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**Toponymic education**

**Report on the International Consortium of Universities  
for Toponymic Education (ICUTE)**

Submitted by South Africa\*\*

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## **Report on the International Consortium of Universities for Toponymic Education (ICUTE)**

### **Summary of the report:**

The International Consortium of Universities for Toponymic Education (ICUTE) was established in accordance with Resolution 5 of the Fifth UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names to provide toponymic education at the university or equivalent academic level. Participating universities are currently the University of the Free State, South Africa; the Sapienza University in Rome, Italy; the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, and the *Universidad Nacional de Colombia Sede Bogotá* in Colombia. Academics participating in their personal capacity are from the University of Vienna in Austria and the Novosibirsk State University in the Russian Federation. The ICUTE functions at several levels. An accredited course in Toponymy has been prepared by the ICUTE and will be presented to participants in conjunction with the International Symposium on Place-names to be held in Windhoek, Namibia, from 18 to 23 September 2017. Further courses are scheduled to be held in Gaborone, Botswana, and Harare, Zimbabwe. Cartographic toponymy is also included in the syllabus of several participating universities; the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro is offering two courses, namely in toponymy and in cartography. Contact education or mentorship is given in respect of advanced and demanding research topics such as palaeotoponymy. In addition, partnerships and exchange visits by academics between participating universities are envisaged.

## **The International Consortium of Universities for Toponymic Education (ICUTE)**

The International Consortium of Universities for Toponymic Education (ICUTE) was established in accordance with Resolution 5 of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names which reads as follows:

*The Conference,*

*Noting* that there exists a need for professional personnel with education in cartographic toponymy,

*Noting further* that very few universities and academies have cartographic toponymy as part of the curriculum,

*Recommends* that each country should aim at providing training in cartographic toponymy at the university or corresponding academic level.

Participating universities are currently the University of the Free State, South Africa; the Sapienza University in Rome, Italy; and the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. Academics participating in their personal capacity are from the University of Vienna in Austria, the Novosibirsk State University in the Russian Federation, and the National University of Columbia in Bogotá, Colombia.

Whereas the UNGEGN courses in Toponymy are primarily focused on training of names practitioners involved in the national and international standardization of geographical names, the objective of the ICUTE is to provide additional broader toponymic education that includes theoretical, linguistic and other aspects of the discipline; research methodology for the preparation and publication of toponymic studies, and so forth, in support of UNGEGN training courses on toponymy and the implementation of UNM resolutions.

At this stage the ICUTE is concentrating on providing education primarily in Africa and South America, as recommended by the Executive of the International Geographical Union (IGU) at a special Business Meeting at the IGU 2015 Conference in Moscow, and by the General Assembly of the International Cartographic Conference in Rio de Janeiro in 2015.

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Interested universities, academic institutions and individuals are cordially invited to join the Consortium.

## **Syllabus: Geographical names: Management and practice of geographical names**

Geographical names (place-names, toponyms) management is a fundamental element of heritage and language management. These names derive from all languages spoken in a country now and in the past, and cut across linguistic boundaries, involving the implementation of diverse and sometimes conflicting orthographic rules.

Geographical names are essential elements in effective communication, e.g. in cartography (a map is meaningless without names); administration and governance; cultural heritage promotion; economic development; environmental management; communication systems, postal and other deliveries; travel, transportation and tourism; disaster management and emergency services co-ordination; peace-keeping, safety and security; education and science; global media, etc.

Geographical names represent the largest and most significant component of common or shared heritage of a nation, incorporating and preserving the history, culture and identity of the people, and reflecting a nation's image.

Geographical names in South Africa are specifically relevant because of the need to document all toponyms and of the changing toponymic landscape resulting from the implementation of the South African Geographical Names Council Act of 1998; the social, political and linguistic implications of name-changes that have been and are being effected.

### **The purpose of the Course**

To provide learners with knowledge of geographical names as fundamental element of heritage and language management and to equip learners with skills to effect the documentation and standardization of geographical names.

### **Brief description of the content of the Course**

The course will provide information on the nature of geographical names including linguistic aspects. It will also include social aspects of geographical names, cartographic and technical applications as well as rules regarding norms and the standardization of geographical names.

### **Learning outcomes of the COURSE**

On completion of this COURSE attendees will be able to:

-Describe the nature of geographical names;

- Explain the usefulness and uses of geographical names;
- Explain the linguistic aspects of geographical names;
- Discuss the social and practical applications aspects of geographical names;
- Discuss cartographic and technical applications related to geographical names; and
- Discuss standardization of geographical names on national and international levels.
- Study a naming case and present a paper reporting on the process.
- Submit a Portfolio of Evidence regarding the documentation of toponyms.

## **Learning unit 1: Introduction to geographical names**

### Section 1: Introduction

- The nature of geographical names: what are geographical names?
- Usefulness and uses of geographical names;
- Geographical names and language; proper names and common nouns;
- Development of proper names from descriptions and common nouns; illocutionary and evolutionary naming processes.
- Syntax and morphology of names: the structure of names: simple and compound names, specific and generic terms, false generics, etc.
- The semantics of names: lexical, pragmatic, associative, referential meanings, etc.; synchronic and diachronic aspects; transparent and opaque names and components; semantic shift: desemanticization, transcategorization.
- Phonology, phonetics and orthographies.
- Toponymic terminology and definitions.

### Section 2: Palaeotponymy - Stone Age Place-names

- Earliest languages and contacts: the San, Khoikhoi and their predecessors;
- 26 San languages: distribution, characteristics and relationships;
- San influence in Bantu and European names and how to determine them;
- Language contact, phonological and orthographic developments, sound shifts, etc.;
- Reconstruction and preservation of San names;

- Authenticity vs. folk etymology; adaptations, reinterpretations, validations;
- Value for orthographic rules of African-language place-names, morpho-syntactic analyzer, etc.

## **Learning unit 2: Applying Geographical Names**

### Section 1: Social and practical applications

- Social aspects of geographical names: names as heritage, culture and identity; national symbols;
- Place names as expression of time- or space-related identity;
- Multilingual and multi-cultural situations; language contact and interaction,
- Names in conflict; elaborating principles for solving place-name conflicts;
- Dual names, alternative names, twin names, translations, hybrids, etc.;
- Orthographies, orthographic reforms and changes;
- Motives for place-naming, elaborating principles for creating new place names; place names and administration, transportation, tourism, etc.;
- Legal aspects of geographical names: legality and legal status of names; sovereignty (internal and external), jurisdiction, international law, maritime law, etc.
- Names visibility, toponymic landscapes, semiotics, signage, and all other aspects.
- Toponymy as ancillary to anthropology, botany, history, linguistics, settlement history, zoology, etc.

### Section 2: Cartographic and technical applications

#### *Cartographic applications*

- Introduction
- Co-ordinate and reference and location systems (definitions of location), GPS, etc.
- digital generation of maps
- geographical/cartographic place-name research, specially as regards functions of place names on maps,
- rendering of place names on maps,
- names placement on maps,
- map lettering

-the use of font types, colors and sizes to distinguish different feature types on maps

*Digital applications; automation: computers and names*

-GIS

-Introduction to GIS

-Data base operation

-Data fields and record keeping

-System components and configuration

-Geographic Names Information System of the USA, SAGNC database, etc.

-Place names in the cyber world

**Learning unit 3: Standardization of geographical names**

Section 1: Introduction

-The United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN): rationale, history, structure and composition;

-UN Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names

-UN Resolutions on the Standardization of Geographical Names

- International organizations

-International Council of Onomastic Sciences (ICOS)

-Joint International Geographical Union (IGU) and International Cartographic Association (ICA) Commission on Toponymy

-International Hydrographic Organization (IHO)

-Scientific Committee on Undersea Feature Names (SCUFN)

-Other

Section 2: International Standardisation

-Languages, writing systems and scripts of the world

-Romanization; script conversion or transformation systems: transcription and transliteration

-Exonyms, endonyms and official endonyms

-Toponymic guidelines for map and other editors for international use

- Shared features, features beyond single sovereignties
- Politics and place-names
- International relations and international conflicts
- Multilingual areas and minority names, trans-boundary names

### Section 3: National Standardization

- Rationale for national geographical names authorities for each country
- National names authorities, agencies - models and procedures
- Establishment, staffing, structuring
- Functions, policies, principles and procedures
- Names collection in the office: sources, cartographic sources, digital sources
- Field collection: planning and practical problems; area and work plan; materials, methods; evaluation of data;
- Reporting in local papers, etc.
- Office treatment - manual and digital recording and storage of data
- Preparation of material and background data for consideration by names authority
- Practical standardization procedures; considerations, practical committee functions
- Dissemination of standardized names: internet, dictionaries, gazetteers, maps, atlases, cartographic products), lists, etc.

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