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## Presentation of E/CONF.105/158/CRP.158 Relationship of UNGEGN with UN-GGIM – „Building Bridges“

UNGEGN Bureau's proposal for a cooperation model  
(submitted by UNGEGN Bureau)

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# What's in the Relationship of UNGEGN with UN-GGIM – „Building Bridges“

## Relationship of UNGEGN with UN-GGIM – “Building bridges”

UNEGN Bureau's proposal for a cooperation model

Date: 2017-06-09

Authors: UNGEGN Bureau and Convenors

### 1. The genesis of UNGEGN and UN-GGIM

Geographical names form a core theme in any geospatial data set. The geographical names theme has a direct relationship with all other data layers (perhaps with the exception of imagery) that constitute fundamental themes. However, its value is often not well recognized, perhaps because the accuracy and validity of geographical names is easily taken for granted, being frequently used in daily conversation when referring to where an event occurred or a destination. It is therefore desirable that geographical names receive heightened recognition as a common and standardized reference framework essential for all fundamental data layers, used in the same way throughout the global community and contributing to national development by improving the exchange of information.

Geographical names provide orientation and identity to a place; they are unique location identifiers for features and places of the real world and provide a link to cultural, social and historical heritage. They may be used together with appropriate information like maps, charts and gazetteers, as well as their respective data services. Gazetteers and gazetteer services associate the names with corresponding real world objects – or locations – by means of coordinates, feature types, authority, stories and other attributes.

Since it was established in 1946, the United Nations has addressed the need for geographical names standardization. This was initially from a cartographic point of view, but more recently also from a database and infrastructure standpoint, as well as reflecting cultural heritage and language issues. Geographical names standardization is acknowledged as a key element of the communication and administration needed to enable the United Nations to become the world's most effective voice for international cooperation on behalf of peace, development, human rights and the environment.

The United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) notes that, since its inception in 1959, multiple names or forms have often been in use, unless countries have a program in place to process geographical names towards a common understanding of spelling, application, feature type and extent, and freely disseminate this information. Equally, misinterpretation of the application of the name to the landscape can occur<sup>1</sup>. The functions of geographical names (orientation, identity, cultural social and historical heritage,...) can lead to a natural complexity (multiple names, languages, transliteration/transcription, political correctness, ...) and thus require an interdisciplinary approach. A series of meetings, debates and recommendations on this subject led to the formation of the UNGEGN and, since 1967, the holding of the quinquennial United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSGN). Through its specialist Working Groups, Divisions and Task Teams, UNGEGN facilitates the development and dissemination of principles, policies and procedures suitable for resolving the challenges of consistency in the authorization and use of geographical names. By helping to establish standardization guidelines, including through making recommendations on other matters such as the systematic transfer between writing systems, and by encouraging individual UN Member States to provide officially approved names, the United Nations aims to enhance the creation of usable and consistent written forms of geographical names throughout the world.

The United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM)

<sup>1</sup> Such as names with a 'false generic' where the name's meaning does not correlate to the feature type; an example is the city of Rocky Mount in North Carolina, United States of America.

1. The genesis of UNGEGN and UN-GGIM
2. The essence of a relationship
3. The common principles
4. The proposal for a cooperation model

[https://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/docs/11th-uncsgn-docs/E\\_Conf.105\\_158\\_CRP.158\\_Relationship\\_UNEGN-UN-GGIM\\_v1%202.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/docs/11th-uncsgn-docs/E_Conf.105_158_CRP.158_Relationship_UNEGN-UN-GGIM_v1%202.pdf)



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# How was consultation process with UNGEGN and UN-GGIM organized and conducted?

- Preparation by UNGEGN Bureau: Jun 2016 - Jan 2017
- First consultation with UNGEGN: Feb-Mar 2017
- First consultation with UN-GGIM: Apr-May 2017
- Replies received (addressing one or both bodies)

UNEGN #17	UN-GGIM #12
Brunei Darussalam, Cameroon, Czechia, Dominica, Germany, Italy, Japan, Lesotho, Macau, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Tunisia, United Kingdom	Denmark, Egypt, Germany, Japan, Madagascar, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Sudan, Sweden, Uganda, United Kingdom



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# How was consultation process with UNGEGN and UN-GGIM organized and conducted?

## Presentation@UN-GGIM-7

- Relationship document as „background document“ and submission of a separate report to UN-GGIM-7
  - <http://ggim.un.org/docs/meetings/GGIM7/E-C20-2017-17%20Strengthening%20Collaboration%20with%20UNGEGN%20Report.pdf>
- Two UNGEGN experts nominated to contribute to UN-GGIM WG Fundamental Data Themes (since May 2017)
- Chair presented UNGEGN at the side event on “fundamental data themes” on Monday, 31.07.2017
- Chair presented Report on Friday, 04.08.2017 to UN-GGIM-7 Committee



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**Economic and Social Council** 19 July 2017

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**Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management**  
Seventh session  
New York, 2-4 August 2017  
Item 16 of the provisional agenda\*  
Strengthening collaboration with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

**Strengthening collaboration with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names**

**Note by the Secretariat**

**Summary**

The present paper contains the report of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names for consideration by the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management.

At its sixth session, held in New York from 3 to 5 August 2016, the Committee of Experts adopted decision 6/112, in which it took note of the ongoing work of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names to modernize its working methods and strengthen its relationship with the Committee of Experts regarding place names. In the decision, the Bureau of the Committee of Experts was requested to engage in a dialogue with the Group of Experts, with a view to defining an effective relationship between the two bodies and how best to use the opportunity of back-to-back sessions in 2017. The potential synergies and possible areas of collaboration between the Group of Experts and the Committee of Experts were recognized through the adoption, in July 2016, of Economic and Social Council resolution 2016/27 on strengthening institutional arrangements on geospatial information management, particularly with regard to strengthening the coordination and coherence of global geospatial information management, capacity-building, norm-setting, data collection, data dissemination and data sharing as critical needs for Member States. In addition, in decision 29/101, adopted at its twenty-ninth session, the Group of Experts on Geographical Names encouraged its Bureau to define the relationship between the Group of Experts and the Committee of Experts. In this report, the Group of Experts details the series of tasks and activities undertaken with the Bureau of the Committee as part of efforts to strengthen collaboration and implement the above-mentioned decisions. The background document on building bridges between the Group of Experts and the Committee of Experts, prepared by the Bureau of the Group of Experts, substantively anchors these activities and includes common principles and a proposed cooperation model for the two bodies. The report before the Committee of Experts also includes information on the first meeting convened between the two Bureaux in February 2017; on the consultative exercise conducted to seek agreement on the common principles and the cooperation model; and on the

\* E/C.20/2017/1

# What came out of the 7th Session of the UN-GGIM Committee of Experts?

Statements #17	What?
Brazil	Agrees with the principles...
Australia	Encourages ongoing dialogue...
Nepal	Local pronunciation to be addressed...
USA, Sweden, Norway, Mexico, Palestine, Argentina	Continue to streamline the work...endorses report
Japan	Suggests to keep bodies separate...
Canada, Belgium	Review cooperation...
Honduras	Take into account historic names...
India	Free of political influences...
Myanmar	Focus on languages...
OGC	Be compliant with international standards...
GGIM Academic Network	Deliver the value...



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# What came out of the 7th Session of the UN-GGIM Committee of Experts?

- Decision 7/114
  - Welcomed the report...
  - Endorsed the proposal to build bridges and a stronger relationship...
  - Supported the common principles of cooperation...
  - Recognized that real benefits of cooperation and collaboration will need to be anchored at the national level...



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\* E/C.20/2017/1

# What came out of the 7th Session of the UN-GGIM Committee of Experts?

- Joined UNGEGN and UN-GGIM Bureau Meeting, Saturday, 5 August 2017, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
  - Further discussion needed about what national institutional arrangements are to be in place...
  - Bodies work substantially different
  - UNGEGN does not sell very well what is done
  - Work on common and concrete issues through initiatives/projects needed
  - Establish liaison groups for UN-GGIM and UNGEGN
  - Include Toponymy in the programme of the UN-GGIM Academic Network –



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# What are the next steps?

- UN-GGIM has to prioritize its tasks and its agenda
- UNGEGN has to consider how to move forward (resolution)
- UNGEGN continues to contribute to the UN-GGIM Fundamental Data Themes initiative
- UNGEGN uses the UN-GGIM High Level Forum in Dec 2017 in Mexico (tbd)
- UN-GGIM and UNGEGN establish liaison groups
- UNGEGN proposes Toponymy content to the UN-GGIM Academic Network



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