
United Nations
Group of Experts on
Geographical Names

Working Paper
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Items 7 and 13
of the Provisional Agenda

REPORTS OF THE WORKING GROUPS (SUMMARIES ONLY)

and

MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON
PUBLICITY AND FUNDING

Report on the Working Group on Publicity and Funding

Submitted by Mr. W.A. Robertson (New Zealand), Convenor of the
Working Group

REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

WORKING GROUP ON PUBLICITY AND FUNDING

Submitted by W. A. Robertson New Zealand, Convenor.

5th August 1996

Preamble

At the last seventh UNEGN Meeting in New York in 1994, an activity plan was outlined for the Working Group on Publicity and Funding. Because of limited time and resources and the need for the publicity and funding actions to be driven by strategic assumptions, the activities listed have not been progressed in terms of the timetable. A heightened emphasis on publicity and funding requires a clear focus and consensus on strategic directions and priorities. Because of this I am of the view that the eighteenth UNEGN should consider issues of vision and strategy and confirm or develop directions and principles, endorse collection and exchange of information, as a basis for the programme of activity over the next term. Accordingly I have prepared a Working Group Report for the further consideration by the meeting.

Review of Role & Vision

A "Draft Strategic Outline" has been appended to provide a basis for discussion and the further development of an UNEGN strategy. This is necessary as the effective work of the Publicity and Funding Committee is dependent on its activity being aligned to the overall UNEGN strategic direction.

Publicity Material for UNEGEN

The existing UN Newsletter is a valuable means of communication among UNEGN members. It can reflect and inform on the strategy and direction of UNEGN over the next terms. Some very good documentation already exists particularly the listing of the resolutions of the six United Nations Conferences on the Standardisation of Geographical Names and these can be taken further once a general programme of planned activity has been determined.

Strategic planning can accommodate and align the activity of other international and regional organisations and can co-ordinate and utilise the activity which would otherwise occur independently. For example "Namenforschung. Name Studies. Les noms propres" produced by Walter De Gruyter & Co. Berlin . New York.

Information on UNEGN i.e. its aims, principles, functions, composition, and operation has been forwarded to the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade for inclusion in the next edition of the United Nations Handbook. We have had no information on when the next edition of the Handbook will be published.

Brochure

The draft can be finalised and distributed at a low cost which could be sponsored by a member country. However it is desirable that the aim of the brochure its main recipients and its prime message be agreed. This in turn depends in some degree on the direction and priorities that arise out of the strategic planning exercise.

National Publicity

Publicity within member countries can be a two way process. Firstly the initiatives taken to meet particular national needs may have some application to other countries and if exchanged can be helpful to others. Where there has been a lack of national publicity, the activities of other member states, particularly those in the division can encourage and support the development of an appropriate level of national publicity.

Funding

Where geographical naming proposals are of wider interest it is possible to obtain resources from a combination of different sources. For example in New Zealand two significant toponymic projects were funded through an aggregation of contributions from the New Zealand Lottery Grants Board, the New Zealand Historic Places Trust, the Ministry of Maori Development, the New Zealand 1990 Centennial Commission, the Department of Survey and Land Information, and a large commercial printing company. The Asia, South East, Pacific, South West, Division shared the workload and the resources to produce the Divisional geographic names map. In both cases there was a clearly defined and understood project and product. Thus the funding was obtained once a product was described which would attract contributions, and the workload was adjusted in terms of the available funding and the time-scale in which the project could remain viable.

Conclusion

That the Eighteenth UNGEGN Meeting give further consideration to the issues raised in this Working Paper in the light of the directions and role already established or to be enhanced over the next terms. That all member countries be invited to contribute as they see appropriate to the activities arising. That the Working Group be asked to proceed with an activity plan aligned to the strategic thinking agreed at the meeting.

UNITED NATIONS GROUP ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES

Publicity and Funding Working Group

Draft Strategic Outline

Preamble

Noting that the socio-economic and environmental interests and the well being of the world's nations are enhanced through efficient communication and the effective use of geographical names and the efficacy of their ready availability in an internationally consistent and accepted format.

Noting further that the United Nations has recognised this important function through its 1959 ECOSOC resolutions and its six conferences on the Standardisation of Geographic Names, and its support for the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN).

Acknowledging that this mission would benefit from a simple statement, of the vision of what that mission is and some milestones of how it will be advanced

Recommends the following draft strategic outline for consideration

Vision Statement

Furthering international relationships, trade, co-operation and development through consistent and unambiguous geographical naming systems. In short developing standardised global geographic addresses for all future applications and requirements

Mission Statement

To encourage, develop, and publicise programmes and activity which promote the work of the United Nations, international, regional, and national organisations in the standardisation of geographic names. To advance the basic aims of the Group of Experts as set out (a), to (f), in the statute and rules of procedure.

Values

- Consultative approach on issues and actions.
- Democratic culture for reaching decisions and developing initiatives.
- Collegial approach to geographic naming standards and systems.
- Respect for the pluralistic nature of geographic names and their diverse historic, cultural and regional backgrounds and environments.
- Decisions to be of a recommendatory character.
- The standardisation of geographical names to be based on achievements of science in relation to language treatment and the technical means of generating and processing toponymic data.
- International standardisation to be carried out on the basis of national standardisation.

Goals

- Asses the mission of UNGEGN with current United Nations strategic directions and priorities.
- Conduct a review amongst members identifying their needs and expectations of the Working Group.
- Develop a clear strategic plan to co-ordinate future activities of UNGEGN
- Develop a programme to deliver to members the specific needs and activities they have identified.

- Encourage greater communication and exchange of relevant initiatives, ideas, information and documentation between members.
- To identify key target groups and develop a publicity programme to ensure that they are adequately informed of all relevant naming activity, guidelines or processes.
- Identify possible and alternative funding approaches and sources for particular types of activity and compile an action plan to follow through.
- Survey and identify the wide range of geographic naming activities being undertaken by international, regional, non-governmental and commercial organisations.
- To undertake the functions 1, to 10, of the Group of Experts as set out in the statutes and rules of procedure.

Milestones

- Design a questionnaire to review the needs and expectations of the members.
- Develop a format and criteria for the exchange of documentation and information between members. (To cover new or changed legislation, or new or changed policy, significant papers or reports or conference proceedings, significant press releases etc.
- Identify target groups and the messages on geographic naming.
- Decide the purpose, focus, and the format for the brochure.
- Identify the actions arising from the strategic plan that should be undertaken over the next term.
- Develop funding options to support specific geographic naming activities identified in the implementation of the strategic plan.
- Select activities being undertaken by other organisations for co-operation or support.
- Survey all member countries and record all relevant publicity and funding initiatives, which have been taken by national names authorities.
- To review the operation of the UNGEGN Newsletter to align it to current directions.