

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

Item 20 of the Provisional Agenda

**IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTIONS AND THE AIMS AND FUNCTIONS
OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS**

Resolution VIII/1 on Indigenous and Minority Group Geographical Names*

***Submitted by Bill Watt of Australia**

Resolution V111/1 on Indigenous and Minority Group Geographical Names

Resolution VIII/1 of the Eighth Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names recommends developing a reporting method to show all interested parties throughout the world what is being done to preserve the heritage of indigenous and minority groups through active recording and use of places names associated with such groups.

A proposal has also been made by New Zealand to the effect that an UNGEGN working group be created to establish best practice methodology and to promote the benefits of such work.

Both concepts are in some ways interconnected, but can also be considered as separate issues.

However, as we consider these matters, it should be remembered that we are taking a step beyond the comparatively straightforward mapping and land information issues into the much less clear or concise realm of cultural issues. Place names must be remembered as being primarily a window into the interaction of a particular people with the landscape they live in, and as such they have specific and often very individual importance to that people and on occasions very unique rules of application and use. General country-wide or world-wide rules will not always apply to all cultural groups, requiring the development of inclusive guidelines, processes and applications rather than a rigid framework that can on occasions be exclusive.

It is suggested that the use of names in a mapping or land information environment can only be fully effective when based on the full cultural considerations and sensitivities.

An example of this situation is the 'one place – one name' concept. If viewed simply from a mapping perspective then if only one name is applied to a feature a rigid rule is established. If the same situation were considered from a cultural perspective, then each culture would have a strong desire to maintain, record and use its name for any particular feature, and should have an expectation that other cultures would respect this position. The latter then provides for inclusive processes to be introduced.

In addition, the inherent nature of GIS systems and web technology provide the means by which much more information can be shown, selected or otherwise as desired by the client.

The intent of Resolution VIII/1 is a low-key information collating / sharing exercise. An impressive amount of such work that has or is taking place throughout the world is worthy of promotion. A concept to promote the resolution is the creation of a database containing the following fields:

- Country.
- Relevant dates of entry / update of record

- Indigenous / Minority Group identification.
- Latitude / Longitude values to provide a spatial location of the general location of the subject area of interest.
- Number of place names involved (optional).
- Date of Collection
- Contact details of the persons involved in the individual projects to enable others to contact them if desired.
- Reference to any printed record of the project (books, journal articles etc)
- General comments

Interested countries (or experts?) could then submit the above details (probably by email, but any other means of communication would be equally effective) in relation to either specific collection projects or areas where such place names are already in established use. This information will obviously be dynamic as new projects are initiated. Participation will obviously be voluntary.

The database can then be attached to a simple map of the world through a GIS system to provide a spatial viewing platform, where a 'point and click' method will bring up the details relating to the specific instances shown on the map.

Australia has indicated a willingness to compile the data and prepare the GIS output. Consideration would have to be given as to how the information could be shared; with probably a web based mapping method the most successful. (An unofficial approach to ESRI Australia has indicated a willingness to consider placing such data on their web server without cost, as is done for a number of other such non-commercial data sharing situations. However, the protocol for such an approach needs consideration.)

The attached information shows a sample of such a database.

In September 2003, the proposal from New Zealand was considered at the Asia South-East Pacific South-West Division meeting in Kuala Lumpur, where it was agreed by all but one attending country to promote the concept of a working group at the 22nd UNGEGN session in New York.

This proposal involves a much larger concept, but the benefits from bringing together the experience and questions from a wide range of situations would provide an opportunity to develop a set of guidelines that would be beneficial for all countries in the world that will need to consider this type of issue. Given the cultural situations found across the world, it is suggested that there will be very few countries that do not have either indigenous or minority cultural groups.

World Wide Summary (printout of database)

<i>Country</i>	<i>Record Number</i>	<i>Date of input</i>	<i>Date of last update</i>	<i>Language / Cultural Group</i>	<i>Number of names</i>	<i>Latitude</i>	<i>Longitude</i>
<i>Reason for collection</i>	<i>Collected by</i>	<i>Date span of collection period</i>					
<i>Relevant publications, reports</i>							
<i>Comments</i>							

Australia	3	2/10/2003	2/10/2003	Narrindjeri	200	-35.61	139.45
Ethnographic research	Norman Tindale						
Information was collected by Tindale over a number of years. This particular extract was compiled by Tindale in 1984 and forwarded to the Geographical Names Board who established spatial locations and obtained authorisation for the general use of the names							

Australia	2	1/10/2003	1/10/2003	Adnyamathanha	300	-32.82	138.89
Language retention program	Dorothy Tunbridge						
"Flinders Ranges Dreaming" by Dorothy Tunbridge							
Information was gathered from the relevant elders and only released with their approval. There are some place names that have not been released due to cultural sensitivity.							

Australia	1	1/10/2003	1/10/2003	Pitjantjatjara / Yankuntjatjara	600	-26.66	132.34
Place names survey	Geographical Names Section,						
Information was recorded in the field with support for those men who had the relevant traditional knowledge, recording accuracy was verified by Dr Cliff Goddard, linguist and the public release of the information was authorized by the relevant communities prior to use in the general State nomenclature.							

New Zealand	4	2/10/2003	2/10/2003	Maori	XXX	-42.59	172.74
Treaty of Waitangi							
Place names are being retained as a result of the heritage preservation provisions included in the Treaty of Waitangi							

Wednesday, 17 March 2004

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