

**Twenty-second Session
New York, 20-29 April 2004**

**Resolutions from the Eight United Nations Conference
on the Standardization of Geographical Names
2002, Berlin***

* Submitted by the UNGEGN Secretariat

Chapter III

Resolutions adopted by the Conference

VIII/1. Promotion of minority group and indigenous geographical names

The Conference,

Considering that the preservation of minority and indigenous group culture is recognized as being an important aspect of the work of the standardization of geographical names,

Recalling the intent of the resolutions of earlier Conferences, namely, resolution 36 of the Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names relating to multilingual geographical names and resolution 22 of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names relating to the recording and use of aboriginal/native geographical names,

Recognizing that there are many agencies throughout the world actively pursuing the retention/revitalization of minority and indigenous group culture through the recording, recognition and promotion of the toponyms representing such groups,

Recognizing also that the promotion of this work will benefit the geographical names authorities and the United Nations, as well as provide valuable information for the community in general,

Noting that Australia has offered to assist the United Nations Secretariat in the compilation and presentation of a report on this work,

Recommends that geographical names authorities throughout the world be invited to present a summary of such activities for inclusion in a general report, scheduled to appear in 2007, on these activities to be prepared by the United Nations for subsequent dissemination to all interested parties.

VIII/2. Commemorative naming practices for geographical features

The Conference,

Noting that the use of names of persons or events to designate features for commemorative purposes or as geographical reminders constitutes an active practice,

Recognizing that the attribution of a personal name to a geographical feature during the lifetime or shortly after the death of a person is a widespread practice,

Recalling that, during a meeting in 1960, the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names acknowledged that the naming or renaming of a geographical feature to include the name of a living person could be a source of problems,

Recognizing that the practice is generally disadvantageous, as this type of designation is subject to subsequent changes not recommended by the Conference,

Noting that little guidance exists on the practice of adopting a personal name during the lifetime or shortly after the death of a person,

1. *Recommends* that the appropriate national authorities discourage the use of personal names to designate a geographical feature during the lifetime of the person in question;

2. *Also recommends* that the appropriate national authorities include in their guidelines clear statements on the length of the waiting period they wish to establish before using a commemorative name.

VIII/3. Working Group on Terminology of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

The Conference,

Noting that the new *Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names*¹ was prepared by the Working Group on Terminology in the six official languages of the United Nations, namely, Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish,

Noting also that the *Glossary* has now been published,

Recognizing that changes in terminology will require additions and/or amendments to the definitions of terms,

1. *Wishes* to express its appreciation and thanks to the members of the Working Group on Terminology for having contributed their expertise and time on a personal and voluntary basis in compiling the *Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names*;

2. *Recommends* that the Working Group on Terminology continue to function, with the aim of reviewing the *Glossary* periodically and updating it as required by a procedure to be agreed upon by the members of the Working Group.

VIII/4. Working Group on Exonyms of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

The Conference,

Recalling resolutions 28, 29, 31 and 38 of the Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, resolutions 18 and 19 of the Third Conference, resolution 20 of the Fourth Conference and resolution 13 of the Fifth Conference, as well as resolutions 4 and 10 of the First Conference, resolution 35 of the Second Conference, resolution 7 of the Third Conference and resolution 4 of the Fourth Conference,

Noting that, notwithstanding the general goal of limiting the use of exonyms, in several countries there has been a tendency to increase their number,

Recognizing that measures such as the categorization of exonym use, the publication of pronunciation guides for endonyms, and the formulation of guidelines ensuring a politically sensitive use of exonyms would help in the reduction of the number of exonyms,

¹ United Nations publication, Sales No. M.01.XVII.7.

Recommends the establishment of a Working Group on Exonyms of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, with the aim of preparing such measures as those mentioned above.

VIII/5. Joint meetings of the linguistic/geographical divisions and working groups of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

The Conference,

Considering resolution 7 of the First United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names,

Considering also the success achieved at the joint meeting of the East Central and South-East Europe Division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names and the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers of the Group of Experts,

Noting that the exchange of ideas, experience and materials at such a joint meeting would further the accomplishment of the recommendations and resolutions of the present Conference,

Recommends the continued organization of joint meetings of the linguistic/geographical divisions and the working groups of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names to address substantively regional needs in the areas of toponymic training, data files and gazetteers, romanization systems, publicity and funding, and terminology.

VIII/6. Integration of geographical names data into national and regional spatial data infrastructures

The Conference,

Emphasizing that standardized geographical names information is a crucial component of the efficient development of national economies in all countries,

Noting that geographical names serve as a common means of access to geo-information and spatial data infrastructures,

Recalling that the Fifteenth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific, held in Kuala Lumpur in 2000, recognized the promotion of national and regional geographical names standardization programmes,²

Recalling also that the Seventh United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas, held in New York in 2001, recognized the importance

² See *Fifteenth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific, Kuala Lumpur, 11-14 April 2000: Report of the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.01.1.2), chap. VIII, sect. 8, resolution 7.

of standardized and consistent geographical names as a fundamental data set of national and regional spatial data infrastructures,³

Recommends that standardized geographical names data should be considered in the establishment of national and regional spatial data infrastructures and included in their design, development and implementation.

VIII/7. Toponymic data exchange formats and standards

The Conference,

Recalling that, in its resolution VII/6, the Seventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names recommended the digital exchange of nationally standardized geographical names, and the establishment of a liaison with the Unicode Consortium,

Recalling also that, in its resolution VII/13, the Seventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names recommended the establishment of a liaison with the International Organization for Standardization,

Noting that the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names has now established a liaison with both the Unicode Consortium and the International Organization for Standardization,

Noting also that suitable international standards for digital toponymic data exchange require development,

Recommends that the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, through its established liaison relationships with standards organizations, vigorously promote the development of international toponymic data exchange standards.

VIII/8. Assistance to the United Nations Geographic Information Working Group

The Conference,

Noting that the United Nations Geographic Information Working Group endeavours to establish a spatial data infrastructure for the United Nations,

Noting also that the Working Group has identified standardized geographical names information as a crucial and fundamental component of this infrastructure,

Recognizing the role of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names in assisting the United Nations in matters pertaining to geographical names,

Recommends that the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names collaborate with the United Nations Geographic Information Working Group in the design and construction of the toponymic component of the United Nations spatial data infrastructure,

³ See *Report of the Seventh United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas, New York, 22-26 January 2001: Report of the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.01.I.13), chap. VI, sect. B, resolution 7.

Also recommends that the Group of Experts, through its structure of working groups and divisions, actively facilitate the provision of standardized geographical names information from appropriate national authorities to the United Nations Geographic Information Working Group.

VIII/9. Geographical names as cultural heritage

The Conference,

Recognizing the emphasis placed by delegates at the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names on the importance of geographical names as part of a nation's historical and cultural heritage,

Noting that the collection of geographical names in many countries of the world is made increasingly difficult as a result of the rapid pace of socio-economic change impacting on society and landscape,

Recalling the recommendation made by the Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in its resolution 27, as well as the recommendations made by the Seventh Conference in its resolution VII/5, that measures be taken nationally to ensure that the names that are yet to be collected are recorded through fieldwork according to the local usage of name forms,

Urges countries that have not already done so, to undertake both the systematic collection of geographical names and the promotion of a greater understanding among the wider public of the significance of inherited geographical names with respect to local, regional and national heritage and identity.

VIII/10. Toponymic data-collection procedures

The Conference,

Recalling the importance of field collection of geographical names as conveyed in resolution 4, recommendation B, of the First United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, and as noted in resolution 27 of the Second Conference,

Recognizing the rapidly developing requirement for highly accurate and complete geographical names and associated information,

Noting the increasing demand for geographical names of all categories for use in a geographic information system (GIS) environment as well as in specialized and multi-purpose automated databases,

Recommends that Governments expand their existing data-collection procedures for geographical names, and establish procedures for collecting names from all acceptable sources so as to be responsive to the needs of geographical names users.

VIII/11. Working Group on the Pronunciation of Geographical Names

The Conference,

Noting that a geographical name has both oral and written forms,

Noting also that the transliteration of geographical names from the script of one language into the script of another with or without diacritical marks, such as romanization, does not normally provide a guide to the correct pronunciation of such names by persons who are unacquainted with the source language,

Noting further that the Third United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in its resolution 7 recommended taking up the subject of pronunciation,

Recommends that a Working Group on the Pronunciation of Geographical Names be established within the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.

VIII/12. Standardization of names of countries

The Conference,

Recalling resolution VII/8 of the Seventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, in which the Conference noted certain differences between the names of countries published by the Documentation, Reference and Terminology Section of the United Nations Secretariat⁴ and the forms recommended by the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names,

Considering that it is desirable for the various entities of the United Nations to use the same names of countries in the official language(s) of each country and in the official languages of the United Nations,

Considering also that, because of the mission and competence of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, harmonization and consultation should be sought with the various entities of the United Nations involved in activities concerning geographical names,

Recommends that the Terminology and Reference Section of the United Nations Secretariat and the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names should consult when updating their lists of the names of the countries of the world in the official languages of the United Nations.

VIII/13. Romanization of Thai geographical names

The Conference,

Recognizing that, in its resolution 14, the First United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names had recommended the adoption of the modified general system of the Royal Institute of Thailand as the international system for the romanization of Thai geographical names,

⁴ Now the Terminology and Reference Section of the United Nations Secretariat.

VIII/16. Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names and the twenty-second session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

The Conference,

Noting the progress made in the work of the standardization of geographical names, at both the national and international levels, by States Members of the United Nations,

Noting also the essential role played therein by the present United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names and by the sessions of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names,

Recognizing the necessity of continuing this important work,

1. *Recommends* to the Economic and Social Council that the Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names be convened in the second half of 2007;

2. *Also recommends* to the Economic and Social Council that the twenty-second session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names be convened in 2004.

VIII/17. Vote of thanks

The Conference

1. *Extends its heartfelt thanks* to the Government of Germany for the excellent arrangements and services provided for the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names and for the generous hospitality extended to its participants;

2. *Expresses its particular gratitude* to the Bundesamt für Kartographie und Geodäsie (Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy) for its excellent organization of Conference-related matters and of the associated technical exhibition;

3. *Expresses its gratitude* to the President of the Conference for the effective way in which he conducted the meetings;

4. *Expresses its appreciation* to the officers of the Conference and to the officers and staff of both the Government of Germany and the United Nations for their hard work and dedication, which greatly facilitated the business of the Conference.