

**Twenty-ninth Session
Bangkok, Thailand, 25 to 29 April 2016**

Item 7 of the provisional agenda

**Implementation of resolutions and activities relating to
the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation**

Report of the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation^{*}

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Report of the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation[†]

SUMMARY

The report covers activities of the Working Group since the 28th Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN). There were two meetings: one during the 28th Session and the other in Copenhagen, Denmark, September 2015, where items for the current work plan of the Working Group were discussed. These items included the implementation of resolutions, resolutions database, results of the evaluation survey conducted at the 28th Session, and the working conditions and status of the UNGEGN, especially with regard to the meeting interval and sequence and to the relationship with the United Nations Committee of Experts on the Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM).

The current work plan of the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation, basically guided by the UNCSGN resolutions V/4 and VI/4, includes the following four items:

- ♦ evaluation of the functioning and efficacy of the UNGEGN and the Conferences, and the implementation of resolutions;
- ♦ identification of ways to involve member states not currently participating in the UNGEGN;
- ♦ examination of the needs of developing countries to achieve national standardization of their geographical names; and
- ♦ proposals for actions to increase the effectiveness of the Conferences, the UNGEGN and its Divisions and Working Groups.

In order to fulfill this plan, two meetings were held, where items relevant to the plan were discussed and suggestions for necessary actions were made.

Working Group meetings

A Working Group meeting was held at the occasion of the 28th Session on 30 April 2014, in conjunction with the Working Group on Publicity and Funding. Thirteen experts attended the meeting. Completed items since the previous Working Group meeting in July 2013 were reported and discussed, which included the initiative to take measures to implement resolutions (e.g., encouraging to relate working papers to resolutions and surveying on restraints to implementing resolutions); the progress of establishing and managing the resolutions database; ways to increase the response rate of the Session/Conference evaluation survey (e.g., online survey).

[†] This working paper pertains to the UNCSGN resolutions V/4 (Work performed by the UNGEGN and its future activities), VI/4 (Working group on evaluation), IV/24 (Divisional activities), V/2 (Statute of the UNGEGN), VIII/2 (Commemorative naming practices for geographical features) and X/1 (11th UNCSGN and 28th Session of the UNGEGN).

Another joint Working Group meeting with the Working Group on Publicity and Funding was held at the Department of Nordic Research, University of Copenhagen on 10-12 September 2015. The National Geographic Information Institute (NGII) of the Republic of Korea and The Danish Place-Name Commission sponsored the meeting, which was attended by twenty-one experts from twelve countries, including convenors and rapporteur of two Working Groups, UNGEGN chair, vice chairs and former chair. Director and staff of the UNSD and the UNGEGN Secretariat participated through teleconference for part of the meeting.

Current working conditions and status of the UNGEGN were reviewed, including completed or on-going items since the 28th Session and the status quo regarding arrangements for the 29th Session in Bangkok in 2016. Special attention was paid to the UNGEGN/United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSGN) operation modalities, with a specific focus on the interval and sequence of meetings and on the relationship with the United Nations Committee of Experts on the Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM). It was decided that a few proposals discussed at the meeting would be summarized and circulated. Possible revision needs of the UNGEGN statute, that is, adding elements of cultural heritage, were also noted.

In the afternoon of 11 September, participants of the meeting joined a guided tour and lecture in the UN City Copenhagen. The possibility of organizing a UNGEGN session at this facility was explored.

Implementing resolutions

The Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation has been mandated to encourage the UNGEGN members to implement resolutions adopted at the Conferences as the standardization norms for geographical names, as endorsed by the UNCSGN resolutions V/4, VI/4 and IV/24. In order to continuously motivate UNGEGN experts to refer to the resolutions in their work, the “Documentation for the Session” has requested each working paper to indicate the resolution(s) to which the document refers since the 28th Session.

It is found that 33 out of 79 working papers presented at the 28th Session (41.8%) referred to resolutions. Frequently referred resolutions included I/4 (national standardization), I/7 (regional meetings), V/6 (promotion of national and international geographical names standardization programmes) and VIII/6 (integration of geographical names data into national and regional spatial data infrastructures). The results of the evaluation survey conducted at the 28th Session inform that major factors hindering the implementation of resolutions are the lack of awareness or understanding, the lack of coordination, and the inadequate level of human and financial resources. It is suggested that drawing attention to implementing resolutions should be continued.

Following up on an idea developed at the previous Working Group meeting, the Working Group will organize a workshop on implementing resolutions during the 29th Session, with the case of commemorative naming. It is expected that each country’s experience of commemorative naming, for example, practices by the public and the private sectors, guidelines provided by names authority, restraints to applying the relevant UNCSGN resolution, will be presented, and ideas to improve its implementation – how to consider each country’s cultural, social, political, and economic contexts – will be shared and discussed.

UNCSGN resolutions database

With the establishment of the Spanish version in spring of 2015, the UNCSGN resolutions database is now in operation in three languages of English, French and Spanish. It is hosted by the NGII and accessible from the UNGEGN web-page at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/ungegn/confGeneral.html>.

In search of the possibility of expanding the database into a fourth language, the Convenor was informed that an expert from the Arabic Division has committed to assist subject to approval of her institute, CAMPAS. The database work will begin when the complete text of the 207 resolutions adopted at all ten Conference become available in Arabic, with the technical and financial support of the NGII. The Convenor received the full Portuguese translations of the entire set of resolutions from the Portuguese-speaking Division during the 28th Session, which is also uploaded on the UNGEGN web-page.

Evaluation of the 28th and the 29th Session

Fifty-three responses to the evaluation questionnaire were received at the 28th Session of 2014. An analysis of the Likert scale evaluations on the programmes, contents, and logistics of the meeting indicated an overall satisfaction with the Session. For future sessions, it was suggested to have longer breaks for networking, more social events, more discussion about topical issues, more special presentations, and applying time limit on presenting documents. More details of the survey results will be reported separately.

In order to provide participants with more time and capacity to answer the questions, an online survey is to be adopted at the 29th Session as well as offline one. The survey is technically supported by the UNGEGN Secretariat.

Future of the Working Group

It was generally agreed at the previous meetings that the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation should continue its work separately from the Working Group on Publicity and Funding, but the two Working Groups should have joint meetings to achieve synergy effects. The Working Group is steered by the convenor, the UNGEGN chair and vice-chairs, but open to any interested experts. The two Working Groups welcomed at the previous meeting in 2015 a new rapporteur, Mr. Gerhard Rampl from Austria. A next joint meeting is expected to take place before the 11th Conference in 2017.

APPENDIX. Participants of the Working Group Meetings

Working Group meeting during the 28th Session, New York, 30 April 2014

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| 1. Brahim Atoui (Algeria) | 2. Marie-Ève Bisson (Canada) |
| 3. Sang-Hyun Chi (Republic of Korea) | 4. Sungjae Choo (Republic of Korea) |
| 5. Peder Gammeltoft (Denmark) | 6. Helen Kerfoot (Canada) |
| 7. Young-Hoon Kim (Republic of Korea) | 8. Takayuki Nakamura (Japan) |
| 9. Yeon-Taek Ryu (Republic of Korea) | 10. Michel Simeu-Kamdem (Cameroon) |
| 11. Hyo Hyun Sung (Republic of Korea) | 12. Gerhard Rampl (Austria) |
| 13. Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu (Germany) | |

Working Group meeting, Copenhagen, 10-12 September 2015

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| 1. Lisa Monica Aslaksen (Norway) | 2. Brahim Atoui (Algeria) |
| 3. Élisabeth Calvarin (France) | 4. Sungjae Choo (Republic of Korea) |
| 5. Naima Friha (Tunisia) | 6. Peder Gammeltoft (Denmark) |
| 7. Botolv Helleland (Norway) | 8. Helen Kerfoot (Canada) |
| 9. Jinyoung Kim (Republic of Korea) | 10. Sun-Bae Kim (Republic of Korea) |
| 11. Young-Hoon Kim (Republic of Korea) | 12. Teemu Leskinen (Finland) |
| 13. Leila Mattfolk (Sweden) | 14. Leif Nilsson (Sweden) |
| 15. Ulla Onkamo (Finland) | 16. Ferjan Ormeling (Netherlands) |
| 17. Sirkka Paikkala (Finland) | 18. Gerhard Rampl (Austria) |
| 19. Yeon-Taek Ryu (Republic of Korea) | 20. Annette Torensjö (Sweden) |
| 21. William Watt (Australia) | |

Through teleconference:

1. Stefan Schweinfest (UNSD)
2. Amor Laaribi (UNSD)
3. Cecile Blake (UNSD/UNGEGN)