

**Twenty-sixth session  
Vienna, 2-6 May 2011**

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**Item 4 of the Provisional Agenda**

**Report of the divisions**

**The Ninth Regional Meeting of Asia South – West Division  
(other than Arabic)**

**In the name of God**

### **The Ninth Regional Meeting of Asia South – West Division (other than Arabic)**

Islamic Republic of Iran, as chair of Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic) of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), encourages regional activities in the related aspects within the division, through technical meetings, correspondence, etc.

Iran has organized nine regional meetings on the standardization of geographical names. Holding regional meetings, Iran has made great efforts on coordinating activities related to geographical names across the region.

The Ninth Regional Meeting of the Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic) was held in Tehran on 28 February and 1 March 2011, hosted by National Cartographic Center (NCC) of Iran. Distinguished delegates of the member countries of this division, including Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey participated in the Meeting. Representatives of Afghanistan and Turkmenistan did not attend, only councilor or secretary of embassy of these countries participated. Deputy of Tajikistan embassy also attended as an observer guest.

Besides, members of Iranian Committee on the Standardization of Geographical Names (ICSGN) were present in the meeting.

During this two days meeting, an educational workshop was presented by Ministry of Agriculture Jihad concerning the Multimedia Database of Iran's Villages. Participants also visited the NCC and the Iranology Foundation.

#### **Meeting topics:**

- Reviewing the 25<sup>th</sup> Session of UNGEGN and the 9<sup>th</sup> United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names.
- Coordination among the Regional Member Countries for participating in the Twenty-sixth Session of the UNGEGN, Vienna, 2 to 6 May 2011.
- Presentation of the Regional Member Countries National Reports.
- Presentation of National Report on the Geomatics and Surveying by Technical Deputy of National Cartographic Center (NCC) of Iran.
- Focusing on membership of Tajikistan in the Asia South – West Division (other than Arabic) of UNGEGN.
- Presentation of the Iranian National Geographical Names Database and the Iranian Committee's Website
- Consultations between the Member Countries to establish the Regional Geographical Names Data Base
- Resolutions approval

## **Standardization of Geographical Names in the Member Countries of Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic)**

### **Azerbaijan**

On 6<sup>th</sup> of May, 2008 (№ 108) the Cabinet of the Republic of Azerbaijan accepted the regulation concerning the account and registration of place names, requirement to compile dictionaries and directories of geographic units, issue and implementation of the state Catalogue of geographic names.

After the acceptance of the law on “*Place names of the Republic of Azerbaijan*”, *State Committee of Land and Cartography* was defined as a governmental institute for performing above mentioned affairs.

After creation of legislative base of geographical places names, there are ongoing activities on national program on geographic names.

1. In 2001, the primary version of the list of names of all settlements of Azerbaijan was prepared together with experts of Parliament of the country.
2. Currently, the book «Administrative-territorial division of the Republic of Azerbaijan» has been already published.
3. Standard-legislative documents of Mili Majlis (National Parliament) regarding with the names of settlements, still have some gaps. Assignment of geographic names to geographic units is not accompanied by graphic applications. This usually causes difficulties in case of amendments to the drawings.
4. Duty maps on a scale of 1:100000 in the Azerbaijan language were issued and regularly updated by State Committee's staff.
5. Currently, in the State Committee of Land and Cartography 80 % of works on accumulation and standardization of geographic names on the basis of topographic maps on the scale of 1:50000 that were issued even in Soviet period were done, the rest 20 % wasn't finished because of known events. Accumulated geographic names are digitized simultaneously.

Before reestablishment of Azeri independence, maps of all scales were published only in Russian. Therefore all place names appeared in Russian, nowadays both Russian and Azeri names are side by side. In order to digitize the data, geographic coordinates for the first letter of the place names was written out from 1:50000 scale maps.

6. State Committee's specialists together with the experts of Institute of Geography of National Academy of sciences of Azerbaijan continue their works on accumulation and normalization of place names in order to provide the governmental list (State Catalogue). Building the list of geographic names from the 1:50000 scale maps have its own peculiarity.

For indicating these names in the Azeri language on 1:50000 scale geographic maps, Committee's experts developed tables of types and the sizes of fonts in the Latin script. At present more than 60 % of 1:50000 scale maps were standardized and were published in the Azeri language.

7. As all 1:25000 scale maps was in Russian language, State Committee with cooperation of National Academy of sciences of Azerbaijan make the full list of place names on the basis of mentioned topographic maps.
8. Along with the achievements there are some difficulties as well. Building digital database of place names of Azerbaijan is in an initial stage. Because of lack of the due control on many publications and mass media, there are a lot of discrepancies in place names.

9. With close cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, place names of foreign countries and territories were published.
10. Simultaneously, State Committee of Land and Cartography works on building of digital databases of all place names. There are difficulties on creation of the automated processing systems of the place names data.

State Committee of Land and Cartography should build terminological dictionary of place names, publish the list of full and short forms of names of the countries and territories in Azeri language.

## **Cyprus**

1. The Cyprus Republic complying always with the resolutions of the U.N. Conferences for the Standardization of Geographical Names has kept abreast of the subject and participates actively to all relevant Conferences, Sessions and Divisions' Meetings to which Cyprus is a member.
  - 1.1 The “*Cyprus Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names*” (CPCSGN) was officially established in 1977 and constitutes the only competent National Authority for the Standardization of Geographical Names and acts under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The Committee in 2009 was reappointed for the next 5 years.
  - 1.2 The CPCGN continues the task for the collection, standardization and Romanization of the Greek alphabet according to ELOT 743, of the Cyprus geographical names. The most toponyms were collected on field by appropriate and authorized bodies during the mapping of Cyprus in 1878 and later periods.
2. **Publications:**
  - 2.1 A “*Booklet/Guide for the Standardization of Names*” has been compiled and published in December 2007. It covers all the sectors involved with naming and geographical names, guides and principles for the standardization of names, the Romanization system of the Greek alphabet, etc. It is in the Greek language and it is suitable especially for local use and needs.
  - 2.2 The “*UNGEGN Promotional Brochure*” translated in the Greek language and after some corrections it has been published as 2nd Edition in 2009. (Both, the Booklet / Guide and the UNGEGN Promotional Brochure, Greek version, were distributed to all Government and Authorities' services and individuals interested on the topic.)
  - 2.3 The “*toponymic guidelines for Map and Other Editors*” originally in draft form was revised and it is anticipated to be published within this year, 2011.
  - 2.4 “*Country Names and Capitals*” The existing list in draft form has been revised and updated and it will be published within this year, 2011.
  - 2.5 The existing national gazetteers prepared by the C.P.C.S.G.N. in 1982 and 1987 respectively, the “*Concise Gazetteer of Cyprus*” (about 2000 entries) and the “*A Complete Gazetteer of Cyprus*” (about 67.000 entries), both need to be updated.
3. Cyprus gives a great meaning and importance on the implementation of the resolutions of the U.N. Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names and to the protection of the Geographical Names, as part of the cultural heritage of every country and as such must be protected against any premeditated or violent changes.

## **Iran**

*Iranian Committee on the Standardization of Geographical Names (ICSGN)*, as a national authority for geographical names, has initiated its own activities with the membership of representatives of affiliated organizations to follow:

- To collect national geographical names data
- To appropriately register and record geographical names
- To develop instructions and scientific procedures for geographical names standardization
- To promote a degree of uniformity for geographical names in the databases, maps, atlases, and written documents
- To Communicate and collaborate with UNGEGN member countries
- To solve problems resulted from geographical names differences among national and known international languages

### **Recent Activities of ICSGN (2009 to 2011)**

1. Consulting on the geographical names subjects in the committee's session bimonthly.
2. Enhancing the Iranian National Geographical Names Database (INGNDB) by:
  - a. Completing and updating current information about 100000 names which have been entered into INGNDB.
  - b. Defining and classifying the geographical names information of urban streets and places for organizing into the Iranian Geographical Names Database.
  - c. Preparing digital data collection and registration of spatial features, including names and etc., during field work.
  - d. Initiating interoperability between Iranian National Geo-Names Database and Iranian National Geo-Database
3. Revising specification of features for annotation of aerial photographs for 1:25000 mapping and topographic database
4. Restructuring and reforming the Committee's website.
5. Publishing:
  - a. Oronyms of Iran
  - b. List of Country Names
  - c. Map of Territory of Contemporary Iranian Language Family
6. Undergoing compilation of "*Comprehensive Directions on Registration of the Iranian Geographical Names*" book (Toponymic Guideline), based on the most recent directions published by the UNGEGN
7. Coordinating with news agencies and other organizations to use of standardized names of places.
8. Arranging the 9<sup>th</sup> Regional Meeting for Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic) and planning the 5<sup>th</sup> National Meeting on the Standardization of Geographical Names
9. Compiling the first edition of Geographical Names Gazetteer, for a block of map sheets in scale of 1:25000, as a sample.

## Pakistan

Pakistan as a permanent member of United Nations Conferences on Standardization of Geographical Names has been participating in these conferences. *Survey of Pakistan (SoP)* is a national surveying and mapping authority in the country since 1947. SoP is also a focal organization on standardization of geographical names in the country.

1. SoP has prepared Electronic Gazetteer based on 1:1 Million scale maps of the country.
2. The work on preparing the Gazetteer based on 1: 50K maps is under preparation and more than 70% work had already been completed. Hopefully it will be publish within one year.
3. Establishing a National Geographic Naming Authority  
In order to bring all national geographical entities on board, the department has worked out a proposal for establishing a National Geographic Naming Authority including the experts on Surveying, Linguistics, Foreign Affairs, History, Culture, Revenue departments, Local administrative authorities and IT.  
Following four working groups are also proposed for establishing at national level. Each group will include relevant experts comprising different part of the country:  
*WG I: Working Group for preparation of Database of Historical Names*  
*WG II: Working Group on Exonyms*  
*WG III: Working Group on Transcription for accurate pronunciation*  
*WG IV: Working Group on website and creation of database of Geographical Names*
4. Standardized Geographical Names will also be placed on SoP website on completion of the gazetteer and will regularly be updated.
5. As a member of Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic), Pakistan hopes to develop regional standards for geographical names of this region.

## Turkey

“*The Board of Experts for Geographical Names of Turkey (BEGeN\_T)*” which is responsible for standardization of geographic names in Turkey, has been founded in July 2004 in accordance with the directive of Ministry of Interior prepared in cooperation with related national institutions.

1. The Board of Experts for Geographical Names of Turkey organizes two meetings every year. Recent developments, activities of working groups, decisions about possible questions from various institutions are discussed during these meetings.
2. Several working groups have been established in the meeting which took place in October 2004, in line with the activities of UNGEGN and national needs.
3. The Turkish version of the UNGEGN brochure has been prepared.
4. The “*Concise Gazetteer of the World at scale 1:30 M*” will be assigned to the new working groups of the Board.
5. Since its establishment, The Board is working for the publication of following documents: “*Multilingual Glossary of Geographical Features*”, “*Turkish exonyms of countries and capitals*” based on the list of ISO 3166, “*Toponymy Guidelines for Authors, Map Publishers and other Editors*”, “*Glossary of Toponymic Terminology*”, “*Gazetteers and Names Databases at various scales*”.
6. 1:250 000 scale “*Turkey and Neighborhood Gazetteer*” has been released on General Command of Mapping Web Site.
7. “*Turkish exonyms of countries and capitals*” based on the list of ISO 3166 was prepared and is going to be approved by the board after the examination of Ministry of International Affairs. It will also be published on websites of BeGeoN\_T and member organizations.
8. Board of Experts for Geographical Names of Turkey participated in several division meetings such as Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic).

## Meeting Approvals

Representatives of member countries to this division adopted the following decisions after holding several sessions and specialized negotiations:

1. Group member countries follow up the subject of development and promotion of level of mutual cooperation in the area of standardization of geographical names through geographical names custodian institutions and by way of development and activating subsidiary work groups.
2. Representatives of member countries should submit to the secretariat of the Iranian Committee on the Standardization of Geographical Names (ICSGN) the news and reports related to activities, achievements, and events of standardization of geographical names in concerned countries for reflecting through website of the committee.
3. The custodian institutes for geographical names in member countries should follow up the subject of collecting and registering data related to names of important geographical places and features for the purpose of developing a regional database of endonyms and exonyms and submit the data to secretariat of the committee in Iran at most within ten months.
4. Regional Geographical Names Database would be accessible for member countries through relevant website and all member countries shall benefit its privileges.
5. Member Countries emphasize on scientific and technical cooperation especially on holding training courses in order to establishment of regional geographical names database.
6. Representatives of member countries unanimously express their approvals with official membership of Tajikistan in Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic) group of experts on geographical names. The representatives also ask United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) to take necessary measures for acceptance of membership of Tajikistan.
7. Member countries do their best for a coherent and coordinated presence in future meeting of Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic) in the sideline of 26<sup>th</sup> meeting of UNGEGN (Vienna, May 2-6 2011).
8. Considering approvals and recommendations of United Nations Conferences on Standardization of Geographical Names and also reports of meetings of UNGEGN, member countries should pay attention to following cases:
  - Collecting, standardization and registration of information related to geographical places and features names as intangible cultural and historical heritage in the form of gazetteers, geographical names databases and etc.
  - Cooperation with secretariat of UNGEGN in the area of completing geo-referenced database containing names of the countries, capitals and major cities of the world which is developed and designed multilingual and multiscriptual.
  - Compiling series of manuals and scientific instructions in the area of writing and pronunciation of territorial names, terminology of geographical names, Unit system for Romanization (Latin writing), and documenting exonyms.
  - Promotion of application of standard geographical names through information services, advertisement, education, etc.
9. Distinguished representatives and members express their agreement with holding the tenth regional meeting on standardization of geographical names of Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic) in 2013. They embrace holding regional meeting in various member countries. Hence, after analyzing hosting requests and with the agreement of representatives of member countries decision will be made regarding holding tenth regional meeting in one of applicant countries.

10. Member countries unanimously select Mr. (Eng.) Mahmoud Ilkhan Director of National Cartographic Center of Iran as chair of Asia South-West Division of UNGEGN (other than Arabic) until next Regional Meeting.
11. Distinguished delegates express their agreement with submitting approvals and results of this meeting to secretariat of UNGEGN and embassies of member countries in Tehran.
12. Member countries express their appreciation towards UNGEGN for making efforts on the global standardization of geographical names.
13. Member countries express their thanks towards NCC of Islamic Republic of Iran for making efforts on holding the Ninth Regional Meeting on standardization of geographical names and good hospitalities.