

18 March 2019

Original: English

**United Nations Group of Experts On
Geographical Names
2019 session**

New York, 29 April – 3 May 2019

Item 5 (b) of the provisional agenda *

**Reports on the work of the Divisions of the United Nations Group of Experts
on Geographical Names**

Report of the Dutch- and German-speaking Division

Submitted by the Dutch- and German-speaking Division**

Summary:

The Dutch and German-speaking Division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names consists of experts from Austria, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, South Africa, Suriname and Switzerland.

The full report contains an overview of the activities undertaken in relation to geographical names by the Division, its members and the countries represented by them in the period since the thirtieth session of the “former” United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names and the Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, both of which were held in 2017, in response to the resolutions that had been adopted at the various Conferences. It also addresses general developments concerning geographical names policy, collection and standardization in the participating countries over the same period. The activities and achievements are reported under the headings of the relevant resolutions.

* GEGN2/2019/1

**Prepared by Tjeerd Tichelaar (Netherlands), chair of the Dutch- and German-speaking Division (DGSD) of UNGEGN on the basis of contributions of DGSD members.

Report of the Dutch- and German-speaking division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

Introduction

The Dutch and German-speaking Division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names consists of experts from Austria, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, South Africa, Suriname and Switzerland. This report contains an overview of the activities undertaken in relation to geographical names by the Division, its members and the countries represented by them in the period since the thirtieth session of the “former” United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names and the Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, both of which were held in 2017, in response to the resolutions that had been adopted at the various Conferences. It also addresses general developments concerning geographical names policy, collection and standardization in the participating countries over the same period. The activities and achievements are reported under the headings of the relevant resolutions.

The following DGSD members are currently in charge of official functions within UNGEGN:

- Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu (Germany) is the convenor of the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers of UNGEGN since 2009. He was co-convenor from 2007 to 2009;
- Gerhard Rampl (Austria) is the coordinator for the Toponymic Guidelines of UNGEGN since 2014. Mr. Rampl is also rapporteur of the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation.
- Tjeerd Tichelaar (Netherlands) chairs the DGSD.

At the conclusion of the 30th session of the ‘old style’ UNGEGN in 2017, the following DGSD members stepped down from their official positions:

- Ferjan Ormeling (Netherlands), long-time (25 years!) convenor of the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy – the convenorship was transferred to Peder Gammeltoft from Denmark (currently Norway). He also stepped down as vice chair of UNGEGN after two terms.
- Peter Jordan (Austria), convenor of the Working Group on Exonyms from 2012 (co-convening from 2006 to 2012) – the convenorship was transferred to Kohei Watanabe from Japan.

Res. I/7 and II/19 Regional meetings

Meetings of the Dutch- and German-Speaking Division were held in:

- New York, Bangkok Grand Palace, 882 1st Avenue, 10-08-2017

- New York, Bangkok Grand Palace, 882 1st Avenue, 16-08-2017 (joint meeting with Norden)
- Brussels, Prins Albert Club/Club Prince Albert 10-10-2018

Res. V/15: Establishment of national geographical names authorities

A team of Dutch experts currently and formerly involved in UNGEGN, spearheaded by Mr. Jasper Hogerwerf of Kadaster, the Netherlands' Cadastre, Land Registry and Mapping Agency, initiated a fresh attempt to realize the establishment of a national geographical names authority. The context, details and state of affairs of this project are presented in the country report of the Netherlands (GEGN.2/2019/80).

In the German speaking countries, the ongoing process of geographical names standardization is supervised by the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (*Ständiger Ausschuss für geographische Namen*, StAGN), which held its 145th session on 5-6 March 2019. Details and contact information of StAGN are provided in the country report of Germany (GEGN.2/2019/19).

The latest achievements of the Austrian Board on Geographical Names are reported on in the country report of Austria (GEGN.2/2019/61).

The representative of Suriname to UNGEGN and DGSD reported to the Chair that he has prepared a planning for the standardization of geographical names in Suriname, which he intends to present at the first UNGEGN session he will be able to attend.

Res. VI/13: Training courses

As international toponymic education has been a major point of attention of DGSD since its inception, the Division provided a strong input to the regional toponymy course in Manila, the Philippines, held from 19-24 March 2018. The course, jointly organized by NAMRIA¹ and UNGEGN, was characterized by two aspects. Firstly, it was the very first UNGEGN course to include marine toponymy. Secondly, it relied on regional expertise. Apart from experts from the host country, the Philippines, and the core UNGEGN team (Ferjan Ormeling, Helen Kerfoot, Pier-Giorgio Zacccheddu), there were experts from the Republic of Korea and from Indonesia, Prof. Sung Hyo Hyun and Prof. Multamia Lauder. Prof. Sung is an expert in the naming of marine and undersea features; Prof. Lauder, who as a student attended the first regional UNGEGN toponymy course in Cisarua, Indonesia (1983), is an expert in linguistic science and cultural heritage.

The course contained the first sea-borne fieldwork: in order to collect local knowledge from fishermen, these were interviewed aboard our surveying vessels en route from one port to the next

The program and materials of the course are available on the website of the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy (https://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/Toponymy_Training_Manila.html).

¹ The National Mapping and Resource Information Authority, Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Res. VIII/1: Promotion of minority group and indigenous geographical names

The country reports of Germany and the Netherlands summarize the way official minority language toponyms are currently dealt with in both countries, as well as the documentation available. The country report of Austria reports on the publication of new bilingual tourist maps and ongoing research into minority toponyms.

Res VIII/4: Exonyms

For the German-speaking countries, StAGN is working on an updated list of selected German language exonyms that will be made available online: see the country report of Germany.

In the Netherlands, a reorganization of the *Werkgroep Buitenlandse Aardrijkskundige Namen* (Working Group Foreign Geographical Names) of the Dutch Language Union, the supranational body in charge of Dutch language matters for Belgium, the Netherlands and Suriname, took effect in 2018: see the country report of the Netherlands.

Res VIII/5: Joint meetings of the linguistic/geographical divisions and working groups of the UNGEGN

On 11-12 October 2018, DGSD and the Norden Division jointly organized a scientific symposium on the role and importance of expert knowledge in the standardization of geographical names. The symposium, prepared by members from Norway and the Netherlands, was kindly hosted by the Belgian National Geographic Institute (NGI/IGN) in Brussels. The venue was the Prins Albert Club adjoining the Egmont Palace. It was preceded by divisional meetings of the DGSD, the Norden Division and the French-speaking division, as well as a joint meeting of Norden and DGSD (10 October), and followed by working group meetings of the WG on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers and (jointly) the WG on Evaluation and Implementation and the WG on Publicity and Funding.

The symposium program was composed of sessions on the subjects of relevance of standardization, experiences in standardization - local vs. national, standardization in a multilingual environment, and international standardization, with contributions by experts from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greenland, the Republic of Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom.

The attendance of the event surpassed the expectations of the organizers: representatives of 30 countries were enlisted, the actual attendees participating in 19 of UNGEGN's linguistic-geographical divisions. Discussions were lively both at the symposium, the divisional and working group meetings and the organized dinners, the homely atmosphere of the Prins Albert Club contributed to exactly the kind of exchange – the sharing of information, knowledge and mutual understanding as well as enthusiasm – envisaged by UNGEGN when calling for the organization of joint meetings.