



Working group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage

Meeting in Bangkok, April 29, 2016

Venue: UNCC, Meeting Room F (MR-F)

Minutes

Attending: Hakan Abaci, Kristina Kwiatkowski, Helen Kerfoot, Sungjae Choo, Gerhard Rampl, Gábor Mikesy, Kadri Teller-Sepp, Hyo Hyun Sung, Tony Worrton, Poer-Giorgio Zaccheddu, Bernd Beinstein, Teemu Leskinen, Yeon-Taek Ryu, William Watt, Annette Torensjö (convenor), Leila Mattfolk (rapporteur)

1. Opening of the working group meeting

The working group meeting was opened by the convenor Annette Torensjö.

2. Organization

Ms. Annette Torensjö was entrusted to act as the working group's sole convenor, since Mr Leif Nilsson has been retired since November 2015. Ms Leila Mattfolk continues as rapporteur.

The working group has been steered by a specific group appointed in New York, 2014 (Mr. Peder Gammeltoft, Mr. Sungjae Choo, Mr. Teemu Leskinen, Ms. Naima Friha, Mr. Michel Simeu Kamdem, Ms. Eman Orieby). The steering group was repealed by the meeting, and all working group members now act on an equal basis.

3. Organization of work

The work within the WG will continue through meetings in connection with the sessions and possibly on other occasions, preferably as joint meetings with other working groups or divisions or groups of interest.

Because of the wide range of aspects, the work within the working group was found to be best organized through different focus groups. To find possible themes for the focus groups, a brainstorming workshop or seminar was suggested.

The Convenor will investigate the possibility to put up a webpage for the WG.

4. Topics

It was commonly agreed that the topics would have to be country specific, i.e. participating members of a working group should prioritize topics that suite the needs of their country, since the starting points are very different. Possible topics were:

- Geographical names used by minorities

This is a common topic for many countries, but the terminology has to be more specific. While the Nordic countries and for example Austria work with geographical names used by minorities, Canada and Australia work with indigenous names.

- Geographical names as cultural heritage
- Legislation and policies

- Fieldwork and the registration of names

It should be stressed that fieldwork is not only done for cartographic reasons, but it is also important for the identity of the name users. Good examples of fieldwork and registration of names are important, since many countries have not yet started to register names.

Mr William Watt will update the maps made during the initial years of the working group, as long as he is provided the necessary data. It would be important to get names used in endangered languages noted on the maps.

Fieldwork and registration could also be discussed in a joint meeting with the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers.

- Presentation of good practices, e.g., the Guide to the field collection of native geographical names (Provisional Edition), 1992, by the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names
 - http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2011/rncan-nrcan/M86-29-1992-eng.pdf

The convenor asked the participants to submit information about other available good practices.

- The inclusion of urban names
- The importance of a common feature classification
- Research on geographical names as cultural heritage
- Commemorative names

Commemorative names were also discussed at a workshop organized by the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation, and the convenor of that working group, Mr Sungjae Choo, suggested cooperation between the working groups on this question. One result could be concrete good examples on how the resolutions are implemented in different countries.

- The commercialization of geographical names

5. Workplan

Current:

The WG will set up focus groups in order to be able to allocate tasks to the different experts within the WG. The WG will build up a website, on which documents prepared by the WG will be published, and where examples of good naming practices will be put forward. The website will also make guidelines available (e.g., regarding commemorative naming). The convenor of the WG invites experts to contribute good examples.

6. Other aspects

No other aspects were discussed.

7. Next meeting

A possible joint meeting with other working groups was discussed. A working group meeting will be held during the Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in New York in August 2017.

8. Closing of the meeting

The Convenor Ms Torensjö thanked the participants and closed the meeting.