

**Twenty-fifth session
Nairobi, 5-12 May 2009**

Item 10 of the provisional agenda

Activities relating to the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers

**Report of the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and
Gazetteers 2007-2009 ***

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Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers

Aims

At the 19th session of UNGEGN in New York, January 1998, the Working Group established the following outline of objectives (with modifications recommended at 8th UNCSGN in 2002):

1. Establish and maintain a Working Group web site to document and distribute news of events and developments relating to gazetteers and toponymic information exchange.
2. Maintain and revise the information contained in *Report of the Working Group on Toponymic Data Exchange Formats and Standards to the Seventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names*.
3. Establish liaison with the Unicode Consortium to represent the needs of the geographic information community for digital text encoding in the context of geographic names.
4. Establish contact with relevant activities under the auspices of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) to influence the development of international standards for the exchange of toponymic information.
5. Promote the implementation of practical programs of toponymic data exchange.
6. Promote and conduct toponymic data exchange workshops to address issues associated with data exchange.

Summary of Working Group (WG) Meetings

The Working Group has held three meetings during the 2007-2009 interval.

1. August 2007: The WG met during the 9th United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSGN) in New York, and reviewed the WG's progress toward meeting its aims. Of note was the recommendation that the WG for a liaison relationship with the Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) given the increasing tempo of activity among WG members in the development of web-based gazetteer services. The WG also discussed the possibility of compiling and publishing technical handbooks and training material on topics related to toponymic databases and data modeling. Also during the 9th UNCSGN, the WG sponsored a sub-group session on "The Future of Gazetteers" and a workshop on toponymic data exchange standards.
2. June 2008: The WG convened a meeting in Freising, Germany, in conjunction with a workshop conducted by the EuroGeoNames consortium. Following a review of the WG's aims, the WG noted progress being made toward the development of an initial version of an OGC web feature service gazetteer profile. This development was being jointly supported by several of the WG members and home organizations. The WG also reviewed progress being made within the UN on the development of an UNGEGN world geographic names database and gazetteer service as a component of the UN's internal spatial data infrastructure. It was noted that the UN may require some technical assistance from the WG as this development progressed.
3. February 2009: The WG convened in Brussels, Belgium, in conjunction with the concluding workshop of the EuroGeoNames consortium. The WG received presentations from Ms. Kerfoot (UNEGN Chairperson) on the latest developments regarding the UNGEGN world gazetteer and on the National Toponym Database project involving UNGEGN and the UN

Economic Commission for Africa. Mr. Illert (BKG Germany) summarized the work of INSPIRE, providing the legal framework for the European spatial data infrastructure. Mr. Stani-Fertl gave a presentation concerning the Database of Exonyms and Other Variant Names, a mechanism for managing exonyms and variant names within the EuroGeoNames construct. Mr. Päll and Ms. Kivisalu (Estonia) provided a description and demonstration of the new web-based National Place Names Register of Estonia.

Members

The following experts are members of the WG, or have taken part in its recent activities.

Ms. A. Alcázar
Mr. J. Andersen
Ms. M. Azcárate
Mr. B. Beinstein
Mr. H. Bell
Mr. P. Boháč
Ms. M. Brnot
Mrs. C. Burgess
Ms. Z. Cekula
Mr. Y. Ferland
Mr. R. Flynn
Ms. I. Hausner
Ms. L. Jianxiu
Ms. B. Kanalley
Ms. H. Kerfoot
Ms. M. Kováčová
Mr. G. Lauber
Mr. T. Leskinen
Mr. C. Loy
Mr. J. Marttinen
Mr. J. Mlinar
Mr. B. Mozetic
Mr. J. Nagelis
Mr. F. Ormeling
Mr. P. Päll
Mr. T. Palmer
Mr. C. Parker
Mr. R. Pribadi
Mr. A. Prijanto
Mr. V. Savickas
Mr. T. Schut
Mr. J. Sievers
Mr. T. Sipilä
Mr. R. Stani-Fertl
Ms. M. Šterna
Mr. A. Torun

Ms. M. Urbanc
Ms. V. Strautniece
Ms. K. Van Doren
Mr. W. Wurzer
Mr. L. Yost
Mr. P.-G. Zaccheddu