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ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

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Previous issues of the Bulletin (formerly Newsletter) can be found at

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/ungegn_info_bulletins.htm

UNGEEN Information Bulletin

(formerly NEWSLETTER)

The *Information Bulletin of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names* (formerly UNGEEN Newsletter) is issued twice a year by the Secretariat of the Group. The Secretariat is established within the Statistics Division (UNSD), Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Secretariat of the United Nations. It publishes contributions/reports from the Experts of the Group, its Linguistic/ Geographical Divisions and its Working Groups. Contributions for the Information Bulletin can only be considered when they are made available in digital form. They should be sent to the following address:

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Preface

Message from the Chairperson

Dear colleagues,

I can advise that planning for the 28th Session of UNGEGN is well underway and my thanks to the Secretariat for their work so far. As normal, they do a wonderful job on our behalf.

As we consider the papers and reports that we will present at this session, I would like to encourage all delegates to be aware of the technical focus of the work of UNGEGN and structure reports that deal with issues in this manner rather than focus on political distractions. UNGEGN does not have mandate so provide solutions to any issue, technical of political, but is aimed at providing a forum where best practice solutions to the technical issues can be presented, emerging issues discussed and directions planned.

I am particularly interested to hear from any experts that have investigated further such issues as volunteer geographic information (crowd sourcing) and the effective integration of place names data in with wider spatial data world. Any report of new issues

would also be of great interest, even if no solution is as yet evident. We will also be dividing the papers into those for information only and those that are to be presented and discussed.

Future Events

A combined meeting of the Working Groups on Publicity and Funding, and Evaluation will be held in June in Seoul, Korea. There may be some issues that will be raised that will be of interest to all delegations. I will report on this in the next bulletin.

I have been invited as the Chair of UNGEGN to be involved in the International Conference of Geography and Environment, Mexico City, October 2013 in two place names sessions to be held during the conference. Again, I will report on the outcomes following the Conference.

Bill Watt

UNGEGN Chair

Australia

Email: william.watt@sa.gov.au

News from the Secretariat

Message from the Secretariat

Dear Experts,

Over the past few months, we have further explored the possibility of holding the 28th Session in 2014 in Bangkok. While the Economic and Social Council in general terms approved to hold the next UNGEGN Session in 2014 “preferably in Bangkok”, we still need final approval on actual dates and venue from the Council. The Council will deliberate such date and venue in late July during its substantive session. The concrete proposal before the Council will be to hold the 28th Session 5-9 May 2014 in Bangkok. We are of course working closely with the UNGEGN chair and will inform you of the Council’s decision.

We are also happy to inform you that the Secretariat is supporting the upcoming UNGEGN Training Workshop in Madagascar with funding three experts as well as participants from five countries. We have also shipped training material to Antananarivo, where the course will be held 17-21 June 2013 under Mr. Ormeling’s leadership.

Due to continued popularity of UNGEGN publications our stocks have run low for a few publications. In the process of getting the some publications reprinted, the Glossary will be getting a bit of a facelift, by getting a new cover and getting the addendum properly integrating in the printed version. Of course, all UNGEGN publications and brochures are also available online. Newly available on our website is also the UNGEGN-ICA webcourse on Toponymy, first released in July last year

(http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/docs/_data_ICAcourses/index.html).

As usual, I would like to encourage you to use our UNGEGN website and let us know if you have and suggestions on how to improve it. Over the next few weeks we will also send out our annual request to Divisions and Working Groups to update their online material, if they have not done so in recent months. Similarly, if you see gaps in our online availability of Session documents and think you can help filling them, we would very much appreciate you contacting us.

On that note, I would also like to encourage you to send us any (scanned) photos that you have from earlier sessions and conferences so we can expand our photo gallery. Photos can be from official meetings, side events, excursions or simply social gatherings. We look forward to receiving your photos and stories behind the photos!

Sabine Warschburger
UNEGN Secretariat
E-Mail: warschburger@un.org

From the Divisions

Baltic Division and Norden Division

Seminar on data integration

The Baltic Division and the Norden Division of UNGEGN in collaboration with the UNGEGN Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers will organize a one-day seminar on **19 September 2013 in Tallinn, Estonia** entitled *Integration of onomastic data into geo-spatial infrastructure*

The main aim of the seminar is to provide a forum to discuss how one can better integrate the resources that onomasticians (or more broadly linguists) have gathered, into the main national infrastructures dealing with spatial data. Integration is always a two-way process, therefore also papers should be expected where cartographers, geo-informatics, etc. could propose their solutions for better integration. Specific sub-topics could include (but should not be limited to)

- digitizing and georeferencing of onomastic datasets (incl. unique identifier management);
- using mobile units (smartphones, tablets and phablets) as tools for collecting place names (crowdsourcing).

Although the seminar is organized within the framework of the divisional meetings of the two divisions on 18 September, it is open to all interested participants. Additionally there will be an excursion to an onomastically interesting region in Estonia on 20 September (to be specified yet). There is no subscription fee for the seminar but there might be a fee for the excursion. More details will be sent in a 2nd circular in June 2013 to all participants.

Papers will be limited to 20 minutes presentation plus 10 minutes for discussion.

Deadlines: For those wishing to present a paper, please send a short title and a summary (about 300 words) of your paper to Peder Gammeltoft (gammelt@hum.ku.dk) and Peeter Päll (peeter.pall@eki.ee) by **1 May 2013**. For those wishing to participate only, please send us an e-mail before 1 June 2013. In both instances please include your contact data: full name, e-mail address, name of the institution, etc. The decision whether the paper will be accepted will be made by an evaluation team (Peder Gammeltoft, Peeter Päll, Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu) by 1 June 2013, and the participants will be informed about that in the 2nd Circular.

Participants will be expected to arrange their travel and accommodation independently. For more information please visit <http://www.tourism.tallinn.ee/eng>.

In questions regarding visa arrangements you can contact the Place Names Board of Estonia (Tõnis Rüütel, Tonis.Ryytel@siseministeerium.ee or via Peeter Päll, peeter.pall@eki.ee).

Peder Gammeltoft

Chair of Norden Division

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Peter Päll

Email: peeter.pall@eki.ee

South West Pacific Division

This is the first report for this new division formed at the last UNGEGN session, and as such should be seen as a preliminary report outlining the directions planned for the near future.

As yet the chair of the division is not determined, however, Australia and New Zealand will share the initial responsibilities. It is proposed that an information pack will be created for each of the other identified countries, using the UNGEGN publications and any other relevant information as well as a proposed meeting schedule and agenda outline. This will be sent to the countries, possible in multiple copies if a single source of contact cannot be determined.

Approaches are being made to determine if funding is available to assist the less developed nation to attend the divisional meetings, which are proposed to be held in conjunction with the annual Committee for Geographical Names in Australasia meeting.

Bill Watt

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From the Working Groups

Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation

As follow-ups the 10th UNCSGN in 2012, two progresses have been made within the framework of the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation. First, the twelve resolutions adopted at the Tenth Conference have been added to the UNCSGN resolutions database. The websites for this database are hosted by the National Geographic Information Institute (NGII) of the Republic of Korea at: <http://www.land.go.kr/ungegn> (English) and <http://www.land.go.kr/portal/ungn/mainFre.do> (French), which are also linked through the UNGEGN website at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/ungegn/confGeneral.html>. Second, results of the questionnaire survey circulated to evaluate the Conference have been analyzed and ready for a review. Collecting and coding of the survey was supported by the UNGEGN Secretariat.

The next meeting of the Working Group has been scheduled, jointly with the Working Group on Publicity and Funding, at the NGII in the City of Suwon, Republic of Korea, on July 4-6, 2013. Current working conditions and procedures of UNGEGN will be reviewed and suggestions for improving its tasks will be made at this meeting. A specific focus will also be placed on evaluating the implementation of resolutions, as discussed at the previous meeting in New York held in conjunction with the 10th Conference.

Sungjae CHOO

Convenor, Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation

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Working Group on Exonyms

14th Meeting, Working Group on Exonyms, Corfu, Greece, 23-25 May 2013

(in conjunction with a meeting of the WG on Toponymic Terminology)

Venue: Corfu City, Greece, Saint Michael & Saint George Palace / Pinacotheca

Preliminary programme:

Opening

Session 1: The Great Divide – comprehensive approaches (Chair: Peter JORDAN, Austria)

- WOODMAN, Paul (United Kingdom):
The scope of activities of the UNGEGN Working Group on

Exonyms, and the definitions of *endonym* and *exonym*

- JORDAN, Peter (Austria): Arguments for new definitions of *endonym* and *exonym*
- NYSTRÖM, Staffan (Sweden): Endonym and exonym: basically linguistic concepts after all?
- MATTHEWS, Philip (New Zealand): Endonyms and exonyms: New definitions
- BATLLE, Maria del Mar (Spain): Comparing approaches in the definition of endonym and exonym
- CHOO, Sungjae (Republic of Korea): The matter of “reading” in the exonym discussions
- HELLELAND, Botolv (Norway): Why *Hellas* in Norway and *Grekland* in Sweden?
- MANDOLA, Malgorzata (France, Poland): Reflexions about *endonym* and *exonym* as proper place names
- BUŠS, Ojārs (Latvia): Two kinds of exonyms – two kinds of classification problems

Session 2: The great divide – specific aspects (Chair: Paul WOODMAN, United Kingdom)

- TANABE, Hiroshi; WATANABE, Kohei (Japan): A reflection on names of large seas
- ZAGÓRSKI, Bogusław R. (Poland): Some problems of exonym use in Arabic
- BELL, Herman (United Kingdom): The Great Divide from a Nubian perspective
- MIKESY, Gábor (Hungary): Historical, revived or new names? Problems of exonym use from Hungarian toponymic aspects
- ZYCH, Maciej (Poland): Country names in Polish as an example of using exonyms and endonyms

Session 3: Exonyms – documentation and use (Chair: Sungjae CHOO, Republic of Korea)

- SABBĀR, Halīm (United Kingdom): Toponymic change in Nubia with a focus on imposition from the outside
- KLADNIK, Drago; GERŠIČ, Matjaž (Slovenia): A gazetteer of Slovenian exonyms
- CREȚAN, Remus (Romania): South-Danubian place names reflected in Theodor Capidan’s seminal works
- STANI-FERTL, Roman (Austria): The list of selected German language exonyms – 3rd edition
- CEKULA, Zane (Latvia): Use of place names on maps in the border area with Russia: The territory of former Abrene
- WOODMAN, Paul (United Kingdom): Endonyms and exonyms in the ‘Near Abroad’: The role of the Russian language in the toponymy of Kazakhstan
- PAIKKALA, Sirkka (Finland): The new gazetteer of Finnish exonyms and its use of the terms *endonym* and *exonym*

General discussion on new definitions of *endonym* and *exonym* (Chair: Peter JORDAN, Austria)

Common bus excursion to historical sites at the island of Corfu

Meeting of the UNGEGN Working Group on Toponymic Terminology (Chair: Staffan NYSTRÖM, Sweden)

Peter JORDAN

Convenor, Working Group on Exonyms
E-mail: peter.jordan@oeaw.ac.at

The Great Toponymic Divide. Reflections on the definitions and usage of endonyms and exonyms, ed. by Paul WOODMAN, published by the Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography, Warszawa 2012, ISBN 978-83-254-1967-7, 302 p.

The book contains papers presented at the 12th Meeting of the UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms in Gdańsk, Poland, in May 2012. The papers deal with the endonym/exonym divide (“The Great Toponymic Divide”), exonym analysis and usage, endonyms and exonyms in minority language environments, and an endonym/exonym illustration from history.

Running as a thread through many of the papers is the suggestion that, even after ten years and twelve sessions, the Working Group remains not entirely certain as to the optimum definitions of the terms ‘endonym’ and ‘exonym’. This admission may come as a surprise, but it is an apt reflection of the relative novelty and sheer complexity of this most challenging of subjects.

Having considered the contributions in this volume, the reader may well form the opinion that fine-tuning the present UN definitions into a durable form ought to constitute the main focus of activity for the Working Group in the near future.

Contents:

Section 1: The endonym/exonym divide

- WOODMAN, Paul (United Kingdom): The naming process: Societal acceptance and the endonym definition
- JORDAN, Peter (Austria): Towards a comprehensive view at the endonym/exonym divide
- MATTHEWS, Philip (New Zealand): Endonyms, exonyms and seas

- BUŠS, Ojārs (Latvia): On some possibilities for a more exact definition of exonyms
- WOODMAN, Paul (United Kingdom): Endonyms, exonyms and language boundaries: A clarification
- ZYCH, Maciej (Poland): Definition of ‘exonym’ in the context of the new list of Polish exonyms
- BELL, Herman (United Kingdom): Nubian perceptions of exonyms and endonyms
- SABBĀR, Halīm (United Kingdom): Numbers of geographical names in Nubia: Endonyms or exonyms?
- WOODMAN, Paul (United Kingdom): Toponymic expression: Endonyms and exonyms in speech, writing and reading

Section 2: Exonym analysis and usage

- MANDOLA, Malgorzata (Poland): French exonyms for Polish toponyms
- POKOLY, Béla (Hungary): Trends in exonym use: Selected exonyms of the Hungarian language
- BATLLE, Maria del Mar (Spain): What is an endonym in Spain?
- ZAGÓRSKI, Bogusław R. (Poland): Polish exonyms for the Arab world: How they come and go; what appears to stay
- CRLJENKO, Ivana (Croatia): Geographical feature importance as a criterion for exonym selection: Croatian examples
- BOHÁČ, Pavel (Czech Republic): Names of European spatial features within the *List of Czech Exonyms*

Section 3: Minority toponyms

- BARTOS-ELEKES, Zsombor (Romania): Minority toponyms in Romania

- MÁNDOKI, Mónika; DUTKÓ, András (Hungary): Slovak names of settlements in Hungary
- WOLNICZ-PAWŁOWSKA, Ewa; ZYCH, Maciej (Poland): Place names in minority languages in Poland

Section 4: Endonyms, exonyms and an illuration from history

- WOODMAN, Paul (United Kingdom): Toponymy in a landscape of aggression: Geographical names in National Socialist Germany

Thanks to the generosity of the Polish Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography the book is available free of charge. Should you be interested to receive a copy, please approach Peter Jordan (peter.jordan@oeaw.ac.at).

Peter JORDAN and Paul WOODMAN

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Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers

Updates on the new tasks addressed to the WG within the 10th UNCSGN

Within the 10th UNCSGN (conference and side events) three new tasks/issues were proposed and afterwards added to the “Scope of work” and to the “Work plan” of the WG TDFG respectively.

Regarding the methods to be used to start actions the set up of a **discussion forum within the website** was agreed by the WG. Three separate Wiki “rooms” / pages for these specific topics has been created and initial documents has been uploaded to it:

Forum 1 - discussing the topic “volunteered geographic information (VGI)/crowd-sourcing”

Forum 2 - discussing the topic **definitions for gazetteers and data types**

Forum 3 - discussing the topic **general feature types/categories**

For the time being, the discussion forum has been already utilized and investigations

commenced on these three issues mentioned before.

Some UNGEGN experts as well as other experts for the respective topics have been registered and started to comment and to extend the content of the Wiki “rooms” / pages respectively.

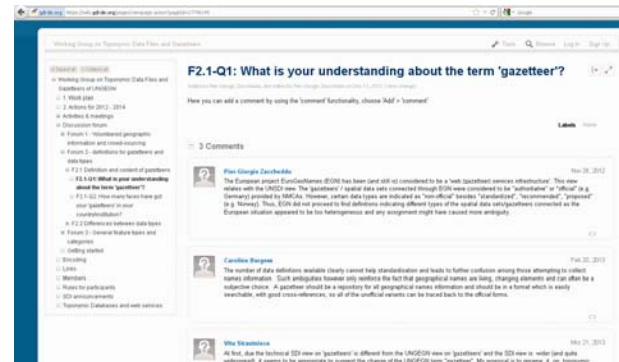


Fig.1: Discussing the question “What is your understanding about the term ‘gazetteer’?” as part of forum 2 ‘definitions for gazetteers and data types’

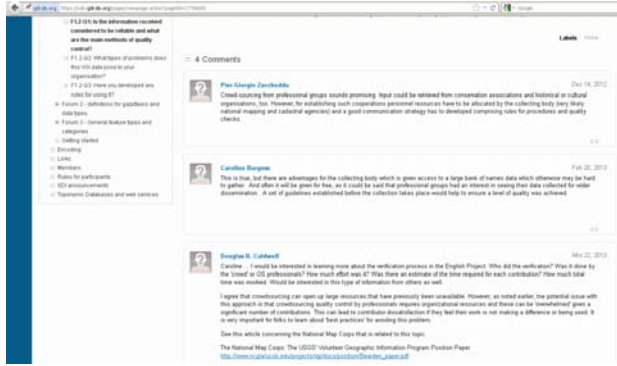


Fig.2: Discussing the question “Is the information received considered to be reliable and what are the main methods of quality control?” as part of forum 1 ‘volunteered geographic information (VGI)/ crowd-sourcing’

The discussion forum is accessible through: [https://wiki.gdi-de.org/display/wgtdfg/Discussion+forum](https://wiki.gdi.de.org/display/wgtdfg/Discussion+forum)

It is obvious that tackling these new and quite complex issues needs more contributions by the WG members and by other UNGEGN experts.

Volunteers from UNGEGN are most welcome to provide content and further initial documents.

If you are interested in contributing to these issues, please contact the convenor of the WG or the moderators for the respective topics mentioned on the webpage of the discussion forum.

Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu
 Convenor, Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers
 E-mail : pier-giorgio.zaccheddu@bkg.bund.de

Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy

Advanced toponymy manual

At the 10th conference, the initiative to produce an advanced toponymy manual, to supplement the existing literature, basic UNGEGN manuals and on-line webcourses, was launched, to be completed by the 11th conference. In order to monitor the current status, an update is given of the commitments made to produce one or more of the planned chapters. The advanced manual is thought of, in its initial stage, as an e-book, to be downloaded from the UNGEGN-website. Hopefully, later, sponsors can be found for translations into other (UN) languages and printed versions.

In the list of chapters those for which authors have been found already are shaded. Some suggestions for possible authors are put in parentheses after the chapter titles.

The need for standardized geographical names as part of the national geospatial data infrastructure.

- In this first chapter the eminence of the national toponymic database, and its benefits for administration, development, emergency mapping and preserving the cultural heritage is highlighted (Helen Kerfoot).

Examples of applications of the national names database in emergency mapping, administration and development

- The National names database and emergency mapping (examples from UNSDI, Haiti, crowd flowers, time-out) (still open)
- National names database and tourist activities/hotel reservations (still open)

Management of a national names programmes:

- Finances, administration, legal issues, human resources in maintaining and publishing the geographical names database (Pier Zaccheddu)

Different geographical names applications:

- Geographical names for hydrographic charts (Australian Navy?)
- Geographical names for tourist maps (Tjeerd Tichelaar or Bettina Wobek?)
- Urban street naming (still open)
- Tourist/road map exercise (Tjeerd Tichelaar)

Regional and global datafile and gazetteer initiatives

- Small islands names project (BIG?)
- Regional datafiles (for instance ASEPSW) (Wendy Shaw)
- Regional names services such as Eurogeonames (Ferjan Ormeling/Pier Zaccheddu)
- World names database UN (Helen Kerfoot)

Concordance between statistical and topographical names

- Standardization of names for statistical enumeration areas (still open. Mexico or Brazil?)
- Reduction of differences between statistical and topographical areal object names (still open. Brazil or Mexico?)
- Integration of crowd-sourced or volunteered geographic information (VGI)/crowd-sourcing (Pier Zaccheddu)

Technical issues: database management*

- Database design and management (Pier Zaccheddu)
- Database Open source options vs commercial options: criteria for selection (Pier Zaccheddu)
- Requirements for a school atlas names database (Tjeerd Tichelaar)

Technical issues: internet, web service infrastructure and applications

- Web services and applications; criteria for selection packages (Pier Zaccheddu)
- Publishing names databases in the Google Earth application (Pier Zaccheddu)
- Working with African GeoNyms – a desktop application (UNECA?)
- UNSDI Gazetteer Framework project (Laura Kostanski)

Evaluation of current Internet products

- Evaluation of current web services and applications (Ferjan Ormeling)
- Evaluation of current names servers (Ferjan Ormeling)

Cultural aspects

- Place names as cultural heritage (Botolv Helleland)
- History of place names (Tjeerd Tichelaar)
- Assigning street names (still open; Claude Tapsoba?)
- Collecting indigenous names (WG on Indigenous names?)

Toponymic research

- Onomastics and lexicology (Zagórski?)
- Etymology and the historic study of place names (Zagórski?)
- Internet sources for linguistic research (Tjeerd Tichelaar)

Toponymic documentation

- Study of linguistic and toponymic sources (Hubert Bergmann)
- Preparing briefs for place name guides (Ormeling?)
- Collating sources and maps (still open)

Positioning

- Theoretical aspects of positioning (Zaccheddu)
- Assessing optimal object positioning procedures: best practices (still open)
- Hands-on GPS exercise (still open. ITC?)

Cartographic aspects: paper and digital map series

- Updating names sheets and Assessing optimal names density for map sheets (Romanian colleagues)
- Dealing with areal names on adjoining map sheets; multiple naming (Romanian colleagues)
- Digital/automatic place name labeling (still open)
- Jumping place names on monitor screens (hierarchical aspects)(still open)

Audit of existing records

- in order to coordinate toponymic information from different parts of the country (still open; BIG?)
- in order to coordinate toponymic information from different survey periods (and therefore collected according to different standards,

processes and procedures) (still open)

- in order to coordinate names record from different national institutions (Laura Kostanski)

Communication issues

- Interview techniques for collecting geographical names (still open)
- Role play for names board meetings (Maputo Video/ still open)

Special training for contacts with the media

- Toponymic requirements of the media (still open)
- Media cartography (still open)
- Exercise on Producing media maps (still open)

Those interested to cooperate with this initiative – especially those working in one of the UNGEGN Working Groups – are requested to contact Ferjan Ormeling, stating to which item or subject they are willing to contribute.

There are no financial inducements, unfortunately, this is strictly a volunteer production for the benefit of our (future) colleagues in the field of toponymy.

Ferjan Ormeling

Convenor, WG Training Courses in Toponymy

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Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage

There is one outstanding issue left from the previous UNGEGN Session, being the need to fill the role of convenor for this group.

Although I will always have a special interest in the issues associated with the cultural aspect of place names, I find that I

will not be able to do justice to this while in the position of UNGEGN Chair.

Any interested persons can advise me by e-mail and I will then organize to advise the other working group members and hold a poll if necessary.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Bill Watt

Convenor, Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage
E-Mail: William.Watt@sa.gov.au

ICA/IGU Working Group/Commission on Toponymy

Toponyms in Cartography. Proceedings of the Toponymic Sessions at the 25th International Cartographic Conference, Paris, 3–8 July 2011, ed. by Peter Jordan and Ferjan Ormeling, Hamburg 2013, ISBN 978-3-8300-6700-9, 134 p.



The toponymical contributions to the Paris International Cartographic Conference are diverse, both geographically and thematically. Geographically, the focus is on Brazil and on Europe, with a paper on Tunis as a Mediterranean extension of Europe. The subjects range from the collection of geographical names to the operation of names servers, from the use of exonyms in school atlases to the creation of names data bases and from the reconstruction of former namescapes to the creation of new ones.

Contents:

- BAILLY, Guillaume (France): Nommer les communautés de communes: état des lieux en 2012, à l'heure de la réforme territoriale
- DHIEB, Mohsen (Saudi Arabia): Towards a geographical database of names in Tunisia: The case of the map sheet of Sfax NW # 107
- JORDAN, PETER (AUSTRIA): TRENDS IN EXONYM USE OF EUROPEAN SCHOOL ATLASES
- LÖFSTRÖM, JONAS & PANSINI, VALERIA (FRANCE): TOPONYMS AND CARTOGRAPHY: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE AND LINGUISTIC CHALLENGES
- MATHIAS, MARCIA (BRAZIL): THE IMPORTANCE OF THE

The ICA 25th International Cartographic Conference in Paris in July 2011 is special from a toponymical point of view because it marks the first meeting of the joint ICA-IGU Commission on Toponymy. Toponymy has been a regular theme for international cartographic conferences for decades, and it is only proper that this has been institutionalized now. The subject of toponymy is now not only dealt within an onomastical context at the biannual ICOS meetings, and within an administrative context at the biannual UNGEGN meetings, but also within a geo-cartographic context at joint ICA-IGU meetings.

- PHONEMES IN THE COLLECTION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES IN BRAZIL
- MENEZES, Paulo de, ALMEIDA, Camila de & FREITAS, Anniele de (Brazil): Toponymy of the political-administrative evolution of Rio de Janeiro State – Brazil
 - RESENDE, Ana, SANTOS, Cláudio dos, & MATHIAS, MARCIA (BRAZIL): THE RIVERHEAD OF THE URUGUAI RIVER: ORIGINS OF A CONTROVERSY
 - SANTOS, CLAUDIO DOS (BRAZIL): A NEW APPROACH TO THE COLLECTION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES IN BRAZIL
 - SZYSZKOWSKA, Karolina & PRZYSZEWSKA, Katarzyna (Poland): The national register of geographical names as part of a modern, consistent and reference spatial data infrastructure of Poland
 - ZACCHEDDU, Pier-Giorgio (Germany) & OVERTON, David (Belgium): EuroGeoNames (EGN) – The implementation of an INSPIRE service

The book can be ordered from the publisher Kovač, cf. to <http://www.verlagdrkovac.de/978-3-8300-6700-9.htm>

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Task Team for Africa

L'année en cours a été très prolifique pour la toponymie africaine. En effet, plusieurs activités ont été enregistrées tant sur le plan structurel et institutionnel que sur le plan de celles dites scientifiques.

Sur Le Plan Institutionnel :

Au Burkina Faso

Création de la Commission Nationale de Toponymie par décret n°2012-1015/PRES/PM/MID/MATDS/MEF du 31 décembre 2013, portant création, attributions et fonctionnement d'une Commission Nationale de toponymie.

Celle-ci, a été installée solennellement le 15 Mars 2013, lors d'une cérémonie officielle co-présidée par le Ministre de

l'Administration du Territoire et de la Sécurité et le Ministre du Désenclavement et des Transports en présence de plusieurs délégués représentant les différents départements ministériels du pays.

C'est dire toute l'importance que le Gouvernement du Burkina compte donner à cette Commission. (Voir le discours de Monsieur le Ministre à ce sujet.)

Cette commission constituée de compétences pluridisciplinaires entre historiens, linguistes, géographes, cartographes, administrateurs et bien d'autres spécialistes, est chargée notamment d'énoncer les règles et d'harmoniser les pratiques relatives à la toponymie au Burkina Faso.

Il est à noter que le Burkina Faso disposait d'une Commission de toponymie depuis 1986 mais pour divers raisons celle-ci n'a pu activer.

Nous souhaitons tout le succès à cette nouvelle Commission dont le Secrétariat a été confié à l'Institut Géographique du Burkina Faso. Connaissant l'engagement de son Directeur Général, en l'occurrence Monsieur Claude Obin TAPSOBA, sa compétence et son expérience dans le domaine de la normalisation des noms géographiques, tant au niveau de l'UNGEGN qu'au niveau africain, nous ne pouvons que nous réjouir de ce choix qui ne peut qu'apporter à ne pas en douter, que réussites et succès à cette Commission.

En Tunisie :

La Tunisie qui était l'un des rares pays africains disposant, d'une Commission de toponymie depuis 1957, vient de se doter d'une nouvelle structure de gestion de la toponymie tunisienne.

En effet, par décret n° 2013-1299 du 26 février 2013, il est créé une Commission nationale de toponymie chargée de la gestion et de la normalisation des noms géographiques en Tunisie.

Vous trouverez tous le détail des dispositions et des prérogatives de cette Commission dans le papier de Madame la Vice Présidente de L'UNGEGN.

Nous souhaitons également tout le succès à cette nouvelle commission qui ne pourra que réussir avec la présence en son sein de la Vice présidente du GENUNG en l'occurrence Madame Naima Fréha. Elle saura apporter toute son expérience et sa compétence pour faire profiter son pays et la

communauté internationale des bienfaits de la normalisation des noms géographiques.

En Algérie :

Création d'une Unité de recherche sur les systèmes de dénomination en Algérie, par arrêté ministériel du 02 Juin 2012.

Cette nouvelle structure vient en appui à la Commission Nationale Permanent Spécialisée de Toponymie qui active déjà, depuis 1998.

La dite Unité, comprenant deux Divisions, la Division sur le système toponymique algérien et la Division sur le système anthroponymique algérien, est chargée notamment :

- d'étudier les systèmes de dénomination en Algérie.
- D'analyser les systèmes toponymiques et anthroponymiques en Algérie.
- De contribuer à la mise en place d'une politique nationale en matière de normalisation des noms géographiques en Algérie.
- De procéder à des publications dans le domaine des noms géographiques.

Elle est actuellement constituée de 45 chercheurs associés, pilotant plus de 10 programmes nationaux de recherche.

Nul doute qu'une fructueuse coopération sera établie entre ces nouvelles structures africaines afin de booster davantage, l'activité dans le continent.

Sur Le Plan Des Activites Scientifiques :

L'Organisation d'un séminaire international sur la toponymie algérienne du 19 au 20 février 2013 au Centre National de Recherche en Anthroponymie

Sociale et Culturelle (CRASC), à Oran/Algérie.

Cette rencontre, qui a enregistré une participation de plus de 200 personnes entre chercheurs, gestionnaires et administrateurs, a eu pour centre d'intérêt les volets historiques, linguistiques, géographiques, sociologiques, psychologiques, anthropologiques, littéraires, de gestion, de normalisation, liés à la toponymie mais également à l'Anthroponymie.

Ce Séminaire s'est fixé comme objectifs:

1. d'établir un bilan de l'état des noms de lieux et de personnes en Algérie, de leurs gestions institutionnelles (juridique, administrative, linguistique, technique...) : mode de création, transmission, changement, transcription, translittération...
2. d'exposer les résultats des travaux de recherche universitaire sur la toponymie et l'anthroponymie algérienne au travers des différentes approches mises en œuvre: linguistique, géographique, historique, anthropologique, juridique, sémiotique, littéraire...
3. de mettre à niveau les institutions nationales utilisatrices de la toponymie sur les dernières dispositions en matière de législation internationale notamment la nécessité d'une normalisation nationale des toponymes algériens servant de normalisation internationale et la problématique de l'application du système de translittération des caractères arabes aux caractères latins.
4. de créer une société savante « la Société algérienne d'onomastique ».

Cours De Formation :

Il est prévu, en collaboration avec les autorités de Madagascar, l'organisation d'un cours de Formation au courant de cette année à Antananarivo.

Cooperation Avec Les Institutions Africaines :

Enfin il y lieu de signaler l'implication de la Commission Economique pour l'Afrique (UN/ECA,) dans son soutien au Task Team for Africa et à l'activité toponymique en général.

En effet, en plus de sa contribution aux travaux du GENUNG, de la mise à la disposition des différents pays africains, du logiciel de base de données toponymiques, de la confection 'du plan dit de Gaborone', relatif au développement de la thématique des noms de noms géographique en Afrique, le thème des noms géographiques est désormais un élément essentiel de l'Agenda des rencontres organisées par elle ou sous son égide.

Tous ces résultats sont en grande partie, dus aux efforts déployés depuis un certain temps, par différents membres du GENUNG. Qu'ils en soient ici, remerciés.

A l'instar de l'ancienne équipe dirigeante du GENUNG, nous sommes certains en tant qu'équipe du Task Team For Africa, de continuer de bénéficier de l'appui du Secrétariat et de trouver toute l'aide nécessaire auprès de Monsieur le nouveau Président Monsieur Bill Watt et son Staff auxquels nous souhaitons plein de succès.

Dr. Brahim ATOUI

Chair, Task Team for Africa

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From the Countries

News from Brazil

An interesting experience of certification of geographic names has been taking place in Brazil since 2009. It is a project in which multidisciplinary teams from the IBGE and local cartographic institutions interact in order to update the official topographic mapping of the State of Paraná in the 1:50 000 scale, by collecting new names, correcting, and revising all the toponyms in the state. The information provided in the last mapping in this scale dates back to the early nineties and late eighties.

Besides aiming at standardizing the set of geographic names of Paraná, the project also promotes the retrieval of historic and linguistic information about these names.

The methodological procedures include extensive preparations in the office about the area where field work will take place. It consists in gathering historical and cultural information as well as cartographic and legal documentation of the area and proceeding comparative analyses of the documents regarding the use of the geographic names. The problems concerning standardization that cannot be solved in the office are then separated for field research with precise objectives, and special attention is given to problems regarding names of features involved in either national or international territorial limits. All the names present in the mapping of the area are organized in a gazetteer in which indication for field research is described when it is the case.

All software used in the project is FOS.

The exchange of information, experience and knowledge between the federal and the state institutions has been a great profit from the project.

So far, about 1800 geographic names have been certified.

As one of the actions of the Project Geographic Names of Brazil, in January 2012, the IBGE launched the *Índice de Nomes Geográficos do Brasil da Base Cartográfica Contínua do Brasil ao Milionésimo - BCIM* (Gazetteer from the Continuous Cartographic Base of Brazil, millionth).

It is expected for this year the public consultation carried out by the Secretary of Planning regarding the main policies for the naming of geographic features in Brazil. Thus, it is believed that as of 2013 these policies will regulate the standardization of geographic names in Brazil.

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Creation of the Register of the Geographical Names in Republic of Bulgaria

The Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre Agency in Republic of Bulgaria (GCCA) has commenced the creation of a register of the geographical names in Bulgaria, whose objective is to ensure uniformity and sustainability in the use of the names of geographical objects and where the information will be contained and updated.

In parallel with the creation of the Register, an information system is being developed, which will provide the tools for registration of the geographical names, their storage, update, maintenance and retrieval of requested information from the database.

The information system together with a fully operational register are expected to be ready by the beginning of 2014 as the geographical names are part of the total volume of geographical information and have to be extracted from the cartographic originals and entered into the new digital Register, which is a time-consuming process.

The sources to be used are the large-scale topographic maps 1:5000 and 1:10000 (stored at GCCA), Medium-scale topographic maps 1:25000 (edition of the Military Geographic Service) and other cartographic and statistic materials.

The Register of Geographical Names is created in a table format and includes the following fields with the elements and features of geographical objects:

- serial number ID;
- name of the geographical object;
- transliteration of the geographical name;
- type of the geographical object, to which the geographical name refers

(marked with a code according to an appendix);

- appurtenance of the geographical object (administrative or to a bigger orographical or hydrographical object or system);
- coordinates of the geographical object, to which the geographical name refers;
- the source, from which the name is extracted;
- actuality of the source for the official name (year of edition);
- the alternative/old name of the geographical object;
- the source, from which the alternative/old name is extracted;
- actuality of the source for the alternative/old name (year of edition).

The System for transliteration of Bulgarian alphabet into Roman alphabet, adopted by the Bulgarian legislation in 2009, is used in the process of transliteration of geographical names in the Register. On international level, the System was adopted on the 10th UN conference on standardization of geographical names, when Resolution № X/8 recommended the system to be adopted as an international system for Romanization of Bulgarian geographical names.

In aid of the customers willing to convert text from Bulgarian to Roman alphabet and vice versa, GCCA has installed on its website a free tool for online transliteration: <http://www.cadastre.bg/en>. The instructions for use are on both Bulgarian and English language and there are options for transliteration (from Bulgarian to Roman alphabet) and re-transliteration (from Roman alphabet to Bulgarian). The tool is

developed in compliance with the system and rules of the Law of transliteration, as well as with the basic rules of Bulgarian grammar, word groups and language characteristics.

The information system of the Register of the geographical names in Bulgaria will be accessible through the web page of GCCA and will allow the users to make enquiries

and search for geographical names through various criteria and characteristics. In addition, when the respective geographical name is selected, it will be visualized on the map of Bulgaria.

Geodesy, Cartography and Cadaster Agency (GCCA)

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Burkina Faso

Discours D'installation Des Membres De La Commission Nationale De Toponymie Du Burkina Faso,

Prononcé par Monsieur Jérôme BOUGOUMA, Ministre de l'Administration du Territoire et de la Sécurité, le 15 mars 2013

Distingués invités,
Madame et Messieurs les Commissaires,



Le Gouvernement du Burkina Faso, en adoptant le décret n°2012-1015/PRES/PM/MID/MATDS/MEF portant création, attributions et fonctionnement d'une Commission Nationale de toponymie, a décidé de se doter d'une structure nationale chargée d'énoncer les règles et d'harmoniser les pratiques relatives à la toponymie au Burkina Faso.

La commission dont vous aurez l'exaltante tâche d'animer aux termes du décret précité, a entre autres pour missions :

- de procéder à l'inventaire et à la conservation des noms de lieux ;
- d'adopter pour chaque nom de lieu sa forme linguistique officielle ;
- d'élaborer les principes, les méthodes et les règles d'écriture de tous les noms de lieux ;
- d'établir les critères de choix des noms à attribuer aux lieux sur l'ensemble du territoire national ;
- de diffuser les toponymes du Burkina Faso tant au niveau national qu'au niveau international.

Ces missions requièrent des compétences plurielles, raison pour laquelle la commission regroupe en son sein historien, linguiste, géographe, cartographe et bien d'autres spécialistes pétris d'expériences.



Les défis qui vous attendent sont nombreux et vous devez vous atteler déjà à en relever un, celui d'adopter la forme linguistique officielle de chaque localité administrative du Burkina Faso.

Au sortir de cette cérémonie, vous allez vous retrouver en atelier technique pour examiner

les noms des localités dans les régions du Nord, de la Boucle du Mouhoun et des Hauts-Bassins.

Madame et Messieurs les Commissaires,

Le gouvernement du Burkina réaffirme sa volonté de trouver des réponses idoines aux préoccupations liées à la toponymie. C'est pourquoi, je vous déclare solennellement installés dans vos fonctions de membres de la Commission nationale de toponymie du Burkina Faso.

Claude Obin TAPSOBA

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The Regulation of National and Municipal Toponymy in Cape Verde

I - General

The toponymy of the country exists since the colonial times, with the most complete version of the 1:25.000 topographic maps used in the Portuguese Army before the independence. This toponymy was designed for use in existing maps at that time, at small and medium scales (scale 1:100,000 and 1:25,000), and still now continues to be the base toponymic the country. The need to adapt that toponymy to the current country was felt twice:

- 1- With the development of the first large-scale maps in 1993, and with the early design studies for the Land Cadaster in Cape Verde, was felt the inadequacy of the existing geographical names for georeferencing of cadastral information in urban and rural areas in the different islands of the country. Also, during the

2000 year Census, it was found that there was a large amount of geographical names that were not appearing in our most complete toponymic base, the map 1:25.000, and those information had to be supplemented with other names in urban and in rural areas in the Census works.

- 2- On other hand, this need was felt with the creation of new cities in the different municipalities in 2005. These new cities, with their need for infra-structures will need to be georeferenced and thus be endowed with more street names, zones, locations, etc., in order to support their economic and social development.

II - Developed Activities

With the Decree-Law No. 5/2012 which regulates the National and Municipal

Toponymy, was created the legal basis for regulation, standardization and updating of the National and the Municipal Toponymy in Cape Verde.

In this Decree-Law which regulates the Toponymy at the national and municipal level, the Government intends to assume its own responsibilities with regards to standardization, compilation or assigning place names to places, sites and infrastructures of national or international, that are its jurisdiction, while requiring stimulates and supports the municipalities to give a new impetus in the implementation of toponymy and municipal police numbers.

Defining itself as the linguistic or historical study of the origin of the names of places, the toponymy, assumes a high cultural significance as an important element that reflects and perpetuates facts, customs, and place events that reflects the memories of the people.

The assignment of place names, both at local and national levels, thus becomes mandatory. Consequently, with regards to the current situation, was setted up a period of five years from the date of publication of this law (28th. February 2012) to the Municipalities attributing toponyms to all public places and places of their municipality.

With respect for local autonomy, the law established a set of concepts to be used, to avoid anarchy in the qualification of public spaces and places, providing criterias for assigning place names, a process that, once completed, should be widely publicized, beyond communicated to the regional Judicial Courts, at the Conservatory (Company Register Land) at Tax Offices, Post office of Cape Verde, the National Police and the Judicial Police and the Civil Protection services.

Thus, within the powers of the “Unidade de Coordenação do Cadastro Predial (UCCP) – MAHOT (Ministry of Environment, Habitation and Territorial Management)” was prepared and submitted in May last year, a proposal for a Regulation of Municipal Toponymy, in order to assist municipalities in preparing its own Regulation Municipal Toponymy and Police Numbering, was created the National Commission on Toponymy (CNT) in order to proceed with the implementation of Toponymy and ensure the homogeneity of this regulation for all municipalities in the country.

These Regulations for Municipal Toponymy and Police Numbering is an instrument aimed at achieving the objectives of planning and management of each Municipality, establishing clear and precise criterias that allow disciplinary ways of assigning place names and police numbering. For the members of the CNT can have a clear idea of the works to be undertaken by the Commission in the near future, we designed a plan of activities to be undertaken during the period July 2012 to July 2013, from where we highlight:

- 1- Adoption of the Rules of the CNT, and the final number of the constituents of the Commission;
- 2- Confirmation, Preparation and implementation of the Regulation of Municipal Police Toponymy and Numbering in all Municipalities;
 - Implementation of Municipal Toponymy Committees;
 - Preparation of National Toponymy Diagnostics;
 - Definition of the work methodology in consultation with all stakeholders of the project;

III. Timeline Toponymy Project Project Activities

Project Activities	Years	
	2012	2013
Preparation and Publication in February 28, 2012 the Decree-Law No. 5/2012 which regulates the National and Municipal Toponymy.		
Adoption of the Rules of the CNT, and the final number of the constituents of the Commission.		
Preparation for Proposed Regulation Municipal Police Toponymy and Numbering of Counties		
Diagnosis toponymy of existing needs and toponymic in Cape Verde		
Definition of areas of intervention		
Pilot project to implement an urban center		
Socialization of the proposed intervention at national level		
Acquisition of toponymic material to install		
Implementation of a National Campaign		

The toponymy represents an efficient geographic referencing system that man needs and uses to track the activities and events in the territory.

The toponymic designations should be stable and should not be influenced by subjective criterias or factors circumstance.

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Kenya: Progress Report on Preparation of the Third Edition of the Standard Names Gazetteer

Introduction

Survey of Kenya, as the National Mapping Organization in Kenya, maintains the Official National Standard Names Gazetteer.

The second edition of the Geographical Names Gazetteer was published in 1978 containing a total of 40,000 name entries. The volume is in analogue format and only allows manual methods of names searches. All geographical names shown on topographical maps of Kenya at the scales of 1:50,000 and smaller have been entered in

Figure 1: Sample of Analogue Card System

SAMPLE ANALOGUE CARDS WITH NAME AND ATTRIBUTES

NAME	MAP No. SA37 162/4
Cartographic <i>Wauo</i>	<i>WUO</i>
Vernacular Spelling	POSITION
I.P.A. Systematic <i>Wauo</i>	LAT. <i>1° 53' S</i> LONG. <i>37° 24' E</i>
Original Spelling <i>Wauo</i>	FILE REFERENCE <i>Kenya April 1952</i>
Alternative Name (if any)	<i>22nd Meeting P.11</i>
TOPOGRAPHICAL FEATURE <i>River, Market</i>	
DERIVATION <i>Kamba</i>	
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS	
SPECIAL REMARKS	

the gazetteer. The entries include names of the first-, second-, third and fourth order administrative divisions, populated places of all sizes, many minor cultural entities and a variety of physical features.

Many newly populated settlements have come up since the publication of the last edition due to national economic development and population growth. This has resulted in increased number of geographical names necessitating preparation of a new edition of the names gazetteer. It is anticipated that the redesigned gazetteer will possess over 100,000 name entries.

The extents in area of some of these emergent urban settlements are rather small and cannot be distinctively shown on maps at the scales of 1:50,000 or smaller. To address this limitation, the new edition has been designed to contain names on topographical maps at the scale of 1:2,500. The new gazetteer will be used as an interactive digital geo-referenced database for visualization of names placement, prompt name searches and continuous updating. All the 40,000 names in the existing gazetteer have been digitized in the restyled digital volume.

NAME	SCALE	TOPOG	FILE	HEE	HT	FL	UTL	LONG	SHEET	BLANK	OUTLINE	2D	3D	TEXT	KENYA	LANDU	PAS	ORIGIN	INFO	FILE	CLASS	OTHER	Approved
Ambi	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000
Ambi	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000	150000

Figure 2: Part of the Digitized Names Entries Record (40,000 Names Digitized)

Evaluation of the Existing Analogue Databases and Records

Survey of Kenya has a network of county offices all over the country engaged in delegated functions of surveying and mapping. These offices provide periodical reports on the actual ground situation and it is from these reports that an assessment is made on the need to revise the topographical maps and geographical names. The reports also assist in evaluating the sanctity of the toponymic information from different parts of the country. The need to conduct prompt searches, efficient provision of geographical names to stakeholders in geospatial clientele and effective knowledge relay were identified as prerequisites for maintaining an up-to-date standard names gazetteer.

Field Data Collection

In Kenya, topographical map revision exercise involves **field verification** of topographical features captured through photogrammetric means and **collection** of geographical names in accordance with the Survey Act and Survey Manual. The manual gives guidance on the procedure of the spelling the place names and how to prepare the names lists. The Swahili Orthography in the Latin alphabet as set out in the standard grammars and dictionaries is used, except for imported names, private names of estates, and established wrong names of towns, railways stations post offices etc.

Collection of names is done by interviewing local residents who provide information on cultural attachments, meaning, and history of the names. The names are listed in special forms designed by the Standing Committee on Geographical Names (SCGN). Local regional administration officers, after consulting residents with thorough

knowledge of the indigenous history, authenticate the lists.

Database entry

After the field exercise, the authenticated lists are collated and the office procedures of quality control undertaken. Also, the compiler ensures that all the forms bearing the names lists have been signed by the County Commissioner of the respective region.

Entries are made in the names' database that is linked to the official map of Kenya. This is helpful in that overlaps, misplaced or repeated entries are easily identified and rectified accordingly.

The database is processed so that several other products can be generated as geospatial layers for use in other Geographical Information System (GIS) applications. These include; annotations layer in topographical mapping, developing names' layers for government projects in population census, electoral, administrative and security issues, physical planning, disaster and hazard management, among others.

Publication of the Names Gazetteer

After normalizing the database and ensuring that it is error free, the Gazetteer is ready for publishing. However, the Survey Act requires that all names published in any map of Kenya must be approved by the Minister of Lands upon advice of the Standing Committee on Geographical Names (SCGN), whose chair is the Director of Surveys.

Lists of all the new names are prepared and presented to the SCGN for endorsement and consequent approval by the minister.

Observations

Several issues were noted data collection.

- Geographical names databases are very dynamic with changes occurring due to;
 - Administrative unit restructuring,
 - New settlements,
 - Emergence of new urban areas that out develop the existing ones.
- The importance of standardization of geographical names cannot be gainsaid. The local residents are very cooperative in providing the necessary information because they appreciate being involved in participating in the exercise. In this regard, chances of disputes in connection with geographical names in Kenya are minimal, be they orthographic, linguistic or phonetic issues.
- Data collection is an expensive exercise that calls for huge investment in capacity development and procurement of equipment. This will enable the personnel involved to gain valuable experience and customize best practices.
- The effectiveness of any map is dependent on the actuality of the names used as annotations on the maps. Frequent updating of the gazetteer provides a trace of the historical development of the respective region.



*Figure 3:
Part of Map of Mombasa Prepared in 1978*



*Figure 4:
Geographical Names Collected in 2013
Overlayed on Figure 3 (1978 Map)
(Note the new geographical names
compared to those existing in 1978 map)*

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Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, the Survey Department which is the national survey and mapping agency, recently established a Geographical Names Branch, aiming at Standardization of Geographical Names used in the maps and other documents and also in the Geographical Information databases.

It has long been identified the need for standardization of geographical names in order to cater the requirements of Geo-Information community by providing correct names along with up to date high accurate maps to the geo information users.

Since the need for a national programme for standardization of geographical names would achieve an overall savings of government resources, this new branch was

established in order to fill this longstanding gap.

Further, the Cabinet of Ministers gave formal approval on 2009.09.08 for establishment of a committee for Standardization of Geographical Names in Sri Lanka.

The Department of Management Services of the Ministry of Finance & Planning gave approval to create a new Deputy Surveyor General post for standardization of geographical names from 2011.01.01 but, the branch was officially established 2012.02.16 due to administrative reasons.

Since the inception of the branch in February 2012, a cabinet paper was prepared for obtaining approval for the establishment of the 10 member committee for Standardization of Geographical Names headed by the Surveyor General comprising representatives from Ministries of Home Affairs & Cultural Affairs, Departments of Archeology & National Languages, Academics of University of Grants Commission, and senior staff of the Survey Department. The activities of the committee will be

- Establish principles that constitute the fundamental doctrines used for guiding the national standardization
- Establish the policies or rules covering specific details devised to deal with problems and the means of implementing standardization.
- Establish procedures and methods for carrying out names standardization.

A Project Concept paper was also prepared for Standardization of Geographical Names in Sri Lanka, which is now before the Department of National Planning trying to obtain funding sources.

Another request was sent to the Department of Official Languages for establishment of Romanization system for Sinhala language as majority of the geographical names have been originated from Sinhala language, but are written in Roman alphabet in most of the maps, official documents and digital databases.

Further, the Surveyor General and the Additional Surveyor General (Central) participated in the 27th session of the United Nations Group of Experts in Geographical Names (UNGEGN) held in New York on 30th July and 10th August 2012 and also in the 10th Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names held in New York from 31st July to 09th August 2012.

The Deputy Surveyor General in charge of Geographical Names participated in the 4th UNGEGN Training course on Toponymy held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia from 17th to 21st September 2012.

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Creation of a National Commission of Toponymy in Tunisia

Introduction

The toponymic landscape in Tunisia is very heterogeneous and its complexity comes at several levels:

- The rich historical heritage of names, important witness on civilizations and cultures that have lived and ruled in Tunisia through 3 millenniums.

- The bilingualism (the official use of the French language in parallel with the Arabic) and the diglossia between the official Arabic and the dialects.
- The toponymy is generally twinned with the cartography which, in a high level, relies either on existing names inherited from colonial epochs and that had been subject of several deformations or on the linguistically

unskilled surveyors who collect the names from the field.

- The absence of national toponymic authorities to regulate the sector, to set up standards for collecting, sharing and transcribing geographical names particularly on cartographic documents (maps, atlases) and on road panels.

Some national standardization' attempts

Considering the above mentioned factors and being aware about the negative impact of this on the mapping production, the government has tried since 1983, through the ex-National Mapping Agency (Office de la Topographie et de la Cartographie: (OTC)) , to set up a unique transcription system for its mapping production plan.

A restricted commission of toponymy created within the OTC and composed of experts and linguists representing three ministries (Ministry of National Defense, Ministry of Equipment, and Ministry of High Education and Scientific Research) was then assigned the task to study the amended Beirut 1972' transcription system, endorsed by the UNGEGN.

The Beirut system was then implemented by the OTC with few changes according to the Tunisian dialect. But few years after its adoption, the map users found this system complex and confusing. The system was thus abandoned letting place to several informal ways of transcription.

It is also appropriate to mention some academic or scientific studies that have addressed the issue of the geographical names 'transcription in Tunisia, researches primarily conducted by Ms Evelyne Ben Jaafar⁽¹⁾ from the Centre for Studies and for Economic and Social Researches (CERES)

in the framework of the establishment of the National Atlas of Tunisia and by Mr Mohsen Dhieb⁽²⁾ from the University of Arts and Humanities of Sfax - Laboratory SYFACTE, to develop a methodology to transcribe, on a medium scale administrative map, the Tunisian toponyms with the least possible errors. Which project remains in progress.

New toponymic challenges: the creation of a National Toponymic Commission

In 2009, the mapping production was assigned to the National Centre for Remote Sensing which, by "Law N°24-2009 of 11 May 2009", became the National Centre for Cartography and Remote Sensing (CNCT).

Empowered by its active participation to the UNGEGN work and in response to the continuous UNGEGN' calls about implementing the UNGEGN' recommendations and resolutions, the CNCT has fought to bring forward the emergency of geographical names' standardization. The creation of a National Toponymic Commission was seen as the first catalyst. Which commission will have to preserve the rich toponymic' heritage and to regulate the toponymic sector.

The project of the Decree was subject of several relevant inter- ministries' meetings, discussions and comments for about 3 years.

On 26th February 2013, the **Decree N°2013-1299** was signed by the ex-President of the Government Mr Hamadi JEBALI, stating creation of the national toponymic commission and setting its composition, its missions and its functioning rules [**Décret n° 2013-1299 du 26 février 2013, portant création de la commission nationale de toponymie et fixant sa composition, ses missions et les modalités de son fonctionnement**].

8th March 2013 was a wonderful day especially for the CNCT to see the Decree of the creation of the National Toponymic Commission (NTC) published on the **JORT** (Journal Officiel de la République Tunisienne) N° **20** in its Arabic and French versions.

The National Toponymic Commission, placed under the tutelage of the Ministry of National defense is chaired by the Ministry of Defense and is composed of members representing the Presidency, 11 ministries (The Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Regional Development and Planning, the Ministry of Equipment, the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Trade and Crafts, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research) and of members representing 9 national institutions from both government and private sectors.

The NTC may call upon experts, researchers, linguists or any other person whose participation in the work of the Committee is considered useful, but without taking part in the vote.

- (1) Associate Professor at University, linguist and author of the book (*Les noms des lieux en Tunisie: Racines vivantes de l'identité nationale*, CERES 1985).
- (2) Professor of geography (mapping), Laboratoire SYFACTE – Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines de Sfax.

The Secretariat of the National Commission of Toponymy is ensured by the National Centre for Cartography and Remote Sensing whose responsibilities are including :

- The preparation of the work' agendas of the Commission.
- The monitoring of the proposals and recommendations of the Commission and ensuring their implementation.
- The preservation and archiving of the Commission' work.

The National Commission of Toponymy is in charge of preserving and developing the national toponymic heritage and whose main missions include the following:

- Collect, identify, control and correct geographical names.
- Set national unified standards for the transcription and management of geographical names in Arabic and Latin.
- Control the translation of the names from Arabic to latin and their transcription and diffusion in particular on maps and road panels.
- Ensure the implementation of the Romanization' system endorsed by UNGEGN.
- Ensure studies and researches about the historical, socio-economic, cultural and religious origins and meanings of geographical names including the exonyms.
- Ensure the setting up of gazetteers, atlases and toponymic databases.
- Look after ensuring the publication and distribution of books, researches, studies and articles about geographical names and use different media to raise people' awareness about the importance of geographical names.
- Ensure the necessary coordination between all bodies involved in geographical names
- Ensure the representation of the Republic of Tunisia at the regional

and international events relevant to the field of geographical names.

In addition, the Commission is responsible for providing advice on all matters and issues related to place names and to participate to the preparation of laws and regulations related to the organization of the toponymic sector.

The Decree also provides for the possibility of creating sub-committees or working groups to treat with topics like exonyms, pronunciation, transcription' systems. Their creation, composition, assignments and operating rules will be subject of Decision by the Chairman of the commission, the Minister of National Defence.

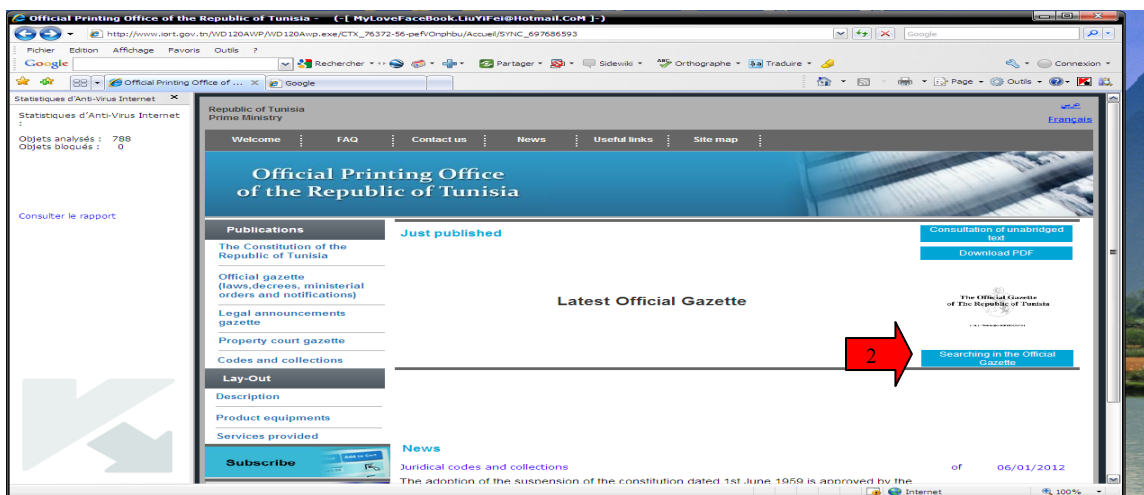
Actually the CNCT is working on setting up the action plan of the commission which should firstly start by setting the procedures for the appointment of the commission' members. There is an idea for organising a workshop - that may hopefully be attended by experts from UNGEGN- in order to introduce the commission and sensitize the

participants about its role in the promotion of the geographical names.

In conclusion, we do recognize that it is indeed a great national achievement, initiated by the National Centre for Cartography and Remote Sensing and supported by the UNGEGN in order to preserve the rich toponymic heritage of Tunisia and to promote all developing sectors by providing them with reliable, correct and standardized geographical names, but the real work will start now and certainly we'll continue to rely on the encouragement, contribution and assistance of UNGEGN' staff and experts to succeed.

For further details about the National Commission of Toponymy, please consult the Journal Officiel de la République Tunisienne (**JORT**) N° 20 dated **8th March 2013** at the following link:

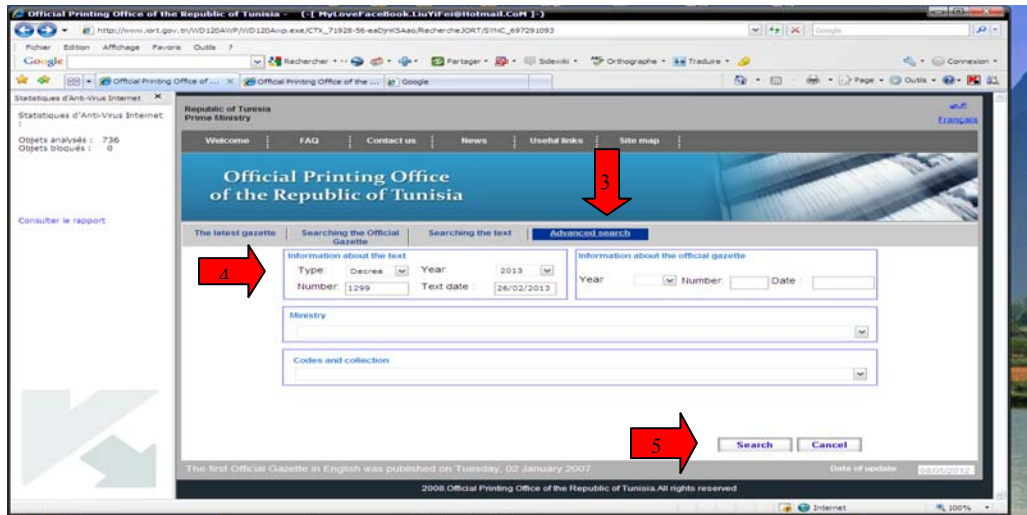
1. <http://www.iort.gov.tn/>
2. [Searching in the Official Gazette](#)



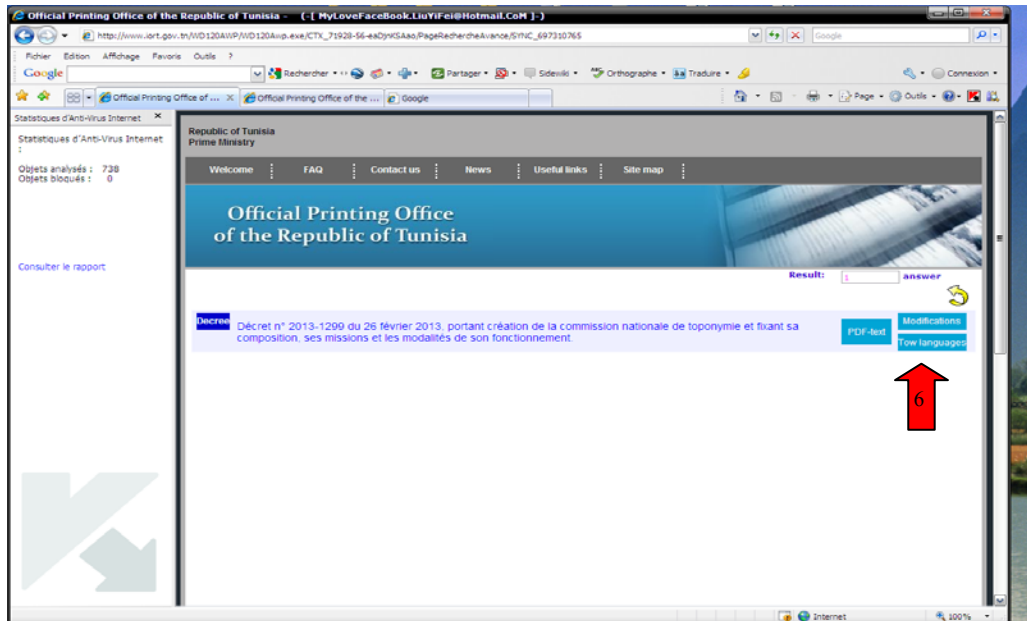
3. Advanced search

4. Make the request (Type : Decree ; Year : 2013 ; Number : 1299 ; Text date : 26/02/2013)

5. Search



6. Click on Two languages



7. The Decree in Arabic and French.

The screenshot shows the website of the Official Printing Office of the Republic of Tunisia. The page is in French and displays search results for a specific decree. The search criteria are: Text year: 2013, Text type: Decree, Text number: 1299, Text date: 26/02/2013. The results show the full text of the decree in French: "Décret n° 2013-1299 du 26 février 2013, portant création de la commission nationale de toponymie et fixant sa composition, ses missions et les modalités de son fonctionnement." The Ministry is listed as "Ministère de la Défense Nationale". The starting page is 916 and the ending page is 919. There is a "Download" button. Below the search results, there is a section for the "Official gazette" with filters for Year (2013), Number (020), and Date (08/03/2013). The page also contains a list of other decrees and laws in French and Arabic, such as "Décret n° 2013-1299 du 26 février 2013, portant création de la commission nationale de toponymie et fixant sa composition, ses missions et les modalités de son fonctionnement." and "Loi n° 74-100 du 25 décembre 1974, portant création de l'office de la topographie et du cadastre, telle que modifiée par la loi n° 2009-26 du 11 mai 2009."

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Upcoming Meetings of Groups Associated with Geographical Names

Some forthcoming meetings of organizations relevant to geographical names

UNGEGN Training Course

17-21 June 2013, Antananarivo, Madagascar

Joint meeting of UNGEGN Working Groups Evaluation and Implementation Publicity and Funding

4-6 July 2013, Seoul & Suwon, Republic of
Korea

Third Session of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM)

24-26 July 2013, Cambridge, United Kingdom
(http://ggim.un.org/ggim_committee.html)

IGU Kyoto 2013 Regional Conference

(<http://www.igu-kyoto2013.org/>)

4-9 August 2013, Kyoto, Japan

There will be 16 papers presented in the
Toponymy commission (joint with
ICA) sessions

10th UN Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas

19-23 August 2013, New York, United States
(<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/RCC/unrcca10.html>)

Joint UNGEGN Division meeting and seminar

18-20 September 2013, Tallinn, Estonia
(Baltic Division, Norden Division,
Integration of onomastic data in National
Spatial Data Infrastructure)

ICC 2013 – 26th International

Cartographic Conference

(<http://www.icc2013.org/>)

25-30 August 2013, Dresden, Germany

International Conference of Geography and Environment

(http://cigma2013.mx/geo_edit/convocatoria-carteles-ing-cigma2013.pdf)

7-9 October 2013, Mexico City, Mexico

American Association of Geographers (AAG)

Annual meeting 2014, 2015

(http://www.aag.org/cs/calendar_of_events)

April 8-12, 2014, Tampa

April 21-25, 2015, Chicago

UNGEGN 28th Session

May 2014

International Congress of Onomastic Sciences (ICOS)

(<http://www.icosweb.net/>)

25-29 August 2014, Glasgow, Scotland