

26 June 2002

English only

**Eighth United Nations Conference on the
Standardization of Geographical Names**

Berlin, 27 August-5 September 2002

Item 7 of the provisional agenda*

**Measures taken and proposed to implement United Nations
resolutions on the standardization of geographical names**

**Action taken on resolutions of the Seventh United Nations
Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names**

**Submitted by the secretariat of the United Nations Group of
Experts on Geographical Names****

* E/CONF.94/1.

** Prepared by Amor Laaribi, secretariat of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), and Helen Kerfoot, Vice-Chair, UNGEGN, Natural Resources Canada.

This document has been prepared to summarize the follow-up actions taken on the resolutions adopted at the Seventh UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSGN), New York, 13-26 January 1998.

It is proposed that this format be used in the future as a system for monitoring the status of actions taken on UNCSGN resolutions.

| RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE 7th UNCSGN | STATUS OF ACTION |
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| 1. Creation of a French-speaking division | |
| The Conference, <u>Recommends</u> that the following divisions be added to the divisions of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names: French-speaking Division. | Implemented. Division put in place and currently chaired by Pierre Planques (France) |
| 2. Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names and twentieth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names | |
| The Conference, 1. <u>Recommends</u> to the Economic and Social Council that the Eighth Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names be convened in the second half of 2002; 2. <u>Also recommends</u> to the Economic and Social Council that the twentieth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names be convened during the fourth quarter of 1999; 3. <u>Further recommends</u> that the Economic and Social Council continue to support the important work of the secretariat of the Group of Experts regarding the standardization of geographical names. | To be held in Berlin, 27 August – 5 September 2002 Twentieth Session of UNGEGN held in New York, January 2000 UN Statistics Division is providing Secretariat for UNGEGN |

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| <p>3. Standardization of geographical names and the United Nations regional cartographic conferences</p> | |
| <p>The Conference, <u>Recommends</u> that the United Nations Secretariat, acting as liaison, inform the special working group on proposals for the reorganization of the United Nations regional cartographic conferences of the concerns, deliberations and recommendations of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names and of the United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names, as proposed in resolution 2 of the Sixth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas.</p> | <p>The Secretariat is involved in the revitalization of the UN Regional Cartographic Conferences.</p> <p>The 15th UNRCC - Asia & the Pacific (2000) recognized the promotion of national and regional geographical names standardization programmes (resolution 7 in Annex) and the 7th UNRCC – Americas (2001) recognized “the importance of standardized and consistent geographical names as a fundamental data set of national and regional spatial data infrastructures”.</p> |
| <p>4. Review of the amended Beirut system of 1972 for the romanization of Arabic script</p> | |
| <p>The Conference, <u>Recommends</u> that the League of Arab States should, through its specialized structures, continue its efforts to organize a conference with a view to considering the difficulties encountered in applying the amended Beirut system of 1972 for the romanization of Arabic script, and submit, as soon as possible, a solution to the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.</p> | <p>Arabic Division may wish to report on this resolution during the 8th UNCSGN in Berlin</p> |
| <p>5. National standardization based on local usage</p> | |
| <p>The Conference, 1. <u>Recommends</u> that measures be taken nationally to ensure that names yet to be collected are recorded, using the methods described in the above-mentioned recommendations; 2. <u>Further recommends</u> that, whenever possible, national standardization be based on current local usage of name forms, collected through field work.</p> | <p>Responsibility of individual member states and UNGEGN divisions</p> |

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| 6. Toponymic data exchange formats and standards | |
| <p>The Conference, <u>Recommends</u> further that the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names liaise with the Unicode Consortium in order to inform that body of the text-encoding requirements found in the field of toponymy and to promote the development of computer tools to facilitate the digital exchange of geographical names information.</p> | <p>Liaison with the Unicode Consortium has been established. The UNGEGN Working Group on Gazetteers and Toponymic Data Files (currently convened by Randall Flynn, USA) will coordinate these liaison activities.</p> |
| 7. Cooperation and agreements with consumer enterprises | |
| <p>The Conference, 1. <u>Recommends</u> that the United Nations Secretariat, as soon as possible after the Seventh Conference and well before the twentieth session of the Group of Experts, promulgate the existing guidelines or otherwise recommend guidelines covering the engagement of the Group of Experts in cooperative agreements and sponsorships with elements of the private sector; 2. <u>Further recommends</u> that the Group of Experts actively pursue the underwriting of the activities proposed by interested parties in the private sector; 3. <u>Requests</u> that the Secretariat report progress in this area at the next and future meetings of the Group of Experts.</p> | <p>.... To be summarized by the UNGEGN Secretariat</p> |
| 8. List of country names | |
| <p>The Conference, <u>Recommends</u> that the UNGEGN list of country names, in their official language(s) and in their romanized form as well as in the three working languages of UNGEGN, be updated on a regular basis and regarded as a reference for all cartographic applications, both national and international, published in the Roman alphabet.</p> | <p>The UNGEGN Working Group on Country Names (currently convened by Sylvie Lejeune, France) has continued to update the UNGEGN country name list (see E/CONF.94/CRP.11, in 2002). Variations between the UNGEGN list and the published UN list are being addressed.</p> |

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| <p>9. Standardization of geographical names utilizing the Internet</p> | |
| <p>The Conference,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Recommends</u> that country toponymic Web sites be established and used for a variety of purposes, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Information on the standardization of geographical names; (b) Toponymic guidelines; (c) Information on training courses in toponymy; (d) Nationally standardized names; (e) Interactive capabilities for handling geographical names enquiries; (f) Facilitation of the international exchange of toponymic data; 2. <u>Recommends further</u> that the UNGEGN secretariat establish an UNGEGN Web site; 3. <u>Recommends further</u> that the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy consider the development of an Internet-based course in toponymy; 4. <u>Recommends further</u> that access to data included on toponymic Web sites be provided free of charge in the interests of international standardization. | <p>Responsibility of individual member states</p> <p>UNEGN Secretariat has established UNGEGN Website at http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo</p> <p>UNEGN Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy is currently starting the development of training materials on the Web; the convenor Ferjan Ormeling (Netherlands) will make a presentation at the Eighth Conference and work will be ongoing</p> <p>Responsibility of individual member states</p> |
| <p>10. Support</p> | |
| <p>The Conference,</p> <p><u>Requests</u> the Secretary-General to ensure the continued availability of officials with the necessary expertise and experience in cartography and/or the standardization of geographical names to provide the relevant support to the United Nations Group of Experts and to the Conferences.</p> | <p>Expertise and experience in cartography and the standardization of geographical names continues to be available to UNGEGN and to the Conferences, through the hiring of a GIS specialist in the Statistics Division, to provide the Secretariat leadership for UNGEGN.</p> |

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| <p>11. Teaching materials for training courses in toponymy</p> | |
| <p>The Conference, <u>Urges</u> the organizers of course in toponymy to make available a copy of their teaching materials to the convenor of the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy, so that it can act as a clearing house for all those searching for additional up-to-date material to be used at courses in toponymy elsewhere.</p> | <p>The current convenor of the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy (Ferjan Ormeling, Netherlands) maintains a web site (http://toponymycourses.geog.uu.nl) that lists past and future training courses. It includes, wherever available, references and/or access to course outlines, reports of instructors, etc. Updates to the web site are ongoing, and a web-based course is in development.</p> |
| <p>12. Training courses in toponymy in conjunction with sessions of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names</p> | |
| <p>The Conference, <u>Encourages</u> the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names to consider organizing short advanced training courses on the subject of the standardization of geographical names to adjoin meetings of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A two-week training course has been offered in the Netherlands and Germany, prior to the Eighth Conference. • Advanced training for UNGEGN experts to acquire additional skills and training prior to future sessions remains to be considered. |
| <p>13. Liaison with the International Organization for Standardization</p> | |
| <p>The Conference, 1. <u>Recommends</u> that the Secretariat liaise with ISO in order to encourage ISO to take note of relevant Conference resolutions on romanization, and suggests that ISO, through the Secretariat, liaise with the Working Groups on Country Names, Romanization Systems and Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers; 2. <u>Recommends further</u> that the United Nations Secretariat investigate the feasibility and desirability of establishing stronger links between the Group of Experts and ISO; 3. <u>Requests</u> that the Secretariat report the conclusions of its investigation, with recommendation, to the Group of Experts at its twentieth session.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaison has been made with the ISO/TC 211 Geographic Information / Geomatics; to be undertaken by the UNGEGN Working Group on Gazetteers and Toponymic Data Files • Liaison with ISO/TC46/SC2, regarding Romanization was discussed informally in 1998. The status of this ISO TC is at present being sought by the Working Group on Romanization (currently convened by Peeter Päll, Estonia) • Further liaison to be determined |

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| 14. Access to and archives of technical papers | |
| <p>The Conference,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Urges</u> countries to ensure that the UNGEGN secretariat is supplied with the material necessary to fulfil its functions in this regard; 2. <u>Recommends</u> seeking the support and assistance of countries to catalogue and index the information in the technical papers they hold, in coordination with the UNGEGN secretariat; 3. <u>Recommends further</u> that assistance and support be sought from a country or countries to reproduce the documentation in a form that makes it more accessible to all; 4. <u>Recommends also</u> that, from now on, the secretariat collect and maintain all technical materials and papers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A catalogue of Conference and UNGEGN documents has been created, noting those documents available at the UN in New York. The listing is available on the UNGEGN web site. • Access to full texts of past documents has still to be addressed (Note: As of June, 2002, the UN Map Library is now scanning UNGEGN documents for the UN website) • The Secretariat will take responsibility for future document access (through the web, map library, etc.) |

ANNEX

Fifteenth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific April 2000

Resolution 7 Promotion of national and regional geographical names standardization programmes

The Conference,

Noting that the consistent use of accurate place names is an essential element of effective communication worldwide, and supports socio-economic development, sustainable development and national infrastructure,

Considering the importance of geographical names as a fundamental data set of the Asia and the Pacific Spatial Data Infrastructure,

Recognizing the role of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names and the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names,

1. Recommends that the Permanent Committee on Geographic Information System (GIS) Infrastructure for Asia and the Pacific support the work of the United Nations by encouraging nations in the region to develop and/or maintain a standardized and consistent approach to geographical naming;
2. Also recommends that countries be encouraged to attend meetings of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names and the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names.