Item 4 of the Provisional Agenda

Reports of the Divisions

A concise overview and synthesis of the information contained in the Division reports submitted to the Twenty-Sixth Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names *

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United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names
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Submitted on behalf of UNGEGN, prepared by Mrs Caroline Burgess (United Kingdom)
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Introduction
The United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) includes 23 Divisions, each comprising representatives from countries with linguistic and/or geographical connections. Each Division is encouraged to submit a report on its activities to the UNGEGN Sessions.

This overview summarises the information contained in the 14 Divisional reports submitted under Item 4 of the Provisional Agenda of the 26th Session of UNGEGN: *Reports of the Divisions*. Papers consulted are listed in Annex A to this paper (this annex also includes acronyms and initialisms used in this paper). No submissions had been made by the remaining 9 Divisions at the time of writing (4th April 2011). Further papers (4) were subsequently received before the start of the 26th Session and are included in the list at Annex A (Working Papers No. 89, 91, 92, and 93); they are not analysed in this summary. The purpose of this synthesis is to limit the amount of time allocated to presentation during this agenda item; all papers are available for consultation at: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnSession26.html

Structure and content of Divisional reports
A variety of approaches towards the presentation of reports is evident among the Divisions, the focus of activity often influenced by the longevity of the Division. The longer-established tend to report by theme or UN Resolution (eg DGSD), others focus on joint meetings, regional activities and joint projects (eg Arabic Division, ASEPSW, Norden Division), whilst the newer Divisions describe attempts to establish contacts and encourage member participation (eg Portuguese-speaking Division; Africa Central Division; Africa East Division) Most Divisions have also included a summary of its member countries' national activities and outputs, detailed information about which has sometimes been submitted to this UNGEGN Session in dedicated Working Papers under other agenda items. In some cases, where a country is a member of more than one Division, an outline of its national activities has been included in all relevant Divisional reports.
A number of common topics have arisen from the reports (largely centred on UNGEGN Working Group themes) and these are described under *Principal areas of work* below.

Division composition and level of activity
The reports reveal the disparities between the Divisions in their size, structure, organisation and level of activity. The composition and chairing of the Division is described in most of the reports. New members have joined or stated a wish to join several of the Divisions: Montenegro recently became a member of the ECSEE Division; Tajikistan has been accepted as a member of the ASW Division (other than Arabic).
The ECSEED has compiled an overview document describing the Division and its members, and has designed a template for the referencing of divisional documentation.
The ASEPSW Division has noted that its title has not been formally adopted by UNGEGN. It has furthermore proposed splitting the Division into two: South East Asia and Pacific South West.
Work within the Africa Central and Africa East Divisions has been encouraged with the support of the Task Team for Africa.

<u>Regional collaboration: Divisional meetings and joint projects</u>
Most of the Divisions have organised meetings since the last session of UNGEGN (Arabic; ECSEE; EENCA, ASEPSW, Norden, ASWD (other than Arabic), Africa Central, Africa East, Baltic, Portuguese-speaking Division, DGSD). Others report instead on other opportunities to share information (USA-Canada), whilst some divisions comprise too few Members to make a Divisional meeting relevant (China; UKD). It is clear that many Divisions are successfully holding meetings in conjunction with other related events[1] whether they be Working Group meetings, toponymic training courses, UNGEGN sessions or other conferences with toponymic themes.
A number of collaborative projects are described including:

- A Regional Map and Gazetteer project, and list of regional generic terms (ASEPSW)
- Minority geographical names in the Norden Division area: investigating the establishment of an online web-based resource (Norden Division)
- The consideration of constructing a regional geographical names data base (ASWD (other than Arabic))
- The future compilation of a toponymic glossary of Central Africa (Africa Central Division)
- Review of the Glossary of Arabic Terms and consideration of a database of Arab geographical names (Arabic Division)
- The compilation of a list of country names and exonyms and a glossary in Portuguese; translation of the UNGEGN glossary into Portuguese; compilation of a compendium of generic terms appearing on maps of the member countries; provision of information on member states' databases and national names authorities (Portuguese-speaking Division)
- Collaboration on Transboundary feature names (Canada-USA Division)
- The United States is working with the Afghan Geography and Cartography Head Office to support a national geographical names authority in Afghanistan.

<u>Principal areas of work:</u>

National names standardisation bodies and relevant legislation
Most reports provide an outline of national names authorities of the member countries of the Division, or describe the state authorities responsible for managing geographical names information. In some instances, there is also an organisation dealing with names beyond the national boundaries, eg. ECSEED (Poland); UKD (United Kingdom); USA-Canada Division (United States). The legislation supporting such activities is also frequently detailed in the reports, and recent amendments specified. Several new names authorities are described as having been created since the last UNGEGN session: eg. ECSEED (Serbia); ASEPSWD (Sri Lanka); Arabic Division (Palestine); Norden Division (Denmark - Faroese Place-Name Commission); Portuguese-speaking Division (Brazil); EENCAD (Uzbekistan almost in law), and in some cases legislation has been adopted giving existing state organisations responsibility for geographical names standardisation eg. EENCAD (Azerbaijan, Belarus). In the ASWD (other than Arabic), a proposal for the creation of a names body in Pakistan has been drafted, and in the Africa East Division, the Madagascar geographical names authority (KPMA) continues, but with financial difficulties. In Jamaica (UKD), new geographical names will be considered by the Place Names Commission upon its reactivation. In the DGSD, the Advisory Commission on Geographical Names in the Netherlands has been dissolved but its responsibilities are expected to be transferred to the Royal Netherlands Geographical Society.

Multi-lingual areas and minority names and languages
Whilst not an overriding theme, work on and support for minority languages is mentioned in reports of ECSEED (Poland) Norden Division, UKD (United Kingdom); Baltic Division (Estonia, Lithuania); Canada-USA Division and the DGSD.

Support to international programmes
Work to support global or regional databases is described. In particular, reports summarise contributions to the EuroGeoNames programme eg. ECSEED (Croatia; Slovakia, Slovenia); EENCAD (Bulgaria); Norden Division;

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[1] As outlined in Resolution VIII/5

Baltic Division; DGSD, and the UNGEGN database eg. Arabic Division, ECSEED (Serbia); Portuguese-speaking Division; DGSD (Belgium).

Toponymic training and promotion of geographical names
Various efforts to promote the importance of geographical names have been carried out, including the translation of the UNGEGN promotional leaflet eg. ECSEED (Cyprus); ASEPSWD (Indonesia). The Ninth regional meeting of Asia-South West Division (other than Arabic) was accompanied by an educational workshop; both the Africa Central and the Africa East Division members are promoting the work and existence of their Divisions to raise awareness in the region, and similar work was being carried out in the Arabic Division and within the League of Arab Nations. The China Division has produced documentaries to publicise geographical names issues; the Baltic Division has organised annual Place Names Days (Estonia) and has been involved in local training courses (Estonia, Latvia). Members of the DGSD have been involved in the organisation of training courses. *Map Africa 2010* was held in South Africa and included a session on the standardisation of geographical names.

Cultural heritage and preservation of historical names
Collecting and preserving geographical names as part of intangible cultural and historical heritage is mentioned in the reports of the Arabic Division, the ASWD (other than Arabic) the China Division, the Baltic Division (Estonia, Lithuania) and the DGSD (Netherlands). The Arabic Division reports on different elements that influence naming such as foreign languages and the natural environment.

Production of toponymic material and related mapping programmes
New or amended Toponymic Guidelines have been published or are anticipated for members of the ECSEED (Cyprus, Poland, Slovakia, Turkey, Ukraine); Norden Division (Denmark); ASWD (other than Arabic) (Islamic Republic of Iran) and DGSD (Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland).
Toponymic glossaries have been compiled by members of the Arabic Division, the ECSEED (Slovakia, Turkey), by the DGSD and are planned for the Portuguese-speaking Division.
The publication of topographic mapping and atlases is inevitably linked to national geographical names work and is therefore described in many of the papers eg. ECSEED (Bulgaria, Croatia, Serbia); EENCAD (Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan); ASEPSWD (Philippines, Sri Lanka); ASWD (other than Arabic) (Islamic Republic of Iran); UKD (Jamaica, United Kingdom); Arabic Division (Jordan); Baltic Division (Latvia) and DGSD (Germany, Belgium). The question of addresses and street names is also included in a number of the reports.

Toponymic databases, Gazetteers and National Data Infrastructures
These are common themes in many reports. The creation and updating of databases and gazetteers, or lists of standardised names, are reported by ECSEED (Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Poland; Slovakia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine); EENCAD (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Uzbekistan) ASEPSWD (Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand); ASWD (other than Arabic) (Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan); Arabic Division (Jordan, Palestinian Territories, Egypt, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Libya); China Division (China); UKD (United Kingdom); Baltic Division (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania); Portuguese-speaking Division (Brazil); USA-Canada Division (Canada, United States) and the DGSD (Germany, Switzerland). The interoperability and compatibility of various national datasets is also covered, eg ASWD (other than Arabic) (Islamic Republic of Iran); UKD (United Kingdom); Baltic Division (Estonia), DGSD.

Websites and portals
Both Divisional and national websites are described in many of the papers. The URLs provided in the Working Papers are drawn out in Annex B to this paper.

Exonyms and country names
Most divisional members describe drawing up lists of exonyms or national-language forms of names beyond state boundaries. Country names are also addressed in eg. Arabic Division, ECSEED (Cyprus, Poland, Slovakia, Turkey); EENCAD (Azerbaijan, Armenia); ASWD (other than Arabic) (Islamic Republic of Iran); China Division; Baltic Division (Lithuania); Portuguese-speaking Division, and the DGSD.

Writing systems

Writing systems (mostly Romanisation) as part of national activities are described in many of the reports, eg. by the ECSEED (Bulgaria and Ukraine) and by the EENCAD (Belarus). Other orthographical regulations are covered by the EENCAD (Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan). The Arabic Division reports on the implementation of the Romanisation system of Arabic and plans to adopt a unified system across the Division.

Maritime, undersea features and other

Maritime and undersea feature names are covered in national standardisation activities reported by EENCAD (Russia), and ASEPSWD (Indonesia, New Zealand). Antarctic names are covered in the reports of EENCAD (Russia); ASEPSWD (New Zealand) and the China Division. The China Division also describes recent activities regarding lunar names. Pronunciation is covered in the report of the Arabic Division.

Task Team for Africa

A major task of the newly-revitalized Africa Central Division is to reach out to those of its member countries which have never participated in UNGEGN meetings. The Chairs of the Africa Central and Africa West Divisions took part in a meeting of the Task Team for Africa, where relations with CODIST[2] were examined with a view to reinvigorating the standardisation of geographical names in Africa. The Africa East Division is requesting assistance from the Task Team for Africa in defining a tangible approach in order to raise awareness at the national level of the importance of standardising geographical names in its member countries.

Achievements

All Divisions report significant progress over different areas; much new national legislation has been adopted in support of geographical names standardisation and names are frequently being captured from topographic maps to populate geographical names catalogues or databases. Progress has also been made in the formulation of new romanisation systems. International collaboration is exemplified by national support to the EuroGeoNames project and the UNGEGN database.

Challenges

The global economic situation has affected many Division members whose funding for toponymic activities has been greatly reduced eg ECSEED (Slovenia); Africa East Division (Madagascar). Financial restrictions are also acknowledged as a barrier to the establishment of national names organisations in countries where support for geographical names activities does not appear very high on the list of national priorities (eg Africa East Division). Funding has also prevented some Division members from travelling to attend Division meetings (ASEPSWD), some meetings have been postponed (Baltic Division) and some countries have never participated in their Division's work (Africa Central Division; Africa East Division). Some Divisions do not appear to be active at all. A lack of suitable contact information has led to difficulties in promoting divisional work among less active members (eg Africa East Division).

Many differences exist in the level of national awareness on toponymic issues; and the explosion in online names information has led to discrepancies in place name spellings in many publications (described by eg. Azerbaijan in the ASWD (other than Arabic) report; Russia in the EENCAD report; and by the USA-Canada Division).

Conclusion

It is clear that a great deal of progress has been made in national standardisation and collaborative regional projects, much of which can be attributed to Divisional communication and encouragement. The exchange of information is crucial, and Division members should be encouraged to share their toponymic data and publicise its availability, especially as (often unauthorised) geographical names information becomes increasingly available on the internet for public consumption. Consideration could be given as to how activity can be further encouraged and support offered to inactive Divisions and non-participating members, particularly given the current economic climate.

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[2] The Economic Commission for Africa's Committee on Development Information, Science and Technology

ANNEX A

List of documents submitted by UNGEGN Divisions under item 4 of the agenda:

Report of the East Central and South-East Europe Division (ECSEED)	Working Paper No. 3
Report of the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division (EENCAD)	Working Paper No. 8
Report of the Asia South East and the Pacific South West Division (ASEPSWD)	Working Paper No. 9
Report of the Norden Division	Working Paper No. 10
Ninth Regional Meeting of the Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic) (ASWD)	Working Paper No. 15
Division de l'Afrique Centrale	Working Paper No. 18
Report of the China Division	Working Paper No. 35
Report of the Arabic Division/ADEGN Report	Working Paper No. 40
Rapport de la Division Afrique de l'Est	Working Paper No. 41
Report of the United Kingdom Division (UKD)	Working Paper No. 42
Report of the Baltic Division	Working Paper No. 45
Relato de las Actividades de la División de los Países de la Lengua Portuguesa	Working Paper No. 48
Report of the USA-Canada Division 2009-2011	Working Paper No. 75
Report of the Dutch- and German-speaking Division (DGSD)	Working Paper No. 76

Additonal Division reports received, but not analysed in this summary:

Report of the Africa South Division	Working Paper No. 89
Rapport d' Activites de la Division Afrique de l'Ouest	Working Paper No. 91
Informe de Avance en la Normalizacíon de Nombres Geográficos de los Países Miembros de la Divisíon de América Latina	Working Paper No. 92
L'activité de la division francophone	Working Paper No. 93

ANNEX B

Divisional websites listed in Working Papers in Annex A

Arabic Division: http://www.adegn.org/
East Central and South-East Europe Division (ECSEED): http://ungegn.cgi.hr/
Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division (EENCAD):
    http://www.cadastre.bg/Otdel.htm [NB this link does not appear to work]
Norden Division and related information: http://nordendivision.nfi.ku.dk/
    http://nordendivision.nfi.ku.dk/about/programme/nairobi090508/; http://nordendivision.nfi.ku.dk/legislation/
    http://nordendivision.nfi.ku.dk/about/programme/uppsala101029/
Portuguese-speaking Division: http://www.dlpng.ibge.gov.br/

National websites listed in Working Papers in Annex A

Armenia Legal Information System portal: http://www.arlis.am/
Brunei National Geographical Names Authority: http://www.survey.gov.bn./jkng [NB this link does not appear to work]
Geographical Names of Canada website: http://www.geonames.nrcan.gc.ca/
Canada's GeoBase portal: http://www.geobase.ca/
China's internet map service: http://www.tianditu.cn/
Gazetteer of the Republic of Croatia: http://cgnd.cgi.hr:8081
Denmark web map service: http://www.stednavne.info
Danish Place-Names Commission list of authorised place names:
    http://www.stednavneudvalget.ku.dk/autoriserede_stednavne/AUTORISEREDE_STEDNAVNE_v.2010-12-10.pdf
Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics of Egypt: http://www.capmas.gov.eg
Estonia Names Place Names Register: http://gmaps.maaamet.ee/knr/
Bundesamt für Kartographie und Geodäsie National Geodata Centre of Germany:
    http://www.geodatenzentrum.de
Toponymic Guidelines of Germany: http://141.74.33.52/stagn/Portals/0/101125_TopR5.pdf
Work of the Hungarian Committee on Geographical Names:
    http://www.kormany.hu/hu/videkfejlesztesi-miniszterium/kozigazgatasi-allamtitkarsag
Iranian National Committee on the Standardization of Geographical Names: http://geonames.ncc.org.ir
Geographical naming activities of Malaysia: http://www.jupem.gov.my/geonames/
Jamaica National Land Agency: http://www.nla.gov.jm/

Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre: http://www.rjgc.gov.jo
Latvia Geospatial Information Law: http://www.vestnesis.lv/?menu=doc&id=202999
Latvia concise Geographical Names Database: http://vietvardi.lgia.gov.lv
Description of Latvia database in English: http://map.lgia.gov.lv/index.php?lang=2&cPath=3&txt_id=24
Latvia National Address Register: https://www.kadastrs.lv/#
Dictionary of village names of Latvia: http://map.lgia.gov.lv/index.php?lang=0&cPath=3&txt_id=96
Description of Latvia Dictionary in English: http://map.lgia.gov.lv/index.php?lang=2&cPath=3&txt_id=96
Latvia web map viewer: http://map.lgia.gov.lv/index.php?lang=2&cPath=4&txt_id=88
Geoinformational Database of Lithuanian Toponyms LVvGDB: http://lvvgdb.lki.lt
Malaysian Center for Geospatial Data Infrastructure geoportal: http://www.mygeoportal.gov.my/ [NB the URL in the website contains an error]
New Zealand Geographic Board members:
    http://www.linz.govt.nz/placenames/about-geographic-board/nzgb-members/index.aspx [NB the URL in the website contains an error]
Toponymic Guidelines of Poland: http://ksng.gugik.gov.pl/english/tgp.php
Poland's list of "Names of countries, their capitals and inhabitants": http://ksng.gugik.gov.pl/english/wykaz.php
Poland's list of "Geographical Names of the World": http://ksng.gugik.gov.pl/english/wydawnictwa.php
List of Minority Place Names in Poland: http://ksng.gugik.gov.pl/english/files/list_of_minority_names.pdf
Poland's geoportal: http://www.geoportal.gov.pl/
Register of the Territorial Division of Poland: http://www.stat.gov.pl/broker/access/index.jspa
Central Register of Nature Conservation Forms of Poland: http://crfop.gdos.gov.pl/index.php
Russia's bulletin of geographical names changes: http://www.rosreestr.ru/kartografy/state_catalogue/data/
Geoportal of Serbia "GeoSrbija": http://www.geosrbija.rs/
Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre of the Slovak Republic: http://www.skgeodesy.sk/ [NB the URL in the WP re-directs to this site]
Sweden's Toponymic Guidelines:
    http://www.lantmateriet.se/upload/filer/kartor/om_kartor/Toponymic_Guidelines_2007_6.pdf
Switzerland geographical names information: http://www.swisstopo.admin.ch
Gazetteer of Thailand: http://www.royin.go.th/
Turkey and Neighborhood Gazetteer: http://www.hgk.msb.gov.tr/index.asp
Ordnance Survey of Great Britain: www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk
Northern Ireland Land and Property Services: http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/lps
Welsh Language Board's Place-names Standardization Team:
    http://www.byig-wlb.org.uk/English/services/Pages/Place-Names.aspx
Ordnance Survey's Gaelic Names Policy:
    http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/aboutus/reports/scotland/docs/namesgaelicen.pdf
    http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/aboutus/reports/scotland/docs/namesgaelic.pdf
Ordnance Survey's Welsh language scheme:
    http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/aboutus/reports/wales/docs/welshlanguageschemefinal.pdf
    http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/aboutus/reports/wales/docs/cynlluniaithgymraegternfynol.pdf
Ordnance Survey's OpenData Licence: http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/business/licences/using-and-creating-data-with-os-products/osopendata/index.html
Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 scale Gazetteer: http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/products/50kgazetteer_open/
The English Project's www.englishproject.org and Location Lingo: www.locationlingo.net
Legislation relating to administrative changes in England: http://www.opsi.gov.uk/
United Kingdom Permanent Committee on Geographical Names: www.pcgn.org.uk
Information about the United States Board on Geographic Names: http://geonames.usgs.gov/

Other websites listed in Working Papers in Annex A

German-language *Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names*:
    http://141.74.33.52/stagn/Portals/0/100419_Glossar_3.pdf
EuroGeoNames reference application: http://www.eurogeonames.com/refappl
INSPIRE Implementing Directive:
    http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:323:0011:0102:EN:PDF
INSPIRE Data Specifications:
    http://inspire.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/Data_Specifications/INSPIRE_DataSpecification_GN_v3.0.1.pdf

GeoSpatial World Forum: http://www.geospatialworldforum.org/