

**Twenty-seventh session
30 July and 10 August 2012, New York**

Item 4 of the Provisional Agenda

Reports of the liaison officers

**Report of the Liaison Officer, International Council of
Onomastic Sciences (ICOS) 2007-2012 ***

* Prepared by: Mr. Botolv Helleland, State Place-Name Consultant, University of Oslo, Norway,
UNGEKN Liaison with ICOS

**United Nations Group of Experts on
Geographical Names
Twenty-seventh session
New York, 30 July and 10 August 2012
Item 4 of the provisional agenda
(Reports of the liaisons officers and international organizations)**

Report of the Liaison Officer, International Council of
Onomastic Sciences (ICOS) 2007-2012 *

* Prepared by Mr. Botolv Helleland, State Place-Name Consultant, University of Oslo,
Norway, UNGEGN Liaison with ICOS

1. The International Council of Onomastic Sciences (ICOS)
(<http://www.icosweb.net/>)

The *International Council of Onomastic Sciences* (ICOS) is the international organization for all scholars who have a special interest in the study of names (place-names, personal names, and proper names of all other kinds). The aim of ICOS is the advancement, representation and coordination of name research on an international level and in an interdisciplinary context.

Every scholar who is actively engaged in scholarly name research may become a member of the ICOS. The official languages of ICOS are French, German and English.

The annual membership subscription is 20 Euros which implies reduced fee at the ICOS congresses. The congresses, which normally are held every three years, are organized on behalf of ICOS by one of its members (normally scholars working at a university). The General Assembly of ICOS, including the election of officers, is usually held in conjunction with the congresses. In 2011 Ms. Carole Hough (Scotland) was elected new president, following Ms. Sheila Embleton (Canada).

Members also receive the journal *ONOMA*, the official publication of the association. It contains topical research reports as well as basic theoretical articles concerning all areas of scholarly name research, including names standardization. Since vol. 34 (1999), each issue is thematic with a guest editor for each volume. The themes for issues 34-44 are the following: Vol. 34 (1999) *Personal Names across Countries*; Vol. 35 (2000) *National and International Standardization of Geographical Names*; Vol. 36 (2001) *Names in Contact and Contrast*; Vol. 37 (2002) *Nordic Onomastics*; Vol. 38 (2003) *North American Onomastics*; Vol. 39 (2004) *Name Research and Teaching*; Vol. 40 (2005) *Literary Onomastics*; Vol. 41(2006) *Name Theory*; Vol. 42 (2007) *Urban Toponymy*; Vol. 43 (2008) *Commercial Names*; Vol. 44 (2009) *African onomastics*. See also the *ONOMA* page of the ICOS web-site [<http://www.icosweb.net/>]. Vol 35, National and International Standardization of Geographical Names, edited by Ms. Isolde Hausner (Austria), should be of special interest to the UNCISG delegates. In 2011 the longstanding editor-in-chief Ms. Doreen Gerritzen (The Netherlands) was succeeded by Mr. Elwys De Stefani (Switzerland).

2. Newsletters

The ICOS Board issues newsletters regularly with information of interest to the members. Links to the most recent newsletters are available on the home page of ICOS. Since the last Conference Nos. 14 to 20 have appeared. No 21 is forthcoming.

3. Congresses

The 23rd ICOS International Congress of Onomastic Sciences was held 17–22 August 2008, in Toronto, Canada in 2008. Among the approximately 160 papers read at the congress a number dealt with place names standardization (see <http://icos2008.yorku.ca/>). Abstracts are available at http://icos2008.yorku.ca/program/show_abstract.php?complete and also as cd. The 24th ICOS International Congress of Onomastic Sciences was held in Barcelona, Spain, 5–9 September 2011. With more than 500 participants from about 55 countries the Barcelona congress was the biggest ever held (see <http://barcelona.onomastica.cat/en/>). The UNGEGN Chair gave a keynote talk entitled Toponymy and Administration: “From plazas to planets with particular reference to United Nations work” (see ftp://ftp.icc.cat/icos/SESSIONS%20ACADMIQUES/Sessi_acadmica_1.pdf). One of the subthemes was “Cartography and geographical names”, with about 20 papers, and another was “Names and standardization” with about 30 papers registered. During the congress a special session on national names authorities was organized and several UNGEGN experts contributed to powerpoint presentations. These presentations have been prepared for the websites of ICOS and of UNGEGN. The proceedings of the congress are in preparation.

The 25th ICOS International Congress of Onomastic Sciences will take place at the University of Glasgow, Scotland, in 2014.

4. Working Group on Terminology

ICOS has established a working group on toponymic terminology and this group cooperates with the UNGEGN WG on Toponymic Terminology. Staffan Nyström, Sweden, chairs both groups.