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STANDARDIZATION OF
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

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UNGEGN, objectives, current structure and programme of work

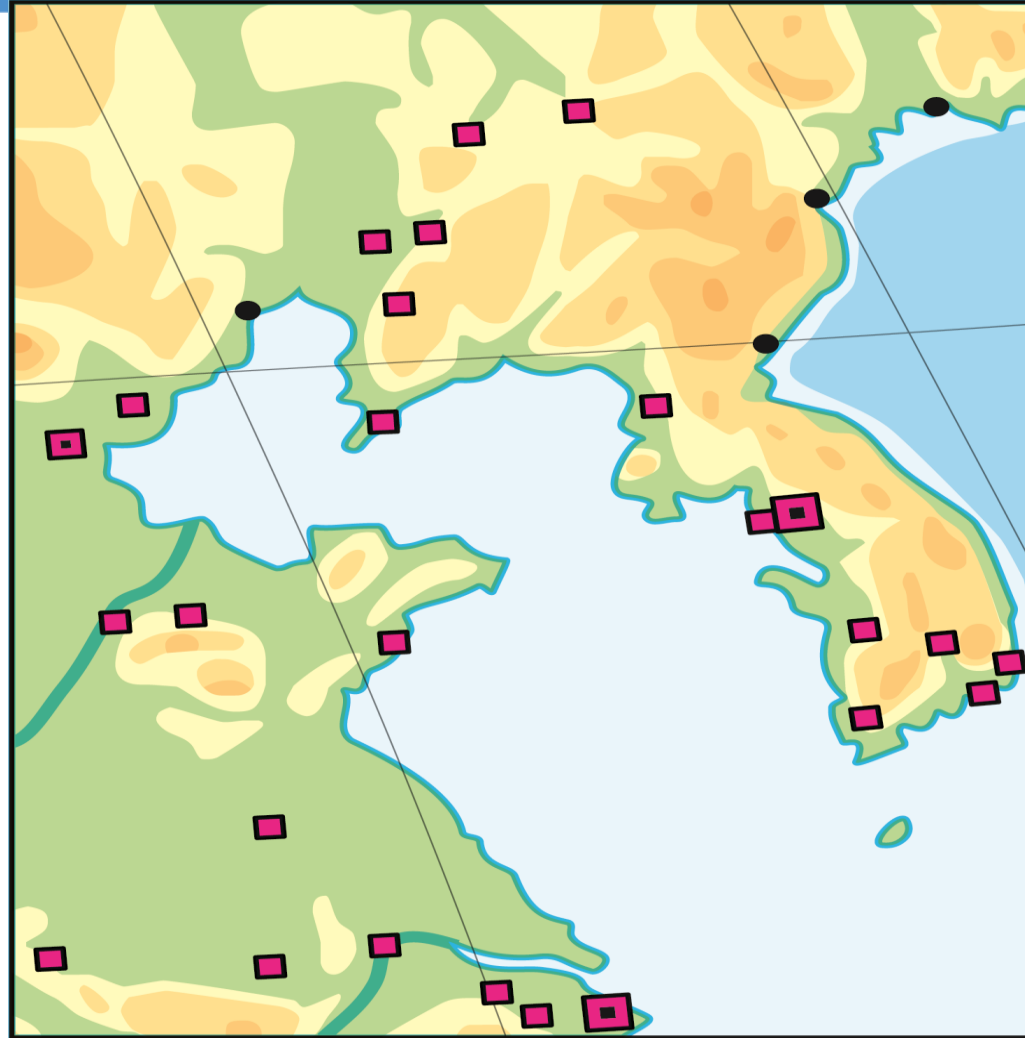
Agenda Item 4 CRP 160

Prepared on behalf of the UNGEGN Bureau
by Catherine Cheetham, United Kingdom



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Promoting the collection, standardization and dissemination of geographical names



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Geographical names affect many areas of life, including:

- Business & trade
- National statistics & census
- Property rights & cadastre
- Urban & regional planning
- Environment - sustainable development/conservation
- Aid delivery & national disaster relief
- Security & peacekeeping
- Search & rescue operations
- Map & atlas production
- Navigation
- Tourism
- Communications (including postal & media services)

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Need for standardization

- Important advances - technology and communication
 - potentially a growing audience
 - sending and receiving data → easier
- This progress increases expectations
 - data must be reliable – accurate and up to date
 - not always easy to meet expectations
- Toponyms are indispensable components of all spatially-referenced information systems
 - ... Google Earth, etc.





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- UN Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSSGN) – since 1967
 - 10 Conferences, every five years
 - promotes national standardization as international standardization
 - starting with resolution I/4
- UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names
 - follows up Conference resolutions
 - assures continuity of work
 - networking; best practices; projects



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UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names

- one of 20 expert groups of ECOSOC
- follows up on implementation of resolutions
- provides continuity between conferences
- convenes between conferences (2 yrs) -29 sessions
- supported by a Secretariat at UNHQ (New York)
- creates working groups to follow up on resolutions
- has 24 geographical/linguistic divisions for grass roots work



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UN Conference/UNGEGN aims

- Encourage the creation of national names authorities – backed by legislation
 - respect local usage of names
 - collect, store and disseminate authorized names
 - for government and public use



Nairobi

- Develop scientifically-based systems of romanization
- Today - encourage multi-national datasets





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Technical

- Develop procedures and establish mechanisms for standardization
- Discuss practical and theoretical steps towards standardization
- Develop appropriate programmes to achieve standardization



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Coordination

- Prepare for UNCISGNs; provide continuity between Conferences and guide implementation of Resolutions
- Create necessary structures to supplement the work of divisions
- Coordinate the activities of linguistic/geographical divisions



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Promotion

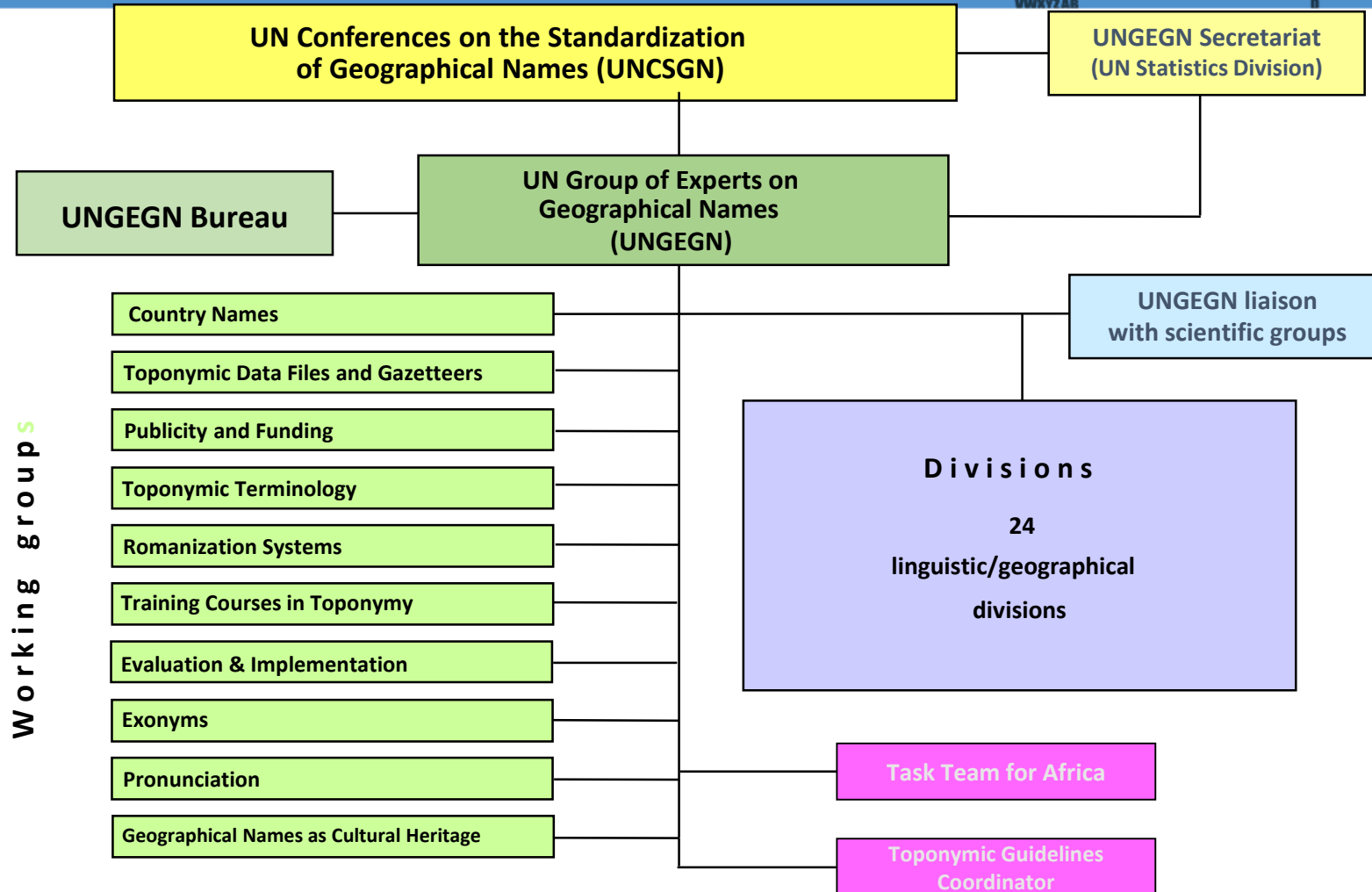
- Make mapping organizations aware of the importance of using standardized geographical names
- Liaise with international organizations dealing with related subjects
- Make standardization principles and standardized geographical names widely available

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WG - Toponymic data files and gazetteers

- Major task to promote consistency of data
 - development and maintenance of digital toponymic files and data bases
 - gazetteers (hard copy and digital)
 - data exchange formats and standards
 - liaison with ISO TC211 and Unicode consortium
 - need to be a focal point for info on software
 - processes for VGI and crowd-sourced data
 - definitions of general feature types/categories
 - updates for technical manual



ID	Name	Settlement	Country	Postal	Postal
00010001	Abuja	Abuja	Nigeria	900001	900001
00010002	Abuja	Abuja	Nigeria	900002	900002
00010003	Abuja	Abuja	Nigeria	900003	900003
00010004	Abuja	Abuja	Nigeria	900004	900004
00010005	Abuja	Abuja	Nigeria	900005	900005
00010006	Abuja	Abuja	Nigeria	900006	900006
00010007	Abuja	Abuja	Nigeria	900007	900007
00010008	Abuja	Abuja	Nigeria	900008	900008
00010009	Abuja	Abuja	Nigeria	900009	900009
00010010	Abuja	Abuja	Nigeria	900010	900010

Website: <https://wiki.gdi-de.org/display/wgtdfg/>



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WG – Romanization Systems

Report on the Current Status of United Nations Romanization Systems for Geographical Names

See also an important [note on links and report versions](#).

Version 4.0. February 2013 – March 2016 [published 2013-02-26, updated 2013-09-24 and 2016-03-30]

- Updates published after the 9th and 10th United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (2007, 2012).
- **Romanization systems**

- **Languages/scripts covered by systems recommended by the United Nations (30):**

Amharic [[pdf/html](#)] | **Arabic** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Assamese** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Belarusian** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Bengali** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Bulgarian** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Chinese** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Greek** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Gujarati** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Hebrew** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Hindi** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Kannada** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Khmer** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Macedonian Cyrillic** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Malayalam** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Marathi** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Mongolian** (in China) [[pdf/html](#)] | **Nepali** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Oriya** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Persian** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Punjabi** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Russian** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Serbian** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Tamil** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Telugu** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Thai** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Tibetan** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Uighur** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Ukrainian** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Urdu** [[pdf/html](#)]

- **Other languages/scripts (15):**

Armenian [[pdf/html](#)] | **Burmese** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Dzongkha** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Georgian** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Japanese** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Kazakh** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Kirghiz** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Korean** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Lao** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Maldivian** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Mongolian (Cyrillic)** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Pashto** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Sinhalese** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Tajik** [[pdf/html](#)] | **Tigrinya** [[pdf/html](#)]

For a more complete listing see a special [subpage](#).

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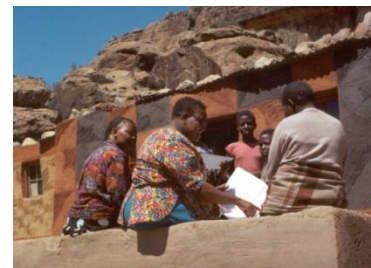


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WG - Training courses in Toponymy

- Courses offered to international audiences since 1982 - in various languages and locations
- Collection of course outlines, etc. available
- To reach a larger audience ... moving towards web-based courses
 - unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/docs/_data_ICAcourses/index.html (developed with ICA)
 - also in French (Div. Francophone) and in Spanish (PAIGH)
- New advanced manual online



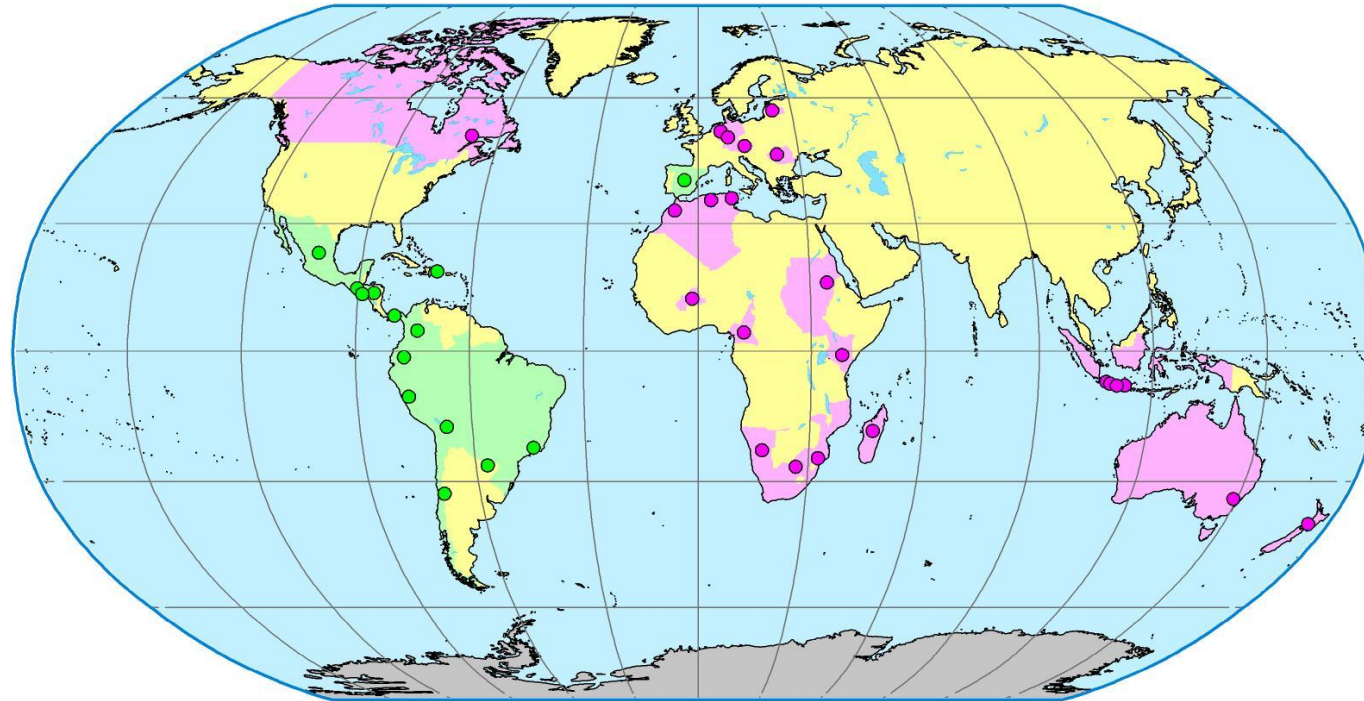
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WG – Training courses in toponymy



● **UNGE GN**

● **PAIGH**

Offering training courses and developing web-based training

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WG - Toponymic terminology

- Need for commonly recognized terminology for any discipline
- First Glossary was published by the UN in 1984
- Updated and expanded Glossary in 2002 ... six languages of UN; 375 terms
- Into maintenance phase - first additions and changes on UNGEGN website, 2007
- Establishing database of terminology





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WG – Geographical names as cultural heritage

- Aim to promote the work being done on cultural heritage, including indigenous, or minority and regional group names
- Retention / revitalization of cultures through toponyms
- Res. VIII/1 (2002), Res. IX/5 (2007)
- Compile guidelines; gather legislation and principles for recording and use of names in cultural context; dialogue with other groups





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UNGEGN Divisions

- Africa Central
- Africa East
- Africa South
- Africa West
- Arabic
- Asia East (other than China)
- Asia South-East
- Asia South-West (other than Arabic)
- Baltic
- Celtic
- China
- Dutch- and German-speaking
- East Central and South-East Europe
- Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia
- East Mediterranean (other than Arabic)
- French-speaking
- India
- Latin America
- Pacific South-West
- Norden
- Portuguese-speaking
- Romano-Hellenic
- United Kingdom
- United States / Canada

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UNGEGN World Geonames Database

- Access through UNGEGN web site
- To include names (geo-referenced) of:
 - Countries and capitals
 - 6 UN languages
 - Language(s) of country
 - Cities > 100,000
- Original writing system + romanization
- Audio for endonyms
- *In future to add: Variant names – exonyms, historical ...*

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UNEGN World Geographical Names

Multilingual, multiscrptual dataset of names of countries, capitals and major cities.

[Geographical Names Database](#) | [About](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Feedback](#) | [Contact](#)

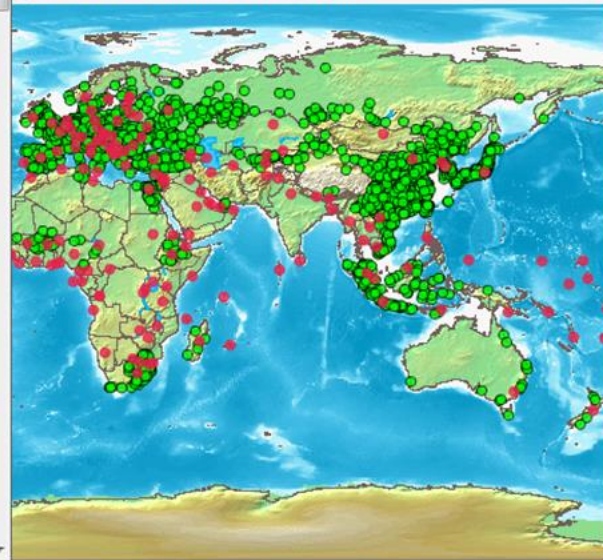
Beta version

Select a country to zoom in and list the names below the map

Select a country to zoom in and list the names below the map

- World
- Afghanistan
- Albania
- Algeria
- Andorra
- Angola
- Antigua and Barbuda
- Argentina
- Armenia
- Australia
- Austria
- Azerbaijan
- Bahamas (the)
- Bahrain
- Bangladesh
- Barbados
- Belarus
- Belgium
- Belize
- Benin
- Bhutan
- Bolivia (Plurinational State of)
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Botswana
- Brazil
- Brunei Darussalam
- Bulgaria
- Burkina Faso
- Burundi

N languages. Point to a city to see the city endonyms (where e. Capital cities are shown in red, other cities are shown in green. might not be able to be displayed properly.



Notes:

- The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. The source for the file is [UNGIWG](#).
- The Arabic fonts are not connected at this stage because of technical problems.

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ccgn

UNGEGN and UN-GGIM: Common principles

- UNGEGN and UN-GGIM recognize that geographical names are an essential part of geospatial information management and its fundamental data themes.
- UNGEGN recognizes that UN-GGIM has the mandate to provide a strategic assessment of geospatial information needs and will support UN-GGIM recommendations to meet mutual goals.
- UNGEGN accepts strategic directions related to geospatial information management that flow from UN-GGIM, and UNGEGN will internalize and promote these directions as they apply to geographical names, encouraging countries and agencies within countries, as required, to meet the strategic initiatives.
- UN-GGIM will support UNGEGN in communicating and promoting the essential role of geographical names in the overall geospatial information environment and the benefits of countries establishing a process for geographical names standardization management in line with UNGEGN guidelines and recommendations.
- UNGEGN and UN-GGIM will continue to operate and function as distinct bodies. A dedicated UNGEGN is indispensable alongside a well-functioning UN-GGIM.
- UNGEGN and UN-GGIM will communicate and collaborate with each other on a regular and ongoing basis.

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Importance
Toponymic Data-files
Coordination
Geographical Names
Organisation
Training
Conference
Cultural Heritage
Technical
Standardization
Thank you

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