Item 18 of the provisional agenda

Toponymic guidelines for map editors and other editors

Toponymic Guidelines for Map Editors and Other Editors, for International Use: Survey and Prospects *

(1) A short statistical survey:
- 39 countries have published Toponymic Guidelines and/or drafts or preliminary versions to date.
- In the 9th UNCSGN 2007 nine countries presented updated versions or updates to single chapters of their Toponymic Guidelines, one country submitted a preliminary (not yet authorized) full version, and two others presented papers containing the main issues to be taken into account by the edition of maps or other publications.

(2) The future of the Toponymic Guidelines:
- It is to be noted that new models of Toponymic Guidelines were presented. Sweden, for instance, compiled its version in Swedish as well as in English. This practice found the broad consent of the experts participating in the 9th UNCSGN and was regarded as an important contribution to the promotion of geographical names standardization on a national as well an international level.
- It is also to be noted that many Toponymic Guidelines are out-of-date. Experts are asked to set up an ad hoc working group in their countries and to work out an updated version for the 10th Conference. Good progress was made in the presentation of updated versions during the 24th session and the 9th Conference in particular. Cyprus has announced a revised version for the session in Nairobi.
- It is to be further noted that many countries have not yet presented Toponymic Guidelines at all because of various and manifold difficulties.[1] To make progress in this matter, one possible solution for these countries could be to elaborate a draft paper of the principles and procedures for the standardization of geographical names in their respective countries as a first step. The convenor has held discussions with some of the countries concerned and found consent for this practice. Samples for this process can be found in papers submitted to the 9th Conference (E/CONF.98/CRP.26; E/CONF.98/61 and Add.1). A further solution may be close cooperation with neighbouring countries.
The Ukraine, which has not yet published any Toponymic Guidelines has announced its 1st edition for the session in Nairobi.
Switzerland established a national working group in 2008, in which experts from the administration and linguistics participate. Its task is to elaborate toponymic guidelines in all 4 national languages. As a result a first preliminary draft has been worded in German, the translation into English will be made after finishing the whole text.
- In a globalized world one can observe an increasing interest for the correct pronunciation of geographical names. The model of Toponymic Guidelines foresees a chapter on pronunciation: Links to pronunciation aids for the countries concerned should be included in all Toponymic Guidelines in this chapter, be it as books containing the transcription of geographical names or as audio files available from national data bases.

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[1] In the 23rd UNGEGN session the "Manual for the national standardization of geographical names" was distributed: Part two, chapter IX contains an article on "Toponymic guidelines for map and other editors, for international use" (by Helen Kerfoot [Canada] and Eeva Maria Närhi [Finland]) in which all the relevant items for establishing a national names programme are discussed. Annexed is a list of countries which have produced Toponymic guidelines together with the status of actuality (2006).