

**Twenty-fifth session  
Nairobi, 5–12 May 2009**

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**Item 13 of the provisional agenda**

**Activities relating to the Working Group on Country Names**

## **Report of the Working Group on Country Names\***

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\* Prepared by Leo Dillon (United States), Convenor, Working Group on Country Names

## **Report of the Working Group on Country Names**

Agenda item 13

25<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

Submitted by the Working Group on Country Names

Prepared by Leo Dillon

### **Summary**

A report describing the activities of the Working Group on Country Names since the Ninth UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in August 2007, including updates made to the Working Groups “List of Country Names” document since the Conference.

The objective of the Working Group on Country Names is to develop and maintain a list of the names of all countries in the world in the language or languages used in an official capacity within each country, and to present an updated version of this document at each UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSGN).

The Working Group presented the updated document titled “List of Country Names” (E/CONF.98/89/Add.1) to the Ninth UNCSGN in New York in August 2007. That document, which is the current official version approved by the Working Group, is available from the UNGEGN website, in the Conference’s “List of documents” page: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/9th-UNCSGN-Docs/E-CONF-98-89-Add1.pdf>.

The Working Group held a meeting at the Conference, where further changes to the document proposed by Working Group members and other UNGEGN experts present were discussed and later decided upon. These changes were incorporated into a yet newer version, posted to the Working Group’s section of the UNGEGN website in October 2007:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN-Working-Groups/WG-Country-Names-Doc-up-to-date-Oct07vers.pdf>.

This version has not been officially approved by the Working Group and is offered for informational purposes, to stimulate discussion within the Working Group and UNGEGN. The Group continues to update this document through informal exchanges between its members, and expects to have a newer version posted to the UNGEGN website soon. That version should include the following changes, made since the formal document was presented at the Ninth UNCSGN:

Bangladesh: Corrected the romanization and Bengali-script of the national official formal name.

Belarus: Updated national official spellings to reflect revision to Byelorussian romanization system

(now Bielarús / Respublika Bielarús).

Central African Republic: Added Sango language forms as national official forms.

Ethiopia: Altered the romanization system employed for national official forms to reflect UN-approved system for Amharic. Now *Ityop'iya / Yeltyop'iya Fēderalawi Dimokrasiyawi Ripeblik*

Kiribati: Added Gilbertese language forms as national official forms.

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya: Removed the variant national official Arabic form *ليبية*

Moldova: Updated the UN official short forms and entry header to Republic of Moldova.

Montenegro: Removed Republic from all formal name forms.

Nepal: Updated all UN official and national official forms of formal name from Nepal to Federal

Democratic Republic of Nepal.

Somalia: Removed 'Democratic' from all formal name forms and altered the spelling to 'Jamhuuriyadda' in the Somali form.

South Africa: Corrected the spelling of 9 national official formal names and 5 short names.

Sri Lanka: Corrected the presentation of the national official Sinhala forms to display the ligatures.

Tunisia: Changed the romanization of the national official Arabic from *Tūnus* to *Tūnis*.

Tuvalu: Added Tuvaluan language forms as national official forms.

United States of America: Changed the entry header to read UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of): Altered entry header to VENEZUELA (BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF).

The Working Group has also been active over the last year in providing local language names of capital cities to populate the UNGEGN World Geographical Names database.

The convenor of the Working Group would like to thank Ms. Catherine Cheetham for her extensive contribution to this report.

The Working Group invites any interested experts to become a member of the group. Please contact the convenor ([dillonli@state.gov](mailto:dillonli@state.gov)) with any questions.