

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

New York, 21 - 30 August 2007

Item 7 of the provisional agenda*

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

Countries of the World - National names authorities

Submitted by the UNGEGN Chair**

* E/CONF.98/1.

** Prepared by Helen Kerfoot (Canada), the UNGEGN Chair.

Countries of the World - National names authorities

Resolution I/4A of the First United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names recommended that “as a first step in international standardization of geographical names, each country should have a national geographical names authority”. This has been re-iterated in resolution V/15 of the Fifth Conference.

In addition resolutions III/16 and VI/9, among others, support the authority of such a national body.

UNGEGN recognizes that the treatment, authorization and dissemination of geographical names may be handled in different ways in different countries, including by national mapping and charting authorities. However, in keeping with the Conference resolutions, UNGEGN has endeavoured to build a better picture of countries having national names authorities, and the contact points where no such authorities currently exist.

Since the 23rd Session of UNGEGN in April 2006 we have received assistance with this from the United Nations Statistics Division and have also consulted the contact information for national mapping agencies as assembled by the Second Administrative Level Boundaries (SALB) Project of the United Nations. However, information for the file remains incomplete, with “status unknown” still remaining for a number of countries.

In various reports to UNGEGN and to this Conference, reference is made to revitalization or reorganization of national names authorities in a number of countries. However, it is clear that in some countries a national names authority may exist in law, but in practice is non-functional. This factor is not addressed on our listing, nor is it indicated on the world map visual presentation. Clearly, though, we cannot consider the existence of a national names authority in itself to constitute a goal achieved in striving for national and international standardization of geographical names.

We seek your assistance in completing this reference information which is so fundamental to the work of UNGEGN.

Helen Kerfoot
Chair, UNGEGN
July 2007

**Which countries have a national authority for geographical names?
Information received up to June 2007**

Note: Several names authorities are indicated as existing, but are currently non-functioning

Country (8th Conf.)	Authority?	Yr of Auth.	Name	Contact, if no Nat. Auth.
Albania	N			Military Geographical Institute / Geographic Studies Center
Algeria	Y	1998	Commission Permanente Spécialisée de Toponymie	
Andorra	Y	2005	Commission de toponymie d'Andorre	
Angola	Y	2004	Commission (approved by President)	
Argentina	Y	1983 1972	Instituto Geográfico Militar de la Republica Argentina Servicio de Hidrografia Naval	
Armenia	N			State Committee of Real Property Cadastre
Australia	Y	1985	Committee for Geographical Names of Australasia	
Austria	Y	1968	Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kartographische Ortsnamenkunde (AKO)	
Belarus	Y	1991	Council of Ministers - Committee for Land Resources, Geodesy and Cartography	
Bhutan	N			Department of Survey & Land Records
Botswana	Y	1967	Botswana Place Names Commission	
Brazil	N			Brazil Institute for Geography and Statistics (IBGE)
Brunei Darussalam	Y	1976	Geographical Names Committee Brunei Darussalam	
Bulgaria	Y	1951	Council of Orthography and Transcription of Geographical Names	
Burkina Faso	Y	1986	Ministère de l'Administration du Territoire	
Cambodia	Y	?	National Commission on Geographical Names, Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction	
Cameroon	Y	1968	National Geographical Names Board	
Canada	Y	1897	Geographical Names Board of Canada / Commission de toponymie du Canada	
Cape Verde	N			Service National de la Cartographie et du Cadastre
Chile	N			Instituto Geográfico Militar

Country (8th Conf.)	Authority?	Yr of Auth.	Name	Contact, if no Nat. Auth.
China	Y	1977	Administrative Areas and Geographical Names Division, Civil Affairs Ministry / China Institute of Toponymy	
Cote d'Ivoire	N			Département de l'aménagement du territoire / CNTIG
Croatia	N*			Croatian Geodetic Institute
Cyprus	Y	1977	Cyprus Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names	
Czech Republic	Y	2001	Commission on Geographical Names	
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Y	2002	DPRK Committee of Geographical Names within Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly	
Democratic Republic of Congo	N			Institut Géographique du Congo (IGC)
Denmark	Y	1910	Stednavneudvalget/The Place-Name Commission	
Ecuador	N			Instituto Geográfico Militar
Estonia	Y	1997	Place Names Board of Estonia	
Fiji	N*			Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources
Finland	Y	1975	The Research Institute for the Languages of Finland	
France	Y	1985	La Commission nationale de toponymie	
Gambia	Y	1984	In the Ministry of Forestry and Environment	
Germany	Y	1959	Ständiger Ausschuss für geographische Namen (StAGN)	
Greece	N			Hellenic Navy Hydrographic Service Hellenic Military Geographic Service
Guinea	N			Institut Géographique National
Hungary	Y	1989	Hungarian Committee on Geographical Names (Földrjzinév-bizottság)	
Iceland	Y	1935	Örnefnanefnd	
Indonesia	Y	2006 (2001)	National Team on the Standardization of Geographical Names	
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Y	2000	Iranian Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names	
Ireland	Y	1946	The Placenames Commission	
Israel	Y	1951	Government Names Commission	
Italy	N			Istituto Geografico Militare
Jamaica	Y	pre-1970	Place Names Committee	
Japan	N			Geographical Survey Institute

Country (8th Conf.)	Authority?	Yr of Auth.	Name	Contact, if no Nat. Auth.
Jordan	Y	1984	National Committee on Geographical Names	
Lao People's Democratic Republic	N*			National Geographic Department
Latvia	N			State Land Service
Lebanon	Y	1962	Direction des Affaires Géographiques (DAG)	
Lesotho	N			?
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Y	2000 (1971?)	National Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names	
Lithuania	Y	1990	The State Commission of the Lithuanian Language	
Madagascar	Y	1973	Komitim-Pirenena Miandraikitra Ny Anaran-Tany (K.P.M.A.)	
Malaysia	Y	2002	National Committee for Geographical Names	
Mali	N*			Institut Géographique du Mali
Mauritania	Y	1985	In the Direction de la Cartographie et de l'information Géographique, Ministère de la Décentralisation et de l'Aménagement du Territoire	
Mexico	N			Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geográfica e Informática (INEGI)
Mongolia	N			State Administration of Geodesy & Cartography
Morocco	Y	?	Commission Nationale de Normalisation des Noms Géographiques (ACFCC)	
Mozambique	N*			National Directorate of Geography and Cadastre (DINAGECA)
Myanmar	Y	?	National Geographical Names Authority	
Namibia	N*			Directorate of Survey & Mapping
Nepal	N*			Survey Department
Netherlands	N			Topografische Dienst Nederland
New Zealand	Y	1946	New Zealand Geographic Board	
Niger	N*			Institut géographique national du Niger
Nigeria	N			
Norway	Y	1879 ?	Norwegian Mapping Authority Norwegian State Consultancy on Place-Names	
Oman	Y	1983	National Survey Authority	
Paraguay	N			
Peru	N			
Poland	N			Office of Geodesy and Cartography
Qatar	N			Ministry of Municipal Affairs
Republic of Korea	Y	1958	National Geography Institute	

Country (8th Conf.)	Authority?	Yr of Auth.	Name	Contact, if no Nat. Auth.
Russian Federation	Y	1994	Commission of Geographical Names	
Samoa	N*			National Mapping Section Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment
Sao Tome and Principe	N*			Direcção de Serviços Geograficos e Cadastrais
Saudi Arabia	N			Saudi Geological Survey
Senegal	N			Direction des Travaux Géographiques et Cartographiques
Serbia	N*			Republički Geodžtski Zavod Srbije
Singapore	N			Singapore Land Authority
Slovakia	Y	1971	Office of Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre of the Slovak Republic	
Slovenia	Y	1986	Commission for the Standardization of Geographical Names	
South Africa	Y	1998	South African Geographical Names Council	
Spain	N			Instituto Geográfico Nacional
Sri Lanka	N			Survey Department
Sudan	Y	1996 (1978?)	Geographical Names Committee	
Swaziland	N			Statistics, Ministry of Economic Planning and Development
Sweden	Y	1974	National Land Survey	
Switzerland	N*			Federal Office of Topography
Syrian Arab Republic	Y	1996	Committee for Geographical Names	
Tajikistan	N			National Space Geodetic and Cartographic Agency of Tajikistan (Tojikoinot)
Thailand	Y	1992	National Committee on Geographical Names	
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Y	2000	Commission nationale pour la normalisation des noms géographiques	
Togo	N			Ministère de l'Administration Territoriale
Tunisia	Y	1983	Commission nationale de toponymie	
Turkey	Y	? ?	The Ministry of Interior General Command of Mapping	
Uganda	Y	1995	Lands & Surveys Department	
Ukraine	Y	2004 (1994)	National Council on Geographical Names, State Service of Geodesy & Cadastre	
United Arab Emirates	N*			Military Survey Department
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	N			Ordnance Survey
United Republic of Tanzania	N			Surveying and Mapping, Ministry of Lands
United States of America	Y	1890	U.S. Board on Geographic Names (USBGN)	

Country (8th Conf.)	Authority?	Yr of Auth.	Name	Contact, if no Nat. Auth.
Uzbekistan	N*			National Centre of Geodesy and Cartography
Vanuatu	N*			Department of Land Surveys
Venezuela	Y	1989	Instituto Geográfico de Venezuela Simón Bolívar	
Viet Nam	Y	2002	General Department of Land Administration Vietnam	
Zambia	N			Zambia Survey Department
Zimbabwe	N*			Department of Surveyor General, Ministry of Lands and Agriculture
<i>Holy See</i>	<i>N*</i>			<i>Secretariat of State - 2nd Section</i>

N* = hopefully soon / in progress / under consideration

Helen Kerfoot, 20 June 2007