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MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON  
COURSES, SEMINARS AND PRACTICAL TRAINING IN TOPONYMY

Report on the Toponymy Course for the Africa South  
Division, held at Pretoria, South Africa,  
20 September - 1 October 1993

**Report on the Toponymy Course for the Africa South Division, held at Pretoria, South Africa, from September 20-October 1, 1993.**

1. UNGEGN members, together with representatives of the Onomastic Research Centre, Human Sciences Research Center (ORC-HSRC) of South Africa, organized a second training course in toponymy for 45 participants from Southern African countries, at the Training Centre of the Department of National Education in Pretoria, South Africa, from September 20-October 1, 1993.

2. The two-week programme consisted of lectures, exercises and fieldwork. Like its predecessor, it was organised on a module basis, to which participants could inscribe at will. Most participants attended the majority of the modules, however. The following modules were offered:

1. Introduction
2. Research in toponymy
3. Names recording, storage and dissemination
4. Standardization of geographical names
5. National names authorities
6. Names placement in maps; coordinate systems
7. Languages, scripts and names conversion
8. Toponymic databases and GIS
9. Place names in Southern Africa

3. The course was organized by a committee, consisting of Dr P.E.Raper and Dr L.Möller (ORC-HSRC), Prof.E.Liebenberg and Dr B.A.Meiring (UNISA) and Mrs I.Booyesen (Univ. of Pretoria).

The programme was mainly effectuated by UNGEGN experts: Dr Raper (UNEGGN chair), Ms H.Kerfoot (UNEGGN vice-chair), Prof.N.Kadmon (convenor UNGEGN WG on terminology) and Prof.F.J.Ormeling (Convenor UNGEGN WG on toponymy courses). Together they presented 20 of the 32 lectures. The lecture team was strengthened by local experts on terminology, coordinate systems (Prof.E.Liebenberg), topographic mapping (M.Hall and K.Lester), Zulu and Sotho languages (Dr A.Koopman and Prof.Lourens), national standardization (Prof.E.B. van Wijk), map lettering (Mrs I.Booyesen), informal settlement (Prof.E.R.Jenkins), semantics (Prof.B.A.Meiring) and toponymic research methods (Dr L.Möller).

4. Most modules contained exercises. There were demonstrations of bibliographic information systems and of the map- and atlas collection of the University of South Africa (UNISA). At the closing session of the course the participants were issued with certificates on the basis of their participation in the course (fieldwork, exercises and demonstrations included).

5. The fieldwork (see also description by Kerfoot and Ormeling in the UNGEGN Newsletter no 12) took place on the South African-Lesotho border, and consisted of map study, planning and interviews of different population groups, both in South Africa and Lesotho. The result was a properly annotated list of new placenames, for incorporation into the topographic maps of the area. The joint fieldwork led to ample opportunities for informal international contacts, an important side-effect, considering the need for international cooperation in toponymy. One of the aspects that became clear during the

fieldwork was the difference in spelling geographical names from the same language on opposite sides of the international border.

Due to time constraints no hands-on experience with geographical information systems could be provided this time. It was substituted, however, by an extensive demonstration of the relevant software packages.

6. During the course, all aspects of the name collecting, analysis and representation activities were practised, even map lettering exercises with preset type (on stripping film) to be applied to the maps, in order to practice map lettering techniques.

7. During the course, the first meetings of the newly instituted (New York, 1992) Africa South Division of the UNGEGN took place, with attendance from Botswana, Lesotho, Mocambique, South Africa, and Swaziland.

8. As the weekend had been spent on the fieldwork, the course programme consisted of 11 working days altogether. This was considered sufficient, both from the view of the aim and contents of the course, and of the financial restrictions the participants had to reckon with.

9. An important aspect of the course was the excursion to a private cartographic enterprise, which highlighted the fact that private industry eagerly awaits the results of the endeavours of national standardization committees.

10. The course participants clearly profited from the fact that - next to handouts from the various lectures - the proceedings of the first toponymy course for Southern Africa, held a year previously, were now available. These proceedings, titled *UNGEGN Training Course in Toponymy for Southern Africa*. (Pretoria: Dept. of Geography, University of Pretoria 1993 [ISBN 0-86979-909-6]) are available from the publisher (Fax # 27.12.420.3284).