United Nations

Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names

New York, 31 July-9 August 2012

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Note

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Chapter I
Organization of the work of the Conference

A. Terms of reference

1.   The Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names was held at United Nations Headquarters from 31 July to 10 August 2012, in accordance with Economic and Social Council decisions 2008/241, 2011/251 and 2012/209.

B. Opening of the Conference

2.   The Director of the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs opened the Conference.

C. Attendance

3.   The Conference was attended by 289 participants. The list of participants is available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/ungegn/ungegnConf10.html.

D. Election of the President

4.   At its 1st plenary meeting, on 31 July 2012, the Conference elected, by acclamation, as President of the Conference, Mr. Botolv Helleland (Norway), who gave a welcoming address.

5.   At the same meeting, a statement was made by the Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

6.   Also at the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the United States of America (E/CONF.101/CRP.41), Canada (E/CONF.101/CRP.42), Israel (E/CONF.101/CRP.43), Palestine (E/CONF.101/CRP.44) and Egypt (E/CONF.101/CRP.45). [1]

E. Organizational matters

1. Adoption of the rules of procedure

7.   At its 1st plenary meeting, on 31 July 2012, the Conference adopted its provisional rules of procedure, as contained in document E/CONF.101/143.

2. Adoption of the agenda

8.   At its 1st plenary meeting, on 31 July 2012, the Conference adopted its provisional agenda (E/CONF.101/1). The agenda as adopted was as follows:

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[1] The conference room papers referred to in the present document are available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/ungegn/ungegnConf10.html.

1. Opening of the Conference.

2. Election of the President of the Conference.

3. Organizational matters:

    (a) Adoption of the rules of procedure;

    (b) Adoption of the agenda;

    (c) Election of officers other than the President;

    (d) Organization of work;

    (e) Credentials of representatives to the Conference.

4. 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).

5. Reports on the work of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, its divisions, working groups and task teams since the Ninth Conference.

6. National and international meetings, conferences, symposiums, publicity and publications.

7. Measures taken and proposed to implement United Nations resolutions on the standardization of geographical names, including the economic and social benefits.

8. National standardization:

    (a) Field collection of names;

    (b) Office treatment of names;

    (c) Treatment of names in multilingual areas;

    (d) Administrative structure of national names authorities, legislation, policies and procedures;

    (e) Toponymic guidelines for map editors and other editors.

9. Geographical names as culture, heritage and identity (including indigenous, minority and regional language names).

10. Exonyms.

11. Toponymic data files and gazetteers:

    (a) Content requirements;

    (b) Data models and classifications;

    (c) Data maintenance;

    (d) Data standards and interoperability;

    (e) Data services, applications and products (for example, gazetteers and web services).

12. Terminology in the standardization of geographical names.

13. Writing systems and pronunciation:

    (a) Romanization;

    (b) Conversion into non-Roman writing systems;

    (c) Writing of names in unwritten languages;

    (d) Pronunciation.

14. Country names.

15. Toponymic education.

16. Features beyond a single sovereignty and international cooperation:

    (a) Features common to two or more nations;

    (b) Bilateral/multilateral agreements.

17. Arrangements for the Eleventh Conference.

18. Adoption of resolutions of the Conference.

19. Adoption of the report of the Conference.

20. Closing of the Conference.

3. Election of officers other than the President

9. At its 1st plenary meeting, on 31 July 2012, the Conference elected the following officers:

Vice-Presidents:
    Mr. Abdul Kadir Taib (Malaysia)
    Mr. Milan Adamič (Slovenia)

Rapporteur:
    Mr. Peder Gammeltoft (Denmark), assisted by Ms. Lucy Phalaagae (Botswana)

Editor-in-Chief:
    Mr. Trent Palmer (United States of America), assisted by Mr. Claude Tapsoba (Burkina Faso), Ms. Eman Oriby (Egypt), Ms. Susana Rodríguez-Ramos (Mexico) and Ms. Nina Syvak (Ukraine)

4. Organization of work

10. At its 1st plenary meeting, on 31 July 2012, the Conference approved its proposed organization of work (E/CONF.101/INF/3, in English only) and established four technical committees. The Conference also elected the officers and allocated agenda items to the technical committees as follows:

Technical Committee I (items 8 and 9)

Chair:
    Mr. William Watt (Australia)

Vice-Chair:
    Ms. Naima Friha (Tunisia)

Rapporteur:
Ms. Caroline Burgess (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), assisted by Mr. Hubert Bergmann (Austria)

Technical Committee II (item 11)

Chair:
Mr. Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu (Germany)

Vice-Chair:
Ms. Eman Oriby (Egypt)

Rapporteur:
Ms. Laura Kostanski (Australia), assisted by Mr. Sungjae Choo (Republic of Korea)

Technical Committee III (items 10, 13 and 14)

Chair:
Mr. Leo Dillon (United States of America)

Vice-Chair:
Mr. Peter Jordan (Austria)

Rapporteur:
Mr. Dónall Mac Giolla Easpaig (Ireland), assisted by Mr. Peeter Päll (Estonia)

Technical Committee IV (items 12, 15 and 16)

Chair:
Mr. Ferjan Ormeling (Netherlands)

Vice-Chair:
Mr. Staffan Nyström (Sweden)

Rapporteur:
Ms. Wendy Shaw (New Zealand), assisted by Mr. Leif Nilsson (Sweden)

11.   Agenda items 1 to 7 and 17 to 20 were considered in plenary meeting.

5.   Credentials of representatives to the Conference

12.   At its 1st plenary meeting, on 31 July 2012, the Conference agreed, in accordance with rule 3 of the rules of procedure, that the Credentials Committee would be composed of the President, the two Vice-Presidents, the Rapporteur and a representative of the Statistics Division. It also decided that the Credentials Committee would examine the credentials of representatives and report to the plenary without delay.

13.   At the 12th plenary meeting, on 8 August 2012, the Credentials Committee reported that the credentials of the representatives had been found to be in order.

F.   Documentation

14.   The list of documents and the texts of the conference room papers and reports before the Conference are available on the web page of the Tenth Conference (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/ungegn/ungegnConf10.html).

Chapter II
Summary of the work of the Conference

A.   Plenary meetings

15.   At the 1st meeting, on 31 July 2012, the President drew the attention of the Conference to former members of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names who had passed away since the Ninth Conference. These included Luís Abrahamo of Mozambique, Eeva Maria Närhi of Finland and Jacub Rais of Indonesia.

Reports by Governments on the situation in their countries and on the progress made in the standardization of geographical names since the Ninth Conference (item 4)

16.   The Conference considered item 4 at its 7th meeting, on 3 August 2012. A conference room paper containing a concise overview and synthesis of the reports under this item was presented by the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on behalf of the Group of Experts. General themes of the country reports were described and subsequently discussed by the Conference. A total of 54 reports[2] had been submitted under the item.

Reports on the work of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, its divisions, working groups and task teams since the Ninth Conference (item 5)

17.   The Conference considered item 5 at its 12th and 13th meetings, on 7 and 8 August 2012. The Vice-Chair (Netherlands), on behalf of the Chair of the Group of Experts, presented an overview of meetings and work since the Ninth Conference (see E/CONF.101/2/Add.1). Since 2007, sessions have been held in Nairobi (2009) and Vienna (2011). Between sessions, the 23 geographical/linguistic divisions, the 10 working groups, the Task Team for Africa and the coordinating group for toponymic guidelines have continued their work. The website of the Group of Experts has been expanded to include conference and session documents, a world geographical names database, sample national standardization documentation and a portal of national authorities and online toponymic databases. Liaison with international organizations involved in the study, use and standardization of geographical names has been maintained.

18.   The President (Norway) presented a conference room paper summarizing and synthesizing the information contained in the 17 reports[2] submitted under item 5. The level of activity reported by many divisions is high and demonstrates the usefulness of the divisions for countries with similar standardization issues. Division matters were considered.

National and international meetings, conferences, symposiums, publicity and publications (item 6)

19.   The Conference considered item 6 at its 1st meeting, on 31 July. The representative of South Africa reported on the national workshop held by the South

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[2] Available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/ungegn/ungegnConf10.html.

African Geographical Names Council and the Department of Arts and Culture in April 2012 (see E/CONF.101/47/Add.1). The focus of the workshop was on public participation and consultation on standardization of geographical names, including the discussion of a revision of the South African Geographical Names Council Act.

20. The liaison officer of the International Council of Onomastic Sciences reported on activities of the council (see E/CONF.101/68/Add.1). Since the Ninth Conference, congresses have been held in Toronto, Canada (2008), and Barcelona, Spain (2011). The next congress is scheduled for 2014 (Glasgow, Scotland). The Council's working group on toponymic terminology liaises with the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology of the Group of Experts.

21. The representative of the Republic of Korea reported on the International Seminar on Sea Names launched in 1995 and its annual progress since 2008 (see E/CONF.101/111/Add.1). Although initially focused on a specific naming issue, the seminar has broadened its agenda in recent years.

22. The liaison officer of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) reported on its activities related to undersea feature naming and the publication *Limits of Oceans and Seas*[3] (see E/CONF.101/130/Add.1). IHO cooperates with other relevant organizations involved in the standardization of undersea feature names. The representatives of the Republic of Korea and Japan expressed their opinions as to why IHO did not wish to take any further decision on the *Limits of Oceans and Seas* at present. Japan and the Republic of Korea held differing views on the applicability of IHO technical resolution A.4.2.6. to oceans and seas.

Measures taken and proposed to implement United Nations resolutions on the standardization of geographical names, including the economic and social benefits (item 7)

23. The Conference considered item 7 at its 1st and 2nd meetings, on 31 July 2012. The Vice-Chair (Netherlands) and the secretariat presented a document prepared by the Chair (Canada) containing a list of the 11 resolutions adopted at the Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (see E/CONF.101/3/Add.1).

24. The representative of New Zealand reported on the implementation of five Conference resolutions by the New Zealand Geographic Board, Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa (see E/CONF.101/50/Add.1). The report also listed the 20 other current resolutions that will be reported on by New Zealand in the future.

25. An initiative for an act on place names in Finland and the creation of an official national standardization body for place names were reported on by the representative of Finland (see E/CONF.101/81/Add.1). Justifications for the proposal included references to Conference resolutions, national standardization organizations and the benefits of standardized place names.

26. The representative of Mexico reported on progress in the implementation of resolutions adopted at the previous Conferences (see E/CONF.101/107/Add.1). Spanish-language versions of the resolutions have been posted on the website of the

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[3] International Hydrographic Organization, *Limits of Oceans and Seas*, Special Publication No. 23, 3rd ed. (Monte Carlo, 1953).

Latin America Division to promote a greater understanding of the resolutions among the Division's member countries. It was hoped that the initiative would aid implementation and increase future participation.

27. The convenor of the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation (Republic of Korea) reported on the status of the Conference resolutions database (see E/CONF.101/112/Add.1). Currently the database is available in English and French only, but versions in other official languages could be prepared. The database is available from www.land.go.kr/ungegn and http://unstats.un.org/unsd/ geoinfo/ungegn/confGeneral.html and can be searched by conference, subject, title or keyword; the full text of the resolutions may be downloaded.

28. Special presentations were given by the representatives of the Economic Commission for Africa, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Indonesian Geospatial Information Agency, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Statistics Division (representing the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management), the National Geographic Information Group of Geoscience Australia and the Cartographic Section of the United Nations Secretariat.

Arrangements for the Eleventh Conference (item 17)

29. At the 13th meeting, on 8 August 2012, the President of the Conference (Norway) presented a document containing the draft provisional agenda for the Eleventh Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names. The modernization of the agenda had resulted in minor reorganizations.

30. At the same meeting, the Conference adopted the draft provisional agenda.

Closing of the Conference (item 20)

31. At the 17th plenary meeting, on 10 August 2012, the Director of the Statistics Division gave concluding remarks. The President subsequently declared the Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names closed.

Action taken by the Conference

Adoption of resolutions of the Conference (item 18)

32. At the 15th and 16th plenary meetings, on 9 and 10 August 2012, the Rapporteur read the text of the draft resolutions. The Conference adopted 11 resolutions emanating from the plenary and the technical committees (see chap. III below).

Adoption of the report of the Conference (item 19)

33. At its 15th to 17th plenary meetings, on 9 and 10 August 2012, the Conference considered item 19 and reviewed the text of the draft report of the Conference submitted by the Rapporteur (in English only).

34. The delegation of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia indicated that it considered that the observations made by the delegation of Greece, cited in paragraph 123 of the present report, were completely unfounded, because of the fact that the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) country and language codes for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia were universally accepted,

and regretted the fact that observations that were in no way related to the mandate of the Conference were included in the present document. The delegation of Greece regretted the statement made by the delegation of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and indicated that the aforementioned intervention of the delegation of Greece was of a purely technical nature, directly connected to information included in a document presented under agenda item 14 and thus entirely within the scope of the activities of the Conference.

35. At its 17th meeting, on 10 August, the Conference adopted *ad referendum* its report, pending discussions between the interested parties on the text of two outstanding paragraphs, following which the Rapporteur would finalize and submit the report to the Economic and Social Council in consultation with the President, the Bureau and the secretariat.

B. Technical Committee I

National standardization (item 8)

36. Technical Committee I considered item 8 at its 2nd to 4th meetings, held on 31 July and 1 August 2012.

Field collection of names (item 8 (a))

37. The representative of Indonesia presented a report describing guidelines for the collection of names of natural features in Indonesia (see E/CONF.101/123/ Add.1). The report covered the aims and scope of the guidelines and detailed the stages of collection. The Committee discussed the work of Indonesia on other feature types, the treatment of cross-border features and the use of information collected in the field.

38. In the conference room paper presented by the representative of Australia, the crowdsourcing of geospatial information for use in national gazetteers was examined and the key themes and findings of research conducted, such as the necessity of some form of quality control to ensure adherence to the principles of the Group of Experts, were described. The distribution, publication and scale of the collected data were discussed, as was the level of acceptance of names gathered. A comment was made by the representative of Google.

Office treatment of names (item 8 (b))

39. The report of Austria described the launch of a new version of the topographic map of Austria at a scale of 1:50,000 and 1:250,000 and outlined the agreed modifications (see E/CONF.101/138/Add.1). The products were available in raster and printed format and included official minority names, such as those in Slovene.

40. The representative of Finland presented a report describing an updated, now online, inventory of Swedish-language place names in Finland (see E/CONF.101/79/ Add.1). The volume contained information on the spelling and pronunciation of the names, as well as the names in Finnish, where appropriate.

41. A second report from Finland noted municipal mergers in the country and outlined the recommendations of the Finnish Language Board on the treatment of former municipal names (see E/CONF.101/82/Add.1). As for maps produced by the

National Land Survey of Finland, old municipal names would be preserved on maps if they remained in use as settlement names. The process for the selection of a new name was discussed, as was the style of presentation of minority language names.

42. In a further report from Finland, the treatment of addresses on islands with identical names resolved through the addition of a qualifier, such as the name of a local feature, was examined (see E/CONF.101/83/Add.1). Recommendations proposed to address these issues were presented in the report.

43. [*There was no agreement among the interested parties on the wording of this paragraph.*]

44. The report of Sweden described the inclusion of a paragraph on good place-name practice in the Swedish Heritage Conservation Act, commented on evaluations carried out in 2006 and 2011 and outlined the addition of Meänkieli to the Act's text (see E/CONF.101/129/Add.1). The Committee discussed prospects of a third evaluation and methods of promotion.

45. The report of Indonesia described the ongoing process of standardizing the names of islands in Indonesia and outlined the timeline for the various stages of work. Furthermore, problems in data collection were examined and a number of conclusions were made (see E/CONF.101/134/Add.1).

46. The representative of Canada proposed a draft resolution to address the adoption of criteria for establishing, evaluating and protecting the cultural heritage nature of geographical names (see E/CONF.101/135/Add.1).

47. In a second report from Canada, the question of using commercial names as geographical names was examined and the negative effects of such practice on the stability and quality of geographical names were described (see E/CONF.101/136/Add.1). The adoption of a resolution limiting such use of names was suggested in the report. The question of whether such names were recorded in national toponymic databases was discussed.

48. The representative of Mexico reported on progress made in national standardization (see E/CONF.101/139/Add.1). No national authority existed, and toponymic matters were handled by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography. Progress made by the Institute was described, and it was noted that additional consultation was being carried out to clarify the spellings of names.

49. The representative of China presented a conference room paper containing a brief introduction to the planning of geographical names in China, where rapid urban development necessitated the application of many new names. The paper described the main procedures, including five basic rules for deciding upon a name. The determination of new names involved all interested parties and the local government.

50. The representative of Norway introduced a conference room paper on the assignment of street addresses and described new legislation that had come into effect in 2010. The use of local names was encouraged for new developments; commercial names were rarely accepted. Naming responsibilities of the various authorities and the need to adhere to spelling rules and stipulations in the Place-Name Act were noted.

Treatment of names in multilingual areas (item 8 (c))

51. The representative of Poland presented a conference room paper describing the treatment of minority place names in Poland and progress in the introduction of minority language names, an updated list of which appeared on the website of the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland.

Administrative structure of national names authorities, legislation, policies and procedures (item 8 (d))

52. The representative of South Africa reported on the appointment of the South African Geographical Names Council, completed in February 2011 (see E/CONF.101/37/Add.1). Details of the appointments were contained in the paper; the Council was meeting and was functional.

53. Changes in legislative acts concerning the standardization of geographical names in Latvia were outlined by the representative of Latvia (see E/CONF.101/90/Add.1). The preservation of names had been included for the first time. It was foreseen that the text of the Regulations on Toponymic Information would be available online in English.

54. The representative of the Republic of Korea reported on the establishment of the Korea Committee on Geographical Names, combining the functions of two former naming committees (see E/CONF.101/114/Add.1). Procedures for the approval and changing of geographical names, including marine geographical names, were outlined.

55. The Regulation on the Guidance for the Establishment of the Topographical Names Standardization Committee, issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, was detailed by the representative of Indonesia (see E/CONF.101/120/Add.1). The report of Indonesia included the text of the law, which stipulated the composition and responsibilities of the various Committees established at the national, provincial and district/municipality levels. Linguistic experts played a consultative role in establishing appropriate standardized spellings.

56. A second report from Indonesia contained the text of the Regulation on the Guidance for the Standardization of Topographical Names, issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, and detailed the general principles and procedures to be followed (see E/CONF.101/121/Add.1).

57. The representative of Indonesia presented a further report that detailed the background and aims of the standardization process for Government administrative areas (see E/CONF.101/125/Add.1).

58. A fourth report was submitted by Indonesia, in which the urgent need to standardize the names of the islands in Indonesia was outlined. To date, 13,466 island names have been standardized (see E/CONF.101/122/Add.1).

59. The representative of Burkina Faso presented a conference room paper on the establishment of a National Toponymy Commission, replacing the inactive authority of 1986. Reasons for the failure of the original commission were discussed. Funding of the new commission falls under the Ministry of Territorial Administration, Decentralization and Security.

60.   The question of standardizing names of single holdings was examined by the representative of Norway in a conference room paper. Owners often resisted the standardization of names where they differed from the spelling of the owner's surname. An amendment to the 1990 Place Name Act had been proposed and prepared by the Ministry of Culture, distinguishing between farm names and the names of smaller farm parcels.

Toponymic guidelines for map editors and other editors (item 8 (e))

61.   The Coordinator for toponymic guidelines for map editors and other editors (Austria) outlined in a conference room paper the aims and content of the toponymic guidelines of the Group of Experts and recorded the submission of more than 40 guidelines or drafts to date. Countries that had not compiled guidelines were encouraged to do so.

62.   The report of Malaysia contained the country's guidelines for the determination of geographical names, containing 21 key naming principles, the application submission procedures and the organizational structures involved in the standardization of names (see E/CONF.101/5/Add.1).

63.   The representative of Denmark presented the updated edition of the toponymic guidelines for Denmark, including appendices for Greenland and the Faroe Islands, in a report (see E/CONF.101/10/Add.1). The version presented included minor editorial corrections and a new website for authorized names.

64.   The representative of the Netherlands summarized the content of the fourth edition of the toponymic guidelines for the Netherlands in a report containing information on languages, the Dutch alphabet and spelling rules for geographical names and identified authorities for the standardization of names (see E/CONF.101/31/Add.1). The guidelines are available from http://taaladvies.net/taal/ aardrijkskundige_namen/downloads/toponymic_guidelines.pdf.

65.   The report of Austria announced the publication of the seventh edition of the toponymic guidelines and detailed the principal changes since the previous version (see E/CONF.101/42/Add.1).

66.   The revised fourth edition of the toponymic guidelines for Estonia was described in a report that provided information on language, linguistic strata, dialects and minority language names and described the names authorities (see E/CONF.101/66/Add.1). Key changes related to information on source materials.

67.   The representative of Finland presented the updated version of the toponymic guidelines for Finland (see E/CONF.101/78/Add.1). The updates related to the distribution of population and languages, the list of publications and changes in administrative structure.

68.   Toponymic guidelines for Ukraine were presented in a report (see E/CONF.101/86/Add.1). The guidelines, published in 2011, contained information on language, territorial divisions, minority language names, an explanation of Ukrainian spelling rules and romanization details.

69.   [*There was no agreement among the interested parties on the wording of this paragraph.*]

70.   The report of Hungary, which was presented in a conference room paper, described the content of the fourth edition of the toponymic guidelines, including information on language, names authorities, source materials and glossaries.

Geographical names as culture, heritage and identity (including indigenous, minority and regional language names) (item 9)

71.   The Committee considered item 9 at its 4th meeting, on 1 August 2012.

72.   The representative of Tunisia presented a report compiled jointly with members of the Arabic Division on toponymic issues arising from the Arab Spring (see E/CONF.101/28/Add.1). The report analyzed the impact of political changes on the representation of place names, with examples from Egypt, Libya and Tunisia.

73.   The representative of Austria reported on the increase in the number of official bilingual (German-Slovene) settlement names in Kärnten (see E/CONF.101/39/Add.1). The report outlined the situation and described new regulations concerning the official bilingual status of 164 settlement names.

74.   The representative of Australia reported on Australian indigenous names projects, highlighting the importance of engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and culture (see E/CONF.101/52/Add.1). The report noted progress made in the recording and use of indigenous names in Australia and described national initiatives and legislative changes.

75.   A second report from Australia described a commemorative naming process to mark the centenary of the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps landings at Gallipoli, Turkey, in 2015 (see E/CONF.101/54/Add.1). Project phases were outlined and supporting departments noted. The names would commemorate the men and women who served in the Australian and New Zealand Defence Forces; endonyms in Gallipoli would also be included in consultation with Turkey.

76.   The representative of Tunisia reported on the Tunisian toponymic landscape, focusing on the languages encountered and the legacy of names from the colonial period still appearing on cartographic products (see E/CONF.101/61/Add.1). A lack of linguistic knowledge by field surveyors, problems in scrutinizing research and a lack of appropriate tools contributed to the distortion of the geographical names. The impact of the 2011 revolution was also examined.

77.   The representative of Canada presented a report outlining a project to liaise with the Pikangikum First Nation in Ontario in the collection and reflection of 17 Ojibway toponyms (see E/CONF.101/133/Add.1). The consultation process, the appropriate presentation of the names and the background to the decision to accord dual-name status were discussed.

78.   A conference room paper by the representative of Norway on a pilot project to raise awareness of local place names in the community described potential methods of collecting, displaying and promoting geographical names and their etymology.

79.   The representative of China presented a conference room paper containing the summary of actions taken to protect the cultural heritage of geographical names in China.

80.   Georgia presented a report on Georgian terms for countries and peoples (see E/CONF.101/88/Add.1).

C. Technical Committee II

Toponymic data files and gazetteers (item 11)

81. The convenor of the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers presented a summary of work undertaken since the Ninth Conference (see E/CONF.101/91/Add.1). Particular attention was given in the report to collaboration with ISO, the Open Geospatial Consortium and Unicode. Aspects of the work programme for the Centre of Excellence for United Nations Spatial Data Infrastructure and assistance provided by the Working Group through training courses in toponymy and input into the Africa GeoNyms project were defined in the report. The representative of the Unicode Consortium confirmed that version 7 of Unicode would be published in 2014.

Content requirements (item 11 (a))

82. Australia proposed to the Group of Experts a reconsideration of gazetteer purposes and definitions. Its report outlined the rise in demand for non-traditional gazetteer information typically related to unofficial, temporal, commercial or colloquial names and asset numbers, such as postcodes and census blocks (see E/CONF.101/57/Add.1). According to the details in the report, there are currently no definitions for what constitutes "official" or "unofficial" gazetteers or data, and an outline of some potential definitions has been sketched by Australia. A call was made for the Group of Experts to reimagine gazetteers as records of official naming processes, sources of unofficial place names, reflections of cultural associations and facilitators of information delivery.

Data models and classifications (item 11 (b))

83. No papers were presented under this item.

Data maintenance (item 11 (c))

84. The report of Malaysia outlined the development of an authoritative geographic names database and web gazetteer since 2004 (see E/CONF.101/70/Add.1). The database includes local names, historical information and data authorized for Government use. There are modules included that utilize Arabic characters and audio in Malay. The current development will incorporate names at a scale of 1:10,000 and be published in 2013.

85. Indonesia reported on new laws providing for the mandatory collection of place names in a database maintained by the Indonesian Geospatial Information Agency (see E/CONF.101/127/Add.1). Since 2004, names have been field-collected for the national gazetteer at a scale of 1:25,000 and 1:50,000. Name collection is currently being undertaken in regions previously unsurveyed, including Papua. The aim is to incorporate the gazetteer into the Indonesia Spatial Data Infrastructure as the authoritative source of geographic names.

86. The report of Algeria (see E/CONF.101/103/Add.1) was not presented.

Data standards and interoperability (item 11 (d))

87. In the report of Australia, the matching of identifiers across data sets was discussed and it was proposed that multi-sector data analysis be assisted by linking

information through a gazetteer framework (see E/CONF.101/55/Add.1). Re-engineering gazetteer services using linked data mechanisms is the focus of the project funded by the Australian Agency for International Development and developed by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization with the support of the Office of the Chief Information Technology Officer of the United Nations Secretariat. The project is being piloted in Indonesia through collaboration with the Indonesian Geospatial Information Agency. Members of the Group of Experts were encouraged to consider participating; a detailed workshop presentation was provided on 8 August.

88. The report of Finland defined one objective of its national spatial data infrastructure programme as providing a method for place names to support the interoperability of geospatial data sets (see E/CONF.101/76/Add.1). The National Mapping Agency maintains standardized place names in the Geographic Names Register. In the model, each object may have one or more place names attributed. The paper provided a schema for the system, which is available through a standard web feature service interface.

89. The report of Mexico outlined how to reduce duplication of information and stated that three technical standards on geographic naming and data had been compiled into one new national standard (see E/CONF.101/140/Add.1). The standard now outlines the use of generic terminology and official, unofficial and personal names, among others. The standard has been reviewed by over 100 offices and entities at the State level and will be published by the end of 2012.

90. The report of Canada contained a summary of issues associated with storing and displaying special characters used in Canadian aboriginal languages (see E/CONF.101/142/Add.1). The Geographical Names Board of Canada adopted the use of ISO-639 language codes, and the gazetteer and website now support Unicode UTF-8 character encoding. Isolated issues in which characters did not display properly on particular web browsers or software have now been resolved.

91. Australia presented a conference room paper on a project in the State of Western Australia to integrate the State gazetteer with addressing and other Government geospatial information data sets. The process required cleansing of data as the State topographic data set was matched against the official gazetteer. As a result, the topographic data set now contains a unique ID for all feature names that are directly drawn from the official gazetteer, resulting in direct benefits for users.

Data services, applications and products (for example, gazetteers and web services) (item 11 (e))

92. The report of Japan outlined various geographical names databases either available free of charge or for a fee (see E/CONF.101/35/Add.1). Since the publication in 2007 of the Basic Act on the Advancement of Utilizing Geospatial Information, fundamental geospatial data have been developed by the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan. Currently, the data set contains approximately 470,000 geographical names taken from 1:25,000 maps, and data are planned to be made available at a fee for public use in the near future.

93. The report of New Zealand outlined details of a new gazetteer system due for release on the web and within the existing data service through Land Information New Zealand late in 2012 (E/CONF.101/51/Add.1). The New Zealand Geographic

Board is developing a modern standards-based gazetteer system that will allow access to official and unofficial names. The system will provide direct access and updates to users both within and outside Government.

94. The report of Estonia outlined five geographical names resources now available, including the place names database of the Institute of the Estonian Language (see E/CONF.101/65/Add.1). This database contains 141,000 records with over 400,000 name variants. The variety of data and systems available, which reflects the different information collected by linguists with regard to pronunciation and etymology, makes it difficult to merge the databases into one comprehensive data set. However, this might occur in the future.

95. Finland reported that under the decree of 21 December 2011 by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, as of 1 May 2012 the National Land Survey made its topographic data sets publicly available, free of charge (see E/CONF.101/77/Add.1). The data sets can be downloaded or acquired through web services, such as web feature or web map services. The past 12 months have seen the registration of 70 users for the web feature service, 4,119 successful downloads of pre-defined name data files and 7,254 successful downloads of small-scale map data files.

96. The report of Germany provided a status update on the EuroGeoNames project (see E/CONF.101/94/Add.1). Between 2006 and 2009, a European geographical names infrastructure was established by connecting national official gazetteers from participating national mapping and cadastral agencies. The project has been managed by EuroGeographics and the Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy of Germany since 2009. The current focus is on achieving coverage of the European Union member States, at least, and providing more cloud-based architecture. A demonstration of the system and of new trends was provided on 2 August 2012.

97. A second report from Germany outlined how the Federal Government, Federal States and municipalities have collaborated, provided data for and utilized the Geoportal.DE, which provides a search function for geospatial data, places, addresses and thematic maps covering Germany (see E/CONF.101/95/Add.1). The geoportal is hosted and maintained by the Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy of Germany.

98. The report of Poland defined the role of the Surveyor General in maintaining the national register of geographical names (see E/CONF.101/102/Add.1). Currently 198,356 objects with attributes are included in the gazetteer. Legislation now defines the gazetteer as the official list of names for Government use, and a new online database allows for data to be gathered, updated and shared through the Geoportal website. The data set comprises names within Poland and will comprise names outside its borders.

99. The report of the Republic of Korea outlined how, since 2003, a geographical names management system had been developed by the National Geographic Information Institute with the participation of local governments (see E/CONF.101/116/Add.1). New geographical names management systems, including a linked open data service, are now provided through the Institute's web pages.

100. The conference room paper of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea presented the responsibilities of its Geographical Names Committee in standardizing geographical names. Delivery of names is provided through the Administrative Geographical Names Management System, *Kumsugangsan* 1.0. Data is stored in a

MySQL database, and the System manages administrative geographical names and administrative borders for display at a scale of 1:25,000.

101. The reports of Spain (see E/CONF.101/7/Add.1 and E/CONF.101/8/Add.1) were not presented.

102. The Chair summarized the reports presented to the Committee and identified as a key issue the establishment of applications to make geographical names data usable for different purposes.

D.   Technical Committee III

Exonyms (item 10)

103. The representative of Japan presented a conference room paper documenting differences between land features and maritime features, such as seas and oceans. Owing to these differences, the exonym/endonym dichotomy cannot be applied to the names of seas; instead, a distinction between local and international names is more important.

104. The co-convenor of the Working Group on Exonyms presented the report of the Working Group outlining its activities since the Ninth Conference (see E/CONF.101/43/Add.1). The report highlighted the five meetings of the Working Group, which included workshops held in Timişoara, Romania (2008), Tainach, Austria (2010), and Gdańsk, Poland (2012). The main topics at those workshops concerned the endonym/exonym divide, guidelines and criteria for the use of exonyms and trends in exonym use. Despite intensive discussions, it was not possible to arrive at final conclusions. It was also indicated that most Working Group members were dissatisfied with the current endonym and exonym definitions and were of the view that they must be re-examined, as they were the basis for all other definitions.

105. The representative of Poland presented an updated list of Polish geographical names of the world being prepared by the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland, due for publication late in 2012 (see E/CONF.101/46/Add.1). The list will be published in hard copy and in PDF format on the Commission's website.

106. The representative of Austria presented a report in which the endonym/exonym divide according to linguistic, sociological, cultural/geographical, juridical and political aspects was examined and the role of the local community in the naming process and the community/feature relationship as the essential criterion for an endonym/exonym was highlighted (see E/CONF.101/73/Add.1). It was noted that the endonym/exonym divide was not always confined to communities with different languages, which was the reason why community had to replace language as a definition criterion for the divide. In conclusion, new definitions for the terms "endonym" and "exonym" were proposed.

107. Austria submitted and withdrew its report containing recommendations for the use of geographical names in Austrian educational media.

108. The representative of France presented a report stating that the work of the Conference and of the Group of Experts, particularly in the matter of exonyms, seemed at times to focus on standardization without sufficient regard for superior

principles relating to freedom of expression and the safeguarding of cultural diversity as declared by the United Nations (see E/CONF.101/89/Add.1).

109. The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea reported in a conference room paper on the revision of exonyms in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as part of the national standardization process.

Writing systems and pronunciation (item 13)

Romanization (item 13 (a))

110. The representative of Bulgaria presented a report on the Transliteration Act of 2009, in which the system and rules for romanization of the Bulgarian alphabet were endorsed (see E/CONF.101/12/Add.1). The paper described the transliteration system as conforming to the principles of simplified conversion of alphabet systems for conversion by electronic means. The representative of Austria expressed reservations concerning the system's non-conformity to the approved principles of romanization, as it was not fully reversible. The reservation was supported by the representative of Slovenia. The convenor of the Working Group on Romanization Systems (Estonia) stated that the Working Group had not achieved unanimous support for the proposed system.

111. The representative of Austria presented a statement of the Austrian Board on Geographical Names regarding the romanization of the Ukrainian Cyrillic alphabet (see E/CONF.101/40/Add.1). The Board held that the proposed romanization system did not adhere to the principle laid out in Conference resolutions of reversible unambiguous transliteration in the conversion of non-Roman alphabets into Roman alphabets and asked the Conference to insist on this principle and not to accept such conversion systems. The fact that a certain system is well implemented cannot be accepted as a criterion overruling all others. In the discussion, the representative of Austria stated that Austria would support neither the Ukrainian nor the Bulgarian transliteration system. This statement was supported by the representatives of Germany, Slovenia and the Netherlands, while the representatives of the Russian Federation and France supported the proposed systems. The representative of Estonia recognized that there had been a difficult discussion within the Working Group on the matter of the Ukrainian system and pleaded for a case of pragmatism as opposed to idealism.

112. The convenor of the Working Group on Romanization Systems (Estonia) presented a report on the main developments in the status of various romanization systems on the agenda of the Working Group (see E/CONF.101/48/Add.1). The report provided information on the romanization systems for Arabic, Armenian, Belarusian, Bulgarian, Georgian, Khmer, Macedonian Cyrillic, Maldivian, Nepali, Persian and Ukrainian. The paper also reported that Belarus, Bulgaria, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Ukraine had expressed their intention to submit their respective romanization systems for approval at this Conference.

113. The representative of Ukraine reported on the Ukrainian romanization system approved by the Government and used at the national level for the transliteration of Ukrainian geographical names into the Latin alphabet (see E/CONF.101/84/Add.1). The representative of Austria stated that he had expressed concerns regarding the Ukrainian romanization system already at the twenty-sixth session of the Group of

Experts, whereas the representative of the Russian Federation supported the Ukrainian romanization system.

114. The report submitted by the Arabic Division (see E/CONF.101/96/Add.1) was not presented.

115. The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran presented a report describing the romanization system for Persian prepared by the Transcription Working Group of the Iranian Committee on Standardization of Geographical Names (see E/CONF.101/118/Add.1). The system had been adopted at the national level and was being implemented for the romanization of geographical names, for which reason the system was being submitted for approval at the Conference. The convenor of the Working Group on Romanization Systems (Estonia) stated that the Working Group had held discussions on the romanization system for Persian and that a draft resolution would be put forward for approval at the Conference, in spite of concerns expressed about the reversibility of the system.

116. The representative of Estonia presented a report addressing the problems of reversibility of romanization systems (see E/CONF.101/141/Add.1). In the report, the measurement of the reversibility of romanization systems by counting graphemes of the source script and calculating the percentage of graphemes romanized unambiguously was proposed. According to this methodology, no systems were fully reversible and a rate of reversibility over 90 per cent should be considered as being very good. As a consequence, the reversibility of a romanization system could only be a recommended, but not mandatory, characteristic.

117. A conference room paper presented by the representative of Belarus (E/CONF.101/CRP.2) described the system for the transliteration of Belarusian geographical names into the Roman alphabet, adopted by the State Committee on Land Resources, Geodesy and Cartography in 2007. The paper stressed that the system had been submitted to the Working Group on Romanization Systems in May 2012. The convenor (Estonia) stated that the Working Group had no objections to the system and would submit a draft resolution to the Conference for approval.

118. The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea presented a conference room paper (E/CONF.101/CRP.15) outlining revisions to the romanization system for Korean published by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in August 2000. The representative of the Republic of Korea expressed reservations with the proposals set out in the paper, but expressed the willingness to engage with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to establish a single romanization system for Korean.

Conversion into non-Roman writing systems (item 13 (b))

119. The representative of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers presented its report and gave a presentation outlining its responsibility in managing and coordinating the domain name system to ensure that every Internet address is unique and that all users of the Internet can find valid addresses (see E/CONF.101/ 104/Add.1). The paper described the IDN ccTLD Fast Track Process, whose objective is to enable countries and territories to use their country or territory name in Internet addresses. The paper highlighted the assistance that the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers had received from the Group of Experts.

Writing of names in unwritten languages (item 13 (c))

120. No papers were presented under this item.

Pronunciation (item 13 (d))

121. The convenor of the Working Group on Pronunciation (Ireland) presented a conference room paper containing the report of the Working Group. The report outlined the aims and work plan and the topics discussed at its meetings, including the use of audio files as a guide to pronunciation. The report highlighted the future role of the Working Group in encouraging and advising on the creation of audio pronunciation guides to geographical names at the national level and in maintaining a register of such guides on the website of the Group of Experts.

Country names (item 14)

122. The convenor of the Working Group on Country Names (United States of America) presented a report that contained the list of country names compiled by the Group of Experts, which contained entries for the 194 countries generally recognized by the international community to be independent States (see E/CONF.101/25/Add.1). The aim of the document was to present country names in the language or languages used in an official capacity within each country in the world. The convenor explained that work had continued on the list over the previous five years and that amendments had been made to it. Palestine requested to be added to the list of country names compiled by the Group of Experts. The secretariat provided an explanation. Statements were also made by Canada and Israel, objecting to the statement made by Palestine. Statements were made by Turkey and Cyprus about the document.

123. Concerns were raised by the representative of Greece about the ISO country and language codes, as well as the language label concerning the entry for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in the UNGEGN list of country names.

124. The convenor of the Working Group on Country Names (United States of America) presented a second paper, which contained weblinks to lists of country names compiled by national and other authorities (see E/CONF.101/26/Add.1). The convenor explained that some country names used by national authorities were not the same as those used by the Group of Experts and that the Working Group would welcome additions to the list.

125. The representative of Poland presented an official list of names of countries and non-self-governing territories containing the names of the countries and 69 non-self-governing territories recognized by Poland, along with the names of capitals (see E/CONF.101/44/Add.1). The representative of Argentina expressed reservations on some aspects of the paper. The representative of Palestine expressed strong reservations regarding the placement of Palestine in the list.

126. The report submitted by Georgia (see E/CONF.101/88/Add.1) was presented under item 9.

127. The representative of Cyprus presented a report describing the list of country names and capitals that had been compiled by the Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names of Cyprus, according to the recommendations of the United Nations (see E/CONF.101/97/Add.1). The representative explained

that the list aimed to show how the country names and capitals were standardized in the Greek language.

E. Technical Committee IV

Terminology in the standardization of geographical names (item 12)

128. Technical Committee IV considered item 12 at its 11th meeting, on 7 August 2012.

129. The report presented by the representative of Australia outlined difficulties when relating and merging multiple feature types from different countries to a linked gazetteer structure, as revealed during the development of a prototype gazetteer framework for Indonesia (see E/CONF.101/56/Add.1). It was recommended that a common feature type list (multilingual and in multi-script format) be developed for implementation by all countries, in order to contribute towards the proposed United Nations Spatial Data Infrastructure, and that a special committee be established to undertake this task.

130. The representative of Indonesia presented a report covering standardization of regional language generic terms, to be completed by 2014 (see E/CONF.101/117/Add.1). These standardized forms were to be used to verify names in the toponymic database.

131. The convenor of the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology (Sweden) presented a report on the work of the Working Group over four meetings held between 2007 and 2012 (see E/CONF.101/137/Add.1). In 2008 it established cooperation with the terminology group of the International Council of Onomastic Sciences. Despite discussions on new and amended toponymic terms and definitions, no changes have been made to the *Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names*; instead, the Working Group awaits the establishment of the planned database of toponymic terminology.

Toponymic education (item 15)

132. The Committee considered item 15 (g) at its 11th meeting, on 7 August 2012.

133. The convenor of the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy (Netherlands) presented a discussion paper proposing to formalize a two-week, in-country toponymy course for advanced education and specialized training in national standardization (see E/CONF.101/30/Add.1). The content of the course would be based on information taken from various courses held worldwide since 2004. Course criteria and a programme were suggested. Self-funded experts willing and available to lecture, especially those who spoke French, Arabic or Portuguese, were sought.

134. The representative of the Netherlands presented a report on a BSc level online toponymy course developed by the Group of Experts and the International Cartographic Association, which now includes 20 modules, as well as updated web content layout and functionality (see E/CONF.101/33/Add.1). The online course is beneficial because most participants do not have access to on-site training, and it lays the groundwork for future advanced training.

135. The report introduced by the representative of Indonesia detailed advice on technical assistance given to local government officials throughout Indonesia to build their capacity for carrying out their name standardization duties (see E/CONF.101/124/Add.1). The training has been led by the national team since 2010, with four sessions per year to cover all provinces, regencies and municipalities. The content is comprehensive, seeking to improve skills and capacity and facilitate more effective communication between the local and national teams.

136. A second paper by the representative of Indonesia informed the Committee of a fourth international toponymic training course, in cooperation with UNGEGN, to be held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, from 17 to 21 September 2012 (see E/CONF.101/126/Add.1). Up to 60 participants are expected from members of the new Asia South-East Division, as well as officials from central and local government agencies in Indonesia.

137. The representative of the United States of America presented a conference room paper on behalf of the liaison officer for the Pan American Institute of Geography and History on activities since the previous Conference, including the provision of three training courses in Ecuador, Honduras and Spain and the development of an online course in applied toponymy.

138. On behalf of the Chair of the Africa Central Division, the delegate from Burkina Faso presented a conference room paper on the first training workshop held in Yaoundé in November 2010, organized by the National Institute of Cartography in partnership with the Group of Experts. Forty participants from Cameroon, Chad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo received toponymic training.

Features beyond a single sovereignty and international cooperation (item 16)

139. The Committee considered item 16 (a) at its 8th meeting, on 6 August 2012.

Features common to two or more nations (item 16 (a))

140. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea presented a conference room paper on standardizing the name of the sea between the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago, seeking the Conference's assistance in resolving this matter first raised at the Sixth Conference, in 1992. The Conference was asked to replace the name "Sea of Japan", a legacy of colonial rule of Japan in the Korean peninsula, with the name "East Sea" and was requested to give a clear mandate to IHO to do likewise. The Chair commented on the mandate of the Conference.

141. The conference room paper submitted by the Government of Japan argued that the naming of individual geographic features should not be raised at this technical forum. Since the Ninth Conference, in 2007, two meetings had been held with the Republic of Korea, regrettably without progress. Japan considered "Japan Sea" as a well-established international sea name since the early nineteenth century, and seas and oceans were neither addressed by Conference resolution III/20 nor IHO technical resolution A.4.2.6. The Chair questioned the definition of the term "international name", as it was not included on the *Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names*. Japan responded that there were as many names for any given sea as there were languages; however, IHO was required to establish one international name for uniformity, navigational aids and maritime safety.

142. The representative of the Republic of Korea, presenting a conference room paper, reported that bilateral consultations with Japan did not make progress owing

to Japan's inflexibility, and that the name "East Sea" should be used concurrently, in accordance with resolution III/20 and IHO resolution A.4.2.6, as the sea area in question was a semi-enclosed sea shared by more than two countries. The Republic of Korea emphasized that the name "East Sea" is gaining wide acceptance at the international level as an increasing number of atlases, books and papers refer to the sea area in question as "East Sea". The Republic of Korea also stressed that the Conference was the right forum to deal with the issue, as it was mandated to encourage the standardization of national and international geographical names. The Republic of Korea pointed out that the concurrent use of "East Sea" and "Japan Sea" would contribute to promoting navigational safety, as around 400,000 ships that sailed the sea area used the name "East Sea".

143. France provided illustrations of bilingual denominations of the sea area between France and the United Kingdom. Japan noted that those examples of English/French bilingual denominations were limited and did not include seas and oceans. France and Qatar stressed that an issue could be solved through close consultations among the countries concerned. In response to a media report about his intervention, the representative of France explained that France used only the term *Mer du Japon*, which did not reflect a position on international naming, urging at the same time that a bilateral solution be sought to resolve the matter.

144. The Chair encouraged the three countries to continue their efforts to find a solution acceptable to all of them.

Bilateral/multilateral agreements (item 16 (b))

145. No papers were submitted under this item.

Chapter III
Resolutions adopted by the Conference

X/1. **Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names and twenty-eighth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names**

The Conference,

Noting the achievements and the progress made in the work of standardization of geographical names at the national and international levels,

Noting also the essential role played by the present Conference and by the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names at its twenty-seventh session,

Recognizing the necessity of continuing this important work with the support of the Economic and Social Council,

1.   *Recommends* to the Economic and Social Council that the Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names be convened in 2017;

2.   *Also recommends* to the Council that the twenty-eighth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names be convened in the first half of 2014;

3.   *Invites* the Bureau of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names to initiate a process of reflection on how to further improve the working methods of the Conference and its report for the next session.

X/2. **Organization of the twenty-eighth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names on the Asian Continent**

The Conference,

Noting that thus far the sessions of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names have been held in Europe, North America and once in Africa,

Noting also the need for greater progress for many Asian countries in the field of standardization of geographical names,

Recognizing that the majority of Asian countries experience difficulties in participating in sessions of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names in Europe or North America,

Affirming the important role of geographical names in economic, social and cultural development, particularly in the developing countries,

Recommends that the twenty-eighth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names be held on the Asian continent, in cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, at a United Nations duty station, provided that the necessary support facilities, including for interpretation in the six official languages of the United Nations, are made available.

X/3. Criteria for establishing and evaluating the nature of geographical names as cultural heritage

The Conference,

Noting the existence of a number of resolutions that address toponymy as part of a nation's cultural heritage and the necessity to preserve toponymic heritage,

Recalling recommendation C of its resolution I/4 on the principles of office treatment of geographical names,

Considering that, to develop these principles, it is recommended that unnecessary changes to geographical names should be avoided and that the treatment of names should not result in the suppression of significant toponymic elements,

Considering also that none of these principles describe how to recognize a name that should be protected for its cultural heritage qualities,

Recommends that, to recognize and protect such a geographical name or a corpus of geographical names, the following criteria be used:

(a)   The age of a name, as indicated by the date of the oldest possible record of the name;

(b)   The resilience of a name, as indicated by the duration of its continued use up to the present or by its notable capacity to transcend history;

(c)   The rarity of a name or of a toponymic phenomenon pointed out by the name;

(d)   The "testimoniality" of a name, or its capacity to clearly embody a cultural, geographical, historical, social or other reality that is specific to the place and an essential component of local, regional or national identity;

(e)   The appeal of a name, which corresponds to a feeling of belonging associated with the name and the place it designates;

(f)   The imageability of a name, or its capacity to inspire ideas or strong, rich images within users, without these images or ideas necessarily referring to history or local trivia.

X/4. Discouraging the commercialization of geographical names

The Conference,

Recognizing that the use of geographical names that seek a commercial purpose and the buying and selling of geographical names are practices that exist, especially in urban areas,

Considering that these practices transform the places and names they affect into commodities that will likely promote the replacement of geographical names with long-standing local usage and threaten the integrity of geographical nomenclatures of nations,

Recalling its resolution VIII/9, in which it recognized the importance of geographical names as part of a nation's historical and cultural heritage, and its resolution IX/4, in which it recognized that geographical names were part of the

intangible cultural heritage, within the meaning of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on 17 October 2003,

Noting that, in the Operational Directives for the Implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, it is stated that commercial activities should not threaten the viability of the intangible cultural heritage and that particular attention should be paid to avoiding commercial misappropriation and to ensuring that the commercial use does not distort the meaning and purpose of the intangible cultural heritage for the community concerned,

Considering that the use of geographical names that seek a commercial purpose and the buying and selling of geographical names are practices that harm the stability of geographical names with long-standing local usage and threaten the quality of the names as useful geographical references,

Noting that, on the one hand, a number of geographical names generated from commercial practices also have a long-standing local usage and serve as effective reference points and that, on the other hand, a number of geographical names with long-standing local usage were named spontaneously by users of the territory owing to a company's presence in the area,

Noting also that some toponymic authorities around the world have already adopted standards to limit or prohibit such commercial toponymic practices,

Recommends that national toponymic authorities discourage the designation of geographical names that seek a commercial purpose, as well as various practices involving the commercialization of geographical names, by adopting standards that address these issues.

X/5. Split of the Asia South-East and Pacific South-West Division into the Asia South-East Division and the Pacific South-West Division

The Conference,

Considering that the Asia South-East and Pacific South-West Division is, with twenty-two members, the largest Division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, and noting that the high number of members has significantly impeded decision-making and the implementation of geographic naming activities,

Noting that, at its twenty-seventh session, the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names agreed to split the Asia South-East and Pacific South-West Division into the Asia South-East Division and the Pacific South-West Division,

Recommends that the Asia South-East Division and the Pacific South-West Division be granted full recognition as linguistic/geographical divisions of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.

X/6. Romanization of Belarusian geographical names

The Conference,

Noting that in Belarus a system of romanization for Belarusian geographical names was adopted in 2000 and was revised in 2007,

Recognizing that the system is linguistically sound and that it has been implemented in maps and gazetteers of Belarus,

Recommends that the system, as set out in the conference room paper entitled "The Roman alphabet transliteration of Belarusian geographical names",[4] be adopted as the international system for the romanization of Belarusian geographical names.

X/7. Romanization of Bulgarian geographical names

The Conference,

Recognizing that the romanization system for Bulgarian geographical names adopted by the Conference in its resolution III/10 is no longer used in Bulgaria,

Recognizing also that since 1999 Bulgaria has implemented another system of romanization, which was finalized and officially adopted in 2009 by the Transliteration Act and is now widely implemented,

Recalling that the Conference, in its resolution IX/8, allowed for the relevance of any internationally adopted romanization system that was no longer implemented by sponsoring nations to be reconsidered after ten years,

Recommends that the system, as set out in the document entitled "Romanization system in Bulgaria",[5] be adopted as the international system for the romanization of Bulgarian geographical names.

X/8. Romanization of Iranian geographical names

The Conference,

Recognizing that the romanization system for geographical names adopted by the Conference in its resolution I/13 is no longer used in the Islamic Republic of Iran,

Recognizing also that over a period of more than twenty years a system of romanization called "broad transcription" has been developed for Persian and is now implemented in the national geographical names database and administrative divisions maps of the Islamic Republic of Iran,

Noting that the original Persian script forms of Iranian geographical names are available in the national geographical names database and the transliterated forms will be available in the same database,

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[4] The conference room papers are available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/uncsgnungegn/ungegnConf10.html.

[5] See E/CONF.101/12/Add.1. The full text of the document is available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/uncsgnungegn/ungegnConf10.html.

Noting also that, because more implementation of this system is needed and a suitable transitional period will be required before the system can be fully implemented at the international level, the Islamic Republic of Iran should provide practical assistance to receiver countries for that purpose,

Recalling that the Conference, in its resolution IX/8, allowed for the relevance of any internationally adopted romanization system that was no longer implemented by sponsoring nations to be reconsidered after ten years,

Recommends that the "broad transcription" system, as set out in the document entitled "New Persian romanization system",[6] be adopted as the international system for the romanization of Iranian geographical names.

X/9. Romanization of Ukrainian geographical names

The Conference,

Recognizing that in 2010 Ukraine officially adopted a system of romanization for geographical names, which revised a system used since 1996,

Recognizing also that, although not fully reversible, the system has nevertheless been well implemented in maps, gazetteers and databases of Ukraine, as well as on public signs and in spheres of life other than those concerning geographical names,

Recommends that the system, as set out in the document entitled "Romanization system in Ukraine",[7] be adopted as the international system for the romanization of Ukrainian geographical names.

X/10. Support for the work on the standardization of geographical names

The Conference,

Recognizing the positive results achieved by the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names,

Considering that, during the period between United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names, the Group of Experts is the only body within the United Nations system dealing with problems relating to geographical names at the international level,

Wishing to ensure that the activities of the Group of Experts are maximized at all times and to consolidate those programmes that most effectively promote national and international standardization,

Recommends that, with the continued support of the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names continue to pursue

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[6] See E/CONF.101/118/Add.1. The full text of the document is available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/uncsgnungegn/ungegnConf10.html.

[7] See E/CONF.101/84/Add.1. The full text of the document is available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/uncsgnungegn/ungegnConf10.html.

actively its responsibilities as defined in its statute and in accordance with the resolutions adopted by the present and past Conferences.

X/11. Web-based course in toponymy

The Conference,

Recognizing the growing need for training qualified personnel for toponymic tasks, in view of the increasingly important role of standardized toponyms in national spatial data infrastructures,

Recognizing also that only a few countries are able to provide for specialized toponymic education,

Noting that the number of participants in international toponymy courses is limited and that those trained frequently move to other jobs,

Recommends that a web-based course in toponymy, developed by the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy and the International Cartographic Association with financial support from the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, be incorporated and maintained on the website of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, in order to contribute to the basic education and training of toponymic staff.

X/12. Expression of thanks

The Conference,

1.   Extends its heartfelt thanks to the United Nations for the excellent arrangements and services provided for the Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names;

2.   Expresses its particular gratitude to the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat for its excellent organization of Conference-related matters and of the associated technical exhibition;

3.   Expresses its gratitude to the President of the Conference and the Chairs of the technical committees for the effective way in which they conducted the meetings;

4.   Expresses its appreciation to the officers of the Conference and technical committees and to the officers and staff of the Statistics Division for their hard work and dedication, which greatly facilitated the business of the Conference.

Annex

Provisional agenda for the Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names

1. Opening of the Conference.

2. Election of the President of the Conference.

3. Organizational matters:

    (a) Adoption of the rules of procedure;

    (b) Adoption of the agenda;

    (c) Election of officers other than the President;

    (d) Organization of work;

    (e) Credentials of representatives to the Conference.

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

5. Reports on the work of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, its divisions, working groups and task teams since the Tenth Conference.

6. National and international meetings, conferences, symposiums, publicity and publications.

7. Measures taken and proposed to implement United Nations resolutions on the standardization of geographical names, including the economic and social benefits.

8. National standardization:

    (a) Field collection of names;

    (b) Office treatment of names;

    (c) Treatment of names in multilingual areas;

    (d) Administrative structure of national names authorities, legislation, policies and procedures;

    (e) Toponymic guidelines for map editors and other editors.

9. Geographical names as culture, heritage and identity (including indigenous, minority and regional language names).

10. Exonyms.

11. Toponymic data files and gazetteers:

    (a) Content requirements and standards;

    (b) Data management and interoperability;

    (c) Data services, applications and products (for example, gazetteers and web services).

12. Terminology in the standardization of geographical names.

13. Writing systems and pronunciation:

   (a) Romanization;

   (b) Conversion into non-Roman writing systems;

   (c) Writing of names in unwritten languages;

   (d) Pronunciation.

14. Country names.

15. Toponymic education.

16. Features beyond a single sovereignty and international cooperation:

   (a) Features common to two or more nations;

   (b) Bilateral/multilateral agreements.

17. Arrangements for the Twelfth Conference.

18. Adoption of resolutions of the Conference.

19. Adoption of the report of the Conference.

20. Closing of the Conference.

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