

**Twenty-eight session
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Item 4 of the Provisional Agenda

Report of the divisions

**Activities of Asia South-West Division (Other Than Arabic)
United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names***

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Standardization of Geographical Names in the Member Countries of Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic)

Abstract

Islamic Republic of Iran, as chair of Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic) of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), follows up and promotes divisional activities in the related fields, through technical meetings, correspondences, and etc.

This is a summary of activities and achievements of the member states in recent years which have been conducted or are ongoing. It has been mentioned here only to countries which reported their activities for us.

Islamic Republic of Iran

The Iranian Committee for Standardization of Geographical Names (ICSGN) strongly supports the efforts taken by the UNGEGN for the standardization of place names and aims to comply and implement its resolutions and recommendations.

Here, major activities that took place in this area are reviewed:

1. Continue bi-monthly main meetings of the Iranian Committee for Standardization of Geographical Names.
2. Complete and update continuously the national geographical names database and improve the web browser of the database.
3. Continue the work on development of the geographical names database for the Asia South West Division (other than Arabic).
4. Issue an order on the implementation of the romanization system for Iranian geographical names.
5. Provide the Persian version of the UNGEGN Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names
<http://geonames.ncc.org.ir/HomePage.aspx?TabID=4698&Site=geonames.ncc.org&Lang=en-US>.
6. Provide a list of the names of Iranian cities with population over one hundred thousand people for the UNGEGN World Geographical Names Database.
7. Continuous monitoring the consistent use of correct geographical names.
8. Encourage of relevant agencies in the field of production, use and dissemination of geographic names and attempt to adapt place names in different databases of these agencies.
9. Consult and collaborate with Iranian experts and researchers in the field of geographic names.
10. Plan to hold toponymic training courses for Iranian National Cartographic Center and other relevant agencies.
11. Participate actively to the UNGEGN conferences, sessions and also meetings of the related working groups.

Azerbaijan

Experts of the State Committee of Land and Cartography of the Azerbaijan Republic continue work on gathering and standardization of place names.

After creation of legislative base of geographical names, works under the national program of place names are conducted as follow:

1. Cards on scale of 1:100000 in the Azerbaijan language are conducted and regularly updated.
2. Up to now, about 80% of works on acquisition and standardization of geographical names were done based on the topographic maps on scale of 1:50000 (produced maps during Union of Soviet Socialist Republics).
3. For indicating place names in the Azerbaijan language on the 1:50000 scale cards, Committee's experts developed tables of font types and sizes in the Latin script. At present, more than 70% of the 1:50000 scale cards were standardized and published in Azerbaijan language.
4. State Committee in close cooperation with Institute of Geography of National Academy of sciences (of Azerbaijan) makes the full list of place names based on the topographic maps on scale of 1:25000.
5. Establishing digital place names database of Azerbaijan is in an initial stage.
6. Place names of foreign countries and territories are published in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan Republic.
7. Work on creation of digital databases of all place names is performed. There are some difficulties on creation of the automated processing systems related to the place names data.
8. State Committee of Land and Cartography should provide terminological dictionary of place names to publish the list of full and short forms of names of the countries and territories in Azerbaijan language.

Cyprus

The Cyprus Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names (CPCSGN) continues the tasks for the collection, the standardization and the Romanization of the Greek alphabet, according to ELOT 743, of the Cyprus geographical names. Almost all the toponyms were gathered on field by appropriate and authorized bodies during the mapping of Cyprus in 1878 and later periods.

1. The Committee continues to distribute a Booklet/Guide for the Standardization of Names to academic institutions, schools, government and semi-government departments, cultural centers, and individuals interested in the topic.
2. The Greek translation of the UNGEGN Brochure is distributed to all of the above sectors when needed.
3. The Toponymic Guideline, presented in draft form during the 22nd UNGEGN Session, is anticipated to be published soon.
4. The gazetteers “Concise Gazetteer of Cyprus” and “A Complete Gazetteer of Cyprus” are in progress to be revised.
5. The Complete Gazetteer of Cyprus was recently digitized, and it will be soon available on CPCSGN’s website.
6. All geographical names and toponyms were included in a distributed European database named EuroGeonames through EuroGeographics, and they are available on line at: <http://ec2-50-19-212-160.compute-1.amazonaws.com/EGNol/>.
7. During the last three years more than 2000 toponyms have been examined and processed, offering services to government, and local government authorities.

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

The Board of Geographic Names of Afghanistan was created based on the presidential decree under supervision of the Afghan Geodesy and Cartography head office.

This board is consisting two executive and technical committees. The technical committee has been working in the following areas:

1. Principles, policies and instructions on the standardization of geographical names.
2. Guide for using the geographical names of Afghanistan.
3. Design and development of the geographical names card.
4. Romanization system of geographical names.

The technical committee reviewed the old system of Romanization (1962) used in the maps of Afghanistan. The committee, also, after studying other systems belonging to the United Kingdom Permanent Committee on Geographic Names (PCGN) and the United States Board on Geographic Names (BGN), concluded that a new unit romanization system is required. The new romanization system should be suitable for geographical names in various languages and dialects of Afghanistan.

All of the above mentioned subjects have been prepared by the technical committee and have been sent for approval to the executive committee.

Finally, the new system on standardization of geographical names will be implemented after approval by the president of Afghanistan.

Republic of Tajikistan

In the recent years, the following changes have been made in the place names of Republic of Tajikistan:

Previous name of the geographical object		New name of the geographical object			
Name	Type of the object	Name	Type of the object	Place of object	Date of change
KIM	town	Nourafshan	town	Soughd Province, Isfara City	29.03.2012
Takali	town	Soughdian	town	Soughd Province, Masjid district	29.03.2012
Ghurughsoi	town	Absharan	town	Soughd Province, Masjid district	29.03.2012
Kalinin	town	Seihoun	town	Soughd Province, Ranibadam district	13.12.2012
Mourqparvar	town	Simorgh	town	Soughd Province, Istarafshan district	13.12.2012
Kamsamol	town	Zarafshan	town	Soughd Province, Zarafshan district	04.07.2013
Gharavouti	town	20 th year of independent of Republic of Tajikistan	town	Khatlan Province, chilinkool district	29.03.2012
Kuibishev	town	Abdurahman Jami	town	Khatlan Province, Abdurahman Jami district	14.06.2012
leningrad	town	Mominabad	town	Khatlan Province, Mominabad district	14.06.2012
Oktiabr	town	Mirza Toursanzadeh	town	Tabei Province, Center of province Shahrinav	16.12.2013

Pakistan

The Survey of Pakistan continues its works on collection, usage and publication of the geographical names. In the recent past, need was felt to develop a comprehensive geographical names database to support efficient access, quick updates and enable not only hard copy output but also deploy it as a web service.

In this regard, the following topics are mentioned:

1. After verifying and analyzing a number of data collection methods, the latest available digital maps on scale 1:50000 came out as a main source for the database. More than 153 thousand records of geographical names of Pakistan were fetched from these maps.
2. In the design phase of the geographical names database, Geodatabase was designed to work in ArcGIS environment.
3. Geographical names were entered in the geodatabase to consume the geonames for web application development, publication of hard copies and development of desktop version of geonames.
4. The geodatabase was utilized for the development of web based version. The development of web application was completed in .net environment using the latest web technologies and tools.
5. This database returns not only latitude and longitude of the searched name but also its map sheet number/name. Therefore, the geographical name helps user to track, order and access desired map.
6. The database was tuned and utilized for publishing the desktop and printed gazetteer of geographical names of Pakistan.

Turkey

The committee that is responsible for the standardization of geographical names in Turkey is “the Board of Experts for Geographical Names of Turkey”. The board is affiliated, hosted and chaired by Ministry of Interior and carries out its activities in cooperation with the representatives of related national institutions.

This report highlights activities of the board since the 27th Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names. The main activities carried out during this period could be summarized as follows:

- The board had regular meetings and represented in the 27th Session of United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names which took place in New York.
- The working group on Turkish Exonyms of Country Names and Capitals published first version of the list of country names and capitals in 2012. This version includes the countries that are recognized by Turkey officially.
- The working group on Toponymy Guide has continued to work. The WG primarily worked towards preparation of documents that are going to be included in the guide. These documents are as follows:
 1. Glossary of Geographic Features.
 2. Names of provinces (first level administration units) and their coordinates.
 3. Adjectives that consist of names of first and second level administrative units (provinces and district/county).
 4. Abbreviations used in the topographic maps published by General Command of Mapping in Turkey.
 5. Abbreviations and Feature Type Codes of Gazetteer of Turkey and Surroundings.
- Gazetteer for Turkey and its neighboring areas was prepared based on 1:250000 scale maps. This gazetteer is available free for users on the website of General Command of Mapping. New version of this gazetteer in accordance with map revisions is planned to be released soon. Also, a work has been started to prepare a gazetteer of the world. This gazetteer is currently under examination by the Faculty of Literature, History and Geography of Ankara University.