--- Update on the UNGEGN WGN Database ---
Concept for the creation of a unique identifier for cities

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UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)
Chair, Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management
Content

➢ UNGEGN's mandate and role
➢ Linked (Open) Data and data modelling are topics of relevance for UNGEGN’s Working Group Geographical Names Management
➢ The update on the UNGEGN World Geographical Names Database
➢ Position Paper / Concept Note for the creation of a unique identifier for cities
UNGEGN = United Nations Group of Experts On Geographical Names

• Worldwide standardisation of toponyms
• Founded in 1959 and, like the UN Statistical Commission and UN-GGIM, is a subsidiary body of ECOSOC
• Convenes Sessions every 2 years, the last one in May 2023
• Ten Working Groups
• The Working Group on Geographical names data management is responsible for:
  • Linked Data
  • Draft Position Paper on UUIDs for Cities

Decision 3/2023/18
Geographical names data management

The Group of Experts:

(a) Welcomed the information made available, the active participation and the efforts undertaken by Member States to inform about and enhance geographical names data management;

(b) Took note of the reports and affirmed the support for strategy 1. Technical expertise of the Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021–2025, outlined for the Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management for the period 2023–2025, and the willingness of Member States to participate and contribute to the action items identified within the Programme of Work;

(c) Reaffirmed that linked data was another stage in the evolution of data management methodologies of the Group of Experts;

(d) Encouraged Member States:
  (i) To consider linked data in their approaches to geographical names standardization;
  (ii) To contribute further to the monitoring of the availability of free, easily accessible, and authorized data on digital geographical names;

(e) Requested the Working Group to continue to facilitate collaboration and workshops on technical issues among national names authorities and practitioners in order to provide practical guidance on organizational and technical issues and processes;

(f) Also requested the Working Group to further coordinate the monitoring of the availability of free, easily accessible and authorized data on digital geographical names;

(g) Further requested the Working Group to take action on the publication of the content and invite standardization bodies to provide input and comments on the ideas presented on:
  (i) Geospatial information-sharing, accessibility and dissemination-related standards;
  (ii) Specific issues related to geographical names data modelling.
UNEGGN-Webinar on Linked Data in 2022

- Four presenters
- Raise the question: What’s in for UNEGNN and its experts?
- Evaluation Report available
- [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/working_groups/webinars/30Sep2022.cshtml](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/working_groups/webinars/30Sep2022.cshtml)
UNGE GN World Geographic Names (WGN) Database

Why are we doing this?

☑️ UNGEGN is mandated by the Economic and Social Council as one of its nine Subsidiary Bodies – this is implementing UNGEGN Decision 2/2019/2

☑️ Position UNGEGN as the ‘go to’ for authoritative, comparable, and high-quality geographic names – aligned with its Strategic Plan

☑️ Provide a dramatically improved platform for managing geographical names data

☑️ Enhance visibility and use of geographical names data, irrespective of language, from across the UN system and globally

☑️ Focus on data to support evidence-based action

☑️ Increase visibility of UNGEGN, its intergovernmental role and its work
Position the UNGEGN as a global leader in authoritative geographical names

1. **WGN Dashboard** - Publicly Accessible Dashboard

2. **WGN API** - Publicly Accessible, read-only geoJSON, API

3. **WGN Administration System** – User Interface for UNGEGN Secretariat
The WGN API:

1. **An open access, RESTful API**, provides read-only access to the WGN database, through several API endpoints (Cities – via WGN Unique City ID, Countries – via M49 code, Languages, Romanization Systems, and other endpoints)

2. **Documented via Swagger’s Interface Description Language**

3. **Provides Standardised GeoJSON**. Can be downloaded as a standalone file or be consumed into Excel or other GIS applications

4. Meets the highest requirements of the **SG’s Data Strategy**, as data is available as Open Access, publicly, without restriction in machine readable formats.
Data Governance & Developments

Data Governance

- The Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management, as part of its work plan provides ‘day-to-day’ Member State governance for the WGN Database
- The Secretariat hosts the database and is responsible for its technical development and maintenance

Future Feature Improvement and Development

- The Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management has been requested to provide “guidance for a unique identifier for cities” to help respond to Recommendation 2 of UNGEGN’s 2023 Session, and other decisions pertaining to Linked Data
Data Governance & Developments

UNEGGN Data Integration Flow

- **Member States**
  - Request review of existing geographic names held within the WGN database
  - Request input (in defined format) of new geographical names
  - Interlinkages with national geographical names authorities and identify national focal point(s)
  - ...

- **Authoritative Data from the UN System**
  - **Short Term**
    - UN Demographic Yearbook – Authoritative Member State provided statistical data
    - UNTERM
  - **Long Term**
    - UN Gazetteer
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Chapter 4 - Universal and Unique Identifier management considerations

- Using Uniform Resource Identifiers “URIs” as global resource identifiers
- Using Universal Unique Identifiers “UUIDs”
- Assumptions for the globally unique identifiers (either URIs or UUIDs) of the WGN DB

Summary

- This paper provides concepts for the creation of a unique identifier for cities and identifies URIs and/or UUIDs as suitable mechanisms for their creation.
- The WG GNDM requests the Secretariat to pilot a unique identifier based on the URI or UUID approach!
Concept Note --- DRAFT Position Paper on the development of a global unique identifier for cities

The WG GNDM seeks the review and comment of relevant groups on the concepts outlined within this paper. Please contact Mr Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu (Pier-Giorgio.Zaccheddu@bkg.bund.de) and Mr Mark Liffe (mark.liffe@un.org) with your comments.