



## Economic and Social Council

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### **Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names**

New York, 31 July – 9 August 2012

Item 4 of the provisional agenda\*

**Reports by Governments on the situation in their countries  
and on the progress made in the standardization of  
geographical names since the Ninth Conference  
(for distribution only).**

### **Report of Denmark**

Submitted by Denmark\*\*

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\* E/CONF.101/1.

\*\* Prepared by Peder Gammeltoft, University of Copenhagen and John Jensen, National Survey and Cadastre, Denmark.

## **REPORT FROM DENMARK ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES SINCE THE NINTH CONFERENCE**

### ***Summary***

*Since the Ninth Conference, the Commonwealth of the Danish Realm has seen the establishment of a new organization for the standardization of geographical names for the Faroe Islands, Føroysk staðarnavnanevnd (the Faroese Place-Name Committee), effectively placing all parts of the Realm under a geographical names standardization board. Efforts are still under way in Denmark to secure a law on geographical names. Standardization of geographical names has a long tradition in Denmark which celebrated its centenary in 2010 with several public arrangements and the launch of an online portal of officially authorized Danish geographical names. At the National Survey and Cadastre, geographical names have been high on the agenda in their 'State-of-the-Art' activities on geographical names. The National Survey and Cadastre is collaborating with Oqaasileriffik on the correct spelling of Greenlandic geographical names on the new charts for Greenlandic waters.*

### **Geographical names standardization boards of the Danish Realm**

The Commonwealth of the Danish Realm consists of Denmark and the autonomous regions of the Faroe Islands and Greenland. Hitherto only Denmark and Greenland have had Geographical Names Commissions. In July 2010 a Geographical Names Commission for the Faroe Islands, Føroysk staðarnavnanevnd (the Faroese Place-Name Committee), was established. The committee is commissioned to authorize geographical names and to guide authorities and the public about the correct spelling of geographical names in public use. Decisions made by the committee step into effect directly but may be appealed to the Minister of Cultural Affairs.

### **A Danish law on geographical names**

The last reported stated that the Place-Name Commission and the Ministry of Culture are working together to establish new and clear guidelines for the standardization of geographical names, possibly in the form of a law about place-names. This work is still ongoing.

### **Centenary of the Danish Place-Name Commission**

Danish geographical name standardization began in earnest in 1910 with the establishment of the Danish Place-Name Commission (Stednavneudvalget). To celebrate the centenary of geographical name standardization and the commission, a series of four seminars discussing various aspects of geographical names and geographical name standardization were held. The papers from the seminars are to form the backbone of a celebratory book on the centenary. Additionally, an online portal for Danish geographical names officially authorized by the Danish Place-Name Commission and the Ministry of Cultural Affairs was launched – see link below.

### **Geographical names celebrated by the National Survey and Cadastre**

The Danish National Survey and Cadastre regularly engages in activities named, *State-of-the-Art*, investigating various focal aspects of the institution's work which may help outline trends, developments, improved usages and areas for new development. The focus of the latest *State-of-the-Art* activity in 2011 was geographical names. Questions centering on the importance of geographical names in the society of today, areas of usage – current and prospective – were discussed. Among issues

discussed were: geographical names as entry point for digital administration, crowd sourcing, laws on geographical names and a framework for a future authoritative register of geographical names, etc. The various questions and issues were explored in a number of talks, seminars and panel debates and will form part in forming future strategies within the Danish National Survey and Cadastre.

### **The place-names of Greenland**

The Danish National Survey and Cadastre is working together with Oqaasileriffik (The Greenland Language Council – under which Nunat Aqqinik Aalajangiisartut, The Greenland Place-Name Committee, belongs) on a set of new and improved charts over Greenlandic waters with names written in the correct Greenlandic spelling. Since the charts contain geographical names at sea but as well as on land, a revision of the present gazetteer of Greenland names is being contemplated. The new and improved Greenland gazetteer is intended to be published on the Internet.

### **Web addresses**

- [www.stednavneudvalget.ku.dk](http://www.stednavneudvalget.ku.dk). Homepage of the Danish Place-Name Commission (Stednavneudvalget), in Danish:
- [www.kms.dk](http://www.kms.dk): The Danish National Survey and Cadastre
- <http://www.oqaasileriffik.gl/en/oqaasileriffik/placenamescommittee>: The Place Names Committee of Greenland
- [www.stednavne.info](http://www.stednavne.info): Portal of Authorized Danish Place-Names, full content may be viewed in this pdf-file:  
[http://www.stednavneudvalget.ku.dk/autoriserede\\_stednavne/AUTORISEREDE\\_STEDNAVNE\\_v.2010-12-10.pdf/](http://www.stednavneudvalget.ku.dk/autoriserede_stednavne/AUTORISEREDE_STEDNAVNE_v.2010-12-10.pdf/)