

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

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**Item 11 of the provisional agenda**

**Activities relating to the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology**

**The UNGEGN glossary and the ICOS List of Key  
Onomastic Terms – a comparison \***

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As I mention in WP no. 57 a joint group has been set up to ensure that information is transferred between the two, globally working, terminology groups of UNGEGN and ICOS. During a meeting in Toronto it was decided that a comparison between the two terminology lists of UNGEGN and ICOS should be made in order to pinpoint any interesting discrepancies between them. This paper presents the first and preliminary results of such a comparison.

The UNGEGN glossary was first published in 2002, as the result of many years of discussions and preparation. The ICOS group – on the other hand – was formed just a few years ago. Their “List of Key Onomastic Terms” is not published; it is preliminary, it has an unofficial status, it is still a living document that is meant to grow considerably during the next few years. It is also meant to be revised on a continuous basis. There are good reasons to believe that more terms from the UNGEGN glossary will be included in the ICOS list later on.

The UNGEGN glossary has 386 entries including the 11 new terms in the latest addendum dating from November 2007. The ICOS list has 73 entries at the moment. Of these 73 entries only 15 are found in the UNGEGN glossary as well, which means that the main part – 58 terms – are not used in the UNGEGN glossary at all. However, this is not as strange as it might sound. The ICOS list covers a wider range of onomastics and thereby includes terms connected to other name categories than geographical names, for instance brand names, personal names and names of animals. This explains why terms like *andronym*, *baptism*, *bestowal*, *nickname*, *zoonym* are included by ICOS but not by UNGEGN.

At the same time the ICOS list in some cases uses – as entries – a more complete group of terms, linguistically related or closely connected to each other. This means, for instance, that while the UNGEGN glossary has only the two related terms *toponym* and *toponymy*, the ICOS list also has the entries *toponymist*, *toponomasticon*, and *toponomastics*.

On the other hand, many terms in the UNGEGN glossary are not of a linguistic or onomastic character in the first place, which explains why they are of less interest to ICOS. Terms like *batch processing*, *computer program*, *coded representation*, *file format*, *map script*, and *UTM grid* are of a more technical nature and will probably never be entered into the “List of Key Onomastic Terms” of ICOS.

But, as I mentioned, 15 terms are shared. These are: *allonym*, *anthroponym*, *choronym*, *endonym*, *eponym*, *ethnonym*, *exonym*, *hodonym*, *hydronym*, *onomastics*, *oronym*, *place name*, *proper name*, *toponym* and *toponymy*. The definitions are in some cases identical, in other cases they differ only in details, and occasionally they indicate that further changes and amendments in the UNGEGN glossary will be necessary.

If we look at it the other way around there are also some key terms in the ICOS list that are not found in the UNGEGN glossary, but maybe ought to be inserted there. Terms like *macrotoponym*, *microtoponym*, *proprialisation* and *settlement name* are a bit tricky to

define but they are useful, and common definitions are needed, since the phenonema they describe are often treated among onomasticians.

This is something we have to discuss within our WG and certainly with the ICOS representatives as well.

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