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**11<sup>th</sup> United Nations Conference on the Standardization  
of Geographical Names**

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Item 4 of the provisional agenda

**Reflection on the past, present and future: the fiftieth anniversary  
of the United Nations Conference on the Standardization  
of Geographical Names**

**Milestones of actions at the Conferences and in the work of  
UNGEGN; creation of UNGEGN divisions and working groups**

Submitted on behalf of UNGEGN\*

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## **Milestones of actions at the Conferences and in the work of UNGEGN; creation of UNGEGN divisions and working groups**

### **Summary**

As we celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names, the attached documents provide some historical data on the work of the Conferences and of UNGEGN.

50 milestones are presented to mark this occasion. As well, those individuals who acted as Conference Presidents and UNGEGN Chairs are noted. Over the years various UNGEGN divisions and working groups have been created or disbanded – the chronology of the formation of the divisions and working groups is included.

## **Introduction**

As we celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names, the annexed documents provide some historical data on the work of the Conferences and of UNGEGN. As well, they provide timelines for the creation of UNGEGN divisions and working groups.

- (1) In summary form, 50 selected UNCSGN/UNGEGN milestones since the ECOSOC resolution 715A (XXVII) of 1959. (see separate document, Annex 1)  
A detailed account of the steps taken by UNGEGN up to 1992 was included in “United Nations activities in the field of standardization of geographical names” E/CONF.85/CRP.3, produced by Max de Henseler for the 6<sup>th</sup> UN Conference in 1992.
- (2) The United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names and UNGEGN sessions since 1960: Conference Presidents and UNGEGN Chairs. (see below)
- (3) Creation of UNGEGN divisions from the initial 14 established in 1972 to the status quo of 24 divisions in 2017.
  - (a) Chronological list; alphabetic list by division (see below)
  - (b) Chart with timelines for divisions (see below)
- (4) Creation of UNGEGN working groups and ad hoc groups
  - (a) Chronological list (see below)
  - (b) UNGEGN Working Groups and Convenors (see below)

## (2) Conferences, UNGEGN Sessions: Presidents and Chairs

Conference	Location	President	Year	UNGEEN	Location	Chair		
Eleventh	New York		<b>2017</b>	30th	New York	William Watt (Australia)		
			<b>2016</b>	29th	Bangkok	William Watt (Australia)		
			<b>2014</b>	28th	New York	William Watt (Australia)*		
Tenth	New York	Botolv Helleland (Norway)	<b>2012</b>	27th	New York	Helen Kerfoot (Canada)/William Watt (Australia)		
			<b>2011</b>	26th	Vienna	Helen Kerfoot (Canada)		
			<b>2009</b>	25th	Nairobi	Helen Kerfoot (Canada)		
Ninth	New York	Helen Kerfoot (Canada)	<b>2007</b>	24th	New York	Helen Kerfoot (Canada)		
			<b>2006</b>	23rd	Vienna	Helen Kerfoot (Canada)		
			<b>2004</b>	22nd	New York	Helen Kerfoot (Canada)		
Eighth	Berlin	Klaus-Henning Rosen (Germany)	<b>2002</b>	21st	Berlin	Peter Raper (South Africa)/Helen Kerfoot (Canada)		
			<b>2000</b>	20th	New York	Peter Raper (South Africa)*		
Seventh	New York	Peter Raper (South Africa)	<b>1998</b>	19th	New York	Peter Raper (South Africa)		
			<b>1996</b>	18th	Geneva	Peter Raper (South Africa)		
			<b>1994</b>	17th	New York	Peter Raper (South Africa)		
Sixth	New York	Abdelhadi Tazi (Morocco)	<b>1992</b>	16th	New York	Peter Raper (South Africa)		
			<b>1991</b>	15th	Geneva	Peter Raper (South Africa)		
			<b>1989</b>	14th	Geneva	Henri Dorion (Canada)		
Fifth	Montréal	Jean-Paul Drolet (Canada)	<b>1987</b>	13th	Montréal	Dirk Blok (Netherlands)/Henri Dorion (Canada)		
			<b>1986</b>	12th	Geneva	Dirk Blok (Netherlands)		
			<b>1984</b>	11th	Geneva	Dirk Blok (Netherlands)		
Fourth	Geneva	Dirk Blok (Netherlands)	<b>1982</b>	10th	Geneva	Josef Breu (Austria)/Dirk Blok (Netherlands)		
			<b>1981</b>	9th	New York	Josef Breu (Austria)		
			<b>1979</b>	8th	New York	Josef Breu (Austria)		

Third	Athens	L. Mavridis (Greece)	<b>1977</b>	7th	Athens	Meredith Burrill (USA)/Josef Breu (Austria)		
			<b>1975</b>	6th	New York	Meredith Burrill (USA)		
			<b>1973</b>	5th	New York	Meredith Burrill (USA)		
Second	London	H.A.G. Lewis (UK)	<b>1972</b>	4th	London	Meredith Burrill (USA)		
			<b>1971</b>	3rd	New York	Meredith Burrill (USA)		
			<b>1970</b>	2nd	New York	Meredith Burrill (USA)		
First	Geneva	Meredith Burrill (USA)	<b>1967</b>	1st	New York	Meredith Burrill (USA)		
			<b>1966</b>	2nd Experts meeting	New York	Meredith Burrill (USA)		
			<b>1960</b>	1st Experts meeting	New York	Meredith Burrill (USA)		

\* Unable to participate at the sessions

### 3(a) Creation of UNGEGN Divisions

At the Second UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names held in London in 1972, with resolution II/3, UNGEGN was formally created under its current name, rather than continuing as an ad hoc group.

At that time (II/4), 14 geographical/linguistic divisions were formed. Several of the original names have since been changed and two divisions (Africa south of the Sahara; Asia South-East and Pacific South-West) were disbanded in favour of smaller regional groupings. Since 1975, other divisions have been constituted, giving 24 divisions as of May 2017.

#### *Chronological list:*

1972	2 <sup>nd</sup> Conference	II/4	Africa south of the Sahara Arabic Asia, east Asia, south-east Asia, south-west, other than Arabic Dutch-speaking and German-speaking Europe, east central and south-east Indian group Latin America Norden Romance languages, other than Latin America United Kingdom group Union of Soviet Socialist Republics United States of America – Canada
1975	6 <sup>th</sup> UNGEGN		China
1978	3 <sup>rd</sup> Conference	III/26	Africa south of the Sahara be subdivided into three: Africa, Central Africa, East Africa, West
1987	5 <sup>th</sup> Conference	V/3	Celtic East Mediterranean Division (other than Arabic)
1992	6 <sup>th</sup> Conference	VI/1	Africa South Baltic Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia (the Division referred to as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics ceased to exist)
1998	7 <sup>th</sup> Conference	VII/1	French-speaking
2007	9 <sup>th</sup> Conference	IX/3	Portuguese-speaking

2012 10<sup>th</sup> Conference X/5 Asia South-East and Pacific South-West subdivided into two:  
 Asia South-East  
 Pacific South-West

*Alphabetic list by name, as currently used*

Africa Central	1978	(from 1972 part of Africa south of the Sahara)
Africa East	1978	(from 1972 part of Africa south of the Sahara)
Africa South	1992	(from 1972-1978, part of Africa south of the Sahara)
Africa West	1978	(from 1972 part of Africa south of the Sahara)
Arabic	1972	
Asia East (other than China)	1972	(originally Asia, east)
Asia South-East	1972	(originally Asia, south-east; then Asia South-East and Pacific South-West)
Asia South-West (other than Arabic)	1972	
Baltic	1992	
Celtic	1987	
China	1975	
Dutch- and German-speaking	1972	
East Central and South-East Europe	1972	
Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia	1992	(from 1972, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Division existed)
East Mediterranean (other than Arabic)	1987	
French-speaking	1998	
India	1972	
Latin America	1972	
Norden	1972	
Pacific South-West	2012	(originally Asia, south-east; then Asia South-East and Pacific South-West)
Portuguese-speaking	2007	
Romano-Hellenic	1972	(originally Romance languages, other than Latin America)
United Kingdom	1972	
United States of America / Canada	1972	

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### 3(b) UNGEGN DIVISIONS TIMELINE

Division	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s
Africa Central					
Africa East					
Africa South					
Africa West					
<i>Africa South of the Sahara</i>					
Arabic					
Asia East (other than China)					
Asia South-East					
<i>Asia, South East / Asia South-East and Pacific South-West</i>					
Asia South-West (other than Arabic)					
Baltic					
Celtic					
China					
Dutch- and German-speaking					
East Central and South-East Europe					
Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia					
East Mediterranean (other than Arabic)					
French-speaking					
India					
Latin America					
Norden					
Pacific South-West					
Portuguese-speaking					
Romano-Hellenic					
United Kingdom					
United States of America / Canada					
<i>USSR</i>					



#### 4(a) Creation of UNGEGN Working Groups and ad hoc groups

1970	Names of Undersea Features A Single Romanization System for each Non-Roman Writing System Extraterrestrial Topographic Names
1971	Definitions
1972	Names of Undersea Features renamed as Names of Undersea and Maritime Features
1973	Training Courses International Gazetteers Country Names
1977	Automated Data Processing
1979	Toponymic Guidelines for Cartography
1982	Names of Undersea and Maritime Features limited to Maritime Features Training Courses now referred to as Training Courses in Toponymy Toponymic Data Files formed from combining Automated Data Processing and International Gazetteers Extraterrestrial Topographic(al) Names disbanded Ad hoc group for Programme for the Fifth Conference in 1987 Now "Toponymic Guidelines for map and other editors"
1984	Maritime Features disbanded Ad hoc group to review the Aims and Functions and modus operandi (reported to Fifth Conference, 1987)
1986	Now "Toponymic Guidelines for map and other editors for international use"
1987	Country Names disbanded Definitions no longer a WG (3 WGs left – Courses, Romanization, Data Files) Ad hoc group: Evaluation – implementation programme Now: WG on Courses in Applied Toponymy
1989	Reconstituted: Terminology
1991	Now WG on Evaluation Now WG on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers Now WG on Romanization Systems
1992	WG on Publicity and Funding – replacing WG on Evaluation Now: WG on Training Courses in Toponymy WG on Country Names re-activated

- 1994            So now have the following WGs:  
                   Terminology  
                   Romanization systems  
                   Country names  
                   Training courses in toponymy  
                   Toponymic data files and gazetteers  
                   Publicity and funding  
                           Toponymic Guidelines for map and other editors
- 1996            WG on Toponymic Data Transfer ... to report to Seventh UN Conference  
                   Also referred to elsewhere as WG on Electronic Data Exchange
- 1998            WG on Toponymic Data Transfer merged into WG on Toponymic Data Files and  
                   Gazetteers
- 2000            Evaluation of reports to 15<sup>th</sup> session and Sixth Conference before revival of a WG on  
                   Evaluation and Implementation
- 2002            WG on Evaluation and Implementation had come into effect  
                   Exonyms  
                   Pronunciation
- 2004            Formalization of a WG for the Promotion of Indigenous and Minority Group Names  
                   Formation of a Task Team for Africa
- 2007            Change of name: WG on the Promotion and Recording and Use of Indigenous, Minority  
                   and Regional Language Group Geographical Names, instead of WG for the Promotion of  
                   Indigenous and Minority Group Names
- 2012            Presumably WG name changed to WG on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage (as it  
                   reports as such in 2014)

### **Working Groups as of 2017**

Country Names	1973	
Evaluation and Implementation	2000	formerly Evaluation, 1987-1992
Exonyms	2002	VIII/4
Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage	2002	Was WG on Promotion and Recording and Use of Indigenous, Minority and Regional Language Groups and earlier names. Started based on resolution

		of 2002; changed to Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage in 2012
Pronunciation	2002	VIII/1
Publicity and Funding	1992	
Romanization Systems	1970	
Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers	1977	Earlier was International Gazetteers, also ADP and Data Transfer; current name in 1998
Toponymic Terminology	1971	Formerly Definitions, started in 1971; changed to Toponymic Terminology in 1991; hiatus 1987-89
Training Courses in Toponymy	1973	
Task Team for Africa	2004	22 <sup>nd</sup> UNGEGN
Toponymic Guidelines for Map and Other Editors for International Use	1979	Has had various titles

#### 4(b) UNGEGN WORKING GROUPS AND CONVENORS

	<b>Title - 2017</b>	<b>Current convenor(s)/ coordinator</b>	<b>Establishment &amp; change</b>	<b>Previous names</b>	<b>Convenors/coordinators</b>	<b>Convenor dates</b>
1	Country Names	Leo Dillon (USA) / Élisabeth Calvarin (France)	1973		F. Nédélec (France) J. Ramondou (France)	1973 1977
			disbanded 1987			
			re-established 1992		Sylvie Lejeune (France)	1992
					Leo Dillon (USA)	2004
					Leo Dillon (USA) / Élisabeth Calvarin (France)	2014
2	Evaluation and Implementation	Sungjae Choo (Republic of Korea)	1987		Richard Randall (USA)	1987
			disbanded 1992			
			re-established 2002		Ki-Suk Lee (Republic of Korea)	2002
					Sungjae Choo (Republic of Korea)	2012
3	Exonyms	Peter Jordan (Austria)	2002		Milan Orožen Adamič (Slovenia)	2002
					Milan Orožen Adamič (Slovenia) / Peter Jordan (Austria)	2004
					Peter Jordan (Austria) / Milan Orožen Adamič (Slovenia)	2006
					Peter Jordan (Austria)	2012

4	Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage	Annette Torensjö (Sweden)	2002	Promotion of Indigenous and Minority Group Names	Brian Goodchild / William Watt (Australia)	2002
			2007	Promotion and Recording and Use of Indigenous, Minority and Regional Language Group Geographical Names	William Watt (Australia)	2006
			2012	Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage	Annette Torensjö/ Leif Nilsson (Sweden)	2014
5	Pronunciation	Tjeerd Tichelaar (Netherlands)	2002		Donall MacGiolla Easpaig (Ireland)	2002
					Tjeerd Tichelaar (Netherlands)	2012
6	Publicity and Funding	Peder Gammeltoft (Denmark)	1992		Richard Randall (USA)	1992
					William Robertson (New Zealand)	1994
					John Parker (Australia)	1996
					David Munro (UK)	2006
					Peder Gammeltoft (Denmark)	2012
7	Romanization Systems	Peter Päll (Estonia)	1970		G. Gomez de Silva (Mexico)	1970
					Josef Breu (Austria)	1971
					E. Földi (Hungary)	1977
					Gerd Quinting (USA) / Josef Breu (Austria)	1987
					Gerd Quinting (USA)	1992

					Peeter Päll (Estonia)	1998
8	Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers	Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu (Germany)	1977	Automated Data Processing	Rolf Böhme (FRG)	1977
			1982	Toponymic Data Files	H.A.G. Lewis (UK)	1982
			1991	Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers	Randall Flynn (USA)	1998
					Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu (Germany)	2007
	<i>International Gazetteers</i>		1973		<i>H.A.G. Lewis (UK)</i>	1973
			<i>to Toponymic Data Files 1982</i>			
	<i>Electronic Data Exchange</i>		1996		<i>Roger Marsdon (UK)</i>	1996
			<i>to Toponymic Data Files 1998</i>			
9	Toponymic Terminology	Staffan Nyström (Sweden)	1971	Definitions	Carl Page (USA)	1971
					H.A.G. Lewis (UK)	1979
			disbanded 1987			
			re-established 1989	Toponymic Terminology	Naftali Kadmon (Israel)	1989
					Staffan Nyström (Sweden)	2007
10	Training Courses in Toponymy	Ferjan Ormeling (Netherlands)	1978		Ferjan Ormeling Snr. (Netherlands)	1978
					Dirk Blok (Netherlands)	1987
					Henri Dorion (Canada)	1989
					Ferjan Ormeling Jnr. (Netherlands)	1991

	<i>Names of Undersea Features</i>		1970		<i>Gordon Delaney (Canada)</i>	1970
			1972	<i>Names of Undersea and Maritime Features</i>	<i>Richard Randall (USA)</i>	1975
			1982	<i>Names of Maritime Features</i>		
			<i>disbanded 1984</i>			
	<i>Extraterrestrial Topographic Names</i>		1970		<i>A.M. Komkov (USSR)</i>	1970
			<i>disbanded 1984</i>			
		<b>Coordinators.....</b>				
A	Task Team for Africa	Braham Atoui (Algeria)	2004		Ridwan Brimah (Ghana)	2004
					Braham Atoui (Algeria)	2006
B	Coordination of Toponymic Guidelines	Gerhard Rampl (Austria)	1979		Josef Breu (Austria)	1979
					Peter Raper (South Africa)	1991
					Isolde Hausner (Austria)	2004
					Hubert Bergmann (Austria)	2009
					Gerhard Rampl (Austria)	2014