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ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

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UNGE GN
INFORMATION
BULLETIN

(FORMERLY NEWSLETTER)

The *Information Bulletin of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names* (formerly UNGEGN Newsletter) is issued twice a year by the Secretariat of the Group. The Secretariat is established within the Statistics Division (UNSD), Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Secretariat of the United Nations. It publishes contributions/reports from the Experts of the Group, its Linguistic/ Geographical Divisions and its Working Groups. Contributions for the Information Bulletin can only be considered when they are made available in digital form. They should be sent to the following address:

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Preface

Message from the Chairperson

Dear Colleagues

This is my first message to you as Chair of UNGEGN. I hope that all were able to return safely home following our largely successful Tenth UN Conference and 27th UNGEGN Session. I found the range of papers and presentations very informative and hope that each of us gained some valuable knowledge and insight that can be applied in our own environments.

Tenth Conference and 27th Session

I would like to take this opportunity to thank a number of people for the work they undertook in relation to the two meetings.

- The UNGEGN Secretariat did their usual excellent task behind the scenes to organise these meetings, and I am sure that their efforts are greatly appreciated by us all.
- Thanks to Ferjan Ormering and Botolv Helleland for their willingness to step into the roles as Chair of the Session and President of the Conference respectively at such short notice. The fact that both meetings flowed so smoothly is a tribute to their efforts.

I would also like to thank all the delegates for the trust placed in me as the new Chairperson. It is a trust I take very seriously. I would also offer sincere thanks to Ferjan Ormerling and Naima Friha who have accepted the roles of Vice Chairpersons and Peder Gammeltoft and Trent Palmer who have agreed to take on the role of rapporteurs.

I believe it is also appropriate to offer a vote of thanks from all the delegates to Ms. Helen Kerfoot for her 20 years of involvement with the UNGEGN Bureau. This conference and session gave us an opportunity to express our appreciation in a number of ways for the support and encouragement Helen has given us. She and her husband Ken have been unselfish in their efforts on our behalf. I feel I can speak for us all when I wish Helen and Ken all the best for their future. Thankfully, Helen has indicated that she will still be involved with UNGEGN in some capacities.

On a more formal note, the final versions of report of the Conference and the 27th Session are now available on the web site in all six languages. The resolutions of the conference will be added to the compendium of resolutions.

The Future

The relevance of place names, particularly in association with spatial data, is increasing. As such, I believe that the pressure of place names authorities and processes will increase as the demand for accurate and comprehensive data increases. I feel this will require us to work smarter in the future.

To this end, I would encourage the working groups and divisions to continue and indeed accelerate the efforts you are making. I would also encourage individuals and countries to become more involved in both the working groups and division to provide a greater resource base, focus and momentum for the work carried out in these valuable forums.

I was encouraged to see the efforts of the Task Team for Africa being rewarded with measurable progress, and look forward the seeing this continue. There are lessons to be learnt from this initiative that will be applicable in other parts of the world.

I would like to take this opportunity to echo the thoughts expresses by the previous Chairperson in relation to the terms of reference and focus of UNGEGN. This body is a technical committee and I would seek the support of all delegates to ensure this focus is maintained. It is noted that there was an increase in the interventions that can only be classed as political. This has the effect of drawing the focus from those important technical issues that require our attention. I would therefore encourage all delegates to

ensure that the technical focus is maintained and that greater efforts be made to ensure that we do not inadvertently or deliberately introduce issues and examples that will detract from the technical nature.

Conclusion

I look forward to working with you over the coming years. Please feel free to pass on to myself or any member of the Bureau any suggestions you have in relation to the next UNGEGN Session. This will aid in the planning for 2014.

Bill Watt

UNGEGN Chair

Australia

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News from the Secretariat

Message from the Secretariat

Dear UNGEGN Experts,

From the feedback we received during and after the 10th Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (31 July – 9 August), the Conference was well received. We would like to thank all of you who made this possible through your active participation, through your interesting documents, your interventions, your posters, your contributions to side events etc.

The 10th Conference and the 27th Session are now well behind us and we can now report that as of December both reports are available in their final version on our website. It's also worthwhile to note that the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has taken note of both reports in resumed sessions in November and as recently as mid-December.

Our focus has now shifted to exploring the possibility of organizing the 28th Session in Bangkok in 2014. In this context, we are working closely with the newly elected UNGEGN chair, Mr. Bill Watt.

The UNGEGN Secretariat has also been able to virtually complete the scanning and uploading of documents for all past UNGEGN sessions. This was achieved with the help of many experts, in particular Helen Kerfoot, Ferjan Ormeling and Hubert Bergmann. In the coming months we will work on scanning and making available online documents from past Conferences.

We are also happy to inform you that the National Geographic Information Institute of the Republic of Korea has, with permission from the United Nations, translated some publications into Korean. They are available on the UNGEGN website at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/publications.html>.

This message would not be complete without thanking Ms. Helen Kerfoot for her tireless efforts and great cooperation with the secretariat over the past years. The Secretariat staff wish her all the best and we now look forward to working very closely with Mr. Bill Watt, the new UNGEGN chair, on current and future activities of the Group of Experts.

Sabine Warschburger
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From the Divisions

Norden Division

The Norden Division has held two meetings this summer, one in Copenhagen on 10 June 2012 and the next on 6 August 2012 during the UNCSGN Conference in New York. Eleven members were present at the first meeting and eight at the second. It was particularly nice to have Greenland, the Faeroe Islands and the Sami communities represented at the Copenhagen meeting and much valuable information was relayed and discussed there. One of the main points of that meeting was the election of the Chair of the Norden Division for the next five years. The chair should have been passed on to Norway but owing to a request from Norway that their chairmanship be postponed, it was decided Denmark retain the Chair for another period.

The New York meeting focused on the status of the EuroGeoNames and INSPIRE projects and on where to hold the next Norden Division Meeting. It was decided to try and

hold the next Norden Division Meeting in cooperation with the Baltic Division, taking an opportunity to have a joint seminar at the same venue. This is still in the early stages of planning but a meeting towards the end of September 2013 is being planned at the time of writing.

We in the Norden Division were proud to see our long-time member Botolv Helleland as the president of the 10th UNCSGN Conference. It is nice to know that the division is playing a central role in UNGEGN and one we hope to be able to maintain in the future.

Peder Gammeltoft

Chair of Norden Division

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From the Working Groups

Working Group On Exonyms

12th Meeting of the Working Group on Exonyms, Gdańsk, Poland, 16-18 May 2012

The meeting had the character of a workshop and was kindly hosted by the Polish Main Office of Geodesy and Cartography, Katarzyna PRZYSZEWSKA being the responsible organizer in place (Fig. 1). It was organized jointly with the UNGEGN Working Group on Romanization Systems (Convenor: Peeter PÄLL). After opening speeches by Peter JORDAN, Peeter PÄLL, Helen KERFOOT and a representative of the host institution, Jan WENDT, professor of geography at the Gdańsk University, conveyed a geographical and historical introduction to city and region of Gdańsk (Fig. 2).

Figure 1



Ms. Katarzyna PRZYSZEWSKA's welcome address

The first session on the endonym/exonym divide filled the first day of the meeting completely and saw papers presented by Peter JORDAN (Austria), Paul WOODMAN (United Kingdom, two papers), Phil MATTHEWS (New Zealand), Ojārs BUŠS (Latvia), Maciej ZYCH (Poland), Herman BELL (United Kingdom)

and Małgorzata MANDOLA (France/Poland). All of them except BELL and MANDOLA complained about insufficiencies of the current definitions of the endonym and exonym and made partly new proposals.

Figure 2



The historical port at the Motława River

The two sessions on the second day of the meeting were devoted to trends in exonym use and minority toponyms. On trends in exonym use reported Béla Pokoly (Hungary), Sungjae Choo, (Republic of Korea), again Paul Woodman (United Kingdom), Maria del Mar Battle (Spain), Bogusław R. Zagórski (Poland), Ivana Crljenko (Croatia) and Pavel Boháč (Czechia). To names in minority languages referred Zsombor Bartos-Elekes (Romania), Ewa Wolnicz-Pawłowska (Poland) and András Dutkó in a common paper with Mónika Mándoki (both Hungary).

A general discussion on goals and tasks of the WG chaired by the convenor highlighted once more the prevailing dissatisfaction with the current definitions of the endonym and

the exonym. It was repeatedly criticized that they were not practicable (esp. ZYCH). Especially WOODMAN and the convenor held the opinion that not primarily language, but the community-feature relation were the essential criterion for defining this divide and that the differentiation between official and unofficial names or languages had nothing to do with the endonym/exonym divide.

Figure 3



School children performing Kashubian dances

Figure 4



Ms. Helen Kerfoot and Mr. Peter Jordan

It was not time enough to discuss all the various proposals for new definitions thoroughly. But it was found that this should be done in a next workshop and as carefully as possible. It should be avoided that the WG comes up with new definitions “every other year”, since this would not throw a good light on the WGs reliability (KERFOOT). Viable definitions ready for the purposes of standardization, however, were the primary task of the WG.

A bus excursion to the bilingual Kashubian region nearby Gdańsk including visits to a university for education in minority culture, a bilingual school with teaching and dancing performances (Fig. 3) and a broadcasting station emitting also features in Kashubian language as well as a dinner invitation by the Polish hosts to a brewery (Fig. 4) completed the program in the most interesting and convenient way.

The proceedings of this meeting will be published soon.

Peter JORDAN

Convenor, Working Group on Exonyms

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13th Meeting of the Working Group on Exonyms, New York, 6th August 2012

The Working Group met on 6th August 2012 during the 10th UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in the UN Headquarters in New York. The Working Group's acting convenor, Peter JORDAN, chaired the meeting.

He first gave an overview on activities of the working group since the last UNGEGN Session in Vienna [Wien] (Austria) in May 2011 highlighting the 11th meeting held during the Session in Vienna, 4th May 2011, and the 12th meeting of the WG, held in Gdańsk (Poland) May 16th to 18th 2012 in conjunction with the WG on Romanization Systems (for more detail see the separate report in this Bulletin). He thanked Katarzyna PRZYSZEWSKA and her colleagues from the Institute of Geodesy and Cartography in Warsaw [Warszawa] for her great and so successful efforts in organizing this meeting.

Topics discussed in these meetings were primarily the endonym/exonym divide, the definitions of the endonym and the exonym, criteria for a politically sensitive use of exonyms as well as the question whether a third term for international waters was needed.

Under the item "elections" JORDAN first mentioned, that Milan OROŽEN ADAMIČ (Slovenia) had been the first convenor of the WG from 2002 to 2005, the person who "made the engine run". In 2005 JORDAN became co-convenor. With the appointment of OROŽEN ADAMIČ as ambassador of Slovenia in Zagreb JORDAN became the de facto convenor of the WG which was confirmed by vote in Nairobi 2009.

According to JORDAN, in spite of organizing

quite a number of meetings and workshops and publishing books, the WG had not reached its goals as defined by its terms of reference yet. So he felt the challenge to accomplish at least some of them as, e.g., new, precise and applicable definitions of the endonym and the exonym as well as guidelines for the use of exonyms. He was thus willing to run for another term as convenor. OROŽEN ADAMIČ resigned as a co-convenor, because he had been elected chair of his Division. He suggested that JORDAN should become the one and only convenor of the WG. JORDAN asked the audience whether a secret vote was demanded. This was not the case and JORDAN has been elected unanimously convenor of the WG. JORDAN then announced that he will establish a steering committee, which is to consult proposals in more detail and present them commonly in WG meetings.

Regarding agenda item "future activities" the convenor highlighted three of them: (1) a thorough discussion of new definitions, (2) criteria for a politically sensitive use of exonyms, (3) categorisation of exonyms. Referring to the definitions, he argued that the current definitions operated with *language* and *officiality* as essential criteria, while the only essential criterion for the endonym/exonym divide was the community-feature relation. This initiated a lively discussion documented by the minutes of the 13th Meeting, which will soon be available at the WG website (<http://www.zrc-sazu.si/ungegn/WGE/exonyms.htm>). In general, however, the three agenda items were approved by the WG.

For a next WG meeting three proposals (two from Romania, one from Greece) were on

the table. Upon invitation of Greece, a next workshop of the WG will take place on the island of Corfu [Kérkura] (Greece) in May 2013. It will have the structure of a workshop and mainly be devoted to the endonym/exonym divide and the discussion of new definitions for the endonym and the exonym.

Peter JORDAN

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Working Group on Publicity and Funding

The Working Group on Publicity and Funding held a joint meeting with the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation in New York on 7th August 2012, in conjunction with the 10th UNCSGN.

At the Working Group meeting, the new Convenor, Peder Gammeltoft and the new rapporteur Hubert Bergmann were presented and welcomed to the Working Group, and both kindly thanked for the honour of becoming part of this important Working Group.

Among the items discussed at the meeting were items completed since last meeting in Seoul in 2011 and future funding activities. Under this item, Burkina Faso had requested an Expert to help with the start-up phase of the newly established new place-names

commission there. Additionally, a Toponymy Training Course is planned for Madagascar in 2013, for which funding is also sought. The Toponymic Terminology Database which was presented as a proof-of-concept at the conference was also discussed as a possible funding project.

It was also decided that the UNGEGN entry in Wikipedia should be updated and augmented, which Hubert Bergmann promised to take charge of, as was a greater focus on the UNGEGN Information Bulletin and updates to the Working Group's page on the UNGEGN website discussed.

Peder Gammeltoft

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Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers

10th UNCSGN - Technical Committee II - agenda item 11

In summary 20 Conference Papers (C.P.s) submitted by 14 countries have been submitted under item 11. Generally it was identified that most C.P.s have addressed national activities on developing and

establishing geographical names databases, services, applications and other products. Two C.P.s described multi-national activities. One C.P. addressed a broader context for gazetteers, namely the "Four faces of Toponymic Gazetteers".

There is a trend of activities in the countries focused on the establishment of GN databases, services and applications to make GN data usable for different purposes - e.g. for GIS, for map production or for the support of specific services like land management, health, address or other services. Sometimes countries do already use web services technologies for the GN data provision/dissemination and by that supporting a vision of a general Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI).

This trend of supporting multi-usage/purposes of GN data is fully compliant and recognizing Res VIII/6 of the 8th UNCSGN, which recommends integrating GN better into national, regional and international SDIs.

The convenor would like to thank the rapporteur, Ms Laura Konstanski and her assistant, Mr Sungjae Choo as well as the Vice-Chair of this TC II, Ms Eman Oriebay for their contributions.

Meeting of the WG within the 10th UNCSGN, UN Headquarters, New York, 2 August 2012

The Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers of UNGEGN held its meeting during the Tenth UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSGN) at the United Nations Headquarters, New York, 09:00 – 09:45, 2 August 2012.

The minutes and the initial presentation of the meeting are available through: <https://wiki.gdi-de.org/display/wgtdfg/2012-08+meeting+in+New+York>

New tasks addressed to the WG within the 10th UNCSGN

Within the 10th UNCSGN (conference and side events) three new tasks/issues have been proposed to be added to the “Scope of work” and to the “Work plan” of the WG TDFG respectively:

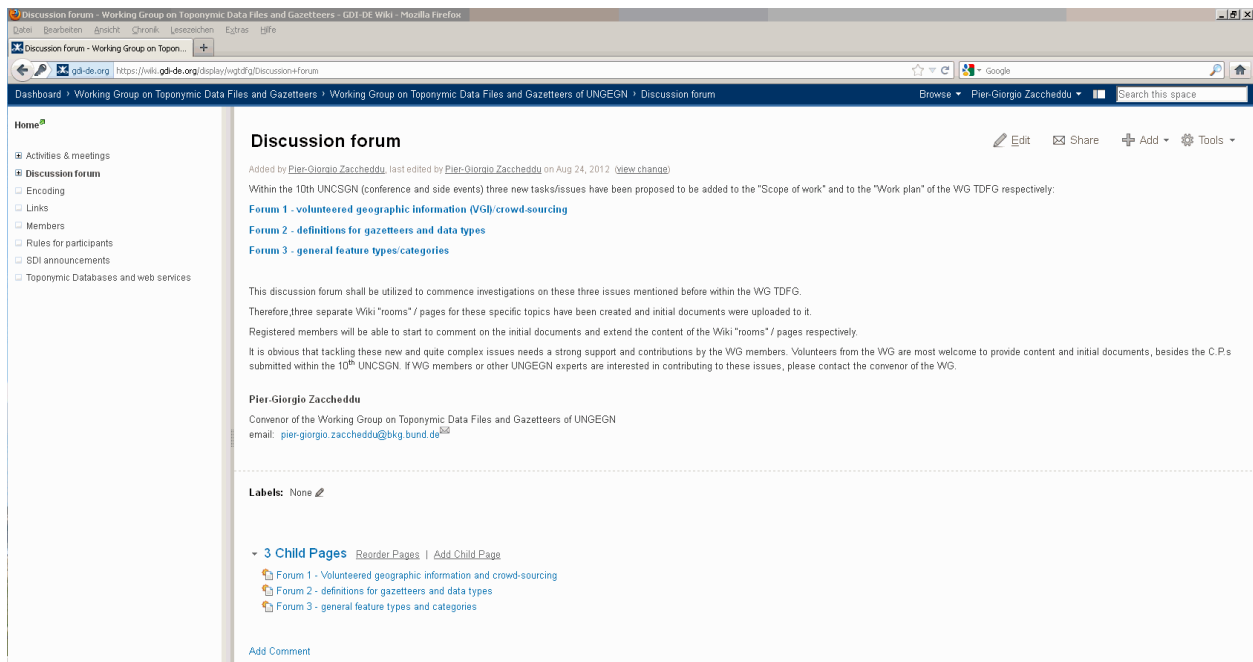
- 1) During a lunchtime presentation about the topic “**volunteered geographic information (VGI)/crowd-sourcing**” it was recommended that investigations about VGI/crowd-sourcing shall be commenced within the WG TDFG. Within the UNGEGN session (item 9) the convenor emphasized that this can only be a starting point for some activity. After some initial technical work within the WG TDFG, at the next UNGEGN session 2014, the discussion of VGI and crowd-sourcing should be continued within the topics national policies and promotion of standardization.
- 2) During the first session of Technical Committee II (E/CONF.101/57 and Add.1) it was recommended by Australia that the WG TDFG may consider to commence investigations into defining appropriate **definitions for gazetteers and data types** as this is obviously an issue for the WG TDFG. With the support of the WG the “Scope of Work“ and the “Work plan” will be updated in due course concerning the definition of types of gazetteers.
- 3) During a session of Technical Committee IV (E/CONF.101/56 and Add.1) it was recommended by Australia that the issue of developing **general feature types/categories** could be an item to be discussed further in the WG TDFG too. It is worth noting that different feature type classifications

increase the complexity of any interpretation or searching process. Interpreting these references is a significant and pressing need for better using information to support decisions, and gazetteers were considered to be the source of the information needed to interpret these references. Obviously this topic relates with the agenda of the WG TDFG.

With the support of the WG the “Scope of Work“ and the “Work plan” of the WG TDFG will be updated in due course. The convenor noted that tackling these new and quite complex issues a strong support and contributions by the WG members is needed.

Regarding the methods to be used to start actions the following suggestions has been accepted by the WG: in 2011 the existing separate Working Group website was re-launched. It is linked to the section available within the UNGEGN website. The software used for the website potentially allows implementing Wiki functionality and set up a **discussion forum within the website**.

This discussion forum could be utilized to commence investigations on these three issues mentioned before within the WG by creating separate Wiki “rooms” / pages for these specific topics and upload initial documents to it. Registered members will start to comment on the initial documents and extend the content of the Wiki “rooms” / pages respectively.



The discussion forum is accessible through: <https://wiki.gdi-de.org/display/wgtdfg/Discussion+forum>

It is obvious that tackling these new and quite complex issues needs a strong support

and contributions by the WG members. Volunteers from the WG are most welcome to provide content and initial documents, besides the C.P.s submitted within the 10th UNCSGN. If WG members or other UNGEGN experts are interested in

contributing to these issues, please contact the convener of the WG.

Upcoming Actions for 2012 – 2014

- participate at and/or contribute, if required, to the yearly organized **United Nations Geographic Information Working Group (UNGIWG) meetings** and report back to UNGEGN and in particular to this WG;
- participate at and/or contribute, if required, to the **GGIM forum, documents, discussions**
- promote and provide consultancy and technical advice to the **UNSDI Gazetteer Framework Project** through the Science and Technical Advisory Group (STAG)
- provide consultancy to the developments related to the **UNGEGN database, UNECA “UNECA Africa GeoNyms database/gazetteer initiative”, the INSPIRE initiative, the EuroGeoNames project**, UN gazetteer and projects of developing countries through **toponymic training courses**;
- monitor the development of the **Best Practice Gazetteer Service profile of Web Feature Service (WFS)** of the Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) Standards Working Group and report back to UNGEGN and in particular to this WG;
- expand the content of the **Working Group website** and promote it through the UNGEGN Information Bulletin, referencing recently presented documents and including information on data modeling and database design, on general issues in the context of

data maintenance, production and distribution in the context of Spatial data infrastructures (SDIs).

- set up a **discussion forum** as part of the Working Group website by utilizing Wiki functionality in order to commence investigations on issues and specific topics like e.g. volunteered geographic information and crowd sourced data;
- update, if required, the content of **Part II of the UNGEGN Technical Reference Manual** and assist the UNGEGN secretariat with the publication of an amended version;
- assist in raising awareness about the lack of availability of standardized names by participating and presenting toponymic data topics at **national and international conferences** organized in the fields of geospatial information management (comprising spatial data infrastructures), cartography and remote sensing;
- arrange **Working Group meetings**, at least one between the two UNGEGN Sessions conducted in preparation of the respective UNCSGN.

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Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy

Report on the 4th BIG-UNGEGN International Toponymy Course held in Yopgyakarta, Indonesia, September 17-21, 2012

75 participants, 9 of which from foreign countries (Oman 2, Philippines 2, Malaysia 4, Sri Lanka 1) attended the fourth international toponymy course, organized by Badan

Informasi Geospasial (BIG, formerly Bakosurtanal) and the UNGEGN Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy. The local participants represented 33 Indonesian

provinces and a number of local government areas - as the task of collecting and processing geographical names has been decentralized in Indonesia since 2008 - and some universities. The course was opened by representatives of the Special Administrative Area Yogyakarta, past UNGEGN chairperson Helen Kerfoot and the director of Bakosurtanal, Dr. Asep Karsidi.



Figure 1: Fieldwork participants interviewing the chief of Desa Kliwong

The program that had been prepared after consultation with the local organizers consisted of sessions on the following items:

- session 1 Names standardization and SDI
- session 2 National names programmes
- session 3 Regional names database initiatives (UN, SEAsia-SWPacific, EuroGeoNames name servers)
- session 4 Fieldwork preparation, preliminary office processing
- fieldwork
- session 5 Database design and management, gazetteers, name servers
- session 6 Names as part of the cultural heritage
- session 7 Standardized names dissemination. Evaluation of current names sites
- session 8 Names for the Media; Name planning

The new Pilot Gazetteer Framework project in Indonesia, that was reported upon at the 10th UNCSGN in New York in August 2012, was also dealt with, as it also requires participation from regional and local government and the various ministries.

Optimal teaching conditions, with coffee, tea and lunches provided on site (so that participants need not leave the premises) made it possible, also thanks to the extremely motivated audience, to have an exacting 9-6 lecturing program.



Figure 2: Fieldwork participants interviewing local inhabitants

The first part of the fieldwork was held in the Cangkringan district high on the slopes of the smoking Mount Merapi. Here, we could still witness the destruction wrought by the eruptions that took place in 2010, with houses still partly covered by the debris of pyroclastic flows. After instruction and a consultation by the district chief, the participants split up into 6 groups, each armed with gps and recording equipment, and visited the different parts of the district for collecting the names, as well as the required attribute data (next day these were incorporated into databases from which both gazetteers and named maps derived). All fieldwork participants had been issued with special T-shirts, so that they were recognizable as an official party. In order to announce the purpose of the

visit beforehand, and to get local informants, the area had been visited earlier by the local organizers.

The second part of the fieldwork took place in two nearby archeological complexes, the Ratu Boko 8th century extensive acropolis overlooking the Prambanan plain, and the 9th century Banyunibo Buddhist temple close by, stressing the role of geographical names standardization as a means of preserving the cultural heritage.



Figure 3 – classroom circumstances

The lecturing team consisted of experts from Australia (1), Canada (1), Germany (1), Indonesia (2), Netherlands (3). Local organizer was Widodo Edy Santosa, from BIG, who is now producing the proceedings, that will also be used as a manual for the provinces and local government to help with their toponymic tasks. An indication of the weight Indonesia assigns to its toponymy programme is the fact that just prior to the course a separate toponymy division was set up within BIG.

Ferjan Ormeling

Convenor, UNGEGN WG on training courses in toponymy

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Advanced Toponymy Course programme and matching manual

At the 10th UNCSGN the realization of an advanced toponymy programme (Advanced Cartography Courses, E/CONF.101/30) was proposed, directed at toponymy staff already familiar with the material contained in the online toponymy webcourse (UNGEGN-ICA Toponymy Webcourse, E/CONF.101/33). Although no arrangements have been made as yet to provide such a course, it seems to be a logical outcome of the finalization of the online toponymy webcourse. Ideally, such an advanced course should be supported by a manual. As the intended audience possibly is too small to warrant a printed version of an advanced toponymy manual, for the time being a digital version is aimed for, to be accessible from the UNGEGN website.

During the discussion on this proposal to realize an advanced toponymy course and matching manual at the meeting of the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy, a number of those present volunteered to produce texts for some of the manual chapters proposed. In order also to cater for the remaining chapters, the list of chapters and subchapters is given below, with an indication whether they are still open to be selected by potential contributors, or are already provided for.

The need for standardized geographical names as part of the national geospatial data infrastructure.

In this first chapter the eminence of the national toponymic database, and its benefits for administration, development, emergency mapping and preserving the

cultural heritage are highlighted (Helen Kerfoot).

Examples of applications of the national names database in emergency mapping, administration and development

- The National names database and emergency mapping (examples from UNSDI, Haiti, crowd flowers, time-out) (still open)
- National names database and tourist activities/hotel reservations (still open)

Management of a national names programmes:

- Finances, administration, legal issues, human resources in maintaining and publishing the geographical names database (Pier Zaccheddu)
- Exercise on logistics, production time needed, necessary upkeep costs (Pier Zaccheddu)

Different geographical names applications:

- Geographical names for hydrographic charts (Australian Navy?)
- Geographical names for tourist maps (Tjeerd Tichelaar or Bettina Wobek)
- Urban street naming (still open)
- Tourist /road map exercise (Tjeerd Tichelaar)

Regional and global datafile and gazetteer initiatives

- Small islands names project (BIG?)
- Regional datafiles (for instance ASEPSW) (Wendy Shaw)
- Regional names services such as Eurogeonames (Ferjan Ormeling/Pier Zaccheddu)

- World names database UN (Helen Kerfoot)

Concordance between statistical and topographical names

- Standardization of names for statistical enumeration areas (still open. Someone from Mexico/Brazil?)
- Reduction of differences between statistical and topographical areal object names (still open. Someone from Brazil/Mexico?)
- Integration of crowd-sourced or volunteered geographic information (VGI)/crowd-sourcing (Pier Zaccheddu)

Technical issues: database management*

- Preliminary discussions on structure and contents of toponymic databases and gazetteers (Pier Zaccheddu)
- Database design and management (Pier Zaccheddu)
- Database Open source options vs commercial options: criteria for selection (Pier Zaccheddu)
- Requirements for a school atlas names database (Tjeerd Tichelaar)

Software packages:

Preliminary discussions on structure and contents of toponymic databases and gazetteers (Pier Zaccheddu)
Names databases and gazetteers (Zaccheddu)

Technical issues: internet, web service infrastructure and applications*

- Web services and applications – open source options vs commercial options: criteria for selection (Pier Zaccheddu)

- Publishing names databases in the Google Earth application (Pier Zaccheddu)
- Working with African GeoNyms - a desktop application (someone from UNECA or Pier Zaccheddu)
- UNSDI Gazetteer Framework project (CSIRO)

Evaluation of current Internet products

- Evaluation of current web services and applications (Ferjan Ormeling)
- Evaluation of current names servers (Ferjan Ormeling)

Cultural aspects

- Place names as cultural heritage (Botolv Helleland)
- History of place names (Tjeerd Tichelaar)
- Assigning street names (still open)
- Collecting indigenous names (WG on Indigenous names?)

Toponymic research

- Onomastics and lexicology (still open)
- Etymology and the historic study of place names (still open)
- Internet sources for linguistic research (Tjeerd Tichelaar)

Toponymic documentation

- Study of linguistic and toponymic sources (Hubert Bergmann)
- Preparing briefs for place name guides (still open)
- Collating sources and maps (still open)

Positioning

- Theoretical aspects of positioning (still open)

- Assessing optimal object positioning procedures: best practices (still open)
- Hands-on GPS exercise (still open)

Cartographic aspects: paper and digital map series

- Updating names sheets and Assessing optimal names density for map sheets (Romanian colleagues)
- Dealing with areal names on adjoining map sheets; multiple naming (Romanian colleagues)
- Digital/automatic place name labeling (still open)
- Jumping place names on monitor screens (hierarchical aspects)(still open)

Audit of existing records

- in order to coordinate toponymic information from different parts of the country (still open)
- in order to coordinate toponymic information from different survey periods (and therefore collected according to different standards, processes and procedures) (still open)
- in order to coordinate names record from different national institutions (Laura Kostanski)

Communication issues

- Interview techniques for collecting geographical names (still open)
- Role play for names board meetings (Maputo Video/ still open)

Special training for contacts with the media

- Toponymic requirements of the media (still open)
- Media cartography (still open)

- Exercise on Producing media maps (still open)

Those interested to cooperate with this initiative – especially those working in one of the UNGEGN Working Groups - are requested to contact Ferjan Ormeling

(f.ormeling@uu.nl) stating to which item or subject they are willing to contribute.

Ferjan Ormeling

Convenor, WG Training Courses in
Toponymy

Email: f.ormeling@geog.uu.nl

From the Countries

Exemple de revitalisation d'une Commission nationale de toponymie (CNT) : cas du Burkina Faso

Au Burkina Faso, normaliser les noms de lieux devient un besoin réel en raison des projets de cartographie topographique à l'échelle du 1/200000 (échelle de référence) couvrant l'ensemble du territoire national et du 1/50000 couvrant la partie nord de notre pays, en cours de réalisation par l'Institut Géographique du Burkina (IGB).

La toponymie du Burkina souffre d'homogénéité selon le diagnostic suivant :

- chaînon brisé entre documents toponymiques anciens et actuels ;
- besoin de clarification entre langue administrative et langues régionales ;
- méconnaissance excusable des évolutions du système de transcription mis en place dans les années 1960 et remanié dans les années 1980-1990.

Voulant être en mesure de déterminer la graphie de ses noms de lieux – qui font partie de son patrimoine culturel et linguistique – dans des conditions satisfaisantes, le Gouvernement du Burkina, constatant que l'ancienne Commission nationale de toponymie (CONATOP), créée par le Kiti n°86-04 8/CNR/PRES/MATS du 13 février 1986, n'a pu produire les résultats escomptés alors que les besoins d'harmonisation et de normalisation sont grandissants pour la production cartographique, la signalisation routière, le tourisme et l'utilisation des technologies de l'information et de la communication en

expansion, a décidé de se doter d'une nouvelle commission dont le statut est précisé par un décret portant création, attributions et fonctionnement efficace d'une Commission nationale de toponymie (CNT) placée sous la tutelle administrative du ministère chargé de l'administration du territoire et la tutelle technique du ministère chargé de la cartographie. Le fonctionnement de la Commission sera pris en charge par une ligne budgétaire inscrite au budget de sa tutelle administrative. La CNT composée par des membres pourvoyeurs et demandeurs de toponymie, et ses missions sont entre autres de :

- adopter pour chaque nom de lieu [nom administratif (division administrative, chef-lieu), nom de lieu dit habité (village, hameau, etc.), nom de lieu dit non habité (oronymie, hydronymie, végétation, communication, etc.), odonymie (rue, route)] sa forme linguistique officielle : la CNT fera des propositions au gouvernement qui se chargera de les entériner ;
- établir les critères de choix des noms à attribuer aux noms de lieux sur l'ensemble du territoire ;
- participer aux travaux internationaux de préservation ou de réappropriation identitaire du patrimoine national toponymique, fait vivant relevant de la culture et de la langue.

L'adoption du décret vise d'une part à doter le Burkina d'une autorité nationale de gestion des toponymes et d'autre part à promouvoir son patrimoine culturel et historique à travers le monde entier.

Ainsi, cette nouvelle CNT devient-elle l'entité nationale chargée d'énoncer les règles et d'harmoniser les pratiques relatives à la toponymie au Burkina Faso. Elle se pourvoit d'un secrétariat, *coeur de la CNT*, qui propose un programme de travail, prépare la tenue des sessions et assure le fonctionnement continu de la Commission à travers un Bureau de toponymie, *brasmoteur de la CNT*, dont la charge est de suivre les orientations données par la CNT, à savoir :

- élaborer des projets de recommandations en matière de toponymie (charte de toponymie, système de transcription des noms) ;
- élaborer une base de données toponymiques et sa mise à jour constante ;
- coordonner l'action des services publics créateurs ou pourvoyeurs de toponymes ;
- contribuer à l'étude des noms géographiques (glossaire) ;
- assurer la promotion de ses travaux et favoriser la diffusion d'ouvrages toponymiques de référence ;
- contribuer à la conservation et au développement cohérent du patrimoine toponymique national ;
- participer aux travaux internationaux sur la normalisation des noms géographiques ;
- faire valoir sa toponymie au titre du patrimoine culturel immatériel.

Le processus de revitalisation de la Commission nationale de toponymie du Burkina devrait faire école pour tout pays qui souhaite assurer une bonne fiabilité des

écritures figurant sur les cartes, en harmonie avec la qualité des éléments techniques qu'elles comportent, et dans toutes publications ou documents publics traitant de toponymie. Il a cependant besoin de l'expertise des nations qui jouissent d'une grande expérience de gestion toponymique pour atteindre le résultat escompté.

La clef de revitalisation d'une CNT passe par :

- l'ENGAGEMENT POLITIQUE d'un Gouvernement de faire de la toponymie un outil de développement socioéconomique et de valorisation de son patrimoine culturel ;
- la VOLONTÉ d'un pays de monter et de suivre des projets (mise à jour cartographique, constitution d'une base de données toponymiques, d'une charte...);
- l'ADOPTION D'UN TEXTE JURIDIQUE (officiel) régissant le fonctionnement de la Commission ;
- le RENFORCEMENT DES CAPACITES locales dans le traitement et la gestion toponymique grâce aux outils adaptés parmi lesquels : la Fiche Enquête [appelée aussi cahier de terrain ou État Justificatif des Noms (EJN)].

À l'énoncé de ces attributions, il est clair qu'une CNT devient vivante, par le biais de son organe interne le bureau de toponymie -, et est appelée à jouer un rôle important pour la promotion de son patrimoine toponymique.

Claude Obin TAPSOBA
Élisabeth CALVARIN
Helen KERFOOT

Special Projects and News Items

27th SESSION OF UNGEGN and 10th UNCSGN, 30 July – 10 August 2012

Names boards – dealing with VGI, crowd-sourcing, web harvesting, 3rd August 2012

Chaired by Ms Annette Torensjö, The Swedish Mapping, Cadastre and Land Registration Authority

A side event was held on *Names boards – dealing with VGI, crowd-sourcing, web harvesting* as part of the 10th UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names. Presentations were given on experiences from Canada, the UK, Sweden and Australia. There was plenty of interest in the topic and following the presentations it was proposed that a new item in the work plan of the Working Group on Toponymic Datafiles and Gazetteers be created. The four presentations will be published on the [UNGEKN website](#).

Introduction

Field collection has been important to national names authorities and to UNGEGN for the last century. There are now new opportunities for collecting information but the sheer volume of information, and the numerous ways of collecting it, can be overwhelming. If care is not taken with methodologies serious questions could be raised about the role of names authorities and the authority of their data. There is a need to ensure quality control and proper evaluation of the information collected.

VGI in Canada's North: Challenges and Opportunities.

Ms. Heather Ross, Toponymist, Geographical Names Board of Canada Secretariat, Canada

New apps and social media present great opportunities for name gathering despite the scale of Volunteered Geographical Information (VGI) and limited resources. A pilot project was run in Nunavut in Northern Canada, a large and new territory with a small and scattered population. The pilot was to create a specific map series for Northern Canada.

As part of the project experts travelled to Northern Canada and also collected information through emails to members of the community. They held consultations where they encouraged local people to annotate maps with names.

The team concluded that while these methods do create extra work for small teams and raise expectations they also provide current information and reach people with local knowledge. As wiki-type apps are here to stay the Geographical Names Board of Canada will seek ways to use them, without compromising authoritative standards.

Ordnance Survey, participation in Location Lingo and other research initiatives

Ms. Caroline Burgess, Head, Permanent Committee on Geographical Names, UK

Ordnance Survey (OS) in the UK has been investigating the collection of names through crowd sourcing and web harvesting, with input from Cardiff University, and participated in the English Project's Location Lingo to collect unofficial names used by the public.

Crowdsourcing:

For the Location Lingo Project, a website was launched to collect names and was promoted by a national newspaper, the *Daily Telegraph*, and through interviews with local radio stations. Local press picked up on the story. The link on the *Telegraph's* web page seemed to reach the most people. Not all of the data generated by the Project were considered to be reliable and had to be closely evaluated.

OS then developed initiatives with professional, expert and amateur groups where mutual interests existed. This currently involves a joint project with the UK coastguard focusing on collecting locally used coastal names.

Web harvesting:

Web harvesting involves visiting websites and extracting information through text analysis. Results were less encouraging.

OS concluded that vernacular naming can be complex and that a number of differing strategies should be used as no single method is fully effective. They found that crowdsourcing using professionals is the most promising method. OS plans to run trials to include interest groups such as the Ramblers and groups of amateur historians.

New method of field collection of Place-Names

Ms Annette Torensjö, Head of Place-Name Section, The Swedish Mapping, Cadastre and Land Registration Authority, Sweden

In response to the growing demand for place names information, and the fact it is vital for search and rescue operations to be able to find locations, the Lantmäteriet in Sweden ran a crowd sourcing exercise by creating a cell phone app that enabled the collection of names and they tested this in Gävle.

Through this exercise they hoped to reach a new, urban audience, and they received around 200 new names, most of which do not appear on general maps. They also found differences in the names submitted by users of differing ages. They define crowd sourcing as when people other than the naming authority collect material, and stress the importance of being able to verify the provenance of the information collected.

The Lantmäteriet hope this will provide a basis for collaboration with the municipalities and with local heritage groups. Going forward they will be working on ways to ensure the authority of this kind of methodology.

Crowdsourcing Geospatial Information for Government Gazetteers

Ms. Laura Kostanski, Project Director, Geonaming Solutions; Secretary, Committee for Geographical Names of Australasia

Ms. Kostanski was granted a scholarship through the Churchill Foundation to travel for six weeks to visit key government departments, agencies and organizations which are involved in pilot studying or

researching methods for crowdsourcing geospatial information.

She too spoke of the increased demand for geospatial information and asked what governments should be doing to standardize crowdsourced names.

There were 10 key findings from the exercise. Crowdsourcing tools should be user friendly and authorities should be open minded about the methods that they use. There should be mechanisms in place to check provenance of collected material and options for appointing ‘knowledgeable notifiers’.

Ms. Kostanski emphasised a need to be aware that crowdsourced data may not necessarily fill all the gaps and underlined the importance of developing strong policies for quality assurance, as well as stressing the advantages of working with special interest groups and local experts, and of reaching out to existing as well as new platforms. She also pointed out that contributors appreciate recognition for their efforts.

Finally she suggested considering the redefinition of data collection interests, and asked whether a gazetteer could include official next to non-official information.

These new methods present opportunities to develop complementary data collection systems and mean that naming agencies can

engage with communities to a wider scale than previously possible.

Discussions and conclusion

Discussions suggested digital posting with the dates collected rather than waiting for the print publication of, for example, Statistical Yearbooks, and highlighting whether or not information is official (ie validated and verified) or not. The difference between raw data in a database and the official output of a gazetteer was also discussed as were the benefits of recording both official and unofficial names.

Themes that stood out from the presentations were the increased demand for geospatial information, the importance of evaluation and authority, and the benefits of working with special interest groups, or ‘knowledgeable notifiers’.

As there is strong interest in this emerging area it was proposed to create an interest group to continue the discussion. It was subsequently agreed that the subject would form a new item in the work plan of the Working Group on Toponymic Datafiles and Gazetteers.

Bettina Hasan

Information Resources Specialist,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office, United Kingdom, 14 August 2012

Explaining GeoNyms

What is GeoNyms?

GeoNyms is a database application designed to assist in collecting, validating and disseminating geographical names (place names or toponyms). Currently two languages English and French are supported skins of the application. An Arabic skin is under development.

What attributes can it support?

It has the capability of registering not only the geographical name, type of feature, status of the record (as in approved by a national body or in progress of being approved) and its location attributes (latitude, longitude, elevation, and related attributes such as map-sheet, coordinate system and UTM Grid) but also detailed information such as multiple *endonyms* (different names used by locals) and *exonyms* (names for the place used by foreigners) with corresponding languages.

A note related to the location of the feature, and historic narrative can also be recorded as part of the geographical name information. In the audio-visual section the application enables multiple picture files to be attached, possibly showing the feature from multiple directions. One can also associate a pronunciation file and/or a video file showing an event that takes place in the geographical location.

Metadata information, such as date the name was captured and who captured the data, including the source of the record, are also part of the supported attributes.

Are there any other tools to make data management easy?

Each geographical name record can be related to a national government administration division. This will help to make it easy working on the data and generating reports by administrative division category.

The application also has built-in data verification mechanisms. One is, a Google Map API module zooming to the location attribute and so providing visual confirmation of the feature. The application also has the capability to detect a location falling outside the boundary of the country.

What is exciting is that you can register toponyms one record at a time as well as by bulk import from an MS. Excel data source. There is also a facility to export data to Excel and CSV.

Who is behind it?

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)'s e-Applications section under the ICTs, Science and Technology Division (ISTD) is developing and maintaining this application. The development is being done by internal experts inside UNECA.

How much does it cost?

It costs Nil, Zilch, Zero, nothing because it is an open-source solution. Both the installable and source codes are available for free. All the tools used to make it are also freely available. The database engine is the famous open-source **Sqlite**. The main development took place on Adobe Flex AIR

which has an SDK (Software Development kit) freely available for developers. Other libraries such as Google Maps API are also freely available from Google.

The fact that it is open-source gives users (particularly countries) the advantage of each country being able to customize it for their own use, while keeping within a framework that would allow compatibility between the basic fields in their databases.

What kind of platform does it run on?

Adobe has released Flex AIR runtime for every platform; this means that an application made of Adobe AIR can run on all known platforms.

Who should use it?

Primarily, GeoNyms has been developed as part of ECA's mandate to provide technical support to its members by giving a tool to facilitate the management of data on geographical names that reflect their culture and heritage. It is therefore devoted to related national authorities; however with it being open-source, any national toponymic officer from any country in any continent or anybody wanting to work on geographical names can use it.

Where do you get it?

<http://geoinfo.uneca.org/geonyms> is the official website of the application. You can get downloads of all the releases of the application from this website. It is advised to use the latest release for best results. Currently GeoNyms has reached version 2.1. The website also contains the necessary documentation that helps install and utilize some of the functionalities.

Has anybody used it? / Anybody using it?

Experts from African countries are trying/using it. Ethiopia and Botswana are running primary tests using their own data. Egypt has tested it and is waiting to have a release that supports Arabic. Madagascar is a front runner; they have imported their data and have started using the system.

Experts from Egypt and Madagascar presented their experience with GeoNyms at the GeoNyms workshop held during the 10th UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names held in New York last August.

Other countries such as Cameroon, Kenya and Burkina Faso have expressed their interest to test and use the application. There is also a strong belief that the application can be useful in other corners of the world where there is less progress on collection and verification of geographical names.

Is there somebody that can be contacted for support?

ECA's team of experts looks forward to assist you with any of your requests. You can contact the team through [e-application-section@uneca.org](mailto:section@uneca.org) or the section chief Mr. Makan Faye at mfaye@uneca.org or the senior GIS officer Mr. Andre Nonguierma at anonguierma@uneca.org or contact the lead developer Mr. Yoseph Mekasha at mekasha@uneca.org. The ECA encourages anyone who is interested to use GeoNyms, in fact we will be happy to hear from users and to support any user from any corner of the world.

Yoseph Mekasha

ICT, Science and Technology Division (ISTD), UNECA

Email: mekasha@uneca.org

Upcoming Meetings of Groups Associated with Geographical Names

Some forthcoming meetings of organizations relevant to geographical names

**Second High Level Forum on Global
Geospatial Information Management
(GGIM)**

4-6 February 2013, Doha, Qatar

**10th UN Regional Cartographic
Conference for the Americas**

August 2013, New York, United States

**American Association of Geographers
(AAG)**

Annual meeting 2013, 2014, 2015

(http://www.aag.org/cs/calendar_of_events)

April 9-13, 2013, Los Angeles

April 8-12, 2014, Tampa

April 21-25, 2015, Chicago

**ICC 2013 – 26th International
Cartographic
Conference**

(<http://www.icc2013.org/>)

25-30 August 2013, Dresden, Germany

**International Congress of Onomastic
Sciences (ICOS)**

(<http://www.icosweb.net/>)

25-29 August 2014, Glasgow, Scotland