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Toponymic data files and gazetteers

Report of the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers 2007-2012

Summary**

The report summarizes the activities of the Working Group during the period 2007-2012 (chap. III) and announces some upcoming actions for 2012-2013 (chap. IV). Following the twenty-fifth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, the Working Group established a workplan comprising an outline of objectives (chap. II) and its scope of work (chap. I).

Concerning the liaisons (chap. III.1) with international standardization bodies (International Organization for Standardization, Open Geospatial Consortium, Unicode), particular mention should be made of the Open Geospatial Consortium activity on the “Best Practices Document: Gazetteer Service — Application Profile of the Web Feature Service Candidate Implementation Standard”, as it is of high relevance to the activities of the Working Group. The Working Group contributed to the comments for amending the Open Geospatial Consortium Gazetteer Best Practices Document.

Of immediate significance to the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, particularly to the Working Group, is the Centre of Excellence for United Nations Spatial Data Infrastructure, an initiative being led by the Office of Information and Communications Technology of the United Nations Secretariat (see United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names *Information Bulletin* No. 41) and substantially promoted by the United Nations Geographic Information Working Group (chap. III.2). The Centre of Excellence will set up a gazetteer framework project as an important initial element of the United Nations Spatial Data Infrastructure.

* E/CONF.101/1.

** The full report was prepared by Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu (Germany), Convenor, Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers, and is available in the language of submission only from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf10.html>.



Furthermore, the Working Group provided consultancy and technical advice concerning the content and structure for data files and gazetteers, among others, through toponymic training courses (chap. III.3). The Economic Commission for Africa initiative “Africa GeoNyms database/gazetteer” has been promoted at meetings, conferences and training courses. The Working Group convened meetings in conjunction with workshops conducted by the European project EuroGeoNames and provided advice to EuroGeoNames outcomes. United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names material and expertise provided by the Working Group contributed to the development of the European INSPIRE data specification on geographical names, following the participative principle of a consensus-building process. Within the twenty-fourth International Congress of Onomastic Sciences held in Barcelona, Spain, from 5 to 9 September 2011, the Working Group contributed to and chaired sessions of scientific section 10 “Cartography and placenames: new platforms for information management” and participated in the round table discussion on the topic “Analysis and management of databases and toponymic/onomastic information”.
