

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

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**Item 4 of the Provisional Agenda**

**Report of the divisions**

**Africa East Division Report \***

## Africa East Division Report

### SUMMARY

This report concerns the activities of the Division after the 27<sup>th</sup> UNGEGN Session, especially the training for trainers for the Africa East countries, held in 2013 in Antananarivo, capital of Madagascar and the meeting of the Division during it with the recorded results.

#### INTRODUCTION

Since 2009 in Nairobi, the Africa East Division received continuous encouragement from UNGEGN that exhorted the members to go ahead despite the low representation during the meeting. Thus, the new bureau was elected and since then, except in 2010, it held a yearly meeting taking advantage of opportunities offered thanks to combined efforts of Task Team for Africa (TTA), its country members and the UNECA.

As a matter of fact, due to its perseverance, taking as example the performances of the other countries of TTA, the Division asserts its existence by the concrete result which is the fulfillment of relevant project such as reported in the next paragraph.

#### INTERNATIONAL TRAINING OF TRAINERS IN TOPONYMY

- 1) 28 people from 6 Africa East countries got the opportunity to attend the international training of trainers in toponymy, organized in Antananarivo in June 2013 by the Malagasy Government through its National Institute for Geography and Hydrography, FTM.
- 2) This project proposed in 2009 in Nairobi as an attempt to mark an effective dynamism have been finally realized successfully thanks to
  - a. efficient collaboration between FTM, UNGEGN team, particularly the secretariat, the coordinator of WGTCT and of course Helen Kerfoot.
  - b. valuable financial support from UNSD, UNECA, PGDI<sup>1</sup>/VPDAT<sup>2</sup>/FTM MadagascarThe Division is expressing its high appreciation to all of them.
- 3) The recorded answers to the call for participation proved that a perceptible cohesion exists within the region: among 11 applications from all Africa apart the host country, 8 were from Africa East. 5 of them were taken in charge by UNSD while 1 has been financed by his department. The candidates from other regions have withdraw so the training has become an AED course. 22 participants from the 24 expected from Madagascar joined the group.
- 4) This achievement constitutes an important step for the Division as for a first experience, it attests its dynamism and its ability to undertake important project; it demonstrated also to the countries member that with enough willing and organizational capacity, this is feasible for any of them.
- 5) Moreover, through the event, the AED contributed to the implementation of the GAP by:
  - Increasing capacity building and knowledge sharing within Africa East countries
  - Promoting coordination and cooperation at national, regional and global levels
  - Making known the existence and the benefits of using of the Africa GeoNyms software
- 6) Lastly, the AED has got once again the opportunity to hold a meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2013, during lunch time. All 3 members of the bureau were present and the Division had the honor to be assisted by 3 personalities: the UNGEGN Past President, the coordinator of Working Group on Training Courses on Toponymy and the UNECA's Specialist on GeoNyms. The corresponding report is as follows:

<sup>1</sup> *Projet de Gouvernance et de Développement Institutionnel*

<sup>2</sup> *Vice Primature en charge du Développement et de l'Aménagement du Territoire*

**Participants:**

Nivo Ratovoarison,	Madagascar (Chair)
Charles Mwangi,	Kenya (Secretary)
Getachew Worku,	Ethiopia (Rapporteur)
Babo Gabalape,	Botswana
John Kitaka,	Uganda
Benoît Barakamfitiye,	Burundi
Kabelo Kgari,	Botswana
Yoseph Mekasha,	UNECA
Ferjan Ormeling,	UNGEEN
Helen Kerfoot,	UNGEEN

**Notes:**

Participants expressed their thanks for the UNGEEN training course and their appreciation for the hospitality provided by FTM and employees in Antananarivo.

Discussion took place with regard to various difficulties faced by the Africa East Division in promoting the standardization of geographical names. The following steps towards progress were suggested:

- (1) Improve the contacts network and maintain contacts made at the various meetings;
- (2) Circulate any email/address changes to this network and to the UNGEEN Secretariat in order to stay connected;
- (3) Exchange emails and documents that relate to geographical names and their standardization;
- (4) Continue to pass on the message of the need for geographical names standardization and train/assist others back in our offices;
- (5) Urge management to revitalize national geographical names committees;
- (6) Continue to try out the GeoNyms software of UNECA (requesting assistance from Yoseph Mekasha – [mekasha@uneca.org](mailto:mekasha@uneca.org) – as needed) and support any action of UNECA/RCMRD to offer further training in GeoNyms;
- (7) Nivo Ratovoarison to prepare a report of the organizational and financial steps taken in organizing the training course and submit a document for the UNGEEN session in 2014;
- (8) Promote the work of each country by contributing to the Africa East Division Report to UNGEEN (2014) and submitting milestone information from a country/division to the UNGEEN Bulletin ([geoinfo\\_unsd@un.org](mailto:geoinfo_unsd@un.org));
- (9) Until an Africa East Division website can be established, the Chair can request the UNGEEN Secretariat (Sabine Warschburger, [warschburger@un.org](mailto:warschburger@un.org)) to make available documents for the Division on the UNGEEN website.

**RELATED ACHIEVEMENTS**

- (1) The list of participants with their email addresses were communicated to all participants and lecturers. Some of them even became friends in facebook.
- (2) The collaboration with UNGEEN Secretariat is and will be continued.
- (3) Exchange emails and information are continued as Helen Kerfoot is always there to awake everybody!
- (4) Madagascar and Kenya has a report on it.
- (5) Nothing to tell yet.
- (6) See Madagascar report.
- (7) Report done and handed to the participants as a mean to help capacity of organization
- (8) Kenya and Madagascar are taking part in AED report. During 27<sup>th</sup> Session, Botswana and Madagascar chairs had a discussion about cooperating for a joint report but it was not yet concluded
- (9) Done, thanks to UNGEEN Secretariat precious collaboration!

**KENYA**

- 1) Kenya has submitted city names data and it is loaded into the UNGEGN World Geographical Names Database (although no sound files yet). The list includes all the county headquarters, the population notwithstanding, that will become centres of national socio economic and administrative activities in the new administrative dispensation.  
Note that though both English and Swahili are the official languages in Kenya, the orthography of Geographical Names is Kiswahili except for exonyms and generics Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar and Botswana are now included.
- 2) As a consequence of the training in Antananarivo, an in house training has been organized by department of surveys.
- 3) A paper on geographical names has been presented by the Kenyan delegate and Secretary of Africa East Division in Istanbul in August 2013.

**MADAGASCAR**

- 1) An International Training of Trainers in toponymy was held in Antananarivo, capital of Madagascar in June 2013 through effective collaboration between the organizer FTM, the UNGEGN and its Secretariat, the UNECA and financial support of the Statistics Division of the United Nations and got the full support of the Malagasy Government.
- 2) The event obtained a great success and the purposes of the training as defined at the beginning of the project were fully achieved:
  - Global level
    - o The host country, Madagascar, could take part in UNGEGN program for geographical names standardization
    - o It was an opportunity for countries within UNGEGN Africa East Division to meet
  - Regional level
    - o Madagascar promoted cooperation within Africa East Division countries by offering to members the opportunity to strengthen their capacity in geographical names, to exchange of point of view, to create and maintain friendships
    - o It was a contribution to the implementation of Gaborone Action Plan (GAP) in terms of toponymy, particularly for Africa East countries.
    - o Open-source database structure GeoNyms developed by UNECA has been promoted.
  - Country level
    - o The visibility of geographical names increased: apart from the participants who were absolutely interested, the FTM has drawn attention of high administration level and population on the necessity of geographical names standardization through wide media coverage.
    - o The 28 participants were trained to be able to share their newly acquired knowledge within the countries and offices they are coming from.
    - o As mapping service and regulator agency of geographical infrastructure in Madagascar, the FTM can go forward its mission with more understanding and better cooperation from concerned interlocutor.

- 3) Furthermore, it has revived the flames of patriotism in Malagasy participants who have strongly recommended the reconvening of the national committee activities.
- 4) The following recommendations were made by the participants:
  1. To organize further hands-on training in the GEONYMS software package, preferably in Nairobi (at RCMRD)
  2. To request the continuation of UNECA support for the revision and standardization of geographical names in Africa, and follow-up relevant recommendations from the GAP (Gaborone Action Plan).
  3. To organize more training activities, such as the present course, for young employees, enabling them to take over eventually.
  4. To revitalize the KPMA, the Malagasy national committee for geographical names, and to make aware both government departments and the general public of the results of its activities.
- 5) Other information:
  - a. The relationship between geology and toponymy in Madagascar is established by a Senior Geologist; the corresponding document is in progress.
  - b. During the celebration of the World Day of Mother Tongue held in National Academy on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2014, one of the recommendations was to study how to restore the use of the mother tongue as the mean of communication and to enhance cultural heritage especially mother tongue including toponymy.
  - c. 16 FTM technicians who are carrying out data collection for administrative boundary delineation have been trained taking in account the knowledge acquired.