



UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 24

JULY 2001

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No. 24, July 2001

United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names Newsletter (ISSN 1014-798) is published by Statistics Division, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

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Impressum

UNGE GN
NEWSLETTER

The *Newsletter of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGE GN Newsletter)* is issued approximately twice a year by the Secretariat of the Group. The Secretariat is established within the Statistics Division (UNSD), Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Secretariat of the United Nations. It publishes contributions/reports from the Experts of the Group, its Linguistics/Geographical Divisions and its Working Groups. Contributions for the Newsletter can only be considered when they are made available in digital form. They should be sent to the following address:

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Preface

Message from the Chairman

Dear UNGEGN Experts

I have pleasure in reporting on various activities relating to the work of UNGEGN of which I have knowledge, or which have been brought to my attention.

UNGIWG

The UNGEGN was represented by Ms Helen Kerfoot, Vice-Chair of UNGEGN, and myself at the second plenary meeting of the United Nations Geographic Information Working Group (UNGIWG) in Rome in March this year. We were thus able to participate in parallel sessions. Ms Kerfoot presented a power point slide exhibition and explained the work of UNGEGN. A full report appears in the Report of the Vice-Chair.

Working Groups

In April, a joint meeting of the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers and the East Central and South-East Europe Division was held at the Surveying and Mapping Authority of Slovenia in Ljubljana.

Meetings of the Working Group on Country Names and the Working Group on Romanization Systems were hosted by the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names for British Official Use in London from 14 to 17 May. I had the privilege of participating in these meetings in London, and of attending a reception for the distinguished UNGEGN experts hosted by the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names for British Official Use in the presence of Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal.

Publications

- Volume 35 of *Onoma*, the journal of the International Council of Onomastic Sciences (ICOS), was devoted to the standardization of geographical names. It includes articles by i.a. myself, Ms Helen Kerfoot (Canada), Mr. Pavel Boha... (Czech Republic), Ms Sirkka Paikkala (Finland), Mr. Hamid Malmirian (Iran), Mr. Naftali Kadmon (Israel), Mr. Ferjan Ormeling (Netherlands), Mr. Botolv Helleland (Norway), and Mr. Herman Bell (Sudan).
- The authoritative book by Mr Naftali Kadmon (Israel) entitled *Toponymy: the Lore, Laws and Language of Geographical Names*, has been published by Vantage Press, New York. It will certainly be invaluable for toponymists and will do much to further the work of UNGEGN and promote the standardization of geographical names.
- In pursuance of resolution 22 of the Fourth UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, the second edition of *United Nations Documents on Geographical Names* is nearing completion. Comprising some 450 pages, this publication will promote and facilitate the standardization of geographical names at national and international levels. These documents, prepared by the Working Groups of UNGEGN, represent the culmination of the collective expertise of the world's top experts over a period of more than forty years. It is indispensable to everyone working with, or interested in, geographical names.

Acknowledgements

My sincere thanks are expressed to the Secretariat of UNGEGN; to Ms H. Kerfoot and Mr. B. Helleland who acted as Chair and Vice-Chair for the last UNGEGN meeting, and to Mr. R.L. Payne and Mr. R.E. Flynn who shared the tasks of Rapporteur; to the Chairpersons and members of Divisions; to the Convenors and members of the Working Groups, and to all who have worked so hard to promote the UNGEGN and the standardization of geographical names.

I look forward to seeing you in Berlin.

Peter Raper
Chairman, UNGEGN

Report from the Vice-Chair

(1) Meetings at UN HQ

This past November and March, I have had the opportunity to meet with staff at UN Headquarters, in particular to further the progress of several projects for UNGEGN.

Of prime importance is the development of an **UNGEGN web site**. The site has been planned; some basic texts about UNGEGN, the divisions, and working groups have been compiled; and initial links to be made to other web sites have been established. Mr. Laaribi is now in the process of making the UNGEGN web site a reality.

In addition, the progress (in particular, the status of translation and final layout) of the *Glossary of Technical Terminology for the Standardization of Geographical Names* was reviewed. Currently the publication of this important reference document is on track to be completed before the Eighth Conference in Berlin in 2002. It will be listed for sale as a publication of the UN's Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

The **UNGEGN brochure**, *Consistent use of place names*, is being produced by the UN in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish. This is well in hand, and should be completed in all languages very shortly.

Volume II of the Report of the Seventh Conference is still being prepared for distribution as a photocopied document. It will include the E/CONF.91/L papers as presented to the Conference in 1998, and should be ready later in 2001.

(2) UN Geographic Information Working Group (UNGIWG) request for help from UNGEGN

The UN Geographic Information Working Group (UNGIWG) was established to improve the way in which the various parts of the UN use cartographic and geographic information. One of its main goals is to establish a common **UN Geographic Database**. This global cartographic / toponymic database with a common georeferenced framework to integrate information for substantive programmes of the UN (e.g. peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance) is considered a crucial capacity building project for the UN. Some of you will have already heard about this endeavour (for example, see WP 71, UNGEGN 2000).

At the second plenary session of UNGIWG held in Rome, March 2001 various organizations that could potentially assist UNGIWG were invited to participate. Dr. Peter Raper and I were pleased to represent UNGEGN. During the session several task groups convened: International boundaries (land and maritime) and coastlines, Administrative boundaries, Cartographic guidelines, field operations, Remote sensing and satellite imagery, Metadata and clearing houses, and Training. From the group dealing with cartographic issues, UNGEGN was asked for assistance in "*preparing guidelines for the UN Gazetteer*" (1-year timeframe) and "*proposing a solution to the difficulties of using Romanized nomenclature*" (long term).

Subsequently these requests were clarified with the UN Cartographic Unit staff in New York, the group that would be the focal point for collection and dissemination of the geographical names data for the UN Geographic Database. At the same time, staff indicated many of their difficulties with selection, storage and use of geographical names.

(A) "**UN Gazetteer**" ... This is unlikely to be the creation of a paper copy book. Also, although it might be possible for the Cartographic Unit to be the focal point of a web network, selectively accessing digital geographical names data bases from national data bases around the world, this does not appear to be likely in the short term. Rather, the more immediate concept appears to be the creation of a suite of appropriate names for inclusion in a UN Geographic Database (for various scale applications) and for use on paper

cartographic products to be produced from the Database. As such, the cartographers' immediate questions are how to obtain and select the appropriate names. What names should they enter into the database? How do they obtain these names? How do they prioritize the possible sources of names? And can the UNGEGN produce some guidelines for them to follow?

Diacritics. Although on older UN cartographic products Roman characters with diacritics could be included, this has become more difficult with the generation of maps from GIS systems where not all diacritics are stored. Many diacritics are omitted on maps now produced for UN use. At the same time, many UN reports prepared in a short time frame for presentation and discussion, do not include the diacritics, and cartographers are being urged to have a correspondence between the maps and the texts. Can UNGEGN assist, for example, by encouraging the wider availability of software that allows for correct representation of global data sets?

Country names and capitals. The UN Cartographic Unit has indicated the differences between country names used by the UN and by the World Bank, and the lack of accepted abbreviated forms of country names (for UN cartographic use) for some Member States. The Unit is also trying to keep up to date, and make available on the Web for UN users, a list of country capitals. Although the UN cartographers are resolving these difficulties, and have been assisted by data from the UNGEGN Working Group on Country Names, continuing close cooperation is needed.

Standardized forms vs. conventional names. Although UN cartographers understand the UNGEGN position on nationally standardized names, they are often required to create maps in accordance with the languages of the UN. Contrary to UNGEGN basic philosophy, conventional names and exonyms have been included, without the nationally standardized forms always being shown. How can UNGEGN better promote its key concepts regarding the use of nationally standardized names?

(B) “Romanization” ... Some of the above questions of written forms of names are relevant here, but the UN Cartographic staff's main request is that Romanization systems be made as simple as is possible.

UNGEKN Action

These concerns and requests have been forwarded to the relevant UNGEGN Working Groups (Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers, Romanization, and Country Names) for discussion and recommendations. A response to the UNGIWG task group is required prior to the next UNGIWG meeting in April 2002. I welcome comments from any individuals who would like to contribute to ameliorating these problems of practical application.

(3) To all UNGEGN Division Chairs

A list of all the national names authorities / national contact points (including phone, fax, and e-mail addresses) in your division would be most valuable, as would be a list of the best way(s) to access the nationally accepted geographical names of countries in your division (e.g. web sites, details of current gazetteers, digital files, toponymy guidelines, etc.). Please forward available information to Jenny Javier at the UNGEGN Secretariat (javier@un.org) for compilation purposes.

Helen Kerfoot
Vice-Chair, UNGEGN
Natural Resources Canada
Ottawa, Canada
hkerfoot@NRCan.gc.ca

News from Headquarters

From the Secretariat

As all of you know, the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names and the Twenty-first Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names will be held in Berlin, from 26 August to 6 September 2002. The “Note Verbale”, the “Documentation for the Conference” and the Agendas for both the Conference and UNGEGN Session have been sent to the Permanent Missions of Member States to the United Nations. A copy of the “Note Verbale”, Provisional Agenda for the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (E/CONF.94/1), Provisional Agenda of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (GEGN/21/1) and Documentation for the Conference (E/CONF.94/INF/1) are enclosed with this Newsletter. On the next pages, more detailed information about the Conference is provided from the hosts in Germany.

Among the important tasks of the the UNGEGN Secretariat is the development of the UNGEGN website. This is progressing well and in the near future the website (once edited and reviewed) will become publicly accessible.

The UNGEGN brochure is nearing completion in the six languages of the United Nations. An English-language copy is enclosed with this Newsletter; the other language versions will be available very shortly.

The preparation of the *Glossary of Technical Terminology for the Standardization of Geographical Names* is in progress and the multilingual publication is scheduled for completion prior to the Eighth Conference.

From 22 to 26 January 2001, the Seventh United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas was held in New York. The work of the Conference was organized around three technical committees, established to deal with a range of issues pertinent to cartography, surveying, land management, GIS technology and spatial data infrastructure in support of sustainable development. The Conference noted the importance of countries establishing geographical names authorities in order to develop principles, policies and procedures for geographical names standardization for various uses, including as a component of a National Spatial Data Infrastructure. Specifically, the Conference recommended “that member States promote or assist in the establishment of national geographical names authorities to develop principles, policies, and procedures for geographical names standardization”. Several UNGEGN experts participated, and Mr. Roger Payne (USA) and Mr. Randall Flynn (USA) acted as Rapporteur to the Conference.

I would like to thank all who contributed to this Newsletter. I would appreciate receiving your further contributions by early January 2002 (but no later than 1 March), to enable us to distribute the next Newsletter by early April 2002.

I look forward to meeting you in Berlin.

Amor Laaribi
Secretary, UNGEGN
Statistics Division
United Nations, New York
laaribi@un.org

Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization on Geographical Names

From the Federal Republic of Germany

host of the:

**Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization
of Geographical Names**
27 August – 5 September 2002
and the
**Twenty-first Session of the United Nations Group of Experts
on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)**
26 August and 6 September 2002

1 General information

The Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names will be held in accordance with the decision of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, adopted on 23 July 1999.

The Conference and associated UNGEGN session will be hosted by the Federal Republic of Germany, in Berlin, from the 26 August to the 6 September 2002. The venue will be the Conference Centre of the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany, located in the city centre.

Arrangements for the Conference will be made by

- the United Nations, together with
- the Ministry of the Interior of the Federal Republic of Germany,
- the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany,
- the Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy (BKG), Frankfurt am Main,
- the Working Committee of the State Survey Offices of the Federal Republic of Germany (AdV),
and
- the Ständiger Ausschuss für geographische Namen (StAGN).

The Chairman of the local organization committee of the conference is:

Dr.-Ing. Jörn Sievers

Office at:

Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy
(Bundesamt für Kartographie und Geodäsie, BKG)

Richard-Strauss-Allee 11

D-60598 Frankfurt am Main

e-mail:sievers@ifag.de

fax: INT-49-69-631-49-05-21

In conjunction with the Eighth United Nations Conference and the Twenty-first Session of the UNGEGN, the following events will be organized:

- Technical Exhibitions,
27 August - 5 September 2002,
comprising a
 - Topical Exhibition
 - Commercial Exhibition

- Country Exhibition
(see below for further details);
- Technical Excursions,
31 August and 1 September 2002,
 - to the multilingual Sorbian region
 - the historical and cultural centre of Potsdam,
 - the Berlin State Library – Prussian Cultural Heritage;
- Training Course in Toponymy,
12 August – 6 September 2002,
 - to be held two weeks prior to the Conference at the International Institute for Aerospace Survey and Earth Sciences (ITC), Enschede (NL) and
 - the Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy (BKG), Frankfurt am Main and to include two weeks' participation at the UN Conference and UNGEGN Session in Berlin
(see below for further details);

as well as:

- Social Events and
- Programmes for accompanying persons.

The organizers look forward to welcoming you on the occasion of the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in Berlin.

For further general information contact:

Dipl.-Ing. (FH) Bernd E. Beinstein
Secretary
Ständiger Ausschuss für geographische Namen (StAGN)
Secretariat at:
Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy
(Bundesamt für Kartographie und Geodäsie, BKG)
Richard-Strauss-Allee 11
D-60598 Frankfurt am Main
e-mail: beinstein@ifag.de
fax: INT-49-69-631-49-05-31

Internet:

<http://www.ifag.de/kartographie/stagn/stagn.htm>
<http://www.ifag.de/un-conference2002/geonames.htm>

2 Technical Exhibitions

To show the importance of the standardization of geographical names for society and for the economy, three Technical Exhibitions will be organized within the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names from 27 August - 5 September 2002.

Aims of the Technical Exhibitions:

- to demonstrate the origin and the historical development of geographical names for society and for the economy
- to demonstrate the importance of geographical names in a digital environment
- to give UN member states the possibility to present their work on the subject of geographical names

We want to achieve this by organizing

- (a) a Topical Exhibition
- (b) a Commercial Exhibition
- (c) a Country Exhibition

(a) **Topical Exhibition** (27 August - 5 September 2002)

The Topical Exhibition has the theme:
Preserving the past – Linking to the future!

The aim will be to demonstrate the origin and the historical development of geographical names through the centuries, as well as the inherent benefits for society and for the economy.

In the organizers' view, presentation of the following six topics could cover the complex scenario of geographical names. The experts named below have agreed to be Topical Co-ordinators of these six topics:

Topic 1 History and change of geographical names

- presenting historical aspects, the development and the change of geographical names.
- Topical Co-ordinator: Isolde Hausner, AT; isolde.hausner@oeaw.ac.at

Topic 2 Multilingual areas

- presenting the practical use of geographical names in multilingual areas.
- Topical Co-ordinator: Ferjan Ormeling, NL; f.ormeling@geog.uu.nl

Topic 3 Romanization systems

- presenting the necessity of romanization systems.
- Topical Co-ordinator: Peeter Päll, EE; peeter@eki.ee

Topic 4 Exonyms

- presenting the use and misuse of exonyms.
- Topical Co-ordinator: Roman Stani-Fertl, AT; stani_fertl@utanet.at

Topic 5 Pronunciation

- presenting aspects of the pronunciation of geographical names.
- Topical Co-ordinator: Roland Heinemann, DE; rheinemann@hr-online.de

Topic 6 Curiosities

- presenting some curiosities on the subject of geographical names.
- The organizers will give an award for the most curious object!
Topical Co-ordinator: Martin Gurtner, CH; martin.gurtner@LT.admin.ch

Call for contributions to the Topical Exhibition:

Everybody is invited to collaborate by working on exhibits to be presented; the organizers will be grateful for any proposal that could be implemented in the Topical Exhibition. You will find in Attachment 1, a timetable indicating the deadlines for the Topical Exhibition. If you wish to contribute an exhibit, please fill in the form included as Attachment 2 and send it to the address in Frankfurt am Main noted on the form.

For further information about the Topical Exhibition please contact the Co-ordinator of the Technical Exhibitions (see below) or the aforementioned Topical Co-ordinators. Information will be available on the new web site cited below.

(b) **Commercial Exhibition** (27 - 29 August 2002)

The Commercial Exhibition has the theme:
Geonames in geographical information systems and digital cartography!
The aim will be to demonstrate the importance of geographical names in a digital environment, by presenting:

- cartographic and GIS products related to geographical names

- the entry and retrieval of geographical names in data bases and delivery of names data using the Internet
- the automated selection and placement of geographical names on maps, in relation to scale

Exhibitors will be encouraged to present data using the ISO 10646/Unicode text encoding standard.

The exhibition concept will be developed in co-operation with the relevant GIS- and software- companies!

For further information about the Commercial Exhibition you may contact the Co-ordinator of the Technical Exhibitions or visit the new web site cited below.

(c) **Country Exhibition** (27 August - 6 September 2002)

The Country Exhibition will give countries the possibility to present their achievements and new products on the subject of geographical names within the framework of the Eighth United Nations Conference.

Emphasis will be put on projects of national standardization authorities of countries, showing preservation of geographical names as part of their cultural heritage.

Call for contributions for the Country Exhibition:

Each country will be able to bring materials to display at the Country Exhibition, within reasonable bounds as to quantity and size.

For further information about the Country Exhibition please contact the Co-ordinator of the Technical Exhibitions or visit the new web site.

Further information about the Technical Exhibitions:

Dipl.-Ing. Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu
 Co-ordinator
 Technical Exhibitions
 Project Group Eighth United Nations Conference 2002
 Office at:
 Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy
 (Bundesamt für Kartographie und Geodäsie, BKG)
 Richard-Strauss-Allee 11
 D-60598 Frankfurt am Main
 e-mail: zaccheddu@ifag.de
 fax: INT-49-69-6333-441

Internet:

<http://www.ifag.de/un-conference2002/geonames.htm>

3 Training Course in Toponymy,
 Enschede, Frankfurt am Main, and Berlin,
 11 August – 6 September 2002

Date and organization of the course

A Training Course in Toponymy will take place, lasting for four weeks from 11 August to 6 September 2002. It will be held in Enschede, The Netherlands in the first week and in Frankfurt am Main, Germany in the second week. During the third and fourth weeks, course participants will attend the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, and the Twenty-first Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), Berlin, being held from 26 August to 6 September 2002.

The course is being organized, in co-operation with the Dutch- and German-speaking Division of the UNGEGN, by a Project Group established at the Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy in Frankfurt am Main, Germany.

This training course concerned with the standardization of geographical names will be offered in English. The Co-ordinator of the Training Course in Toponymy is Mr. K. Hans Stabe (see below for contact address).

Aims of the course

The aims of the course are:

- To provide Developing Countries with information on the establishment or the strengthening of “names authorities” that can deal with national geographical names in general, with names collection, names surveys, national names standardization, the preparation of a gazetteer and/or a digital toponymic data base. Such a data base could become part of a national geographic information system (GIS);
- To introduce participants to the above activities through theory and practical applications;
- To consider international aspects of the work of geographical names, such as romanization systems and the use of foreign names;
- To enable participants to attend the session of the UNGEGN and the Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names to be held in Berlin, immediately following the course.

Invitation to apply

Currently we are collecting addresses of potential “national names authorities” in Developing Countries and the names of possible candidates for the course. Any suggestion about and addresses of suitable organizations or individuals are appreciated. After this exercise is completed, letters of invitation and application forms will be sent to qualifying candidates and their agencies.

Who may apply for the course?

At the course it is planned to have about 24 female and male participants, who should come from Developing Countries, preferably countries that have not previously sent participants to similar courses and that have had little or no representation at Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names or at Sessions of the UNGEGN.

Please note that this course is not intended for those already in managerial positions in their own country. Female candidates are particularly encouraged to apply for participation in the course.

Applicants for the course should, as far as possible, meet the following criteria:

- Be a citizen/resident of a Developing Country;
- Be a graduate in cartography, geography, or linguistics;
- Have an appropriate command of the English language;
- Be no more than 35 years of age;
- Work in their home country in an organization, institute, authority or agency that deals or will deal in one way or another with national and international standardization of geographical names (such as: collection of geographical names, correct spelling of names, origin of names, preparation of lists of names or gazetteers, the use of foreign names in the national language, or the use of romanized place names in countries using a non-roman writing system).
In some countries such an institution for names standardization might not yet exist, but the country may intend to establish one in the near future. If an applicant is being considered to assist in establishing that institution, he or she might be a good candidate for the training course;
- Have some basic experience in field work and have acquired some knowledge of toponymy;
- Have a basic knowledge in computer techniques (as background to building a geographical names data file).

Additional assets for course participation are:

- Have some knowledge and experience working with data bases or with Geographical Information Systems (GIS);
- Be in a position, on returning to his/her home country, to transfer to others the lessons learned at the training course;

- Be eligible to participate in the work of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) and to become a member of his/her country's delegation to the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in Berlin, 26 August – 6 September 2002.

Some details about the course and its location

First week

The first week of the course will be devoted to the theory of toponymy and will take place at the International Institute for Aerospace Survey and Earth Sciences (ITC) in Enschede, The Netherlands. Prof. Ferjan Ormeling, the Convenor of the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy of the UNGEGN, will organize and oversee the lectures to be held. Topics such as models and procedures of national agencies, writing systems in different languages, field collection systems, exonyms, and toponymic guidelines will be presented and discussed.

Second week

The second week of the course will consist of practical field work near Frankfurt am Main, Germany. Participants will receive a topographic map with the geographical names missing. In small groups, and accompanied by German speakers, they will collect names for the different features, such as villages, watercourses, mountains, and individual buildings. Local residents, as well as local officials, will be consulted by the participants in the names collection process.

Third and fourth week

Participants from the training course should attend the Twenty-first Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), in Berlin, Germany, 26 August and 6 September 2002, and the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, in Berlin from 27 August to 5 September, 2002 either as members of their national delegation or as observers.

Financing of the Training Course

The course is being sponsored and financed by the United Nations (Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) and by the Governments of The Netherlands and Germany.

Selection procedure of candidates

Candidates for the course will be selected by a Selection Committee based upon the criteria listed above. A notification to applicants and selected candidates will be issued by the committee in spring 2002. The Selection Committee will consist of:

- Director-General, Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy, Frankfurt am Main;
- Chair, United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN);
- Chairman, UNGEGN Working Group Training Courses in Toponymy;
- Chairman, Organizing Committee Eighth UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names 2002;
- Co-ordinator, Training Course in Toponymy.

Submission of application forms

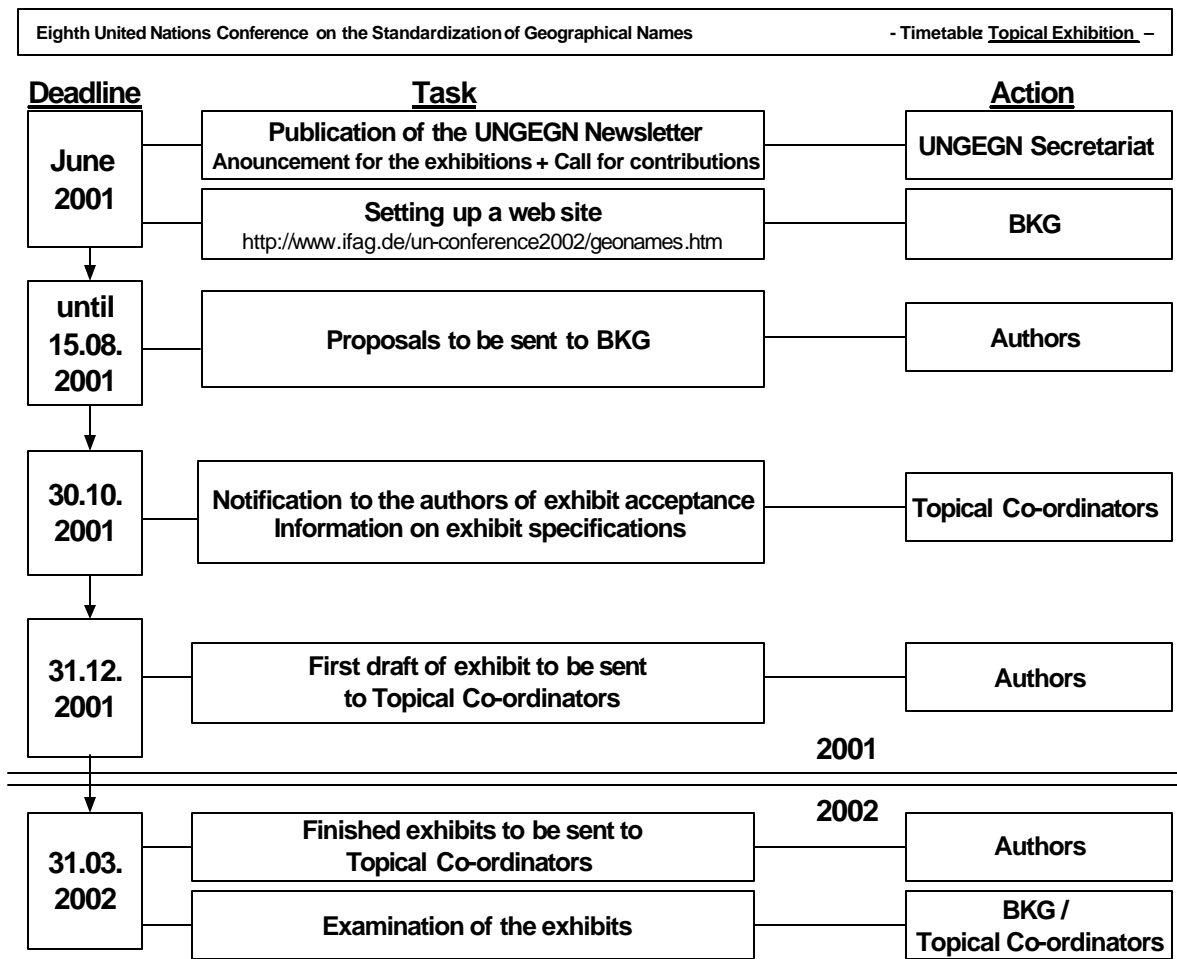
Information regarding possible candidacy for the forthcoming Training Course in Toponymy will be available from the Co-ordinator. The completed application forms should be forwarded to the Co-ordinator not later than 30 November 2001.

For further information, please, contact:

Mr. K. Hans Stabe
 Co-ordinator Training Course in Toponymy
 Project Group Eighth United Nations Conference 2002
 Office at:
 Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy
 (Bundesamt für Kartographie und Geodäsie, BKG)
 Richard-Strauss-Allee 11
 D-60598 Frankfurt am Main
 Germany
 e-mail: stabe@ifag.de
 fax: INT-49-69-6333-441

Internet:
<http://www.ifag.de/un-conference2002/geonames.htm>

Attachment: 1



Attachment: 2

Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names

Form for Contributions - Topical Exhibition -

Form for Contributions for the Topical Exhibition

Name: _____
Address: _____

E-mail: _____
Institute: _____

<input type="checkbox"/>	1 History and change of geonames	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 Multilingual areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3 Romanization systems	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	4 Exonyms	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	5 Pronunciation	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	6 Curiosities	<input type="checkbox"/>

Description of intended exhibit (please use separate form for each exhibit):

Preferred presentation: Panels PowerPoint presentation Table exhibit

Please forward your proposal till 15.08.2001 to:

Dipl.-Ing. Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu
Co-ordinator Technical Exhibitions
Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy
Richard-Strauss-Allee 11
D- 60598 Frankfurt am Main
E-mail: zaccheddu@ifag.de

From the Divisions

Dutch- and German-speaking Division

Second International Symposium on Geographical Names “GeoNames 2000”

Proceedings of the Symposium published

In March 2000 the Second International Symposium on Geographical Names “GeoNames 2000” was held in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. It was organized by the Ständiger Ausschuss für geographische Namen (StAGN) and hosted by the Bundesamt für Kartographie und Geodäsie. A report on this symposium prepared by Helen Kerfoot was published in UNGEGN-Newsletter No. 23. More information about the symposium and the papers is available on the web at http://www.ifag.de/Kartographie/Stagn/GeoNames2000_E.htm.

The proceedings of the symposium have now been published in the Technical Series:
Mitteilungen des Bundesamtes für Kartographie und Geodäsie, Band 19
Second International Symposium on Geographical Names GeoNames 2000
Frankfurt am Main, 28-30 March 2000
Verlag des Bundesamtes für Kartographie und Geodäsie (BKG), Frankfurt am Main 2000
ISSN 1436-3445 / ISBN 3-88648-292-8

Price: DEM 62,59 / €32,00

It can be ordered at the Internet-shop of the BKG under: <http://www.ifag.de/Kartographie/Shop/index.html>
click: Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen
click: Mitteilungen des Bundesamtes für Kartographie und Geodäsie
search in the list: Band 19

It is also available from bookshops.

Bernd E. Beinstein
Secretary, StAGN

International Workshop on Exonyms “GeoNames 2001”

Berchtesgaden, 1-2 October 2001

**Organized by the Dutch- and German-speaking Division (DGSD) of the
United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)
(in the framework of the 50th German Cartographic Conference)
(<http://kartographentag.kartographie-dgfk.de>)**

Thematic outline

The conferences of the United Nations for the standardization of geographical names have so far (from 1972 to 1987) issued several resolutions concerning the use of exonyms. Essentially, these resolutions aim at improving international communication through the use of unambiguous geographical names, i.e. using endonyms instead of exonyms. These resolutions show a gradual decline in the use of exonyms and intend to further and accelerate this general trend by recommending various measures. However, they do not distinguish

- between different exonym categories (e.g. according to the kind of the geographical object: settlement names, names of administrative units, names of nature objects like rivers and mountains; according to historical layers: exonyms in current use, historical exonyms),

- nor do they discern between the variety of communicative situations (e.g. in cartographic publications, text publications, speech; in publications for national or international use; in scientific or popular use; in communication with educated or linguistically skilled partners or with a wider educational strata; in topical or historical context; in the context of scientific and other terms derived from place names or in an isolated situation; in communication with partners in a border region; etc.)
- nor do they take account of the cultural relation between the language of the endonym and the language of the exonym (Is the endonym language well-known and easy to be correctly pronounced by the average reader or speaker of the recipient/user community or is it – for the average recipient – an “exotic” language?).

Taking into account that the gradual decline in the use of exonyms observed by 1987 has not continued in the following decade at least in Central, East and Southeast European countries, it seems to be appropriate to pursue the discussion on the use of exonyms with the final end to reconsider the general attitude of the United Nations regarding exonyms.

The Second International Symposium on Geographical Names "GeoNames 2000", organized under the auspices of the DGSD by the Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy in Frankfurt am Main in March 2000, has already significantly contributed to a better understanding of the meaning of exonyms. Its scope was not wide enough, however, for a detailed discussion on the possible functions of exonyms.

The international workshop on exonyms GeoNames 2001, organised by the DGSD will offer such an opportunity within the framework of the 50th German Cartographic Conference (50. Deutscher Kartographentag) in Berchtesgaden to be held on 1-2 of the workshop

- 1 *Advantages of endonyms as incorporated in the UN resolutions*
- 2 *Role and meaning of exonyms according to categories of geographical objects:*
 - (a) categories by geographic classification
 - Settlement names
 - Names of administrative units
 - Country names
 - Names of rivers, mountains, physical and cultural regions (both within a country or language area and across country or language borders)
 - (b) categories by time layer
 - Names for objects that have developed meaning as attribute
 - Names for objects with just a historical meaning
- 3 *Role and meaning of exonyms according to communicative situations*
 - (a) by medium type
 - Cartographic publications
 - Text publications, mass media
 - Sign posts a.o.
 - Oral speech
 - (b) by practical function of the medium
 - To be used exclusively outside the endonym region or country (e.g. school atlas, school book)
 - To be used exclusively in the endonym region or country (e.g. large-scale road map, GPS)
 - To be used both outside and inside the endonym region or country
 - (c) by intention of communication
 - Official
 - Scientific
 - Educational (primary and secondary)
 - Popular
 - Political (national, international)
- 4 *Role and meaning of exonyms according to the geographical and cultural relation between the language of the endonym and the language of the exonym*
 - (a) by spatial distance/vicinity to places covered by exonyms
 - Near to the place designed by an exonym
 - More distant
 - (b) by cultural relation

- Endonyms of languages widespread and well understood in the recipient/user community
 - Endonyms of languages in considerable cultural distance to the recipient/user community
- 5 *Practise of exonym use in different language communities*
- 6 *Consequences of these findings for the work of UNGEGN.*

Organisational frame

The workshop is to be devoted to intensive discussions following the sequence of themes listed above. Every participant will be invited to engage himself. However, in order to implement a discussion structure and to challenge comments from the auditory some keynote speakers would be needed (also following to the topics listed above) to present a paper of 10 minutes at the maximum. Every participant is invited to offer her/himself for this role and to specify the topic to which she/he is willing to speak. Please, forward these offers to Mr. Jordan (address see below).

Scope of participants

The workshop is open to all UNGEGN members as well as to other persons interested in the subject. UNGEGN members from other divisions than DGSD are encouraged and cordially invited to actively participate in order to achieve the widest possible range of opinions and comments. No registration fees will be charged for attending only the DGSD Workshop GeoNames 2001. Participation in the 50th German Cartographic Conference is welcomed, but separate registration is required as well as payment (<http://kartographentag.kartographie-dgfk.de>). This Internet address should also be used if reservation of hotel accommodation is required.

Peter Jordan
DGSD

Registration for the DGSD Workshop GeoNames 2001
(<http://www.ifag.de/Kartographie/Stagn/GeoNames2001.htm>)

Venue: Kur- und Kongresshaus Berchtesgaden
Maximilianstraße 9

Date: 1 October 2001, 1300 hours to 2 October 2001, 1700 hours

Registration Form

The undersigned

Name Mr / Ms
Affiliation
Street
City
Country

will participate in the DGSD Workshop GeoNames 2001 and will not / will prepare a presentation for GeoNames 2001.

titled.....

.....
Signature

Please, forward your registration form before **1 August 2001**, to:

Dr. Peter Jordan
Österreichisches Ost- und Südosteuropainstitut
Josefsplatz 6
A – 1010 Wien
Austria
e-mail: peter.jordan@osi.ac.at

La Division francophone

Le programme de travail de la Division a été adopté en juin 2000. Il doit couvrir la période jusqu'à la prochaine réunion du GENUNG, en août 2002 à Berlin. Ce programme est consultable sur le site de la Division (<http://www.toponymie.gouv.qc.ca/divfranco.htm> à la rubrique "Sommaire des documents" - *Bulletin d'information toponymique n°2*). Les actions préconisées par ce programme ont commencé à être mises en œuvre : certaines sont terminées, d'autres sont en cours, d'autres n'ont pas encore débuté.

- La liste des sites Web pouvant intéresser des autorités toponymiques francophones est consultable sur le site de la Division .
- Le Bulletin d'information toponymique n°2 (c'est à dire le bulletin de la Division) a été édité et diffusé aux membres en décembre 2000.
- La version française de la plaquette GENUNG a été imprimée et diffusée en décembre 2000. Pour les personnes intéressées, il est possible de recevoir des exemplaires supplémentaires (de la plaquette, ou du Bulletin d'information toponymique n°2) sur simple demande, auprès du secrétariat de la Division :
Pierre PLANQUES ou Sylvie LEJEUNE
IGN 2 avenue Pasteur
94160 Saint-Mandé, France
Tél : (33) 1 43 98 83 47, Mél : toponymie@ign.fr
- Les formes françaises de la "Liste des noms de pays" ont été revues et mises à jour ; elles seront présentées à la réunion du groupe de travail du GENUNG qui se tiendra à Londres en mai 2001.

Autres nouvelles:

Le protocole de coopération des commissions de toponymie du Québec (CTQ) Canada et de France (CNT), a été réactualisé. La nouvelle version a été signée à Paris, le 13 mars 2001, à la Délégation générale du Québec, par les présidentes des deux commissions : Madame Nicole RENÉ pour le Québec Canada, et Madame Marie-Rose SIMONI-AUREMBOU pour la France.

Le président de la Division
Pierre Planques

Norden Division

Meetings

On December 7th and 8th Norden Division held a meeting in Helsinki with participants from Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. The meeting was focused on technical topics mostly concerning databases for geographical names in the Norden countries. Other items discussed were i.a. geographical names on Internet, particularly the differences between different websites. One question was how to create a good Internet version from a geographical names data base. The participants pointed out, that a website must be simple to handle and should present as much information as possible without any links.

New act concerning good place-name practice in Sweden.

On April 28th 2000 the Parliament of Sweden approved a governmental bill concerning good place-name practice. On July 1st 2000 the revised Act concerning Ancient Monuments and Finds came into force, including also a new section (§4) regarding place-names. The paragraph emphasizes on the question of preservation of place-names as a part of the cultural heritage. The paragraph also stipulates, that place-names standardized for public map production should be written in their standardized form, also in other governmental and municipal use. The act contributes in an effective way to increase the use of the standardized geographical names.

Hans Ringstam
Sweden

Romano-Hellenic Division

The Romano-Hellenic Division met during the UNGEGN session in January 2000 in New York and again on July 6 and 7, 2000 at the Italian Military Geographic Institute in Firenze.

Seventeen experts* from Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Romania and Spain participated in this second meeting, chaired by Mr. Salvatore Arca, Division Chair.

In brief, the principal items discussed were as follows:

1. The Division had prepared a synoptic table, providing an overview of the status of the **standardization of geographical names in RHD member countries**. Experts presented summaries on the status of standardization in Cyprus and Greece, and on the publication of a 50,000-entry gazetteer of Romania.
2. **Toponymic guidelines** (at least one edition) have been produced by 6 out of 11 member countries of the RHD. A draft of toponymic guidelines for Cyprus was presented.
3. Two **presentations on standardization** in France were made: Charte de Toponymie, aimed to harmonize all IGN data bases, and Administrative Divisions of France
4. **Gazetteers**. The “Concise catalogue of geographical names of Italy at 1:1M scale mapping” was presented, and an overview was given of the “Concise catalogue of geographical names of Greece”, presented at the 20th session of UNGEGN.
5. **Exonyms**. During the discussion, the different types of exonyms were emphasized (as submitted by Italy to the Fifth UNCSGN in 1987). It was emphasized that lists of exonyms need continual updating. A recent list of French exonyms for cities of the world was made available.
6. **Multilingual Glossary of terms for geographical features**. A project to compile terms used in all languages of the Division is in progress. The content of the second draft was reviewed and experts encouraged to provide further information to complete the project.
7. **UNGEGN promotional brochure**. A draft text has been prepared in Italian, and a French-language version awaits financial support for publication. RHD members confirmed the usefulness of translating and publishing the brochure in all languages of the Division.
8. The **next meeting of the Division** will take place October 10-13, 2001 in Athens.

Please contact the Division Chair for further information about the Romano-Hellenic Division.

Salvatore Arca, Division Chair, RHD

Firenze, Italy

e-mail : saarca@tin.it

*Participants at the Romano-Hellenic Division meeting, July 6-7, 2000, Firenze

Cyprus	Mr. Prodromos Vasileiou Mr. Menelaos Christodoulou
France	Mrs. Sylvie Lejeune
Greece	Mr. Emmanouil Gounaris Mr. Georgios Makridis Mr. Athanasios Pallikaris Mr. Ioannis Papaioannou
Italy	Mr. Salvatore Arca Prof. Laura Cassi Prof. Carlo Alberto Mastrelli Mrs. Monica Meini Mr. Maurizio Pampaloni Mrs. Laura Stanganini Mr. Sandro Toniolo Mr. Giovanni Orrù
Romania	Mr. Serban Dragomirescu
Spain	Mr. Jose M. Garcia-Courel de Mendoza

United Kingdom Division

On behalf of the United Kingdom Division of the UNGEGN, the UK Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (PCGN) recently had the privilege of hosting meetings of two UNGEGN Working Groups:

- Working Group on Country Names: May 14-15, 2001
- Working Group on Romanization Systems: May 16-17, 2001

The meetings were held in the offices of the PCGN within the Royal Geographical Society in London. Technical summaries of each meeting can be found elsewhere in this present *Newsletter*. In total, 13 members of UNGEGN attended all or part of the four days of meetings.

A particular highlight of the week was a Reception on May 16th, hosted by the PCGN to welcome members of the UNGEGN, and held in the Reading Room of the Royal Geographical Society. This Reception afforded UNGEGN members the opportunity of meeting committee members of the PCGN. Significantly, it was held in the presence of Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, who had graciously accepted an invitation to attend. It was apparent that Her Royal Highness was very interested to learn of the work of the UNGEGN, particularly its endeavours to reach out to developing countries. Such countries are frequently visited by Her Royal Highness and are an area of special interest to her. Through this Reception, therefore, the Working Group on Publicity and Funding (whose Convenor, David Munro, is also Chairman of the PCGN) was also able to provide an especially valuable service in promoting the work of UNGEGN.

At least to the United Kingdom members of UNGEGN present during the week, it became evident that such working group meetings should if possible be convened more often in the future. The allotment in each case of two full days of dedicated and uninterrupted discussions, devoted entirely to the agenda of a single working group, saw the accomplishment of a truly substantial amount of work. Such progress is inevitably not possible when a working group can only meet for an occasional hour during an UNGEGN session or UNCSGN conference.

On a separate issue, experts may recall that at the 20th Session of UNGEGN last year the United Kingdom Division reported on the Ordnance Survey's draft Policy on Gaelic Place-Names in Scotland. That policy has now been approved and a Gaelic Place-Name Working Group has been established. In addition to this, the Ordnance Survey has recently published a Welsh Language Scheme that sets out how it will give effect to the guiding principle of equality between English and Welsh when providing products and services to the public in Wales. This scheme has been prepared in accordance with Section 21(3) of the Welsh Language Act 1993 and with the approval of the Welsh Language Board.

Paul Woodman & David Munro
United Kingdom

From the Working Groups

Working Group on Publicity and Funding

Since the meeting of the 20th Session of UNGEGN in New York a number of developments have helped profile the work of UNGEGN.

The Working Group is most grateful to Pierre Planques, Chairman of the Francophone Division, for arranging the translation into French of the UNGEGN brochure. This was printed with generous support from the Institut Geographique National (France) and copies can be obtained from the Secretariat. The French version of the brochure can be downloaded from the Francophone Division web site (<http://www.toponymie.gouv.qc.ca/divfranco.htm>). The translation of the brochure into other languages is encouraged for the benefit of informing a wider audience about the activities of UNGEGN.

The development of a website presence has been advanced by members of the Working Group in collaboration with the UNGEGN Secretariat and by individual Working Groups and Divisions. It is intended to develop further web links with Working Groups and Divisions and with other appropriate toponymic data bases.

Peter Raper, Chairman of UNGEGN has asked the Working Group to explore the possibility of funding the publication of a 46-page volume entitled *United Nations Documents on Geographical Names*. The Chairman of the Working Group would welcome any offers of support for the printing of this important UNGEGN document.

In order to enhance the profile of UNGEGN, the Chairman of the Working Group on Publicity and Funding, David Munro, invited HRH The Princess Royal to attend a reception hosted by him in his capacity as Chairman of PCGN. This event, which is reported more fully in the UK Division Report, was designed to welcome to London distinguished experts of the Working Groups on Country Names and Romanization Systems meeting in the Rooms of the Royal Geographical Society, 14-17 May 2001. Her Royal Highness was received on that occasion by Dr Munro and Dr Peter Raper, Chairman of UNGEGN. The Working Group acknowledges with grateful thanks the generous support of the publishers Collins who sponsored this special event.

David Munro
Convenor, Working Group on Publicity and Funding

Working Group on Romanization Systems

Report on the Meeting of the Working Group in London, 16–17 May 2001.

Following an invitation by the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names for British Official Use (PCGN), the UNGEGN Working Group on Romanization Systems held its meeting in London, at the offices of the PCGN on May 16–17, 2001. Participants in the meeting included Mr. Brahim Atoui (Algeria), Mrs. Caroline Burgess (United Kingdom), Mr. Charles M. Heyda (United States), Mr. Naftali Kadmon (Israel), Mrs. Sylvie Lejeune (France), Mr. David Munro (United Kingdom), Mr. Peeter Päll (Estonia), Mr. Gerd Quinting (United States), Mr. Peter E. Raper (South Africa), Mr. Alessandro Toniolo (Italy), Mr. Paul J. Woodman (United Kingdom).

1. The agenda of the meeting included recent developments of various romanization systems; romanization systems in the context of the United Nations; preparations for the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (Berlin, 2002); other activities of the Working Group.
2. While discussing the status of various romanization systems already approved by the United Nations, experts noted that the systems for Chinese, Greek, Hebrew, Macedonian Cyrillic, Mongolian (in China), Persian, Russian, Serbo-Croatian Cyrillic, Tibetan and Uighur were stable and being used by the appropriate national authorities though the degree of implementation in different countries varied greatly and some aspects (e.g. the use of diacritical marks or apostrophes) deserved further attention. Alternative national systems were adopted and occasionally used for Bulgarian and Khmer. It was hoped that the proposed modification of the romanization system for Thai would be put forward at the next UN Conference in 2002, after clarifying some differences in the use of certain character complexes. Working Group members took note of the developments regarding the romanization system for Arabic, notably the planned conference on romanization issues in Algeria in 2002 and the meeting of experts of the Arabic Division planned to take place in the United Arab Emirates in autumn 2001, in accordance with resolution 4 of the Seventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (New York, 1998). More information was needed on the implementation of the romanization system for Amharic in Ethiopia. As regards the romanization systems for the languages of the Indian group (Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu), it was stated that, as these systems had not been implemented, it was necessary to contact the national names authorities of the countries of that division in order to obtain their views on the necessity of revising previous United Nations resolutions concerning the adoption of the aforementioned systems.
3. Turning to the languages and scripts that are not yet covered by romanization systems recommended by the United Nations, members of the Working Group noted that while there existed national romanization systems for Byelorussian, Dzongkha, Laotian, and Maldivian, none of the systems had been presented to the Working Group and subsequently to UNGEGN sessions or United Nations conferences on the standardization of geographical names. National authorities of these countries needed to be contacted in order to encourage them to put forward their national systems for consideration by experts on geographical names. Experts noted that although the romanization system for Ukrainian had been discussed at previous UNGEGN sessions, there was no new information available since 1997 and the Roman-letter equivalents of certain Ukrainian characters still needed clarification. Working Group members took note of the new official system of romanization for Korean promulgated by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Republic of Korea, in July 2000. The Working Group was mindful of the efforts by experts from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea started in 1989 seeking to agree on a single international system for the romanization of Korean geographical names. Information to clarify the actually utilized script and/or possible romanization systems for Armenian, Georgian, Kazakh and Tigrinya was obtained. No new information was received on the status of the romanization systems for Burmese, Japanese, Kirghiz, Mongolian (Cyrillic), Pashto, Sinhalese and Tajik.
4. Working Group members noted that there was evidence of the actual and quite stable use of new official Roman alphabets for Turkmen and Uzbek. Thus, these languages now fall outside the scope of consideration of the Working Group. In order to facilitate the use of earlier name sources, however, it was agreed to include the tables of correspondences between Cyrillic and Roman characters for Azerbaijani, Turkmen and Uzbek in the report of the Working Group to the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names.
5. Discussing the difficulties faced by the United Nations departments and services in using geographical names, especially diacritical marks accompanying the letters and characters in some names, it was noted that there already existed technical solutions to solve the problems with diacritical marks. The UNGEGN Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers does address these issues. The resolutions of the United Nations conferences on the standardization of geographical names supported the use of diacritics in names since they are integral parts of the spellings of names.
6. Working Group members also discussed preparations for the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names. This involved the contents and format of the report on

the current status of United Nations romanization systems for geographical names and conceptions for the romanization sub-topic at the planned Technical Exhibition. Development of the Working Group website was also briefly discussed.

7. During the two-day meeting the Working Group was able to discuss a wide range of topics, accomplishing a great deal of work thanks to the dedicated efforts of each participant of the meeting and to the excellent organizational support by the PCGN, the host of the meeting. Altogether, these meetings are most beneficial and will continue to be in the future.

Peeter Päll,
Convenor, Working Group on Romanization Systems

Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers

Joint International Meeting on Geographical Names Ljubljana, 18-20 April 2001

Under the auspices of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, a joint international meeting on geographical names was held at the Surveying and Mapping Authority of the Republic of Slovenia on 18-20 April 2001. The meeting was organised by the UNGEGN East Central and South-East Europe Regional Division in collaboration with the UNGEGN Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers. The central theme of the joint meeting on 18 April 2001 was the development of toponymic databases, digital gazetteers, and the exchange of digital toponymic information. Representatives from Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Slovenia, the Slovak Republic, and the United States made presentations on topics relating to this theme, with much useful discussion and exchange of information. The meeting also touched on recent developments at the UNGEGN secretariat, preparations for the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, and the latest issue of *Onoma*, the journal of the International Council of Onomastic Sciences. Participants agreed that the meeting of an UNGEGN Regional Division and an UNGEGN Working Group to address a theme of common interest was of significant benefit in furthering the aims of the Group of Experts, and it was hoped that future joint meetings could be arranged.

The Working Group expresses its appreciation to the Surveying and Mapping Authority of Slovenia and the Chairman of the East Central and South-East Europe Regional Division for organising the meeting and for their warm hospitality.

Report on the Meeting of the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers Ljubljana, 19 April 2001

Report prepared by Mrs. Caroline Burgess, United Kingdom.

1. The Working Group met in Ljubljana on 19 April 2001 to discuss developments in the production of digital toponymic data files and gazetteers and to review its work plan.
2. Participants in the Working Group meeting included:
 - Mr. Milan Orožen Adamič, Slovenia
 - Mrs. Caroline Burgess, United Kingdom
 - Mr. Randall Flynn, United States
 - Ms. Isolde Hausner, Austria
 - Ms. Helen Kerfoot, Canada
 - Ms. Mária Kováčiová, Slovak Republic
 - Mr. Teemu Leskinen, Finland
 - Mr. Blaž Mozetič, Slovenia
 - Mr. Janis Nagelis, Latvia
 - Mr. Giovanni Orrù, Italy

Mr. Jörn Sievers, Germany
Ms. Mara Šterna, Latvia
Ms. Vita Strautniece, Latvia
Mr. Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu, Germany

3. Initial discussions concentrated on a first draft of a website* where information on the Working Group and its activities would be posted, along with links to other appropriate web pages. Members would be encouraged to provide material on relevant subjects which could be included in .pdf format. All submissions would be retained and an archive built for reference purposes. Initial comments concerning structure and links were to be forwarded to the Convenor by mid-May 2001, and the launch of the website would be announced in the June 2001 UNGEGN Newsletter.
4. One of the prime objectives of the Working Group was to make contact with other bodies who were dealing with similar issues. In particular the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) should be approached by the UNGEGN Secretariat to raise awareness of the existence of the Working Group. The Convenor would also attempt to establish how the Working Group could become involved in relevant Technical Committees of ISO, including ISO/TC 211 (Geographic Information). The possibility of a formal association with the encoding standards consortium, UNICODE, was also to be investigated. The United Nations had recently established a Geographic Information Working Group who had requested assistance from UNGEGN with regard to the creation of a UN global gazetteer and text encoding standards for the UN GIS. The Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers agreed to work with the UNGEGN Vice-Chair to address these issues. A further significant body involved in digital gazetteer production was the Centre for Global Georeferencing Research (CGGR) at the University of California. The Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) and the US National Geographic Society were both participants. CGGR's Alexandria Digital Library project was concerned with the production of a global gazetteer and CGGR had consequently been compiling a standard for gazetteer content. Working Group Members were encouraged to study the CGGR material and consider how contact should be made.
5. Workshops or technical exhibitions which could further raise awareness of the Working Group were also discussed. It was suggested that the commercial software and digital data processing companies which were to be exhibiting at the 8th UN Conference on the Standardisation of Geographical Names (UNCSGN) in summer 2002 be approached in advance of the Conference and made aware of the concerns facing the Working Group, with particular regard to the encoding of letter/diacritic combinations and special letters. The Convenor would draft some suggested wording to be approved by the Working Group and included in a letter of invitation to the companies concerned.
6. The Working Group discussed multilateral programmes of digital data exchange, such as the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) *Composite Gazetteer of Antarctica* and the Nordic database. Such projects highlighted the importance of compatibility at all levels and the need for a standard format for databases and gazetteers.
7. The question of text encoding standards was considered by the Working Group. Members emphasised the importance of retaining special letters and diacritical marks where used in geographical names. Unfortunately many database search engines were unable to deal with such characters. The Report of the Working Group on Toponymic Data Exchange Formats and Standards (E/CONF.91/CRP.11) to the 7th UNCSGN was revisited. The Members agreed that the content needed to be updated and the lists of languages, writing systems and characters be amended as appropriate. Members would contact the Convenor with their comments and the lists would be recompiled using current technology, with a view to posting the revised document on the Working Group website.
8. A key outcome of the Working Group discussions was the identification of a clear requirement for practical guidelines for the creation of toponymic databases and gazetteers and for digital

* The website may be viewed at: <http://www.zrc-sazu.si/ungegn/>

toponymic data exchange. The Working Group would compile such a document, based on Annex C of E/CONF.91/CRP.11, which would be presented to the 8th UNCSGN.

9. The Working Group would next meet during the 8th UNCSGN.

Working Group Website

As noted in the meeting report above, the Working Group is actively constructing its website, which may be viewed at <http://www.zrc-sazu.si/ungegn/>. The Working Group expresses its gratitude to Mr. Milan Orožen Adamič, Slovenia, for taking on the task of site webmaster. Please be aware that the website is very much a work in progress; suggestions for useful content and links are gratefully accepted and may be sent to the Working Group convenor.

Randall E. Flynn

Convenor, Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers

Algeria

La toponymie nationale

(Extrait du rapport national sur l'état des lieux de l'information géographique en Algérie)

Depuis un peu plus d'un siècle, la toponymie a été reconnue comme une science qui a sa propre cohérence bien qu'elle doit s'appuyer sur plusieurs disciplines: géographie, cartographie, histoire, linguistique, politologie... Des spécialistes de chacun de ces domaines se sont intéressés à la toponymie et une certaine polarisation des intérêts s'est rapidement manifestée. D'aucuns ont concentré leurs recherches sur la linguistique, l'étymologie, la dialectologie afin de découvrir l'origine et le sens des noms de lieux et le contexte socio-historique dans lequel ils sont nés. D'autres se sont attachés à établir des normes de gestion toponymique pour contribuer à fixer le plus possible l'usage des noms géographiques pour faciliter la fonction première de ce vocabulaire spécifique qui est la localisation et l'orientation.

En tant qu'élément significatif de l'information géographique, la toponymie nationale reste à l'heure actuelle un patrimoine connu uniquement par quelques professions, le plus souvent les utilisateurs, tels que les géographes, les géomètres, les historiens, etc. Monsieur Mustapha LACHERAF, penseur algérien, parle de cet espace géographique modelé par les millénaires, de cette filiation issue de la plus haute antiquité: "je ne sais pas si l'algérien moyen, surtout dans les villes, ressent avec la même acuité une égale brûlure, cette frustration qui le prive de la connaissance tellurique de cet espace, de son adhésion sensorielle, sensitive, charnelle, à cette géographie natale qu'on ne lui enseigne plus et avec laquelle il ne peut avoir un contact direct, un lien ombilical ou iniatique même furtif (mais conscient) durant toute sa vie ou presque".

On estime à un (01) million de noms géographiques dans notre pays. L'essentiel de ce volume est apposé sur la cartographie nationale aux différentes échelles.

Les toponymes portés sur la carte classés en deux (02) catégories.

- les noms officiels ou administratifs (environ 20 000 noms de lieux), se sont des noms qui désignent des espaces dont les limites ont été choisies et arrêtées par l'administration (nom de wilaya, de commune), ils peuvent être également intégrés à cette catégorie les noms de voies de communications;
- les noms non officiels, qui sont généralement les noms de lieux dits, d'oued, de Djebel, etc.. Cette catégorie n'est régie par aucun texte réglementaire et leur graphie résulte uniquement de l'usage et elle est souvent différente d'une carte à une autre et d'un document à un autre.

Le nombre de toponymes avancé plus haut, dénote la richesse de l'espace national en dénomination qui font de lui, un espace fortement identifié. La gestion rationnelle de cette masse suppose des moyens et du temps, elle implique surtout la mise en place d'une banque de données toponymique, qui demeure un préalable aux opérations de recensement et de normalisation.

La mise en place d'une commission permanente de toponymie au sein du Conseil National de l'Information Géographique, vise en particulier une action normative et une officialisation des noms géographiques. La définition d'un système de translittération reste également une priorité. Les études menées en ce domaine, dans le cadre des activités du CNIG ont permis de relever des aspects de dysfonctionnement.

Au plan administratif:

- l'absence d'une nomenclature nationale des toponymes;
- l'existence de plusieurs dénominations pour un même lieu et inversement une même dénomination pour plusieurs lieux;

- l'absence d'une prémisse d'hierarchisation dans l'attribution des noms en fonction de l'importance du site;
- ancrage de dénomination n'ayant pas de révélation sur le lieu (le cas des ensembles immobiliers: Cité DRAGADOS etc...);
- rares sont les toponymes mettant en valeur la géographie, le territoire, l'histoire et les us et coutumes;
- absence de normalisation dans la transcription graphique que ce soit en caractères arabes ou en caractères latins des toponymes et patronymes algériens;
- absence d'un système de translittération nécessaire pour toute normalisation par la romanisation.

Au plan juridique:

- faiblesse du dispositif juridique et réglementaire qui se résume essentiellement en deux (02) décrets (le n 93-96 du 05 avril 1993 relatif aux baptisations aux noms de moudjahid et chartid et le décret n 97-194 du 05 avril 1997 relatif à la dénomination et la débaptisation des lieux et édifices publics) et une réglementation de procédure administrative.

Pour la prise en charge des questions liées cet aspect de l'information géographique dont l'impact économique est important, il serait souhaitable pour les pouvoirs publics d'inscrire les actions visant la problématique de la toponymie nationale dans la démarche préconisée par les instances spécialisées de l'Organisation des Nations Unis, en l'occurrence les Divisions Géographiques/Linguistiques issue des recommandations du Conseil Economique et Social, et dont les groupes d'experts qui les composent fournissent régulièrement des règles pouvant être adaptées au contexte national.

Dans ce même ordre d'idée, il serait également fort utile pour notre pays de se doter d'un organisme national chargé des noms géographiques. Le Ministère de l'Intérieur et des Collectivités Locales, compte tenu de sa vocation territoriale, serait à même d'assurer la tutelle d'un tel organe.

***Abdelaziz Medjrab, Directeur de le cartographie,
Service géographique et de télédetection de l'armée***

Belgium

J'ai le plaisir de vous faire savoir qu'un chapitre relatif à la toponymie est désormais disponible sur le site de l'Institut géographique national à l'adresse <http://www.ngi.be>.

Il y est entre autres question des travaux du GENUNG.

La toponymie <http://www.ngi.be/FR/FR2-11.shtm>

De toponymie ... <http://www.ngi.be/NL/NL2-11.shtm>

***Kathleen Van Doren
Géographe, Directeur de la Formation***

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Canada

(1) Publications

Principles and Procedures

The Geographical Names Board of Canada's publication *Principles and procedures for geographical naming/principes et directives pour la dénomination des lieux* was revised in early 2001. The text is the same as the 1999 version of the publication although the Preface reflects the activities of the provincial names boards and reference is made to the new territory of Nunavut. *Principles and Procedures* is available free of charge from the Geographical Names Section at the address given below. The 1999 version of the publication is still available on the GeoNames web site at <http://geonames.nrcan.gc.ca/english/publications.html> and http://geonames.nrcan.gc.ca/data/princ_proc_fre.pdf

Geographical Names

The Geographical Names Section also produced early this year the bilingual brochure - *Geographical Names / Toponymes*. The brochure describes, briefly, what geographical names are used for, who is responsible for naming geographical features in Canada, how the names are approved, what the Geographical Names Section does, what the Canadian Geographical Names Data Base is, where to find out more information, and provides contact information including web site addresses. Copies of the brochure are available free of charge from the Geographical Names Section.

Publication sur la toponymie autochtone du Québec

La Commission de toponymie du Québec a produit un cinquième ouvrage consacré à la toponymie autochtone : *La toponymie des Hurons-Wendats*. Il compte près de 280 rubriques, une carte de localisation, un historique, un lexique et une bibliographie. L'ouvrage sera diffusé au cours de l'été 2001.

Reconnaissance de la toponymie comme composante du patrimoine national

En 1987, la Cinquième Conférence des Nations Unies sur la normalisation des noms géographiques reconnaissait ceux-ci comme éléments significatifs du patrimoine culturel des nations (résolution 6). Cette reconnaissance trouve maintenant un écho dans le rapport du Groupe-conseil chargé par le gouvernement québécois de lui recommander une Politique du Patrimoine culturel du Québec : *Notre patrimoine, un présent du passé*, novembre 2000; Internet : <www.politique-patrimoine.org>. Une version anglaise est disponible aussi à cette même adresse. Certaines des recommandations du Groupe-conseil visent explicitement la toponymie.

Manitoba publication

In May 2001, the Manitoba Geographical Names Program published *Geographical Names of Manitoba*. The book contains almost 12,000 entries in a dictionary format; each entry provides a history behind the name. Distinctions are made between official names and names that are not official. The introductory material provides a brief history of naming in Manitoba and a list of some Native root words commonly used in Manitoba geographical names.

Contact address for information on publications

Geographical Names Section, 634 – 615 Booth Street, Ottawa ON Canada K1A 0E9.

(2) Municipal amalgamations

Municipal changes, especially amalgamations, are taking place all across Canada, but particularly in Ontario and Quebec.

Between 1996 and 2001, some 815 incorporated populated places in Ontario were amalgamated, reducing the number of these places to 447. The old names have not disappeared however, as most remain as official names with different statuses in the Canadian Geographical Names Data Base (CGNDB). It is possible for these names, now designating unincorporated areas, to appear in gazetteers and on maps. A small number are no longer “official”, but remain in the CGNDB so that their history is not lost.

Au Québec, l'une des conséquences possibles de ce mouvement de regroupement des municipalités est la disparition de toponymes qui désignent des lieux habités depuis des siècles. Pour préserver l'existence et

l'usage de ces noms patrimoniaux dans le nouveau contexte administratif, la Commission a conçu un mécanisme de sauvegarde toponymique et a prévu des interventions en ce sens dans sa planification stratégique, pour les trois prochaines années.

Municipal changes are noted in provincial government publications about municipalities. These changes are noted in *Canoma*. They are also listed on the GeoNames web site at <http://geonames.nrcan.gc.ca/english/newplaces.html> > and <http://geonames.nrcan.gc.ca/francais/newplaces.html>>.

Street names

The new municipalities, formed by amalgamation, are finding that they have more than one street with the same name. In all provinces and territories except Quebec, street naming is handled at the municipal level.

Le gouvernement du Québec a décrété que les plus importantes agglomérations du Québec, à l'exemple de la décision du gouvernement de l'Ontario de créer des mégavilles, verront se regrouper les municipalités qui les composent. Il en résulte que l'odonymie des nouvelles villes comptera un grand nombre de noms identiques ou quasi identiques. Pour contrer la confusion qui menace de s'installer, la Commission de toponymie du Québec a proposé une procédure souple de réduction de l'homonymie dans les noms de voies de communication www.toponymie.gouv.qc.ca/procedure.htm qui intègre des paramètres aussi divers que l'ancienneté des noms ou le nombre d'entreprises visées par le changement éventuel du nom de la voie où elles se trouvent.

***Kathleen O'Brien, Coordinator
Geographical Names Board of Canada***

Israel

Toponymy, The Lore, Laws and Language of Geographical Names

(333 pp., 35 illustrations, ISBN 0-533-13531-1, list price US\$ 14.95.)

Based on the author's experience of 23 years of activity at the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names and the U.N. Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names, this book, which appeared in January 2001, was designed both as an instructory text for the staff of national and other professional authorities on geographical names, and as a textbook for training courses in the standardization of geographical names and students of courses in toponymy and related subjects in geography and linguistics at secondary and tertiary level, thus conforming to Resolution No. 5 of the 4th Conference and No. 11 of the 7th Conference. The book includes hundreds of references, many relating to United Nations documents.

TOPONYMY can be ordered from the publishers, Vantage Press Inc., 516 West 34th Street, New York, N.Y. 10001, and from bookshops such as the Barnes & Noble chain (www.bn.com).

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A more detailed list of contents (137 paragraphs) can be obtained from the author (msnkadmo@mscc.huji.ac.il).

Naftali Kadmon
Israel

Morocco

Ibn Batuta, the greatest globetrotter in the history of mankind

The autobiography of this illustrious man has been embedded in his own prolific account about his travels since he had left Tangier in 725 A.H. (1325 A.D.) and until he was received by Sultan Abou Inane, in Fez, in Shaabane 750 A.H. (November 1349 A.D.), on the occasion of his return, in the aftermath of which he embarked on a new peregrination to Andalusia, then to the Sudan.

Yet, some thirteen years in the life of this great man remain unknown. No information is disclosed on his conditions, nor on his household, except some news about the injunction made by Sultan Abou Inane to Ibn Juzay, the clerk, in 757 A.H. (1356 A.D.), to write down the account of Ibn Batuta's travels. Ibn Batuta was appointed later on as judge in the Tamesna Province, one of the most affluent regions in the Kingdom of Bani Marin, situated between Bouregreg and Oum Rabii rivers.

But his voice died away following the death of his patron Sultan Abou Inane in 759 A.H. (1357 A.D.).

Born in Tangier on Monday 17 Rajab 703 A.H. (24 February 1304 A.D.), he died while still in office as judge in 770 A.H. (1369 A.D.).

Ibn Batuta had embarked on many travels, interspersed with multifarious ordeals, and daunting perils too. But he came unscathed from all these terrifying experiences. So goes the saying: "Only age kills."

But some people go so far as to belittle Ibn Batuta, decrying him as a man of limited culture. Their view is downright erroneous, since Ibn Batuta was a genuinely cultured man in the deepest sense of culture.

As you skim through the account of his peregrinations, you can realize these facts right from the first passage, as he was bidding farewell to Morocco, when his companions chose him as their judge.

Whether in Arabian or Persian land, he availed himself of the opportunity to delve into knowledge, and to knit ties with a large number of Sheikhs and scholars, women and men alike, who awarded him unreservedly their recommendations, which entitled him to take up the office of judge in India and the Maldives.

Worth noting in Ibn Batuta's peregrinations is the fact that, in spite of his long absence and the many posts he held, he had never forgotten his homeland, Morocco, which remained ever engraved in his mind. He mentioned Ceuta whilst in Sanoub on the banks of the Black Sea. The images of the great Moroccan rivers always filled his mind, making him compare in one instance in the Salé River with Istanbul River. He took great pride in his Moroccan identity and was keen on giving vent to such a feeling.

Another point worth noting is the sharp economic and commercial sense with which he was endowed. His talks about prices, and his close follow-up of the situation of weights and measures as well as the value of currencies makes you feel you are reading a specialized newspaper chronicling market conditions.

One conspicuous fact was Ibn Batuta's amazing celerity of acclimatization, for he would quickly learn the language of the folks he visited. He started assimilating Persian before he had command of the Turkish language because Persian was widespread in the region that extended to China. He used to transcribe these two languages in the Arabic script, thus bearing testimony to the fact that the Arabic script is capable of assimilating all phenemes. This is an important scientific fact.

He was also eager to render accurately the geographical names, describing them minutely to shun any spelling or pronunciation errors. This is one of the characteristics that distinguished our eminent globetrotter from most geographers who had recorded geographical names. It is therefore only natural that his travels should be considered as a vivid geographical glossary that no researcher in the history of Africa, Asia and even Southern Europe can do without.

One of the reasons that aroused my interest in Ibn Batuta's travel was the overriding feeling that infused my heart upon joining the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, which is subsidiary to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in New York.

The goal of this Conference, as everybody knows, is to survey and standardized geographical sites throughout the world. This is an auspicious occasion for me to correct, from this lofty international podium, about one thousand geographical names mentioned in Ibn Batuta travels about the three continents he had visited.

The social conditions of women and their status in the nations he had visited prompted him to formulate interesting ideas about the situation of women. He spoke about the chastity and compassion of the Khurasan women as well as the lofty status of Yurkey and Tartar women to the extent that the enforcement of crucial decisions hinged on the approval of "eminent ladies" side by side with Sultans. He also talked about women in the desert and the Sudan, when the woman used to enjoy her right to an equitable treatment.

We must mention here that whenever Marco Polo the Venetian was mentioned, the scholars concerned travels and travellers always talked about Ibn Batuta, the man from Tangier. Marco Polo had visited the Far East some sixty years before, and his memoirs, which were recorded afterwards, were the object of extensive comments. Yet, it is worth noting that the scope of Ibn Batuta's travels was larger than Marco Polo's, in addition to the contrasting inherent scientific value of both.

While Ibn Batuta had embarked on his travels alone, and the writer of his travel account (Ibn Juzay) was highly trustworthy in the rendition of his travels, it must be noted that Rustichello, the writer of Marco Polo's travels, used to supplement the travel accounts with figments of his imagination. We have

today the English translation, published in 1818 by William Marsden from the Italian original text published by Ramusio in 1559.

After Marsden, other editions appeared, with many additions. They totalled over one hundred editions, all dissimilar, while Ibn Batuta's travels have remained as they first appeared in the Fez edition of 757 A.H. (1356 A.D.).

Furthermore, Marco Polo's travel were confined to a number of regions to the exclusion of Africa and Europe. The people visited by the Moroccan traveller were therefore far more numerous than those visited by the Venetian traveller.

While voicing his pride on his unparalleled, far-reaching travels, Ibn Batuta pointed out that he had surpassed the Egyptian traveller Sheikh Abdullah who had neither gone to China, nor to Sarandib Island, Morocco, Andalusia or the Sudan. I personally believe that had Ibn Batuta met with Marco Polo, he would have made the same comment. For we know that the lands visited by that traveller from Tangiers surpass by far those crossed by Marco Polo.

But our traveller from Tangiers excels the Venetian traveller in another essential matter. He managed to minge with the local population through marriage as well as through the top-ranking offices he held and the close contacts he made with different circles. Such dynamism fulfilled his curiosity and met his ever-renewed aspirations. To know the calibre of both men and gauge the cognitive input in their works, suffice it to survey the number of geographical names mentioned in their work, and sort out the proper names cited in their memoirs. We will then certainly find ourselves paying tribute to the tremendous memory of the Moroccan traveller who managed to memorize such a considerable number of geographical and proper names, in spite of the plunder of his memoirs in the Indian Ocean. Such a power of assimilation and recollection is, indeed, beyond human capacity. Similarly, when it comes to the exotic, novel elements in both travels, it can be safely upheld, without hesitation, that Ibn Batuta had excelled Poli, his counterpart.

This period in history teemed with travels made by renowned globetrotters. From the Western world, apart from Marco Polo, there was also Odoric who visited Asia immediately after Polo. As from the Arab world, there were Ahmed Ben Fadlan, Ibn Jubayr al-Andalusi, al-Abdari al-Hihi, and Abu Hamed al-Gharnati. Yet, with its far-reaching surface, its long duration and its extensive input, Ibn Batuta travel surpasses all those.

One day, as I was speaking about Ibn Batuta, I said to my fellow member in the Academy of the Kingdom of Morocco, Mr. Neil Armstrong, the man who had gone to the moon as you know " Ibn Batuta is one of your fellow explorers." His reply was quite simple: "There is a huge difference between us. Whereas I was pushed into a machine, then I found myself on the moon, and was told to go back afterwards, I realized that Ibn Batuta, during his thirty-year peregrinations, had been walking all the way through, or at times riding a horse, a camel, an elephant, a cart, a sedan or a ship in order to achieve his exploration goals." Clear then that Ibn Batuta's travels are the first of their kind in the history of the entire mankind, as upheld by a large number of researchers.

Abdelhadi Tazi
Morocco

Saudi Arabia

**The General Directorate of Military Survey (GDMS) of the Ministry of Defence and
Aviation Geographic Names Transliteration Software**

The General Directorate of Military Survey (GDMS) of the Ministry of Defence and Aviation of Saudi Arabia has written software to enable the transliteration of Geographic Names. This software, written in Visual Basic by GDMS enables the transliteration of Arabic Characters to Latin and vice-versa.

Transliteration is the operation, which represents the characters of an entire alphabetical system of writing by the characters of the conversion alphabet.

Romanization is the conversion of non-Latin writing systems to the Latin Alphabet.

The transliteration system used in GDMS to transliterate from Arabic geographic names to Latin is the system that was revised and agreed in 1972. It is based on the system adopted by Arabic experts at the conference held in Beirut in 1971 with the practical amendments carried out and agreed upon by the representatives of the Arabic-speaking countries at their conference. It is the system recommended by the United Nations.

Arabic is written from right to left and the script usually omits vowel points and diacritical marks from writing, which normally makes it difficult to obtain uniform results in the Romanization of Arabic. The software is still under development but nevertheless has overcome some of the problems normally associated with software of this kind and is proving a very useful tool in the production of mapping at GDMS. One of the problems is that although the system concentrates on the transliteration from Arabic to English it has also been designed to transliterate from English to Arabic, which is more difficult, and a reasonable effort has been made in this respect. Another problem concerned the code page selection and this has been overcome by the use of Unicode, which has wide support throughout the new generation of operating systems (e.g. Windows NT, Windows 2000). More details of the other problems that have been faced will be given in the presentation planned to be given at the Eighth UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in Berlin in 2002.

Colonel Abdullah Saleh Al-Oraini
Commander Computer Section Wing, Military Survey Department
Saudi Arabia

United States

US BGN International Activities

Members of the US BGN and its staff participated in three UNGEGN Working Group meetings held in April and May 2001. One staff member took part in the joint meeting of the UNGEGN East Central and South-East Europe Division and the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers, held in Ljubljana in April 2001. The Board's vice chairman and two staff participated in their capacity as members in the meetings of the Working Groups on Country Names and Romanization Systems, held in London in May 2001. Detailed reports of these meetings are found elsewhere in this newsletter.

A member of the Board's Advisory Committee on Undersea Features participated in the biennial meeting of the Subcommittee on Undersea Feature Names of the International Hydrographic Organization's Guiding Committee for the General Bathymetric Chart of the Ocean. The meeting was held in Japan in April 2001.

Two of the Board's staff participated in the Seventh United Nations Conference on Cartography for the Americas held 22-26 January 2001 in New York. Several papers on the standardization of geographical names, and their relationship to cartographic application were presented. Importantly, two sections of the resolution supporting NSDI development were devoted to the importance of geographical names as a required data layer, and the importance of establishing principles and policies to achieve standardization of geographical names.

During the period 30 October – 10 November 2000 the Board hosted the biennial meeting between the Board and the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names for British Official Use (PCGN) in Washington, D.C. There was much exchange of meaningful information regarding policy and suggested solutions to problems common to both groups.

The Executive Secretary of the US Board participated in the Annual Conference of the Geographical Names Board of Canada in Winnipeg, Manitoba 13 – 15 September 2000 where an informal meeting of the US/Canada Division was held.

Since the last newsletter, the twelfth course on geographical names (applied toponymy) offered under the auspices of the Pan American Institute of Geography & History (PAIGH) was held in Asunción, Paraguay 26 June – 7 July 2000. The course was very successful, providing 21 students from Paraguay, Chile, Ecuador, and Uruguay with an introduction to toponymy, and the need for establishing a national program of standardization for geographical names. The course includes lectures on establishing principles, policies, and procedures for standardizing geographical names as well as an extensive field exercise; and a workshop in developing, designing, and implementing an automated geographical names database.

US BGN Domestic Names Committee Activities

The Domestic Names Committee (DNC) of the U.S. Board on Geographical Names meets monthly, and has rendered decisions on 105 newly proposed names and adjudicated 119 controversial names and issues since our last report. The DNC staff responded to more than 5,200 inquiries of which approximately one-half were by e-mail. We are pleased to announce that since the last newsletter, three States have established geographical names authorities bringing the total of such organizations to 48 States and two Territories. The DNC participated in the 2000 Annual Conference of the Council of Geographical Names Authorities (COGNA) hosted by the Missouri State Geographical Names Board, and held in Saint Louis, Missouri. The conference was a success and was well attended by more than 100 registrants. Attendees included representatives of the Canadian Geographical Names Board, and an informal meeting of the U.S./Canada Division was held. The conference included an array of papers on various toponymic themes and the regular event known as the State/Federal Roundtable where issues of policy and procedures are addressed by officials from local and State governments, and the Federal Government. The host State Board held its regular meeting, as did the DNC of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names. The next annual conference of COGNA will be held 4-8 September 2001 in Boise, Idaho. On 1 June 2000, the Board's Domestic Names Committee met to discuss and re-evaluate its policies and procedures. There were no suggested major policy changes although some wording will be altered to reflect clearer definitions.

The Geographic Names Office, during the past year, has awarded a contract to compile geographical names data in the southern portion of the State of Texas, and a contract to compile names in the State of Kentucky will be awarded by July 2001. This program of extensive compilation of geographical names was initiated in 1982 after the compilation from Federal maps and documents was complete. This program of extensive compilation is complete or underway except for three States; New York, Alaska, and Michigan.

As previously reported, the publication of conventional gazetteers (paper copy) was suspended in 1999, and this decision is still in place. The use of the website has contributed to a marked decrease in requests for such publications. Presently, the website query page receives an average of more than 25,000 accesses per day, and users are downloading more than 100 digital gazetteers per day. The website address has changed to: <<http://geonames.usgs.gov>> where the U.S. Antarctica Geographical Names Database may also be accessed. Users of the website have always been able to view the location of the feature represented by the retrieved database entry, and now the user has the added option of viewing that location on the appropriate digital version of the large scale topographic map known as a Digital Raster Graphic (DRG). The Geographic Names Office has implemented new software to be used in the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) Maintenance Program. This web-based software has allowed Federal, and now State agencies to participate in maintenance of the database. It is now fully operational. Agencies using this new maintenance software to submit changes and new data are the U.S. Geological Survey (for the National Mapping Program), U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, and the Office of Coast Survey as well as the States of Florida and Delaware. It is anticipated that additional States will become partners in the maintenance program as they implement the requirements for a National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI). The Federal Bureau of Land Management is scheduled to begin participation later this year. Information submitted is verified and available online within a few days. The maintenance and data compilation program continues with more than 200,000 new entries added to the database in the past year.

The redesign of the GNIS, which is the official source for geographical names of the United States is complete, and includes spatially enabling the database so that feature geometry will be available. The addition of geometry will be, at first, for feature types that are administrative such as civil divisions, parks, forests, etc. However, geometry for all feature types will be added slowly as part of the maintenance program. The newly redesigned database is in the initial phase of testing, and could be available by the end of the year. Version 6 of the compact disc product for GNIS should be released before the end of this year, and has been completely redesigned to include graphic representation (maps) as well as the text database.

US BGN Foreign Names Committee Activities

The Board's Foreign Names Committee has continued to meet more frequently than its usual quarterly basis in order to address matters related to its responsibility to standardize foreign geographic names for official United States Government use. Most recently the Committee has held significant discussions regarding its policy on the use of exonyms and anglicized foreign place-names. The Board, since its inception, has favored the use of local official names in official publications. Exceptions to this practice have been allowed when an English language name for a feature in a foreign area is in widespread and current use among the English speaking population. Minor modifications in the presentation of local official names in foreign areas have also been permitted in order to accommodate their use in an English-language context. Such modifications, for example, include the use of upper case initial letters in generic terms. The Committee is now reexamining these policies for the first time in over thirty years. This review is especially pertinent given the current interest within UNGEGN in exonyms and their use.

The BGN Foreign Names Committee staff continues to maintain the BGN Geographic Names Data Base covering foreign areas. The database currently holds approximately over five million place name records. It includes names of undersea features considered by the BGN Advisory Committee on Undersea Features and approved by the Board. Recent design changes to the database's web site (at <http://164.214.2.59/gns/html/index.html>) have improved response time performance, and now allow users to download complete country files in a format suitable for import into a geographic information system or other application software. Future enhancements to the database include its conversion to the ISO 10646/Unicode text-encoding standard.

***Roger L. Payne, Executive Secretary
U.S. Board on Geographic Names***

Other Reports, Forthcoming Meetings and News

International Council of Onomastics Sciences (ICOS)

News from the International Council of Onomastic Sciences (ICOS)

The 21st International Congress of Onomastic Sciences will be held in Uppsala (Sweden) from August, 19-24, 2002. The theme of the congress is *Names in language and society*. Uppsala is not only known as a scholarly centre but also a centre of Swedish onomastics. Official Swedish place-name research started already in 1902 with the foundation of the Royal Swedish Place-Name committee.

The scientific programme of the congress contains 8 sections. Section 5 is dedicated to *Name treatment and name planning* and is concerned above all with place-name planning of both national and international character, with standardization of names in different countries, with legal practice in place-name treatment, with minority names and with name treatment in a globalized world. After all it also deals with the cultural-historical aspects of names.

UNGEEN members are kindly invited to take part in this congress and to give lectures on the related themes.

Preliminary registration can already be sent to the organizing committee.:

ICOS 21

SOFI

Box 135

SE-751 04 UPPSALA, Sweden

Fax: +46 18 65 21 65

E-mail: registrator@sofi.uu.se

Further information will be available on a special website:

www.dal.lu.se/sofi/oau/ICOS21.html

The 35th volume (2000) of **ONOMA**, the Journal of the International Council of Onomastic Sciences was published recently. It is a thematic volume, mainly dedicated to the theme "Aspects of Names Standardization". It comprises 11 papers dealing with the various items of names standardization. Contributors of papers are members of the United Nations group of experts on geographical names:

Naftali KADMON, Ptolemy – the First UNGEEN Toponymist. Commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the first United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names.

Sirkka PAIKKALA, Place Names in Finland as Cultural Heritage.

Hamid MALMIRIAN, A Historical Study on Nomenclature of the Persian Gulf.

Peter RAPER, Introduction to Standardization of Geographical Names.

Helen KERFOOT, Wien or Vienna; Kalaallit Nunaat, Grønland or Greenland? Recent work and directions in geographical names standardization through the United Nations.

Ferjan ORMELING, Toponymic Education and Training.

Milan HARVALÍK, **Pavel BOHAË**, Exonyme und Standardisierung fremder geographischer Namen im Tschechischen.

Botolv HELLELAND, Das norwegische Ortsnamengesetz – Entstehung, Ziel und Handhabung.

Leif NILSSON, Current Trends in Swedish Place-name Standardization.

Paul VIDESOTT, Zur Standardisierung der ladinischen Ortsnamen in Südtirol.

Herman BELL, Arabic Orthography and African Place-names in the Sudan. Can a conflict between Diverse solutions be Resolved?

Isolde Hausner

Austria

Individual place names research in Assam, India

One of the highlights at the geographical names sessions during the 29th International Geographical Conference held in Seoul, August 2000, was the presentation by Sarat Kumar Phukan on Khasi elements in the place names of Meghalaya, one of the states in Northeastern, India. Mr. Phukan is Superintendent of Police in Assam, but also took a masters degree in geography and a PhD from Dibrugarh University in Assam (where he wrote a dissertation on Assamese place names). He has also authored books on road names and on anthroponyms in Assam. The material for his studies was collected in his spare time and reflects the places all over Assam where he was stationed.

The paper Mr. Phukan presented in Seoul was based on his fieldwork in Meghalaya and Assam. The Khasis, linguistically belonging to the Mon-Khmer group, can be regarded as the original inhabitants of this region, and indeed of a larger area than their present abode, as can be seen from place names with Khasi roots in the surrounding area. As the Khasis have no written history, it is only from the place-names that some of it can be reconstructed. That is one of the reasons, as Mr. Phukan indicated, why place name study is so important, and why place names should be preserved in order to safeguard human culture. The culture of small minorities like the Khasis (some 700 000 of them remain, but only half a million still speak the language) is something to be preserved, and place names and their meanings form part of that heritage. During his fieldwork, Mr. Phukan took pains to ask the local population for the meaning of the names, and was confronted time and again, by the fact that only some very old people still would know the original meanings. As knowledge of the ancient languages is rapidly disappearing, the number of potential informants is rapidly decreasing as well. So the gathering of these names and of their meanings alike is now an urgent matter,

In the paper, Mr. Phukan presented in Seoul, he categorised all the Khasis place names he collected into names referring to: physical geography of the objects (place named after hills, mountains or streams) flora and fauna economic geographic aspects of the locations (products or trades) cultural geographic aspects.

He explained the composition of the names with their prepositions, generics and specific parts, and gave their original meanings, annotated with their co-ordinates and administrative status. He also had taken slides of the local landscapes in Assam.

As it was my privilege to chair the session in which Mr. Phukan presented his paper, I would like to give some wider recognition to his work, as well as to put it in a more general framework:

It could well be seen as a task for cultural organizations like UNESCO to team up with UNGEGN in order to help preserve this part of the human heritage. Cultural artifacts too frequently are regarded as consisting of material objects or ceremonies, but names as well would qualify in this respect. In those areas where place name collection is not yet centrally organized or where linguistic minorities lack the expertise to collect these place names themselves, courses could perhaps be organized sponsored by international organizations in order to help preserve this part of the human heritage.

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