

13 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**

**Web site of the United Nations Group of Experts on
Geographical Names**

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

* E/CONF.94/1.

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Introduction

During the Seventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names held in New York in 1998, the increasing potential of the World Wide Web as a communication tool was recognized by participants. As a result, Resolution 9, part 2, recommended that “the UNGEGN Secretariat establish an UNGEGN web site”, to improve the communication with member states and toponymic experts, and so help promote and realize the goals and resolutions of the Conferences.

Subsequently, the UNGEGN Working Group on Publicity and Funding, discussed and fully endorsed the high priority of this development as an essential UNGEGN support activity.

Since the Conference, and more particularly since the Twentieth session of UNGEGN in 2000, the UNGEGN Secretariat, with the help of the UNGEGN Vice-Chair, has been creating such an UNGEGN web site. In April 2002, the site was launched under the umbrella of the United Nations Statistics Division, at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo>.

In developing the web site, the following purpose and aims were enunciated:

General purpose

- In an easy and accessible way, the web site will provide for UNGEGN a focal point for timely dissemination of information on its activities and material on the standardization of geographical names, in as many UN languages as possible.

Aims

- The web site should provide:
 - Content information on UNCSGN, UNGEGN (as well as its divisions and working groups), and UNGEGN Secretariat activities
 - Access to documents of UNCSGN and UNGEGN
 - Special materials, such as the UNGEGN brochure, UNGEGN Newsletter
 - Links to authoritative web sites relevant to geographical names standardization
 - Divisions
 - Working Groups
 - Individual member states – names authorities and national geographical names data bases
 - UN Cartographic information
 - Sites of other pertinent agencies, e.g. ISO, IHO ...

- The web site should be updated in a timely way
- Member states and other bodies should be encouraged to link to the UNGEGN site

The question of language of specific material on the site has been left in the hands of the UNGEGN Secretariat, to handle as effectively as possible.

Current content of the UNGEGN web site

At present the web site provides access to materials under the following headings:

- (1) Home page – providing access to news, upcoming events, and latest documents
- (2) Overview – a summary of the establishment and work of UNGEGN, with links to other fundamental areas (e.g. UN resolutions, Working Groups, Toponymic Guidelines)
- (3) UN Conferences – the background and purpose of the Conferences is provided, in addition to a summary table, a list of reports, a table of all Conference documents and resolutions; for the Seventh Conference (1998) the vol. I report is available in English, French and Spanish, and preparatory materials for the Eighth Conference (2002) are detailed and downloadable
- (4) UNGEGN – providing access to the Statute; UNGEGN Division and Working Group materials; details of the Twenty-first session (2002); the report (six languages) and list of documents from the Twentieth session (2000), and the complete list of reports and all documents from past UNGEGN sessions
- (5) UNGEGN Divisions – background and functioning of the linguistic/geographical divisions, countries participating in each division, and links to division web sites
- (6) UNGEGN Working Groups – summary of the work of all currently operating working groups; links to working group web sites
- (7) UNGEGN Sessions – a summary list of sessions, dates and locations
- (8) News and events – providing an archival record of items that are moved from the Home page
- (9) Documents – access to texts of documents: resolutions, UNGEGN brochure, Glossary of Terms (*to come*), UNGEGN Newsletters since 2000, Toponymic Guidelines overview and Guidelines available on the web, list of Conference reports and documents, list of UNGEGN session reports and documents; other useful reference material

- (10) Links – to web sites of Divisions, Working Groups, toponymic guidelines, areas within the United Nations, international organizations, national names authorities and searchable geographical names data bases of various countries
- (11) Contacts – for contacting the Secretariat
- (12) Site map – overview of materials available on the site

Future content and updating

- (1) Creating and implementing a Search capability within the site.
- (2) Updating and correcting information is a very important part of the web site maintenance and should include:
 - (a) Revising and adding to information on Divisions and Working Groups of UNGEGN, together with the links provided to Division and Working Group web sites.
 - (b) Highlighting advanced notices of Division and Working Group meetings in Upcoming Events on the Home Page
 - (c) As they become available, expanding links to online national geographical names data bases, national names authority web sites and special agency sites.
- (3) Over the years, available documents will be increased within the current framework of the web site. For example, papers from the Eighth Conference processed on the United Nations Optical Disk System (ODS) can be made available for external access on the UNGEGN web site. Selected documents from past conferences/sessions may be considered, if resources permit.
- (4) In future, too, it is hoped that graphic interfaces – such as world or regional maps – will provide different access points to toponymic data files.
- (5) Materials in languages other than English can and will be added as available. However, it is not feasible to have all documents translated and available in all the six UN languages; nor is it currently viable to create six different web sites for each language.
- (6) With your assistance in providing the information, contact addresses for the authority/authorities responsible for geographical naming in each country should be made available on the web site.
- (7) The Secretariat has responsibility for the integrity of the web site and will continue to have the final decision on modifying, removing or adding material and links.

- (8) The listing of the UNGEGN web site in other indexes and search engines should be reviewed and optimized. The URL for the web site should be added to UNGEGN letterhead, to the Newsletter masthead, and to future UNGEGN documents.

Your views are sought on methods of further developing the web site and your assistance is requested to keep the material on the site relevant and up to date. All information should be sent to Mr. Amor Laaribi (laaribi@un.org) at the UNGEGN Secretariat.
