

**Twenty-eight session
28 April – 2 May 2014**

Item 12 of the Provisional Agenda

Activities relating to the Working Group on Country Names

Report of the Working Group on Country Names *

* Prepared by Leo Dillon, Convenor, Working Group on Country Names

Report of the Working Group on Country Names

Provisional agenda item 12

28th Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

Submitted by the Working Group on Country Names

Prepared by Leo Dillon

The main objective of the Working Group on Country Names (WGCN) is to develop and maintain a list of the names of all countries in the world in the language or languages used in an official capacity within each country, and to present an updated version of this document at each UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSGN).

The WGCN also provides an updated unofficial “working version” of the *List of country names* document as a working paper to the UNGEGN Sessions. After receiving and processing comments from WGCN members, an updated unofficial version is included at the present Session.

The new version contains the following substantive changes from the UNGEGN List of Country Names submitted as Conference Paper E/CONF.101/25 at the Tenth UNCSGN in New York in August 2012:

Introduction: added Belarusian and Ukrainian to the list of UN-approved Romanization systems, and also a disclaimer concerning the National Official names.

Bulgaria: changed the romanization of National Official names as per the 10th Conference agreement on Romanization.

Cape Verde: UN Official short and formal names in all languages changed to Cabo Verde.

Iran (Islamic Republic of): changed the romanization of National Official names per 10th Conference agreement on Romanization.

Papua New Guinea: UN Official formal names in all languages changed from [equivalent of] “Papua New Guinea” to “Independent State of Papua New Guinea.”

Somalia: UN Official formal names in all languages changed from [equivalent of] “Somali Republic (the)” to “Federal Republic of Somalia (the).”

There have also been some minor changes based on comments from Working Group members, mostly having to do with language formatting or correcting names to those used in the UNTERM database.

The WGCN has an ongoing collaborative relationship with the Terminology Team in the UN Terminology and Reference Section, one of whom is a WG member. In reviewing the updated “working version” of the *List of country names* document this year, the WGCN worked with the Terminology Team to update and correct several minor errors or

inconsistencies in country name records. This has benefitted both organizations by providing more accurate and better coordinated data to the users of United Nations information.

The convenor wishes to thank all the Working Group members for their efforts to make the Group a success, and would particularly like to thank Catherine Cheetham, Naima Friha, Élisabeth Calvarin, Peeter Päll, and Danielle Henripin for their contributions to the *List of country names* document. He also expresses his deep regrets at not being able to attend this Session.

The Working Group invites any interested experts to become a member of the group. Please contact the convenor (dillonli@state.gov) for any questions.