

Perspectives on the Future Operations of UNGEGN

Introduction

Following on from the discussion at the 2016 Session of UNGEGN, the Bureau and working group convenors have been reviewing the current operations of UNGEGN discussing the future operations of UNGEGN.

At the 2016 session, there was a presentation that outlined some concerns about the current operational modalities of UNGEGN. His discussion was based on the expressions in ECOSOC resolution 2016/27. It was determined that the Bureau would review the operations and report back to the conference.

Given this is the 50th anniversary it is appropriate to recognise the efforts that have been made by made by our colleagues over this period. Past efforts have developed a foundation that has proved to be resilient and appropriate, and most of the structure is to be retained. It must be stressed that the changes that are being proposed should not be seen in any way as detracting from the incredible foundation that has been laid for us.

Why Change?

Initial organization

- Conferences - the place where directions were set by the passing of resolutions
- Sessions - to report on the progress made by countries in relation to the resolutions

Current perspective

- A blurring of these roles
- Some delegates are not aware of or perhaps do not fully understand the differences

Why Change?

Time frame

- Too large a gap between setting directions and strategy.
- The rapid increase in the use of spatial data for a range of general community functions has led to a situation where decisions and directions need to be set more rapidly.

Costs

- There are increasing cost pressures both in the United Nations and in our respective countries.

UNGGIM

- Need to align our directions with those of UNGGIM to ensure that there is maximum benefit derived from a synergistic relationship between the two bodies.

1. What is Proposed?

The proposed operation structure is summarised as follows:

- A two-yearly meeting cycle of 5 days per meeting.
- These meetings will combine both the ability to set directions and pass resolutions with the reporting functions.

What is Lost

Time

- Reduction of 20 days meeting time over the 10-year period.
- Use what time we have as wisely as possible

Use of the term Conference as a regular part of our meeting schedules

- Retain the term “Session” for the meetings – in harmony with the general practice across UN bodies

What Stays the Same?

Country Focus

- The fundamental aspect of the mandate of UNGEGN to encourage to development of a standardization process in each country will remain. International standardization is based on the national programs.
- The need for input from countries is paramount on all aspects of the work of UNGEGN.

Divisions

- Divisional Structure will be retained with the current emphasis to encourage divisions to be active in supporting and encouraging countries.
- Still be the flexibility for countries to determine their divisional affiliation.
- UNGEGN will respond to alterations in divisional structures with the creation of new divisions or merging of existing divisions

What Stays the Same?

Working Groups

- Similar to divisions, this will be retained. The concept of working groups has proved to be sound, being to provide a point of focus for specific naming issues.
- Working groups can be established or disbanded as required and their terms of reference can be altered when deemed appropriate by UNGEGN

Resolutions

- The ability to pass resolutions will be retained. This will be a change in the session meeting structure.
- Continue to add any resolution passed in the future to the same body of information compiled in recent years for the resolutions.

What Stays the Same?

Meeting Structure

- In general, the meeting structure as currently used in sessions will be followed, being initially seated in Divisions
- Working group convenors leading the consideration of the papers submitted under the specific topics and the chair doing likewise for the papers that do not fit under the working groups.
- Adopt seating by countries for consideration of the resolutions and the report of the session.

Location

- Alternate the venue of the meetings between New York and another location, as has been done in the past.

Special Presentations

- Retain as these have proved a successful method of broadening our perspective on issues, and bringing insight into how other organizations view both the work of UNGEGN and the outputs that flow from the standardization processes.

What is Gained?

- Ability to achieve cost savings at a time of diminishing resources
- The ability to set timely strategic directions.
- Adjust the meeting structure to remove the lack of clarity as to the purpose of the different meetings.
- Be able to respond in a timely manner to any strategic initiative flowing from the work of UNGGIM.
- An incentive to consider a strategic vision for UNGEGN over the next few years, setting goals or targets that we can use as a measurement of our efforts.

What Do We Have to Do?

- Review of the mandate and rules of procedure to ensure that we adopt documents that reflect the new meeting structure, combining aspects from the current conference and session documentation.
- Be prepared to adjust to use the time available in our meetings to maximum efficiency, considering the issues that need to be discussed as a priority. Included in such adjustments could be:
 - A template concept for both country and division reports, with the focus on these reports as general reports on progress of the work within the countries and divisions countries. These reports can be structured to discuss the routine workings, and may also allude to the issues for discussion, but these latter matters should be the subject of specific papers. Division and country reports would then be presented for information only.

What Do We Have to Do?

- Focus the papers for discussion on such matters as:
 - The rationale behind legislative changes
 - The rationale behind alterations to jurisdictional structures
 - Creation of or alteration to database design and content
 - New ways of dealing with identified issues.
 - Concepts or questions as to how to deal with emerging issues and problems.