

[next>](#)[Home](#)[Selfstudy](#)[UN Role](#)[Contents](#)[Intro](#)[1. Background](#)[2. Role of
UNGEGN](#)[3. Major
goals - dreams](#)[4. How the
systems
functions](#)[5. Conferences](#)[6. Sessions](#)[7. Divisions](#)[8. Working
groups
\(a/b/c/d/e
f/g/h/i/j\)](#)[9. Toponymic
Guidelines](#)[10. UNGEGN
website](#)[11. UNGEGN
Geonames
database](#)[next>](#)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<previous - next>

[Home](#)[Selfstudy](#)

:

[UN Role](#)[Contents](#)[Intro](#)[1.Background](#)[2.Role of](#)[UNGEGN](#)[3.Major](#)[goals - dreams](#)[4.How the](#)[systems](#)[functions](#)[5.Conferences](#)[6.Sessions](#)[7.Divisions](#)[8.Working](#)[groups](#)[\(a/b/c/d/e](#)[f/g/h/i/j\)](#)[9.Toponymic](#)[Guidelines](#)[10.UNGEGN](#)[website](#)[11.UNGEGN](#)[Geonames](#)[database](#)

The content of this module is based on teaching materials by Ferjan Ormeling. These teaching materials are made available in the "[documents](#)" section.

The module contains the following chapters:

[Introduction](#)[Chapter 1: **Background**](#)[Chapter 2: The **role** of **UNGEGN** is on of ...](#)[Chapter 3: Some **major goals / dreams**](#)[Chapter 4: How the **system functions**](#)[Chapter 5: **Conferences**](#)[Chapter 6: UNGEGN **sessions**](#)[Chapter 7: UNGEGN **divisions**](#)[Chapter 8: **Working Groups** \(WGs: \[a\]\(#\), \[b\]\(#\), \[c\]\(#\), \[d\]\(#\), \[e\]\(#\), \[f\]\(#\), \[g\]\(#\), \[h\]\(#\), \[i\]\(#\), \[j\]\(#\)\)](#)[Chapter 9: **Toponymic Guidelines**](#)[Chapter 10: UNGEGN **website**](#)[Chapter 11: UNGEGN **Geonames database**](#)

When reading through the following pages, you will come across some uncommon terms. These terms are hyperlinked to the UNGEGN [Glossary of Terminology](#) (pdf). Behind each term a number (#) is given that corresponds to the numbering applied in this glossary, e.g. [toponymy](#) (#344).

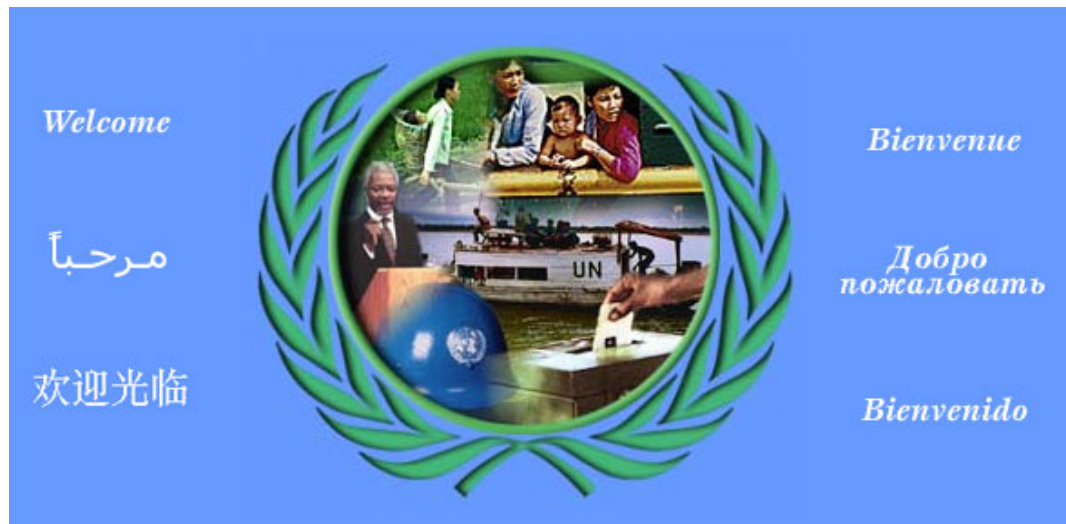
For exercises and documents (and literature) on this topic see respectively the "[Exercises](#)" and/or the "[Documents](#)" section of this module.

The complete module can be downloaded [here](#).

<previous - next>

INTRODUCTION

<previous - next>

[Home](#)[Selfstudy](#)

:

[UN Role](#)[Contents](#)[Intro](#)[1. Background](#)

|

[2. Role of
UNGEGN](#)

|

[3. Major
goals - dreams](#)

|

[4. How the
systems
functions](#)

|

[5. Conferences](#)

|

[6. Sessions](#)

|

[7. Divisions](#)

|

[8. Working
groups
\(a/b/c/d/e
f/g/h/i/j\)](#)

|

[9. Toponymic
Guidelines](#)

|

[10. UNGEGN
website](#)

|

[11. UNGEGN
Geonames
database](#)

<previous - next>

1. BACKGROUND

<previous - next>

- 1950s - need for clear unambiguous names in UN cartography and communication
- 1960s - first UN technical meetings on geographical names standardization; first UN conference on the standardization of geographical names (1967)
- 2000s - names at core of communication and geospatial information... maps, census, search & rescue, postal services, etc.

[Home](#)

|

[Selfstudy](#)

:

[UN Role](#)

|

[Contents](#)

|

[Intro](#)[1.Background](#)

|

[2.Role of
UNGEGN](#)

|

[3.Major
goals - dreams](#)

|

[4.How the
systems
functions](#)

|

[5.Conferences](#)

|

[6.Sessions](#)

|

[7.Divisions](#)

|

[8.Working
groups
\(a/b/c/d/e
f/g/h/i/j\)](#)

|

[9.Toponymic
Guidelines](#)

|

[10.UNGEGN
website](#)

|

[11.UNGEGN
Geonames
database](#)

<previous - next>

2. THE ROLE OF UNGEGN IS ONE OF ...

<previous - next>



... creating awareness of the need for standardization of geographical names, so that these names can play a role of links between humankind and the topographical objects or features around it, and a role of links between different geospatial datasets

- animating UN member countries through its resolutions to set up names bureaus, launch names programmes, helps in producing gazetteers and sets exchange formats.
- UNGEGN takes on this role because the UN realizes the potentially essential and indispensable role of standardized and up-to-date geographical names in search and rescue/disaster situations, famines, etc. .

UNGEKN realizes its task

- by showing and formulating principles and best practices to adhere to for names collection , standardization and dissemination, with the help of manuals, literature and working papers from member countries
- by providing education programmes, in the form of courses in the countries that apply for them, and by providing webcourses (these are now being developed in English, French and Spanish). The proceedings of many of the courses are available and can be downloaded [here](#).
- by providing incentives for joint action for groups of countries with similar challenges (through a system of UNGEGN-divisions)
- by checking whether the resolutions proposed by UNGEGN and endorsed by ECOSOC are being followed and implemented by member countries
- by providing fora for discussion regarding practical issues, such as standards and best practices, on a global or regional basis
- by organizing scientific meetings either directly or within the divisions or working groups
- by disseminating the results of these actions and linking the professional community engaged in the work of standardization of geographical names through the UNGEGN Bulletin.
- by providing the results of its own name standardization programme for actions by other UN divisions
- by providing a collective memory of toponymical actions, experience and activities in its archive (where all papers tabled at its 10 conferences and 27 UNGEGN sessions are stored and can be downloaded [here](#) ([pdf](#)).

[Home](#)[Selfstudy](#)

:

[UN Role](#)[Contents](#)[Intro](#)[1.Background](#)[2.Role of](#)[UNGEKN](#)[3.Major](#)[goals - dreams](#)[4.How the](#)[systems](#)[functions](#)[5.Conferences](#)[6.Sessions](#)[7.Divisions](#)[8.Working](#)[groups](#)[\(a/b/c/d/e](#)[f/g/h/i/j\)](#)[9.Toponymic](#)[Guidelines](#)[10.UNGEKN](#)[website](#)[11.UNGEKN](#)[Geonames](#)[database](#)

<previous - next>

3. SOME MAJOR GOALS / DREAMS

<previous - next>

- Every country having some form of authority for geographical names
- Standardized ("authorized") forms of names nationally recognized and used
- All authorized names easily available and accessible for international use
- All languages/writing systems having a standardized conversion to Roman orthography

Some areas of common interest

- Field collection of locally used names (resolving questions of recording and writing)
- Names authorities and standardization processes
- Disseminating data - gazetteers, digital files, data transfer standards, world wide web ...
- Developing national toponymic guidelines for international cartographic use
- Conventional names and exonyms



UNGEGN

- ◆ UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names
 - ◆ follows up on implementation of resolutions
 - ◆ convenes between conferences (2)
 - ◆ has held 23 sessions
 - ◆ supported by a Secretariat at UNHQ (NY)
 - ◆ creates working groups to follow up on resolutions
 - ◆ has 23 geographical/linguistic divisions for grass roots work
 - ◆ UNGEGN bureau



[Home](#)
|
[Selfstudy](#)
:
[UN Role](#)
|
[Contents](#)
|
[Intro](#)
|
[1.Background](#)
|
[2.Role of UNGEGN](#)
|
[3.Major goals - dreams](#)
|
[4.How the systems functions](#)
|
[5.Conferences](#)
|
[6.Sessions](#)
|
[7.Divisions](#)
|
[8.Working groups \(a/b/c/d/e/f/g/h/i/j\)](#)
|
[9.Toponymic Guidelines](#)
|
[10.UNGEGN website](#)
|
[11.UNGEGN Geonames database](#)

<previous - next>

4. HOW THE SYSTEM FUNCTIONS

<previous - next>



- UN Conferences (every 5 years) see [slide 5](#) ~resolutions
- UNGEGN Sessions (~ every 2 years) see [slide 6](#)
- UNGEGN Divisions (23) see [slide 7](#) geographical and/or linguistic groups of countries
- UNGEGN Working Groups see [slide 8](#)
 - Publicity and funding; see [slide 8a](#)
 - Toponymic terminology see [slide 8b](#)
 - Gazetteers and toponymic data files see [slide 8c](#)
 - Country names; see [slide 8d](#)
 - Romanization systems see [slide 8e](#)
 - Training courses see [slide 8f](#)
 - pronunciation see [slide 8g](#)
 - exonyms see [slide 8h](#)
 - indigenous and minority group names see [slide 8i](#)
 - evaluation and implementation see [slide 8j](#)
 - toponymical guidelines see [slide 10](#)

[Home](#)
|
[Selfstudy](#)
:
[UN Role](#)
|
[Contents](#)
|
[Intro](#)
|
[1.Background](#)
|
[2.Role of UNGEGN](#)
|
[3.Major goals - dreams](#)
|
[4.How the systems functions](#)
|
[5.Conferences](#)
|
[6.Sessions](#)
|
[7.Divisions](#)
|
[8.Working groups \(a/b/c/d/e/f/g/h/i/j\)](#)
|
[9.Toponymic Guidelines](#)
|
[10.UNGEGN website](#)
|
[11.UNGEGN Geonames database](#)

<previous - next>

5. CONFERENCES

<previous - next>



- Conference resolutions reflect the technical work discussed
- 184 resolutions assembled and grouped by subject area (26 groups)

Resolutions can be found at the [UNGEGN website](#), under the [conferences/general tab](#), here the UNCSGN Resolutions 1967 - 2007 are available in two languages:

- in [English](#) ([pdf](#))
- in [French](#) ([pdf](#))

Home
Selfstudy
UN Role
Contents
Intro
1.Background
2.Role of UNGEGN
3.Major goals - dreams
4.How the systems functions
5.Conferences
6.Sessions
7.Divisions
8.Working groups (a/b/c/d/e/f/g/h/i/j)
9.Toponymic Guidelines
10.UNGEGN website
11.UNGEGN Geonames database

<previous - next>

6. UNGEGN SESSIONS

<previous - next>

UNGEGN meets between the 5-yearly Conferences to follow up the implementation of resolutions adopted by the Conferences and to ensure continuity of activities between Conferences. These meetings, called sessions, are held twice in between conferences (the intervening sessions) and once immediately preceding and succeeding conferences. The latter session is used to determine the composition of the bureau, to decide on the creation or disbanding of working groups, to nominate their chairs and to receive reports of the working groups.

All the items addressed during conferences are also addressed at the intervening sessions. Material is developed here to address at the conferences, or to make decisions about at the conferences, or to elaborate conference resolutions. Contact between the experts is maintained.

The session meetings are held in UN facilities with all translating infrastructure, so that all communications are translated into the 6 official UN languages.

The 27th UNGEGN session is held (on July 30 and August 10) in conjunction with the 10th UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (held July 31-August 9, 2012) in New York.

The agenda for the 26th session, held in 2011 in Vienna, was:

Provisional Agenda :

1. Adoption of the Agenda
2. Report of the Chair
3. Report of the secretariat of the Group of Experts
4. Report of the divisions
5. Report of the Liaison Officers and international organizations
6. Activities of the Task team for Africa
7. Implementation of resolutions and activities related to the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation
8. Activities related to the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy
9. Activities related to the Working Group on Toponymic data files and gazetteers
10. Activities related to the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology
11. Activities related to the Working Group on Romanization systems
12. Activities related to the Working Group on Country Names
13. Activities related to the Working Group on Publicity and Funding
14. Activities related to the Working Group on Exonyms
15. Activities related to the Working Group on Pronunciation
16. Activities related to the Working Group on the Promotion of the recording and use of indigenous, minority and regional language group geographical names
17. Geographical names and cultural heritage
18. Issues of toponymic standardization
19. Toponymic guidelines for map editors and other editors
20. other toponymic issues
21. preparation for the Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographic Names
22. Provisional agenda for the 27th session of the Group of Experts
23. Adoption of the Report

<previous - next>



- [Home](#)
- |
- [Selfstudy](#)
- |
- [UN Role](#)
- |
- [Contents](#)
- |
- [Intro](#)
- |
- [1.Background](#)
- |
- [2.Role of UNGEGN](#)
- |
- [3.Major goals - dreams](#)
- |
- [4.How the systems functions](#)
- |
- [5.Conferences](#)
- |
- [6.Sessions](#)
- |
- [7.Divisions](#)
- |
- [8.Working groups \(a/b/c/d/e/f/g/h/i/j\)](#)
- |
- [9.Toponymic Guidelines](#)
- |
- [10.UNGEGN website](#)
- |
- [11.UNGEGN Geonames database](#)

7. DIVISIONS

<previous - next>



UNGEGN Divisions

- ◆ Africa Central
- ◆ Africa East
- ◆ Africa South
- ◆ Africa West
- ◆ Arabic
- ◆ Asia East (other than China)
- ◆ Asia South-East and Pacific South-West
- ◆ 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
- ◆ Norden
- ◆ Romano-Hellenic
- ◆ United Kingdom
- ◆ United States / Canada
- ◆ Portugese-speaking

[Home](#)[Selfstudy](#)

:

[UN Role](#)

|

[Contents](#)

|

[Intro](#)

|

[1. Background](#)

|

[2. Role of UNGEGN](#)

|

[3. Major goals - dreams](#)

|

[4. How the systems functions](#)

|

[5. Conferences](#)

|

[6. Sessions](#)

|

[7. Divisions](#)

|

[8. Working groups \(a/b/c/d/e/f/g/h/i\)](#)

|

[9. Toponymic Guidelines](#)

|

[10. UNGEGN website](#)

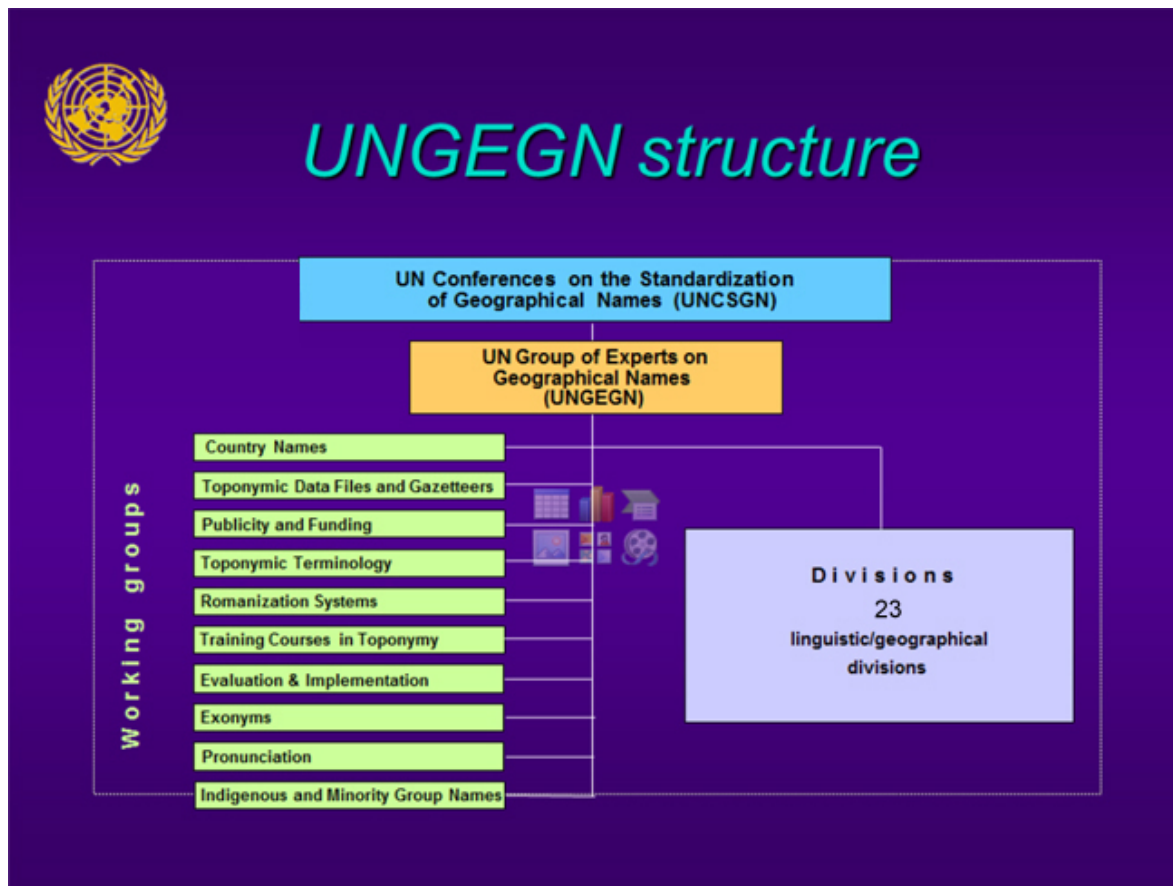
|

[11. UNGEGN Geonames database](#)

<previous - next>

8. WORKING GROUPS

<previous - next>

[Home](#)[Selfstudy](#)[UN Role](#)[Contents](#)[Intro](#)[1. Background](#)[2. Role of UNGEGN](#)[3. Major goals - dreams](#)[4. How the systems functions](#)[5. Conferences](#)[6. Sessions](#)[7. Divisions](#)[8. Working groups \(a/b/c/d/e/f/g/h/i/j\)](#)[9. Toponymic Guidelines](#)[10. UNGEGN website](#)[11. UNGEGN Geonames database](#)

<previous - next>

8. WORKING GROUPS - A) PUBLICITY AND FUNDING

<previous - next>



- Originally was evaluation
- Now narrower focus
- Was responsible for brochure
- Must continue promotion of UNGEGN work
- Ensured the establishment of UNGEGN web site
- Coordinated material for two new UNGEGN manuals

[Home](#)

|

[Selfstudy](#)

:

[UN Role](#)

|

[Contents](#)

|

[Intro](#)

|

[1.Background](#)

|

[2.Role of
UNGEGN](#)

|

[3.Major
goals - dreams](#)

|

[4.How the
systems
functions](#)

|

[5.Conferences](#)

|

[6.Sessions](#)

|

[7.Divisions](#)

|

[8.Working
groups
\(a/b/c/d/e
f/g/h/i/j\)](#)

|

[9.Toponymic
Guidelines](#)

|

[10.UNEGN
website](#)

|

[11.UNEGN
Geonames
database](#)

<previous - next>

8. WORKING GROUPS - B) TOPONYMIC TERMINOLOGY

<previous - next>



- 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; 345 terms
- Into maintenance phase



The "**Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names**" can be found at the [UNGEGN Publications page](#), and can be directly accessed [here](#), or can be downloaded via this website by clicking [here](#).

[Home](#)[Selfstudy](#)

:

[UN Role](#)[Contents](#)[Intro](#)[1.Background](#)[2.Role of](#)[UNGEGN](#)[3.Major](#)[goals - dreams](#)[4.How the](#)[systems](#)[functions](#)[5.Conferences](#)[6.Sessions](#)[7.Divisions](#)[8.Working](#)[groups](#)[\(a/b/c/d/e](#)[f/g/h/i/j\)](#)[9.Toponymic](#)[Guidelines](#)[10.UNGEGN](#)[website](#)[11.UNGEGN](#)[Geonames](#)[database](#)

<previous - next>

8. WORKING GROUPS - C) GAZETTEERS AND TOPONYMIC DATA FILES

<previous - next>



Major tasks to promote consistency of data

- gazetteers (hard copy and digital)
- development and maintenance of digital toponymic files and data bases
- data exchange standards
- liaison with ISO technical committee TC211 and Unicode consortium
- need to be a focal point for info on software
- Working group [website](#)

[Home](#)[Selfstudy](#)

:

[UN Role](#)[Contents](#)[Intro](#)[1.Background](#)[2.Role of
UNGEGN](#)[3.Major
goals - dreams](#)[4.How the
systems
functions](#)[5.Conferences](#)[6.Sessions](#)[7.Divisions](#)[8.Working
groups
\(a/b/c/d/e
f/g/h/i/j\)](#)[9.Toponymic
Guidelines](#)[10.UNGEGN
website](#)[11.UNGEGN
Geonames
database](#)

<previous - next>

8. WORKING GROUPS - D) COUNTRY NAMES

<previous - next>



- Written forms of country names in UN languages and official languages of country. Transliteration where possible through UNCSGN-recommended systems
- 193 country names presented
- Updated for 2006
- Continuous updating and rationalizing with 1997 UN Terminology Bulletin

[Home](#)

|

[Selfstudy](#)

:

[UN Role](#)

|

[Contents](#)

|

[Intro](#)

|

[1.Background](#)

|

[2.Role of
UNGEGN](#)

|

[3.Major
goals - dreams](#)

|

[4.How the
systems
functions](#)

|

[5.Conferences](#)

|

[6.Sessions](#)

|

[7.Divisions](#)

|

[8.Working
groups
\(a/b/c/d/e
f/g/h/i/j\)](#)

|

[9.Toponymic
Guidelines](#)

|

[10.UNGEGN
website](#)

|

[11.UNGEGN
Geonames
database](#)

<previous - next>

8. WORKING GROUPS - E) ROMANIZATION SYSTEMS

<previous - next>



- Since first Conference aim has been to have single romanization systems for each language
- Difficult task 28 languages with systems adopted by the Conferences
- Slow but steady progress - systems must be based on scientific principles
- Website of the [UNGEGN Working Group on Romanization systems](#)

[Home](#)[Selfstudy](#)

:

[UN Role](#)[Contents](#)[Intro](#)[1.Background](#)[2.Role of
UNGEGN](#)[3.Major
goals - dreams](#)[4.How the
systems
functions](#)[5.Conferences](#)[6.Sessions](#)[7.Divisions](#)[8.Working
groups
\(a/b/c/d/e
f/g/h/i/j\)](#)[9.Toponymic
Guidelines](#)[10.UNGEGN
website](#)[11.UNGEGN
Geonames
database](#)

<previous - next>

8. WORKING GROUPS - F) TRAINING COURSES IN TOPONYMY

<previous - next>



- Courses offered to international audiences since 1982 - in various languages and locations
- Collection of course outlines, etc. available
- Web site: <http://toponymycourses.geog.uu.nl>
- To reach a larger audience ... moving towards web-based courses
- ICA <http://lazarus.elte.hu/cet>
- Cours de toponymie: <http://www.toponymie.gouv.qc.ca/ct/references-utiles/cours-toponymie/>

[Home](#)[Selfstudy](#)

:

[UN Role](#)[Contents](#)[Intro](#)[1.Background](#)[2.Role of
UNGEEN](#)[3.Major
goals - dreams](#)[4.How the
systems
functions](#)[5.Conferences](#)[6.Sessions](#)[7.Divisions](#)[8.Working
groups
\(a/b/c/d/e
f/g/h/i/j\)](#)[9.Toponymic
Guidelines](#)[10.UNGEEN
website](#)[11.UNGEEN
Geonames
database](#)

<previous - next>

8. WORKING GROUPS - G) PRONUNCIATION

<previous - next>



- Established by resolution of 8th Conference
- Work plan under development
 - thought that pronunciation guidelines would help with the reduction of exonyms

[Home](#)
|
[Selfstudy](#)
:
[UN Role](#)
|
[Contents](#)
|
[Intro](#)
|
[1.Background](#)
|
[2.Role of
UNGEGN](#)
|
[3.Major
goals - dreams](#)
|
[4.How the
systems
functions](#)
|
[5.Conferences](#)
|
[6.Sessions](#)
|
[7.Divisions](#)
|
[8.Working
groups
\(a/b/c/d/e
f/g/h/i/j\)](#)
|
[9.Toponymic
Guidelines](#)
|
[10.UNGEGN
website](#)
|
[11.UNGEGN
Geonames
database](#)

<previous - next>

8. WORKING GROUPS - H) EXONYMS

<previous - next>



- Exonyms / Conventional names vs endonyms
 - UN resolutions call for reduction of exonyms in international cartography
 - There have been efforts to produce maps with only endonyms by New Zealand on behalf of the Asia SE & Pacific SW Division
 - The creation of UN Geographical Names Database, provides an opportunity for national authorities to have their endonyms used and the matching variant names (e.g. exonyms) if they want so.

Home
Selfstudy
UN Role
Contents
Intro
1.Background
2.Role of UNGEGN
3.Major goals - dreams
4.How the systems functions
5.Conferences
6.Sessions
7.Divisions
8.Working groups (a/b/c/d/e/f/g/h/i/j)
9.Toponymic Guidelines
10.UNGEGN website
11.UNGEGN Geonames database

<previous - next>

8. WORKING GROUPS - 1) INDIGENOUS AND MINORITY GROUP NAMES

<previous - next>



- Aim is to promote for countries interested, the work being done on indigenous or minority group names
- Retention / revitalization of cultures through toponyms
- UNGEGN Resolution VIII/1 (2002) – Promotion of minority group and indigenous geographical names

[Home](#)

|

[Selfstudy](#)

:

[UN Role](#)

|

[Contents](#)

|

[Intro](#)[1.Background](#)

|

[2.Role of
UNGEGN](#)

|

[3.Major
goals - dreams](#)

|

[4.How the
systems
functions](#)

|

[5.Conferences](#)

|

[6.Sessions](#)

|

[7.Divisions](#)

|

[8.Working
groups
\(a/b/c/d/e
f/g/h/i/j\)](#)

|

[9.Toponymic
Guidelines](#)

|

[10.UNGEGN
website](#)

|

[11.UNGEGN
Geonames
database](#)

<previous - next>

8. WORKING GROUPS - J) EVALUATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

<previous - next>



- Was previously in place 1987-1992
 - Became WG on Publicity and Funding
- Started up again in 2000
 - To evaluate functioning of UNGEGN
 - To implement resolutions
 - To address needs of developing countries in achieving standardization

[Home](#)
|
[Selfstudy](#)
:
[UN Role](#)
|
[Contents](#)
|
[Intro](#)
|
[1.Background](#)
|
[2.Role of UNGEGN](#)
|
[3.Major goals - dreams](#)
|
[4.How the systems functions](#)
|
[5.Conferences](#)
|
[6.Sessions](#)
|
[7.Divisions](#)
|
[8.Working groups \(a/b/c/d/e/f/g/h/i/j\)](#)
|
[9.Toponymic Guidelines](#)
|
[10.UNGEGN website](#)
|
[11.UNGEGN Geonames database](#)

<previous - next>

9. TOPONYMIC GUIDELINES

<previous - next>

**The following text has been taken from the UNGEGN website:**

At the Third United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names held in Athens in 1977, the gathering and dissemination of toponymic information were discussed. The great variation in approaches from country to country, led Josef Breu, elected as UNGEGN Chair in 1977, to initiate the compilation of *Toponymic Guidelines*, with a sample from Austria submitted to the Eighth Session of UNGEGN in 1979 ([W.P. 5](#)).

Recommendations have been made, and updated, concerning the content of *Toponymic Guidelines*, and the subject is retained as an UNGEGN and Conference agenda item. *Guidelines* have been presented as technical documents, published in *World Cartography*, published by individual countries, or made available on websites. 40 countries have now issued *Toponymic Guidelines*, with a number of countries having developed several editions since 1979. Other countries are encouraged to make their material available for editors worldwide.

Content of Toponymic Guidelines

The content of *Toponymic Guidelines* has been developed since 1979 and includes information about official, national and minority languages, names authorities, source material for toponyms, glossaries, abbreviations used on official maps, differentiating text from toponyms on national maps, and administrative regions. At the Ninth Conference ([Conference report, paragraph 106](#)), it was acknowledged that the format should not be too restrictive; also considered important were having guidelines in more than one language and cooperating with neighbouring countries.

Recent reports of the Coordinator

- to 26th Session of UNGEGN, 2011, [W.P. 70, rev. 1](#)
- To 25th Session of UNGEGN, 2009, [W.P.29](#)
- To 24th Session of UNGEGN, 2007, [W.P. 5](#)

Status reports, recent Guidelines, etc.

The UNGEGN [Manual for the national standardization of geographical names](#), published by the UN in 2006, contains Chapter IX (Part II) "Toponymic guidelines for map and other editors, for international use (from the 1970s to the present)" by Helen Kerfoot (Canada) and Eeva Maria Närhi (Finland).

- Content list as developed over the years (page 148). See also: [W.P. 86](#), 26th Session of UNGEGN, 2011
- *Toponymic Guidelines* produced up to 2004 (pages 149-151)
- *Toponymic Guidelines* available on the web (page 151)
- UN Conference resolutions pertaining to *Toponymic Guidelines* (page 152)

A special module of this toponymy course, S14, is devoted to toponymical guidelines.

[Home](#)
|
[Selfstudy](#)
:
[UN Role](#)
|
[Contents](#)
|
[Intro](#)
|
[1.Background](#)
|
[2.Role of UNGEGN](#)
|
[3.Major goals - dreams](#)
|
[4.How the systems functions](#)
|
[5.Conferences](#)
|
[6.Sessions](#)
|
[7.Divisions](#)
|
[8.Working groups \(a/b/c/d/e/f/g/h/i/j\)](#)
|
[9.Toponymic Guidelines](#)
|
[10.UNEGN website](#)
|
[11.UNEGN Geonames database](#)

<previous - next>

10. UNGEGN WEBSITE

[<previous](#) - [next>](#)

This website, <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/default.html>,

United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)

In 1959, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) paved the way for a small group of experts to meet and provide technical recommendations on standardizing geographical names at the national and international levels. This meeting gave rise to the United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSGN) and to the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN). The UNCSGN is held every five years, and UNGEGN meets between the Conferences to follow up the implementation of resolutions adopted by the Conferences and to ensure continuity of activities between Conferences. Today, UNGEGN is one of the seven standing expert bodies of ECOSOC, with over 400 members from over 100 countries.

Outside its meetings, UNGEGN functions through 23 geographical/linguistic divisions and through working groups, currently addressing issues of training courses, digital data files and gazetteers, romanization systems, country names, terminology, publicity and funding, and toponymic guidelines.

A multilingual, multiscriptural and geo-referenced database of names for countries, capitals and major cities

Upcoming conferences and sessions

- The 27th Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) will be held in New York, 30 July and 10 August 2012.
- The 10th Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSGN) will be held in New York, 31 July – 9 August 2012. Note: Verbal was transmitted on 27 February 2012.

Recent conferences and sessions

- The twenty-sixth Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), was held in Vienna, Austria, 2 - 6 May 2011.
- The Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names was held at United Nations headquarters in New York, from 21 to 30 August 2007. The Ninth Conference was attended by over 300 participants from over 90 countries.

Upcoming events

- WG on Exonyms: 16-18 May 2012, Gdańsk, Poland. Contacts: Peter Jordan and Katarzyna Przysiewska.
- WG on Romanization Systems: 18 May 2012, Gdańsk, Poland. Contacts: Peter Páll and Katarzyna Przysiewska.
- Norden Division: 10 June 2012, Copenhagen, Denmark (in association with the Fifteenth Nordic Name Research Congress, 6-9 June). Contact: Peder Gammeltoft.
- Arabic Division, 6th Arab Conference on Geographical Names: 10-13 July 2012, Amman, Jordan. Contact: Mr. Ibrahim Al Gaber.
- 27th Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names: 30 July and 10 August 2012, New York. Contact: Helen Kerfoot.
- 10th United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names: 30 July and 10 August 2012, New York. Contact: Helen Kerfoot.
- International Geographical Congress (IGC): 26-30 August, 2012, Köln, Germany. Contacts: Cosimo Palagiano, Paulo Márcio Leal de Menezes and Peter Jordan.

... informs about upcoming conferences and sessions, recent conferences and sessions and other upcoming toponymical events. After an overview of UNGEGN activities and its mandate it informs on the conferences on the standardization of geographical names and the resolutions accepted there, and allows downloading of all conference papers. It does the same with all UNGEGN sessions, explains the divisions and working groups and their convenors and activities, shows the composition of the UNGEGN bureau and lists the liaison officers with related scientific organisations.

It refers to the World Geographical Names database, refers to national names authorities, their geographical names databases and toponymical guidelines.

The publications produced by or on behalf of UNGEGN are shown, as well as the media kit and other reference material. The UNGEGN bulletin can be accessed through the site, all related events are listed and finally shows how to reach the UNGEGN.

[<previous](#) - [next>](#)[Home](#)[Selfstudy](#)[UN Role](#)[Contents](#)[Intro](#)[1. Background](#)[2. Role of UNGEGN](#)[3. Major goals - dreams](#)[4. How the systems functions](#)[5. Conferences](#)[6. Sessions](#)[7. Divisions](#)[8. Working groups](#)[9. Toponymic Guidelines](#)[10. UNGEGN website](#)[11. UNGEGN Geonames database](#)



11. UNGEGN GEONAMES DATABASE

[<previous](#)

What is the full name of Egypt in Arabic or English? How is the capital of Ukraine written in Ukrainian or used in Spanish? What is the capital of Burkina Faso and how is it pronounced? What are the coordinates of Recife in Brazil? To provide answers to such questions, a multilingual, multiscriptual geo-referenced geographical names database is being developed by the UN Statistics Division and the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), with input from the UN Terminology and Reference Section, the UN Cartographic Section and the UN Geographic Information Working Group - UNGIWG. Through the web, database users can access short and full names of countries (192 UN member states), their capitals, and the major cities (population over 100,000) for many countries. Authoritative city endonyms are provided mainly by national name authorities and sound files are being added to assist users with pronunciation. At this stage, the database contains nearly 2,600 country names, some 4,100 names for 2,970 cities, with more than 600 audio files. As a useful reference tool for geo-information management, the UNGEGN World Geographical Names Database will continue to be developed and improved, and updated on an ongoing basis (source: UGEGN).



UNGEGN World Geographical Names

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

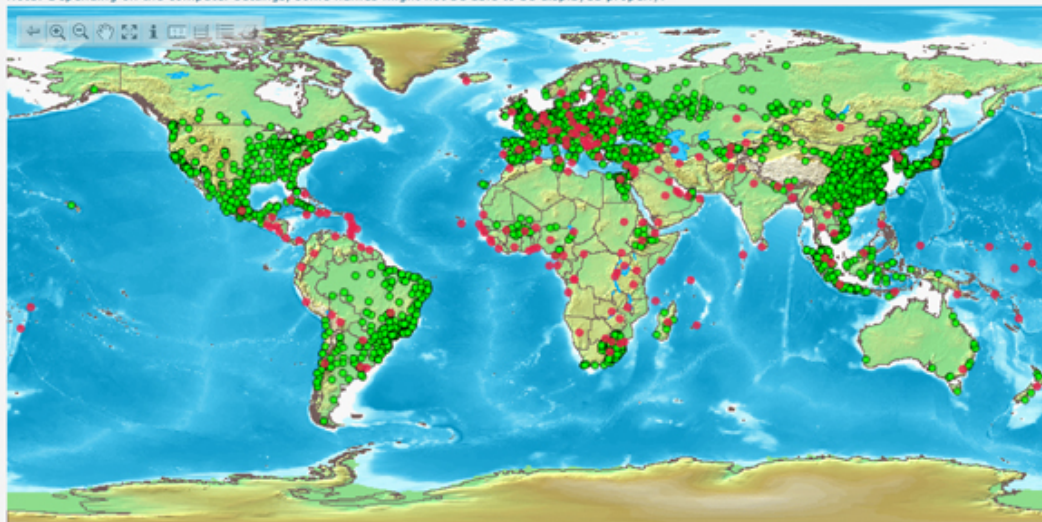
Geographical Names Database | [About](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Feedback](#) | [Contact](#)

Beta version

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

Roll over a country to display the country name in the six UN languages. Point to a city to see the city endonyms (where available and in romanized form only) and the English name. Capital cities are shown in red, other cities are shown in green.

Note: Depending on the computer settings, some names 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 [UNGIIWG](#). Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined.

[Home](#)

[Selfstudy](#)

[UN Role](#)

[Contents](#)

[Intro](#)

[1.Background](#)

[2.Role of UNGEGN](#)

[3.Major goals - dreams](#)

[4.How the systems functions](#)

[5.Conferences](#)

[6.Sessions](#)

[7.Divisions](#)

[8.Working groups \(a/b/c/d/e f/g/h/i/j\)](#)

[9.Toponymic Guidelines](#)

[10.UNGEGN website](#)

[11.UNGEGN Geonames database](#)

[<previous](#)

AVAILABLE EXERCISES

[next>](#)

[Home](#)
|
[Exercises](#)
:
[UN Role](#)
|
[1.Responsibility
of
standardizing
names](#)

Exercise 1: Responsibility of standardizing names

[next>](#)

EXERCISE 1: RESPONSIBILITY OF STANDARDIZING NAMES

[<previous](#)

[Home](#)
|
[Exercises](#)
:
[UN Role](#)
|
[1. Responsibility of standardizing names](#)

The role of UNGEGN is one of creating awareness of the need for standardization of geographical names, so that these names can play the role of links between humankind and the topographical objects or features around it, and a role of links between different geospatial datasets. However, not all geographical names are considered to fall under this mission. Some name categories that were addressed in the first conference are no longer dealt with, and inversely, some name categories not dealt with at the beginning are now being addressed. In the resolutions of UNGEGN, especially under the headings 5 and 17-23 you will also find clues. Have a look at the agendas of the first conferences, and try to find groups of names not longer addressed by UNGEGN. This prior preoccupation with name categories no longer addressed is also reflected in subjects of the working groups. Who has taken over the responsibility of standardizing the names no longer cared for by UNGEGN?

[Answers](#)[<previous](#)

EXERCISE 1: RESPONSIBILITY OF STANDARDIZING NAMES - ANSWERS

[<back to exercise 1](#)

[Home](#)
|
[Exercises](#)
:
[UN Role](#)
|
[1. Responsibility of standardizing names](#)

In the Agenda of the 1st conference, 1967 New York, Undersea feature names are already mentioned. In the report of the 2nd and 3rd conferences working groups on maritime and undersea features were mentioned. Simultaneously, there also was a WG on Extraterrestrial features. In the agenda of the fourth and fifth conference there are items on extraterrestrial names, and on undersea feature names.

In the 6th conference the extraterrestrial features no longer figure, in the seventh the maritime and undersea features no longer are there. In the last 3 conferences, the standardization of minority names and aboriginal names are addressed as well, also from the viewpoint of preserving the cultural heritage.

In resolution 4-13 it is stated to dissolve the WG on extraterrestrial names, and to leave it to the International Astronomical Union to deal with these names. The Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research SCAR deals with Antarctic names.

With the IHO the responsibility for maritime names has been shared in the past, and the work of updating the respective databases has been transferred to IHO.

DOCUMENTS AND LITERATURE



[Home](#)
|
[Documents](#)
:
[UN Role](#)

Available documents:

- [D12-01](#): Recent developments in international standardization of geographic names: progress between the second and third regional cartographic conferences for Asia and the Far East (Background paper by the United States of America). (3rd UN Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Far East, vol. II, proceedings of the Conference. New York 1965. Agenda item 12, Geographical Names, pp 312/314). For proceedings click: [URL](#) / [pdf](#).
- [D12-02](#): Preparatory meeting for the United Nations Conference on the standardization of geographical names: Report of the Group of Experts on Geographical names (1966) / [URL](#).
- [D12-03](#): Kerfoot, H. (2003). *Role of the United Nations in the standardization of geographical names*. Pp 109-119 in Ferjan Ormeling, Jörn Sievers and Hans Stabe (eds.), Training Course on Toponymy, Enschede, Frankfurt and Berlin 2002. Mitteilungen des BKG 28, Frankfurt am Main 2003.

Online resources:

- [UN Documents on the standardization of geographical names](#) / [pdf](#)
- [List of country names and associated practical information](#) on the web site of the Cartography Section, United Nations, New York / [pdf](#)
- [Group on Gazetteers and toponymic data files](#)
- UNGEGN - [Working Group on Romanization systems](#)
- ICA - [Commission on Education and Training \(CET\)](#)
- [Cours de toponimie](#)

The United Nations sell the following publications which also can be downloaded from the [UNGEGN](#) website:

- [Glossary](#) of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names (New York 2002) / [pdf](#)
- [Manual](#) for the national standardization of geographical names (UN - Ecosoc, New York, 2006 ST/ESA/STAT/SERM/88 Sales No. E.06.XVII.7 ISBN 92-1-161490-2, available in the 6 UN languages) / [pdf](#)
- [Technical reference manual](#) for the standardization of geographical names (New York, 2007) / [pdf](#)
- [Resolutions](#) adopted at the nine UN Conferences on the standardization of geographical names ([English \(pdf\)](#) / [French \(pdf\)](#))