
**United Nations
Group of Experts on
Geographical Names**

**Working Paper
No. 24**

**Twentieth Session
New York, 17 – 28 January 2000**

Item 18
of the Provisional Agenda

**IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTIONS AND THE AIMS AND FUNCTIONS OF
THE UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES**

Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation

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1. The Group of Experts on Geographical Names, established by ECOSOC resolution in 1959, met for the first time in June 1960. During the ensuing forty years, a great deal has been accomplished. Many countries have established national geographical names authorities, embarked on standardisation programmes, published maps and gazetteers of their standardised geographical names, prepared and published toponymic guidelines for map and other editors, prepared lists of exonyms for their reduction internationally, presented toponymic education and training at the tertiary and other levels, devised and published transliteration tables for non-Roman scripts, established websites for facilitation of standardised geographical names, and so forth.
2. An analysis indicates that the developing countries are lagging very far behind in all these activities. In 1992 the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa requested the UNGEGN to assist in revitalising the geographical/linguistic divisions in Africa, and a special session of the United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Africa in Addis Abeba in 1993 was devoted to geographical name standardisation. Subsequently, however, no progress has been made in this regard.
3. The restructuring of the United Nations has resulted in a reduction of staff and available resources. Some of the publications of the Group of Experts are under scrutiny with a view to possible cessation, e.g. the UNGEGN Newsletter. The Group has been requested to evaluate its activities, determine priorities, and seek means of economising on non-essential activities.
4. The Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation, under the convenorship of Dr Richard R. Randall (USA), was disbanded on Dr Randall's retirement, after having revised the Aims and Functions of the UNGEGN and drafting a list of recommended actions. The essentiality of re-establishing the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation is highlighted by the considerations mentioned above. Interested experts are cordially invited to join the Working Group.
5. Possible functions of the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation are:
 - Evaluating all UNGEGN activities (including Sessions and Conferences) with a view to ensuring cost-effectiveness
 - Evaluating and categorising resolutions to determine their status of implementation, and devising means to ensure their full implementation.
 - Identifying developing countries most urgently requiring education, training and guidance in the establishment of national geographical names authorities and gazetteer production, and determining priorities in this regard
 - Finding methods of ensuring the implementation of resolutions on the standardization of geographical names in instances where countries are unable to participate in UNGEGN sessions and UN conferences on the standardization of geographical names
 - Maintaining an ongoing review of UNGEGN activities to ensure optimal efficiency and cost-effectiveness.