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TASK TEAM FOR AFRICA

by

Brahim Atoui : TTA, Convenor





Geographical Names standardization in Africa: Challenges and constraints

A decade of actions





BRIEF HISTORY

African Countries : Precursors in the establishment of structures for the standardization of geographical names



- Liberia: 1955
- Botswana: 1965

- Cameroon : 1968
- Malawi 1971

- Zambia 1979
- Tanzania 1981
- Tunisia : ~~1957~~ 1983

HISTORY

The UN Group of Experts on the Standardization of Geographical Names, aware of the African specificity in toponymic matters whose languages are mainly derived from unwritten languages, was concerned at its first conference on toponymic issues in Africa.

- **Establishment of a Task Team for Africa at the 23rd Session of GENUNG:**
- **Make a diagnosis**
- **Revitalizing a toponymic activity in Africa**
- **Suggest appropriate solutions for the promotion of geographical names**
- **Initiate appropriate actions.**

TASK TEAM for AFRICA

DIAGNOSTIC

- **Establishment of a Task Team for Africa at the 23rd Session of GENUNG:**
- **Make a diagnosis**
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- **Financial problems**
- **Distance from meeting venue,**
- **Lack of training of African skills in this field.**

CONTRAINTES



VERY LOW PARTICIPATION IN THE GENUNG'S WORK

conferences	Number of participating countries
1st Conference	9
2nd conference	4
3rd Conference	6
4 th Conference	10
5thConference	6
6 th Conference	10
7th Conference	15
8 th Conference	8
9 th Conference	16
10 th Conference	13

Participation by country (From a total of 56 countries)

- 7 countries participated only once.
- 7 countries 2 times
- 6 countries 3 times
- 5 countries 4 times
- 3 countries 5 times





Countries with toponymic management structures

Only 17 of the 56 countries in Africa have a structure in charge of toponymy management. They are often not very active and have very little human or material means.

Linguistic-Geographical Divisions

Africa is divided into four linguistic-geographical divisions

1. **The Eastern Division**
2. **the Central Division**
3. **The Western Division**
4. **the Division of South Africa.**

It should be reminded that Resolution No. 4 of the Second UNGEGN Conference made Africa a single Division

- ✓ Resolution 26 of the 3rd Conference reconfigured Africa into 3 Divisions :
 1. **The Western Division, regrouping 16 countries**
 2. **The Central Division, regrouping 11 countries**
 3. **The Eastern Division, regrouping 14 countries**
- ✓ By Resolution One of the 6th Conference, a fourth Division was added to that of South Africa.



North Africa Division?

1. That of North Africa, which should include the Arab and Sahelian African countries, a homogeneous group with similar ethnic, cultural, linguistic and toponymic similarities, Does not yet constitute a division despite the aspiration of the countries of the region of the need for it.
2. This action could not **be** materialized by the incomprehensible opposition of some new experts belonging to the Arab Division.





ACTIVITIES OF THE TASK TEAM FOR AFRICA IN ORDER TO BOOST TOPONYMIC ACTIVITY IN AFRICA (1)

25 th Session of the GENUNG in Africa, 2009

Internship of Tunis ~~2017~~ 2007:

1. Internship Organized with the assistance of the African Organization for Cartography and Remote Sensing and the Regional Center for Remote Sensing of the States of North Africa and the Tunisian National Center for Remote Sensing, under the aegis of the **UNGEGN** Working Group on the training of ~~GENUNG~~ .

It took place in Tunisia with over 70 participants from 11 countries in Africa and the Arab world.

2. **Internship in Ouagadougou**, from 4 to 8 August 2008, brought together trainees In particular from West African countries

3. **Internship in Nairobi**: for East African Countries was also held in Nairobi from 1 to 3 May 2009 at the CRMCD on the margin of the 25th Session of UNGEGN;



ACTIVITIES OF THE TASK TEAM FOR AFRICA IN ORDER TO BOOST TOPONYMIC ACTIVITY IN AFRICA (2)

1. **Internship in Yaounde / Cameroon:** Training workshop on the standardization of geographical names, held in Yaoundé from 22 to 27 November 2010 with the collaboration of the GENUNG, thus allowing the revival of the Commission of Toponymy of Cameroon
2. **Internship of Antananarivo:** held in Madagascar from 11 to 21 June 2013, with the collaboration of GENUNG, which also encouraged the dynamism of the Commission of toponymy of this country.
3. **Second Internship in Tunis:** Another internship in Tunis from 12th to 16th January 2015 for the benefit of members of the newly created Tunisian National ~~Commission of Tunisian~~ **Committee of** Toponymy.
4. **Internship in Oran / Algeria:** Another seminar held in Oran, Algeria, for the benefit of Algerian researchers in Toponymy of the National Center for Research in Social and Cultural Anthropology, officials and communal administrators in charge of naming the places.



ACTIVITIES OF THE TASK TEAM FOR AFRICA IN ORDER TO BOOST TOPONYMIC ACTIVITY IN AFRICA (3)

- 1. Meeting of Constantine / Algeria:** important scientific meeting was held in Constantine / Algeria, which saw the participation of all the countries of the Sahel (Mali, Chad, Niger, Burkina Faso) During which a recommendation was adopted by participating African countries, supporting the creation of a North African Division within UNGEGN.
- 2. Another meeting is also planned in Algiers** at the time of the next International Book Fair **or a national toponymy data has been celebrated for more than 3 years (phrase à revoir)**, with the participation of Experts in toponymy of South Africa as Country 'guest of honor' of this Fair and of Burkina Faso: the theme of this day will be devoted to the toponymy Arab-Berber-African.
- 3.** Finally, two international competitions were organized by the Task Team for Africa for the benefit of the African countries, which saw an important participation of applicants from different African countries and prizes were awarded to the winners.



ACTIVITIES OF THE TASK TEAM FOR AFRICA IN ORDER TO BOOST TOPONYMIC ACTIVITY IN AFRICA (4)

1. In addition to these activities, the Task Team has continually sensitized African organizations to promote the standardization of geographical names. His actions were crowned by the organization of a meeting of African countries under the aegis of the ECA / UN in Gaborone / Botswana, With the participation of ~~GENUNG~~ **UNGEEN**, During which an ambitious plan of action called 'GAP' was adopted.
2. This plan aims at a better management of toponymy in Africa and contains several recommendations.
3. Moreover, through awareness-raising efforts of the Task Team for Africa, several Commissions have been reactivated and others have been created**d**;
4. This is particularly the case of: **Tunisia**, Burkina Faso, Mali, Benin and; soon; Niger with a very significant contribution from the Commission of French toponymy and IGN FI,



DESPITE HIS EFFORTS , THERE IS STILL A LONG WAY TO GO AND SEVERAL QUESTIONS ARE CURRENT

1. What are the best mechanisms to put in place to increase the dynamism of the toponymic activity in Africa?
2. How to activate different African geographical and linguistic divisions?
3. How could the Economic Commission for Africa be further involved in the promotion and coordination of toponymic activity in Africa ?
4. How to implement the provisions of the GAP?
5. What can ~~GENUNG~~ **UNGEEN** do for Africa?
6. How to ensure cooperation between the Task Team for Africa and UN-GGIM Africa?
7. What could be the contribution of GGIM Africa to the promotion of geographical names in Africa?



Despite his efforts , There is still a long way to go and several questions are current

- If important results have been achieved, further reflection will have to be carried out within the UNGEGN and the Task Team for Africa in order to achieve better Leading to other salutary initiatives.
- Despite these modest but nevertheless positive results, which remains beyond the expectations of our continent, we have to double our efforts and we have great hope for the support of the GENUK at the TASK TEAM FOR AFRICA for more results.



- Now Mrs Naima Friha, our Vice-President, will give us another presentation in which she will show us some successful experiences of toponymy commissions thanks in particular to the actions of the Task Team. for Africa

Ce slide ne sera pas affiché



Thank you for your attention