

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

4 July 2012

**Tenth United Nations Conference on the
Standardization of Geographical Names**

New York, 31 July – 9 August 2012

Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

**Reports by Governments on the situation in their countries and on the progress
made in the standardization of geographical names since the Ninth Conference
(for distribution only).**

Report on Jamaica

Submitted by Jamaica **

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**Summary
Report of Jamaica**

**United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names
New York, 31 July to 9 August 2012
(Agenda Item 4)**

Document prepared by the National Land Agency, Jamaica (www.nla.gov.jm)

JAMAICA

1. Jamaica is the largest of the English Speaking West Indian islands. It has an area of 11,424 square kilometres (4,411 square miles) and is divided into 3 major divisions called counties, which are subdivided into 14 administrative regions known as parishes.

NATIONAL GAZETTEER

2. Jamaica has full map coverage at small and medium scales, as well as up-to-date map coverage of Kingston, the country's capital at a scale of 1/4000. All these maps are available in both digital and paper based forms with geodetic datum aligned to WGS 84.

Many of the names on these maps are regularly repeated across the island and this poses special challenges for efficient identification of places with such names. To resolve these problems and provide easy access to geographical names, Jamaica has started work on a national gazetteer to which online user-access will be provided when completed.

CIVIC ADDRESS PROJECT

3. In April 2011 Jamaica implemented a civic address pilot project, which will inform the formulation of a national project. The goal of the project is to have all properties in Jamaica provided with a civic address through the authority of their respective local authority. National standards for civic address and road names, including commemorative names will be developed under this project.

RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

4. It is important that Jamaica starts the development of a national gazetteer, implement the national civic address project and reactivate the 'Place Names Committee' in order to ensure a sustainable system of collecting, collating, processing and maintaining officially sanctioned geographical names for Jamaica.

Report of Jamaica

United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names New York, 31 July to 9 August 2012

(Agenda Item 4)

Document prepared by the National Land Agency, Jamaica (www.nla.gov.jm)

JAMAICA:

1. Jamaica is the largest of the English Speaking West Indian islands. It has an area of 11,424 square kilometres (4,411 square miles). It measures 243 kilometres (146 miles) from east to west and its greatest width from north to south is 80 kilometres (51 miles).

The island is divided into 3 major divisions called counties, which are subdivided into 14 administrative regions known as parishes. Figure 1.

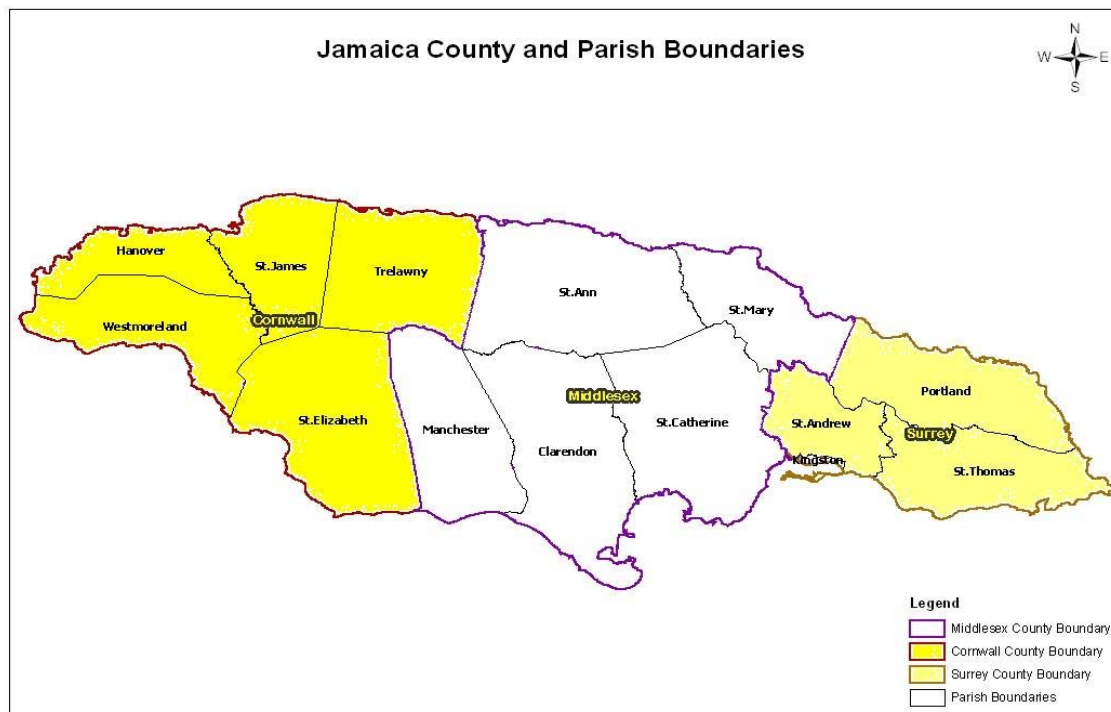


Figure 1– Jamaica County and Parish Boundaries

NATIONAL GAZETTEER

2. Jamaica has full map coverage at scales 1/250,000; 1/50,000 and 1/12,500 respectively. The National Land Agency last updated the 1/250,000 map in 2008 and the 1/50,000 map in 2011. The Agency also produced updated maps of 4 urban centres, including Kingston, the country's capital at a scale of 1/4000. All these maps are available in both digital and paper based forms with geodetic datum aligned to WGS 84.

All the names appearing on these maps are official names; however, many of these names recur across the island and this poses special challenges for efficient identification of places with such names. For example, the National Land Agency has identified some 40 instances of the recurrence of the geographical name **Content** in 13 of the 14 parishes.

To address these challenges, Jamaica needs a modern, reliable and up-to-date gazetteer that includes, *inter alia*, an updated list of geographical names with their coordinates provided in the current geodetic datum. The present list of geographical names does not reside in a database and the coordinates for these names relate to a geodetic datum that Jamaica no longer uses.

The National Land Agency's response has been to commence research and preliminary work to develop a national gazetteer for Jamaica. The gazetteer will be done in phases and geographical names will be recorded on a parish by parish basis. The first phase will include all the geographical names appearing on the 1/12,500 scale map. Subsequent phases will include the additional names appearing on the larger scale maps, for example, 1/4,000. Many of these names appearing on the 1/4000 scale maps will have to go through the formal process of approval by the 'Place Names Committee' (currently inactive), notwithstanding the fact that they may already have official standing in the records of the local authorities and the National Land Agency. The names appearing on the 1/250,000; 1/50,000 and 1/12,500 scale maps with the exception of a very few names were approved by the 'Place Names Committee'.

Modern technology will be employed to enable online user-access to the gazetteer through web mapping tools.

CIVIC ADDRESS PROJECT

3. In April 2011 the Ministry of Local Government in collaboration with the National Land Agency implemented a civic address pilot project in the parish of St. Elizabeth. St. Elizabeth is located in the south-western section of the island. The outcome of this pilot project will inform the formulation of a national project.

The goal of the project is to have all properties in Jamaica provided with a civic address through the authority of their respective local authority. This will result in easier location of properties, easier location of delinquent property owners, and better security of properties and residents.

Modern technology (GPS/GIS) will be used to both gather and analyse data for the project. All currently gazetted civic addresses and road names will be verified in the database, and all new civic addresses and road names will be approved by the relevant local authority and gazetted before entry in the database.

National standards for civic address and road names, including commemorative names will be developed under this project.

RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

4. It has been recognized, that it is vitally important that Jamaica:

- (a) Focus on completing the first phase of the gazetteer within the next 12 to 18 months and enable on-line access.
- (b) Complete the development of the national standards for civic address and road names within the next 6 to 9 months as a prerequisite to comprehensive implementation of the national civic address project.
- (c) Take steps to reactivate the 'Place Names Committee' in order to regularize geographical names appearing on official maps, which have not yet received the approval of the Committee.

The foregoing actions will ensure a sustainable system of collecting, collating, processing and maintaining officially sanctioned geographical names for Jamaica.