

U.N. Group of Experts on
Geographical Names

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Proposal for a Revision of the Modus
Operandi of the UN Group of Experts
on Geographical Names

(submitted by the German-Dutch Speaking Division)

Modus Operandi of the United Nations Group
of Experts on Geographical Names

(UNGEKN)

1. Tasks of the UNGEKN

By Economic and Social Council resolution 1314 (XLIV) of 31st May, 1968 and later decisions, the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names has been charged with providing for continuous co-ordination and liaison among countries to further the standardization of geographical names and to encourage the formation and the work of linguistic/geographical divisions.

2. Linguistic/Geographical divisions

In order to achieve the results required, on both the national and the international levels, as specified in the resolutions adopted at United Nations conferences, the linguistic/geographical divisions listed below were formed:

1. Africa Central Division
2. Africa East Division
3. Africa West Division
4. Arabic Division
5. Asia East Division (other than China)
6. Asia South-East Division
7. Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic)
8. China Division
9. Dutch and German-speaking Division
10. East Central and South-East Europe Division
11. India Division
12. Latin America Division
13. Norden Division
14. Romano-Hellenic Division
15. Union of Soviet Socialist Republic
16. United Kingdom Division
17. United States of America/Canada Division

3. Composition of UNGEKN

- a) The Group of Experts is composed of the national experts appointed by member countries of the seventeen divisions.
- b) Governments may appoint national experts to attend meetings of the Group of Experts on the understanding that the said national experts will have the right of voice.

4. Membership of Divisions

- a) A country not already a member of a division will decide for itself to which division it wishes to belong.
- b) A country may also participate in the activities of divisions other than its own, provided the nature of their participation is not such as to change the linguistic/geographical character of the division.

5. Selection of Division Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen

- a) Each division will select, by methods of its own choosing, an expert to represent the division as a whole as its chairman at the meetings of the Group of Experts and to speak on divisional matters at the U.N. Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names.
- b) In order to guarantee the continuity of the work, each division consisting of more than one sovereign state should appoint a vice chairman; the division chairman will act in close contact with his vice-chairman.

6. Responsibilities of Division Chairmen

- a) The division chairmen will be responsible for ensuring that the work of the Group of Experts and its potential for technical assistance are brought to the attention of the individual nations within their division and for reporting to the United Nations any special problems within his division.
- b) The chairman of the division is expected to stimulate the standardization work within his division by all appropriate means, e.g., correspondence, (including with national surveying and mapping agencies), divisional meetings, preferably at least one in 5 years, etc.

7. Election Chairman/Vice Chairman of UNGEGN

- a) The Group of Experts will elect the following officers: a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman and a Rapporteur.
- b) The elections mentioned under item a will be held after the respective United Nations conferences on the standardization of geographical names. The officers will serve until their successors are elected after the next conference. The Cartography Section of the United Nations will provide the secretariat for the Group of Experts.
- c) In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman will assume the office of the Chairman. In the absence of the Vice-Chairman or the Rapporteur, the Chairman will appoint persons to complete the unexpired portion of their terms of office.

8. Meetings of the UNGEGN

The Group of Experts will meet in accordance with the precedents set by the Economic and Social Council.

9. Voting in UNGEGN

Decisions can be taken by voting, whereby each division has one vote.

10. Ad-hoc experts invited by UNGEGN

Persons with special knowledge of particular aspects of the standardization of geographical names may be invited by the chairman to place before the Group of Experts their specialized knowledge and to present papers on particular topics.

11. UNGEKN Working Groups

- a) Working groups of specialists may be formed by the Group of Experts under the chairmanship of one of the national experts referred to in paragraph 3 to study particular problems between meetings of the UNGEGN.
- b) During the meetings of the Group of Experts, ad hoc working groups may be appointed to deal with particular issues. Upon completion of the appointed task, these ad hoc working groups will be disbanded.

12. Working Languages of UNGEGN

The working languages of the United Nations selected for the conduct of business during the meetings of the Group of Experts will depend on the nature of the representation and the facilities available at the time.

13. Communication in UNGEGN

- a) The Group of Experts will maintain communication among themselves. The Chairman will be responsible for communicating the results of their main activities to the Cartography Section of the United

Nations and to the members of the Group by means of the Division chairman, and to international organisations concerned with geographical names through the Cartography section of the United Nations.

- b) Apart from formal means of communication as mentioned in paragraph 3b, members of the UNGEGN are supposed to communicate through informal channels amongst themselves and with international organisations.
- c) The UNGEGN will encourage countries to supply information and assistance to other nations within or outside their respective divisions and also to the United Nations Cartography Section.