

Item 3 of the Provisional Agenda*

Reports of the working groups

Report of the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation

Submitted by the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation**

* GEGN/30/1

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Report of the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation*

SUMMARY

The report covers activities of the Working Group since the 29th Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN). There was a workshop on implementing resolutions during the 29th Session and a Working Group meeting in Innsbruck, Austria, April 2017. At both meetings were discussed measures to improve the implementation of resolutions and the functioning of the UNGEGN and the Conferences, which also included resolutions database and the evaluation survey of the previous session.

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:

- ◆ Evaluating the functioning and efficacy of the UNGEGN and the Conferences, and the implementation of resolutions;
- ◆ Finding ways to involve member states not currently participating in the UNGEGN;
- ◆ Looking at the needs of developing countries to achieve national standardization of their geographical names; and
- ◆ Proposing 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 were made for further actions.

Workshop on Implementing Resolutions, Bangkok, April 2016

The Working Group organized a workshop on implementing resolutions at the UNCC Bangkok during the 29th Session of UNGEGN, 27 April 2016. This workshop was designed to put through the proposal made at the working group meeting in Copenhagen, September 2015 to have forums to share experiences of implementing UNCSGN resolutions. Commemorative naming has been chosen as the first topic: A resolution was adopted at the 8th Conference (2002), VIII/2, which recommended that the use of personal names be discouraged to designate a geographical feature during the lifetime of the person in question, and that clear statements be provided on the length of the waiting period before using a commemorative name.

* 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) and VIII/2 (Commemorative naming practices for geographical features).

After the working group convenor's introduction of the workshop background, each country's experience of commemorative naming was presented; Austria (by Peter Jordan), Finland (by Ulla Onkamo), Republic of Korea (by Sungjae Choo), Sweden (by Annette Torensjö), and Tunisia (by Naima Friha). A specific focus was given on the practices either by public or private sector, guidelines provided by names authority, restraints to applying the relevant UNCSGN resolution, and so on. Questions and comments were then extended by Helen Kerfoot (Canada), Staffan Nyström (Sweden) and all participants.

Commemorative naming practices are commonly found in all countries presented with some conspicuous types; naming after historical figures, governors or politicians, classic or modern musicians, civil workers, sports stars, and so on. The UNCSGN resolution VIII/2 is generally effective in guiding the naming authorities of each country as basic guidelines; discouraging naming after living persons and setting up the "waiting period." Despite these guidelines, there are still cases in which names of living persons are adopted. Political motivation sometimes works, which is often unavoidable. The waiting period has variations; from five (Austria, Finland) to thirty years (Republic of Korea). Persons to be commemorated should have a relation to the feature to be named (Austria).

For future plans, the convenor expressed his hope to have further discussion on commemorative naming in other formats, such as seminar, papers, books, etc. and extend into other topics, such as commercial use of geographical names, cultural heritage values, the use of generic terms in the international settings, and so on, but with central focus on the aspects of implementing resolutions.

Materials and related references presented at the workshop are available at the UNGEGN website: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/ungegn/wg7.html>.

Working Group Meeting, Innsbruck, April 2017

A Working Group meeting was held at the University of Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria, 19-22 April 2017, jointly with the Working Group Publicity and Funding and the Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage. The meeting was hosted by Mr. Gerhard Gampl, rapporteur of the Working Group, and attended by thirteen experts from eleven countries, including convenors and rapporteurs of three Working Groups, UNGEGN chair, vice chairs and former chair. The UNGEGN Secretariat participated through teleconference for a part of the meeting.

Current working conditions and status of the UNGEGN were reviewed, including completed or on-going items since the 29th Session and the status quo regarding arrangements for the 11th Conference and the 30th Session. Measures to improve the implementation of resolutions, current status of resolutions database, results of the evaluation survey of the previous session, ideas for special presentations and exhibition at the next meeting, fifty-year celebration of the Conference, and so on were reported and discussed. Possible ways of guiding National and Division reports to be more consistent and organized were also discussed, e.g. templates or guidelines, based on the current documentation guidelines and previous suggestions made by reviewers of National or Division reports.

Special attention was paid to the future structure of UNGEGN and United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSGN), with specific focus on the operation modalities, interval, sequence and length of meetings, and on the relationship with the United Nations Committee of Experts on the Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM).

The two and a half day discussion session was followed by a half-day excursion to the higher points in the city of Innsbruck. All the participants were benefited to have a great chance to take a general grasp of the city's namescape as well as to taste its beautiful scenery, led by the organizer Mr. Rampl.

Implementing resolutions

As an on-going focus and mandate, the Working Group has tried to encourage the implementation of resolutions adopted at the Conferences, as norms of the standardization of geographical names. In this stream, documentation guidelines for the Conference and the Session now request each working paper to indicate the resolution(s) which relates to its theme.

The degree of referring to resolutions, however, is not yet high. An examination of the working papers presented at the 29th Session shows that 32 out of 88 papers (36.4%) referred to resolutions, which records a lower rate than those at the 28th Session, 41.8% (33 out of 79). Frequently referred resolutions included I/4 (national standardization), I/7 (regional meetings), V/6 (promotion of national and international geographical names standardization programs) and IX/7 (dissemination of information concerning the origin and meaning of geographical names). The first three were resolutions also frequently referred at the 28th Session.

The evaluation survey conducted at the 29th Session shows that the resolutions are useful for promoting geographical names standardization and implementing them is important in each country's work on geographical names (See Appendix 2 for more details). But it also informs that there are restrictions to implementing them, such as potential contradiction between resolutions, e.g. reducing exonyms versus promoting cultural heritage, specific cultural environment, lack of awareness or understanding, lack of coordination, inadequate level of human and financial resources, etc.

UNCSGN resolutions database

The 207 resolutions adopted from the First to Tenth Conference are now serviced in the PDF texts in English, French, Spanish, Arabic and Portuguese and through the web-based database in English, French and Spanish. Both texts and database are accessible at the UNGEGN web-page: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/ungegn/confGeneral.html>. The database, hosted by the National Geographic Information Institute (NGII) of the Republic of Korea, provides a useful engine to search resolutions by Conference, subject and key words.

As the Arabic text of resolutions are now prepared, which was compiled by Ms. Eman Orieby from Egypt and approved by the Arabic Division, the task of loading it onto the database system will begin in an appropriate time frame with the technical and financial support of the NGII. The database will be updated to include resolutions which will be adopted at the 11th Conference.

Evaluation of the 29th Session

Sixty-seven responses to the evaluation questionnaire were received after the 29th Session of 2016 through an on-line survey. Most of the respondents indicated that it had met their expectations (56 out of 57, 98.2%) and rated the overall usefulness of the Session very highly or highly (64 out of 67, 95.5%). An analysis of the likert scale evaluations on each item of the programs, contents, and logistics of the meeting, however, indicated that there were some variations in the assessment; the rate of 'useful' and 'very useful' being higher for special presentations and Working Group meetings, but lower for exhibition and Division meetings. In the same line, time for Working Group or Division meetings received lower rate of positive assessment while retaining Working Group activities as agenda items did higher rate (See Appendix 2 for more details).

A few topics were suggested as future topics of special presentation, including urban toponymy, crowd sourcing and geo-spatial themes, works of related UN organizations, cultural aspects of naming, undersea feature naming and toponymic training. Comments and suggestions for the next meeting included encouraging participation of more countries, improving method of presentation, earlier arrangement for exhibitions, reserving more time for Working Group and Division meetings, social activities, etc. Thirty-one countries answered yes to the question on the assistance need, mostly required in training courses, expert visits, and publication of materials for standardization. Setting up the operation modalities of UNGEGN/UNCSSGN and the relationship with UN-GGIM was ranked at the top of the to-do list before the 11th Conference.

The evaluation for the 11th Conference will be also conducted through an on-line survey. Making use of the advantages of on-line survey, there will be some more itemized questions on the UNGEGN works and meetings. The link for the survey will be provided at the meeting.

Future of the Working Group

It was confirmed again at the Working Group meeting in Innsbruck, April 2017 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. Mr. Gerhard Rampl from Austria has been the rapporteur of the two Working Groups since 2015. The next joint meeting will take place during 11th Conference, tentatively scheduled at 9:00-9:45, 14 August 2017.

APPENDIX 1. Participants of the Working Group Meeting, Innsbruck, 19-22 April 2017

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| 1. Brahim Atoui (Algeria) | 2. Catherine Cheetham (United Kingdom) |
| 3. Sungjae Choo (Republic of Korea) | 4. Naima Friha (Tunisia) |
| 5. Peder Gammeltoft (Denmark) | 6. Helen Kerfoot (Canada) |
| 7. Leila Mattfolk (Sweden) | 8. Ferjan Ormeling (Netherlands) |
| 9. Gerhard Rampl (Austria) | 10. Annette Torensjö (Sweden) |
| 11. William Watt (Australia) | 12. Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu (Germany) |
| 13. Elisabeth Gruber (Austria) | |

Through teleconference:

1. Cecile Blake (UNSD/UNGEGN)

APPENDIX 2. Results of the Evaluation Survey of the 29th Session, Bangkok, April 2016

Table 1. Evaluation of the usefulness of each program and content of the Session

	excel- lent	good	fair	poor	very poor	excellent and good (%)
Usefulness of documents	28	33	4	1	0	92.4
Usefulness of special presentations	38	26	2	0	0	97.0
Usefulness of workshops	20	33	6	0	0	89.8
Usefulness of Working Group meetings	29	33	3	1	0	93.9
Usefulness of Division meetings	25	27	8	3	0	82.5
Usefulness of exhibition/displays	18	30	14	2	0	75.0
Usefulness of talking/networking with experts	34	28	3	2	0	92.5

Table 2. Evaluation of the logistics of the Session

	excel- lent	good	fair	poor	very poor	excellent and good (%)
Duration of Session: 5 days	41	21	4	1	0	92.5
Allocation of time	28	30	6	2	0	87.9
Discussion versus information papers	26	31	9	1	0	85.1
Summarizing groups of documents	27	29	8	2	0	84.8
Retaining WG activities as agenda items	29	36	1	0	0	98.5
Time for WG and Division meetings	17	21	20	8	0	57.6

Table 3. Evaluation of the usefulness of UNCSGN resolutions for managers of geographical names in promoting geographical names standardization

	very useful	useful	moderate	seldom useful	never useful	very useful and useful (%)
Usefulness of UNCSGN resolutions	46	16	2	1	0	95.4

Table 4. Evaluation of the importance of the implementation of UNCSGN resolutions in each country's work on geographical names

	very important	important	moderate	seldom important	never important	very important and important (%)
Implementation of UNCSGN resolutions	44	18	3	0	0	95.4