

Twentieth Session
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Item 14
of the Provisional Agenda

TOPONYMIC GUIDELINES FOR MAP EDITORS AND OTHER EDITORS

Toponymic guidelines for map and other editors, for
International use: an overview of existing guidelines and
UNGEGN work to date

Toponymic guidelines for map and other editors, for international use: an overview of existing guidelines and UNGEGN work to date ¹

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A start to the project for developing Toponymic Guidelines

At the Third UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in Athens in 1977 discussion inside and outside the formal sessions addressed the gathering and dissemination of toponymic information. It became clear that the general comprehension of geographical names around the world was not of a high level. The great variation in geographical names and the approaches to their use in different countries was not thoroughly understood by all experts, and certainly not by the information users, for example, cartographers.

Dr. Josef Breu of Austria was elected Chairman of UNGEGN following this Conference and during the late 1970s he initiated a practical project to make the current toponymy and standardization methods in different countries systematically available for users of this information. Initially this was directed mainly at cartographers, but later the user base was considered as a more general international audience, particularly those involved in publishing. At the Eighth Session of UNGEGN in New York in 1979, Dr. Breu presented the first sample of Toponymic Guidelines in a 10-page document (Working Paper 5) summarizing this information for Austria. Subsequently Austrian guidelines were published in the United Nations series *World Cartography*, Vol. XVIII (1986). Although the type of material to be presented by each country will vary, this Austrian presentation still provides a useful pattern for the type of content anticipated for consistency in this project.

Recommendations for content of Toponymic Guidelines

This useful tool for advancing the common understanding of toponymy aims at systematically presenting information for each country: about languages, their distribution and status; linguistic and administrative maps; the alphabet used in written forms of names, supplemented by information on the phonetic values of characters and the use of capitalization, word strings, etc.; names standardizing authorities and their contact addresses; published source material containing standardized names; and a glossary of common terms within toponyms. In subsequent years, other items have been added, including abbreviations used on national maps; and methods of differentiating toponyms from other text on national maps. (See Appendix 1 for a detailed outline.)

Where countries have names standardization bodies or well established means of treatment and maintenance of toponymy, these guidelines could normally be considered as "official". In other cases they were viewed essentially as practical, professional instruments for toponymists, geographers and cartographers. Some countries have presented more than one edition of their guidelines. Updating is, of course, one of the necessary issues in keeping the guidelines useful.

Progress to date

Dr. Breu continued as coordinator of the *Toponymic Guidelines* until he resigned from the task in 1991. At that time Dr. Peter Raper (South Africa) took over the guidance of the project.

In recent years considerable attention has been given to questions of publishing the complete national guidelines that are available. So far no comprehensive compendium of guidelines has been published, but 21 countries have their individual guidelines in print. Appendix 2 shows all guidelines that have been presented at UN Conferences and UNGEGN meetings. It also indicates which countries have had their documents printed in Volume II of the United Nations Conference reports. All those presented at the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Conferences as "L" papers are so included; other Conference document designations and presentations to UNGEGN sessions are not found in UN publications.

In addition to the guidelines for Austria published in *World Cartography* in 1986, those presented for France were published as *Guide de toponymie cartographique*, an Information Bulletin of the Institut Géographique National in 1989 and those for Poland were published as *The Polish Toponymic Guidelines*, by the National Geodetic and Cartography Service in Warsaw in 1993. At the Seventh UN Conference in January 1998, Estonia was the first country to report having its toponymic guidelines on the World Wide Web.

Looking to the future

Several resolutions of the UN Conferences on Standardization of Geographical Names have addressed the need for *Toponymic Guidelines* (see Appendix 3) and 30 countries presenting national guidelines is certainly encouraging. However, 22 of these are European countries, so from the perspective of world coverage UNGEGN should still be encouraging further participation in the project. To this end, the Chairs of UNGEGN divisions are encouraged to use step-by-step methods to develop guidelines for countries in their divisions which are unable to initiate this work themselves.

Guidelines must be distributed as widely as possible to cartographers and publishers. The Internet now provides a solution for easier world-wide dissemination of toponymic guidelines, without the high costs of printing and distribution. The Web certainly provides the medium for quick communication of name changes and will doubtless become of increasing importance for information gathering. On the other hand, for the more "permanent" characteristics of guidelines, hard copy editions remain invaluable reference tools for frequent users.

Appendix 1

Toponymic Guidelines,

as originally proposed by Dr. Josef Breu in his Circular No 2, 12 December 1977,

with additions, modifications and new numbering of 1981 (Circular Letter No 20).

The title reflects modifications from the Eighth Session of UNGEGN, 1979 and from the Fourth Conference, 1982. Item 6 follows a resolution of the Fifth Conference, 1987.

Toponymic Guidelines for Map and Other Editors, for International Use

Name of individual country

1 Languages

1.1 General remarks

1.2 National language(s)

1.2.1 Legal situation and practical application in administration and official cartography

1.2.2 Alphabet(s) and transcription(s)

1.2.3 General spelling rules for geographical names

1.2.4 *Pronunciation*

1.2.5 Grammatical peculiarities which are essential for the treatment and understanding of geographical names

1.2.6 Distribution of main dialects and their characteristics; how far are dialectal name forms adapted to the standard form of the language(s)? (In the case of many African countries with English, French, Portuguese or Spanish as official languages: Distribution of main vernaculars and their characteristics; how far are vernacular name forms adapted to the spelling of the official language?); linguistic maps

1.3 Minority languages

1.3.1 – 1.3.6, as under 1.2

2 Names authorities and names standardization

2.1 National names authority. Aims, functions, rules, address.

2.2 Provincial names authorities. Aims, functions, rules, addresses.

2.3 Names standardization. Legal aspects, procedures, progress.

3 Source Material

3.1 Maps: map series containing standardized names. Which sheets of a series contain already standardized names?

3.2 Gazetteers containing standardized names.

4 Glossary of appellatives, adjectives and other words necessary for the understanding of maps. (As such glossaries will serve the needs of foreign users they must contain also - and above all - words of the general vocabulary.)

5 Abbreviations used on official maps; the decoding and meanings

6 Methods of differentiating toponyms from other text on national maps

Annex Administrative maps

Appendix 2 **Toponymic guidelines for map and other editors for international use**

<u>Country</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Edition</u>	<u>Document</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Pub. in Vol. II</u>	<u>Location</u>
Australia	1992		E/CONF.85/L64	6th UN Conf	✓	New York
Austria	1998		E/CONF.91/INF21	7th UN Conf		New York
	1994	add	WP67	17th UNGEGN		New York
	1992	rev.	E/CONF.85/L14	6th UN Conf	✓	New York
	1992	add	E/CONF.85/WP41	6th UN Conf		New York
	1991	rev.	WP10	5th UNGEGN		Geneva
	1986			<i>World Cartography XVIII</i>		
	1985		E/CONF.77/CRP3	3rd UN Americas		New York
	1982		E/CONF.74/L2	4th UN Conf	✓	Geneva
	1981		WP10	9th UNGEGN		New York
	1979		WP5	8th UNGEGN		
1975	prel.		Geogr. Namenbuch Österreich			
Canada	1992	rev.	E/CONF.85/L47	6th UN Conf	✓	New York
	1989	rev.	WP48	14th UNGEGN		Geneva
	1985		E/CONF.77/CRP7	3rd UN Americas		New York
	1981		WP16	9th UNGEGN		New York
China	1992		E/CONF.85/L1	6th UN Conf	✓	New York
	1982		E/CONF.74/L48	4th UN Conf	✓	Geneva
Czech Republic	1998		E/CONF.91/CRP17	7th UN Conf		New York
	1996		WP52	18th UNGEGN		Geneva
	1994		WP28 p.3	17th UNGEGN		New York
Czechoslovakia	1987		E/CONF.79/INF62	5th UN Conf		Montréal
Denmark	1982		E/CONF.77/L14	4th UN Conf	✓	Geneva
Estonia	1998	2 nd ed.	E/CONF.91/INF16	7th UN Conf		New York
	1992		E/CONF.85/L76	6th UN Conf	✓	New York
Finland	1998	3 rd ed.	E/CONF.91/L17	7th UN Conf		New York
	1994	rev.	WP63	17th UNGEGN		New York
	1982		E/CONF.74/L41	4th UN Conf	✓	Geneva
	1981	prel.	WP37	9th UNGEGN		New York
France	1989		WP44	14th UNGEGN (<i>Guide de toponymie cartographique</i> , 1989)		Geneva
	1985		E/CONF.77/CRP1	3rd UN Americas		New York
	1982		E/CONF.74/L21	4th UN Conf	✓	Geneva
	1981		WP21	9th UNGEGN		New York
Germany	1998	3 rd ed.	E/CONF.91/L26	7th UN Conf		New York
	1992	2 nd ed.	E/CONF.85/L93	6th UN Conf	✓	New York
	FRG 1982		E/CONF.74/L9	4th UN Conf	✓	Geneva
	FRG 1981	prel.	WP11	9th UNGEGN		New York
	GDR 1981		WP60	9th UNGEGN		New York
Greece	1998		E/CONF.91/CRP22	7th UN Conf		New York
	1981		WP28	9th UNGEGN		New York
Hungary	1994		WP10	17th UNGEGN		New York
	1981		WP35	9th UNGEGN		New York

Iceland	1982		E/CONF.74/L15	4th UN Conf	✓	Geneva
Ireland	1994		WP65	17th UNGEGN		New York
	1992		E/CONF.85/WP3	6th UN Conf		New York
Italy	1998		E/CONF.91/CRP20	7th UN Conf		New York
	1987		E/CONF.79/L30	5th UN Conf	✓	Montréal
Japan	1994	2 nd ed.	WP43	17th UNGEGN		New York
	1987		E/CONF.79/INF11	5th UN Conf		Montréal
Netherlands	1992		E/CONF.85/L2	6th UN Conf	✓	New York
	1987		E/CONF.79/INF6	5th UN Conf		Montréal
	1986		WP5	12th UNGEGN		Geneva
Norway	1998		E/CONF.91/CRP16	7th UN Conf		New York
	1982		E/CONF.74/L16	4th UN Conf	✓	Geneva
Poland	1996		WP6	18th UNGEGN (ISBN 83-900969-2-7; Warsaw 1993)		Geneva
Romania	1994		WP79	17th UNGEGN		New York
	1991		WP20	15th UNGEGN		Geneva
Russia (only as USSR)						
Slovakia Czechoslovakia	1996		WP72	18th UNGEGN		Geneva
	1987		E/CONF.79/INF62	5th UN Conf		Montréal
South Africa	1992		E/CONF.85/L23	6th UN Conf	✓	New York
	1991	3 rd ed.	WP4	15th UNGEGN		Geneva
	1987		E/CONF.79/L35	5th UN Conf	✓	Montréal
	1986	2 nd ed.	WP6	12th UNGEGN		Geneva
	1984	1 st ed.	WP19	11th UNGEGN		Geneva
Spain	1982		E/CONF.74/L86	4th UN Conf	✓	Geneva
Surinam	1985		E/CONF.77/CRP2	3rd UN Americas		New York
	1981		WP12	9th UNGEGN		New York
Sweden	1998		E/CONF.91/L46	7th UN Conf		New York
	1982		E/CONF.74/L17	4th UN Conf	✓	Geneva
	1981	prel.	WP38	9th UNGEGN		New York
Switzerland	1982		E/CONF.74/L67	4th UN Conf	✓	Geneva
Turkey	1982		E/CONF.74/L7	4th UN Conf	✓	Geneva
United Kingdom	1982		E/CONF.74/L57	4th UN Conf	✓	Geneva
United States	1989		WP28	14th UNGEGN		Geneva
	1987		E/CONF.79/L19	5th UN Conf	✓	Montréal
	1985		E/CONF.77/CRP4	3rd UN Americas		New York
	1982		E/CONF.74/L102	4th UN Conf	✓	Geneva
USSR	1987		E/CONF.79/INF53	5th UN Conf		Montréal
	1984	prel.	WP39	11th UNGEGN		Geneva

General

Breu, J. (Austria)	1987	E/CONF.79/L7	5th UN Conf	✓	Montréal
Breu, J. (Austria)	1986	WP9	12th UNGEGN		Geneva
Breu, J. (Austria)	1984	WP20	11th UNGEGN		Geneva
Breu, J. (Austria)	1984	INF6	11th UNGEGN		Geneva
Gall, F. (Guatemala)	1981	WP2	9th UNGEGN		New York

Appendix 3 United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names - Resolutions on toponymic guidelines passed at the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Conferences (1982, 1987, 1992)

IV/4 Publication of toponymic guidelines for map and other editors

The Conference,

Recognizing the desirability of international exchange of information concerning the main facts, measures and achievements in the field of national name standardization,

Noting that within the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names progress has been made in this respect since its eighth session,

1. Recommends that countries should be encouraged to publish and keep up-to-date toponymic guidelines for map and other editors which may enable cartographers of other countries to treat correctly all problems of cartographic toponymy of the countries that produced such guidelines, and which may be of help to all users in interpreting maps;
2. Further recommends that those guidelines contain, inter alia and as appropriate, the following items:
 - (a) Legal status of geographical names in the respective languages of multilingual countries;
 - (b) Alphabets of the language or languages and furthermore, in the case of non-Roman alphabets and scripts, the officially introduced romanization keys;
 - (c) Spelling rules for geographical names;
 - (d) Aids to pronunciation of geographical names;
 - (e) Linguistic substrata recognizable in the existing place names, but only as far as their knowledge may be of benefit to the cartographer;
 - (f) Relationship between dialect(s) and standard language(s);
 - (g) Peculiarities of dialect and areal distribution of the main dialects;
 - (h) Areal distribution of languages within multilingual countries;
 - (i) Names authorities and measures taken in names standardization;
 - (j) Source material;
 - (k) Glossary of words necessary for the understanding of maps;
 - (l) Abbreviations in official maps;
 - (m) Administrative division;
3. Recommends also that the toponymic guidelines submitted by Austria should serve as a sample of format and contents;
4. Further recommends that a correspondent should be appointed by the United Nations Group of Experts on the Standardization of Geographical Names to co-ordinate the work of developing national toponymic guidelines and to maintain communication with national experts involved in the development of such guidelines.

V/11 Differentiation of toponyms from other map text

The Conference,

Noting the difficulties and misunderstandings that may arise in distinguishing toponyms from non-toponymic text on maps,

Recognizing that users whose native language is different from that used on a map may have particular difficulties in this area,

Recognizing also that the automated scanning of maps by optical electronic means may facilitate the automated recording of toponyms,

1. Recommends that a clear typographical distinction be made on national topographical maps between toponyms and text that serves other purposes;
2. Also recommends that the methods of differentiation be explained in national toponymic guidelines for map and other editors.

V/14 Publication of toponymic guidelines

The Conference,

Recalling resolution 4 on the publication by countries of toponymic guidelines for map and other editors, adopted by the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names,

Noting that, while some countries have already complied with that resolution, many have not yet done so,

Considering the key role played by such publications in attaining the objectives of national standardization as the basis for international standardization,

Recommends that countries be strongly encouraged to publish and keep up to date toponymic guidelines for map and other editors dealing, *inter alia*, with the items listed in resolution 4 of the Fourth Conference, and that the United Nations Secretariat provide appropriate assistance for the publication and dissemination of such guidelines.

VI/7 Toponymic guidelines for map and other editors

The Conference,

Noting with appreciation the increasing number of countries preparing toponymic guidelines for map and other editors,

Considering that wider dissemination of these toponymic guidelines is essential to maximize their usefulness,

Recommends:

- (a) That toponymic guidelines be issued in combined volumes, in at least one of the working languages of the United Nations,
- (b) that provision be made to issue the guidelines, in the *World Cartography* bulletin.

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- 1 *A more comprehensive report on UNGEGN and the production of toponymic guidelines was written by Helen Kerfoot (Canada) and Eeva Maria Närhi (Finland) and was submitted to Nomina Africana in October 1999.*