

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

New York, 21 - 30 August 2007

Item 17(b) of the provisional agenda*

Toponymic education and practice and international cooperation:

Training courses in toponymy

**Report of the African Organization of Cartography and
Remote Sensing (AOCRS)**

Submitted by AOCRS**

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** Prepared by the African Organization of Cartography and Remote Sensing (AOCRS).

United Nations' Group of Experts on Geographical Names

Report of the African Organization of Cartography and Remote Sensing 9th UNGEGN Conference New York - August 2007

The African Organization of Cartography and Remote Sensing (AOCRS) has attached a very particular importance to the geographical names and to the work of the United Nations' Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), since the 23rd meeting of Vienna, in March 2006, a meeting to which the Secretary-general AOCRS took part for the first time, and in which a special session had been devoted to the question of the geographical names in the African continent. Considering the close relation between the activities of AOCRS and the geographical names, AOCRS takes care to put all its capacities for the concretization of the sustainable development in Africa through accurate charts bearing the exact geographical names.

The situation of the Cartography in Africa, and in spite of the fact that a great number of African countries has, in the last few years, carried out good mapping coverage of their territories, the continent remains, generally, poor even extremely poor in certain cases, as regards cartographic and topographic cover on adequate scales and degrees of accuracy.

On this occasion, the Secretariat-general of the African Organization of Cartography and Remote Sensing would like to present its sharp thanks and to testify its gratitude to the Presidency and the Secretariat-general to the UNGEGN to have devoted a session to the discussion on the situation of the geographical names in the African continent. This step was largely appreciated in what it is regarded as a good departure for the work of the AOCRS in the field of the geographical names.

Among the activities of the AOCRS since the meeting of Vienna, the following is quoted:

1 - The African Organization of Cartography and Remote Sensing organized an international Conference on the geographical names in Tunis, during April 2007, with the collaboration of the regional Centre of Remote Sensing for North African countries, and with the support of UNGEGN. The meeting which was attended by Chair and Vice Chair of UNOEGN was raised by the presence of the Tunisian Minister for Defence, while the closing ceremony was chaired by the Tunisian Minister for Housing, Equipment and Regional Planning. The meeting was marked by a high level training course on the geographical names, thanks to the contribution of the lecturers and to the great interest of the 70 participants from 11 African and Arab countries.

The Secretariat-general of the AOCRS seizes this occasion to present its thanks to the teachers who were so kind as to gracefully devote a part of their invaluable time and supported the tiredness of the trip to ensure the success of the Conference, and whose names follow:

- Mrs. Helen Kerfoot, President of the UNGEGN;
- Mr. Brahim Attoui, Vice-president of the UNGEGN;
- Mr. Ferjan Ormeling;
- Mr. Henri Dorion;
- Mrs. Elisabeth Calvarin.

The Secretariat-general also makes a point of presenting its sharper thanks to the Division of the Statistics of the United Nations for the taking in charge of the plane tickets of certain African experts who took part to the training course in Tunis, as well as to Mr. Vice-chair of the UNGEGN, head of Task Force Team for Africa, for the coordination and the participation in the training course.

The Secretariat-general of the AOCRS also seizes this occasion to present its congratulations to the Group of the UNGEGN and more particularly to its team of trainers, at the time of the 25th anniversary of the first training course in the field of the geographical names, which proceeded in Indonesia in 1982, and would like also make a point of congratulating the Group of the UNGEGN for the success on the training course of Tunis.

2 - A meeting of the Arab division took place in Tunis in April 2007, during the international Conference of the geographical names, in the presence of Mrs. Chair and Mr. Vice-chair of UNGEGN. Secretariat-general of AOCRS considers that holding the conference is an excellent occasion to invite experts of Arab countries in the perspective of the Arab Conference to be held in Lebanon, and the international Conference scheduled in New York.

3 – As a result of many contacts with the economic Commission of the United Nations for Africa (UNECA), as well as the head of task force team for Africa within the UNGEGN, the question of the geographical names in the African continent was integrated in the agenda of the Commission on the Development of Information (CODI 5), gathered in Addis Abeba from April 30 to May 4, 2007.

After having discussed this question in presence of the Vice-chair of the UNGEGN, the Secretary-general of the African Organization of Cartography and Remote Sensing and Mr. Yacob Zewoldi, member of the UNGEGN, the Commission recommended the organization of one of the next meetings of UNGEGN in an African country.

4 - African Organization of Cartography and Remote Sensing undertakes currently contacts with certain African countries, among which Burkina Faso, for the organization of a training course in the field of the geographical names, like the session which took place in Tunis. Certain African countries right now made share of their will to take part in this session, but the project is still at the stage of stammering and requires a more time before its concretization.

5 - AOCRS will take part to the 31st world Conference of the Geographers, envisaged in Tunis in 2008. Contacts were undertaken with this intention.

African Organization of Cartography and Remote Sensing