PROGRESS MADE ON ARCHIVING DOCUMENTS PERTAINING TO THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES AND TO THE SESSIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Creating a compendium of technical papers of UN Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names and the sessions of the UNGEGN

Submitted by Helen Kerfoot (Canada)
CREATING A COMPREHENDIUM OF TECHNICAL PAPERS
OF UN CONFERENCES ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES AND THE SESSIONS OF UNGEGN

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Introduction

At the Seventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names held in New York in January 1998 participants expressed concern about the incomplete document holdings of the UNGEGN Secretariat and the resulting difficulties of accessing technical papers from the seven Conferences and all UNGEGN sessions. Resolution VII/14 "Access to and archiving of technical papers" addressed this concern. (see Appendix 1).

To initiate follow-up to this resolution, I worked with staff at the United Nations in New York: Mr. Hans Stabe before his retirement, Ms. Jenny Javier, and staff of the Main UN Library (Dag Hammerskjold Library) and of the UN Map Collection in New York. I visited New York on two occasions, in September 1998 and in January 1999, to further this work. I express thanks to all involved for their assistance with our search for relevant documents.

During the past two years our aims have been two-fold:

Phase 1: To establish a complete inventory of technical documents presented at all the Conferences and UNGEGN sessions

Phase 2: To determine which of these documents are in the holdings of the UN Map Collection, the Dag Hammerskjold Library, and the UNGEGN Secretariat office

Work on Phase 1 and Phase 2 moved ahead, and although neither can be considered 100 percent complete, good progress has been made on both phases. Next steps in this project should be considered by UNGEGN so that Experts or UN Member States requiring documents can easily access the material.

Summary of work completed

Phase 1 of the project has involved a large amount of data input to build a file which contains entries for all documents officially presented at the seven UN Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names, the nineteen sessions of UNGEGN, and the two experts' meetings that were held prior to the first Conference. The request from the UNGEGN Secretariat was that the material be captured as a spread sheet, rather than as a data base and a commonly used software be selected. Consequently Microsoft Excel has been used to create the compendium.

In the tabulation, we have at this time included the following possible data elements for each entry:

- Conference/UNEGGN session number
- Year
- Reference number of document
Most data entry is complete, with some 1100 conference documents and some 820 UNGEGN documents now included in the file. A sample printout is included as Appendix 2. Some listings still need completion for early meetings.

Phase 2 was to ascertain which of these documents are located at the United Nations in New York. The locations to be verified were the Dag Hammerskjold Library, the UN Map Collection, and the UNGEGN Secretariat office. With the help of Mr. Stabe and Ms. Javier a large part of this exercise has been completed, and in the process the Map Collection holdings for recent UN activities have been augmented with duplicate copies from the UNGEGN Secretariat office.

In summary, it is found that the technical papers are not complete, even among these three locations. The Library’s mandate is only to keep Conference documents - and these are incomplete; the Map Collection has an assortment of documents, including UNGEGN papers; and the UNGEGN Secretariat is missing documents from many years, possibly due to various office moves. Fields have been added to the Excel file to indicate whether or not each of these UN locations has a particular document.

Copies of the tabulation (as of the end of September 1999) have so far been forwarded to the Secretariat and the Map Library for their reference, possible provision of updates, and holdings upgrading.

It should be noted that recently the United Nations has started to archive official UN documentation in digital form on the UN ODS (Optical Disk System). So far, for geographical names material only some documents from the Seventh Conference are included. At present, ODS is on the United Nations Intranet, but through the external Internet there is, to date, only limited access to the documents by users registered by the United Nations. Although there might be the possibility that documents from earlier conferences could eventually be added to the ODS, this would likely only be the CONF “L” papers. Information Papers (INF), Conference Room Papers (CRP), and Working Papers (WP) from UNGEGN sessions are unlikely to be included on UN ODS.

Data from the Excel file has been exported into Filemaker software to make particular selections of documents ...... however, so far no time has been spent to review documents to create subject indexes or to record key words. Consequently any search is based solely upon the words used in the document title, as well as information recorded in the other data fields.

Future work on this project

Phase 1 • Update to include documents of the 20th UNGEGN session
• Gather information from other Experts to fill current gaps in data entry
• Add other relevant UN documents, e.g. toponymic items in *World Cartography*; toponymic presentations to Regional Cartographic Conferences

Phase 2
• Some further checking of UN holdings and upgrading from within the three UN document areas or from the holding of other Experts
• Verify holdings of Experts for documents not held at the UN

Further phases depend on discussion and needs, but might for example address some of the following items:

- **Compendium of documents:**
  Make list and/or digital file of the compendium of documents widely available by some method(s)

- **Comprehensive indexing system:**
  Make a more comprehensive indexing system, of some or all documents, and covering some or a comprehensive list of topics

- **Texts of documents:**
  Make some/all documents themselves widely available by some method(s)

Participation of the UNGEGN Secretariat, of various Experts, and possible finances for further phases of this project to address Resolution VII/14 need to be determined.

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**Appendix 1.**

**Resolution VII/14. Access to and archiving of technical papers.**

The Conference,

Recalling resolutions 1 and 5 of the First United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in which it was recommended that the UNGEGN secretariat serve as a documentation centre and clearing house,

Recognizing the amount of information that has been presented at past Conferences and meetings of UNGEGN and its working groups,

Recognizing further that the collection of technical papers held by the UNGEGN secretariat is incomplete and that accessing and making available the information in them efficiently and effectively is therefore difficult,

1. **Urges** countries to ensure that the UNGEGN secretariat is supplied with the material necessary to fulfil its functions in this regard;

2. **Recommends** seeking the support and assistance of countries to catalogue and index the information in the technical papers they hold, in coordination with the UNGEGN secretariat;

3. **Recommends further** that assistance and support be sought from a country or countries to reproduce the documentation in a form that makes it more accessible to all;

4. **Recommends also** that, from now on, the secretariat collect and maintain all technical materials and papers.
TENTH SESSION OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES, Geneva, 23 August and 15 September, 1982


The national languages of the counts of the world, their scripts, Austria and the United Nations recommend on their Romanization.

Report presented by the German Democratic Republic (GDR)

Regional geographical names of the German Democratic Republic (GDR)

1982 ECONF.74/L.3
1982 ECONF.74/L.4
1982 ECONF.74/L.5
1982 UCONF.74/L.6
General directions for the spelling of geographical names of the German Democratic Republic (GDR)

1982 ECONF.74/L.9
Toponymic guidelines - Turkey

1982 ECONF.74/L.10
Gazetteer of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG)

1982 UCONF.74/L.11
Cuba

1982 ECONF.74/L.12
Toponymic guidelines - Denmark

1982 ECONF.74/L.13
Toponymic guidelines - Sweden

1982 VCONF.74/L.14
Townymk guidelines - Federal Republic of Germany (FRG)

1982 UCONF.74/L.15
Gazetteer of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG)

1982 ECONF.74/L.16
Toponymic guidelines - Norway

1982 ECONF.74/L.17
Toponymic guidelines - Benin

1982 ECONF.74/L.18
Surveying and Cartography, Benin

1982 ECONF.74/L.19
Administration for Surveying and Cartography, Berlin

1982 ECONF.74/L.20
Institut für Angewandte Geodäsie, Frankfurt am Main

1982 ECONF.74/L.21
Comisión Nacional de Nombres Geográficos, Cuba

1982 ECONF.74/L.22
Research Institute, University of Oslo

1982 ECONF.74/L.23
Comité de Toponymie de l'Institut Géographique National de France

1982 ECONF.74/L.24
Geodetic Surveying of the Federal Republic of Germany

1982 ECONF.74/L.25
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Prepared by

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