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Item 8 of the Provisional Agenda

Activities relating to the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy

Report UNGEGN Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy 2014-2016

Submitted by the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy*

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Summary

This report describes the activities of the UNGEGN WG on Training Courses in Toponymy since 2014. The main effort of the group went into the organization of training courses, which were held in Oran, Algeria in September 2014 and in Tunis, Tunisia, in January 2015. The one in Oran was aimed at local authorities and names scientists, and included street naming. The course in Tunis was aimed at providing a road map for national names committees in Africa in general and in Tunisia in particular. Apart from these toponymy courses, work was undertaken to maintain the UNGEGN/ICA webcourse in toponymy, and to further the advanced toponymy manual, aimed at completion by 2017.

Report of the UNGEGN WG on Training Courses in Toponymy 2014-2016

Toponymy courses held:

Oran, September 13-15, 2014 – at the invitation of the Centre de Recherche en Anthropologie Sociale et Culturelle a lecturing team of the WG participated in the workshop **Formation en Toponymie**. 45 Participants from all over Algeria: universities, local administration, ministries and the national mapping agency attended. The first day “Importance of standardization of place names” was meant for the sensibilisation of local administration officials of the issues involved. The second and third day were meant for an audience of staff involved in place name standardization and researchers, and were held at the university. New in this context was the ample attention for street names, an issue often neglected in developing countries. Apart from the foreign lecturers, 3 Algerian lecturers participated, describing the current practices, rules and regulations, and the terminology involved. Local organizer was Brahim Atoui.

Tunis, January 12-16, 2015 The Centre National de la Cartographie et de la Télédétection (CNCT) in Tunisia and the UNGEGN organised a workshop on geographical names, in Tunis, with a double agenda: the toponymic training of the newly appointed members of the National Committee of Toponymy of Tunisia (NCTT) and the elaboration of a road map for the creation and functioning of African national names bureaux. With those objectives in mind, the lecturing team had been strengthened by Brahim Atoui, chair of the UNGEGN Task Force for Africa, Lucy Phalaagae (Botswana), Chair of the UNGEGN Africa South Division, and Oumar Sanon (Burkina Faso), standing chair of the UNGEGN Africa West Division.

The 18 Tunisian participants represented the various Tunisian ministries composing the National Committee of Toponymy in Tunisia. The local organisation had been put in place by UNGEGN vice-chair Col. Mme Naima Friha and her team from CNCT. The fieldwork, directed by Mme Elisabeth Calvarin, was held in the Bizerte area on the north coast around the village of Ghar el Melh. As this village had been the main Ottoman naval port in Africa in the past, and currently was the centre of a wetlands conservation project, there was ample opportunity to go into the cultural heritage of the names.

For the road map for the creation and functioning of African national names bureaux at a general level, a draft framework was elaborated to be extended later by the Task team for Africa. For one particular country – Tunisia - during the workshop drafts were developed regarding the mandate and functioning of the NCTT, the principles and directives for naming to be adhered to.

Toponymy Courses planned

The working Group is currently planning a toponymy course in Brazil, to be held possibly in September 2016. Philippine authorities have approached UNGEGN regarding a toponymy course to be held in 2016 or 2017..

Distance Learning

Regarding the UNGEGN/ICA web course on Toponymy (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEFN/docs/data_ICAcourses/index.html): at the request of Japan some changes were made in 2014 and 2016.

In April 2016, the distance learning course "Formation et expertise en toponymie dans le monde francophone" which is freely available to everyone, will go online. It has been developed by Mme Elisabeth Calvarin. In May and November it will be possible to do the course under paid supervision, after which a certificate will be handed out. The proceeds will be used to help the experts to continue to participate in the UNGEGN activities. Information is given at <http://cours-fad-public.ensg.eu/>

Advanced Manual

The plan to have an advanced manual with chapters on current issues relevant for the collecting, processing, standardizing, development of databases, diffusion through webservers, is currently under way. It will be reported on in a separate paper.

Teaching material used in the UNGEGN-sponsored courses has been added to the DGSD website, as DGSD is strongly cooperating with the WG in the realization of training courses.

Membership of the Working Group:

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