



UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Strengthening relationships, links and connections in geographical names
standardization and for sustainable development and pandemic recovery

2023/3rd session UNGEGN | 1-5 May 2023 | @unsd_gegn



Second Meeting of UNGEKN Bureau and Division Chairs

Microsoft Teams Meeting

Friday 9 December 2022

from 7:00 -8:30 am NYC time



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WELCOME UNGEGN Divisions – Introductions

Africa Central X	Baltic X (2)	India
Africa East	Celtic	Latin America
Africa South X	China	Norden X (2)
Africa West	Dutch- and German-speaking X	Pacific South-West X
Arabic	East Central and South-East Europe X	Portuguese-speaking X
Asia East (other than China) X (3)	Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia X	Romano-Hellenic X
Asia South-East X	East Mediterranean (other than Arabic)	United Kingdom X
Asia South-West (other than Arabic)	French-speaking X	United States / Canada X (2)

14 Divisions were represented at the meeting



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UNGEEN Bureau

Officers of UNGEEN

Chairperson

- Mr. Pierre Jaillard, France

Vice-Chairpersons

- Mr. Sungjae Choo, Republic of Korea
- Ms. Susan Birtles, Australia

Rapporteurs

- Mr. Trent C. Palmer, USA
- Ms. Wendy Shaw, New Zealand



UNGEEN Chairperson



Vice-Chairpersons



Rapporteurs



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AGENDA

1. Welcome and opening remarks
2. The Implementation of the UNGEGN Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021-2029
3. Participation and Preparation UNGEGN 2023 (3rd) session
 - a. Preparation of Divisional reports and National Reports
 - b. Operations of Divisions -Helen's report
4. Presentation of Draft Decision on Exonyms
5. Presentation and discussion UN-GGIM/UNGEGN project proposal
6. Any other business
7. Closing remarks and adjournment



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The Implementation of the UNGEGN Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021-2029



- Presentation and discussion will be led by Mr. Sungjae Choo

His Power point will be made available



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Participation and Preparation UNGEGN 2023 session

UNGEGN 2023- Session Theme

“Strengthening relationships, links and connections in geographical names standardization and for sustainable development and pandemic recovery”

Important Dates to Note

- **Summary Reports** are to be submitted the latest **20 January 2023**
- **Full Reports** are to be submitted the latest **13 March 2023**
- **The e-deleGATE will be opened** on 27, February 2023 to begin accepting registration



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Preparation of Divisional reports and National Reports

National reports (Item 4 (a) of the provisional agenda)

National reports should include the following:

- a) A summary, of not more than 500 words, outlining the main issues discussed;
- b) Background information or a historical sketch (only for countries that did not present national reports at previous conferences);
- c) A discussion of goals and national programmes;
- d) A discussion of problems, solutions and achievements during the reporting period;
- e) An update on actions taken to support the implementation of the UNGEGN Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021-2029, with particular attention to Strategy 2: Relationships, links and connections.
- f) Conclusions and recommendations.

Divisional reports (Item 4 (b) of the provisional agenda)

Reports submitted by a division of the Group of Experts should include material on activities and issues of common interest to Member States of the division.

Some information referring to individual countries may be more appropriately included in national reports.

Also, some topics may fit well for submission and discussion under other agenda items.



Participation and Preparation UNGEGN 2023 session

**Suggestions
Special Presentations**

Divisions are being asked
to suggest technical
topics for special
presentations

Side events

Divisions are encouraged
consider convening side
events and to look out
for announcement of
side event details.



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Operations of Divisions

Rule 47 Linguistic/geographical divisions

1. The Group shall be supported in its activities by linguistic and geographical divisions listed in the annex to these rules.
2. The number of linguistic and geographical divisions and their **compositions may be revised as necessary by the Group**.
3. A State shall **decide for itself the division to which it wishes to belong**. A State may be a member of another division provided that the nature of its participation does not change the linguistic and geographical character of the division or divisions concerned.
4. Each division shall elect, **by methods of its own choosing, a Division Chair** to represent the division at the meetings of the Group.
5. Each division may elect a Vice-Chair and such other officers as may be required.
6. The Division Chair and Vice-Chair shall **stimulate activities in the standardization of geographical names** within their division by all appropriate means, such as correspondence with national bodies on the standardization of geographical names and national geospatial agencies, and organization of meetings of the division members.
7. The Division Chair shall be **responsible for ensuring that the work of the Group and its potential for technical assistance** are brought to the attention of the individual States that are members of the division concerned and for reporting to the Group any special problems in the division.
8. To discuss technical and procedural matters, **a division may organize meetings** to be held in parallel with sessions of the Group and meetings of any body of its organizational structure, or at any other appropriate time.



Division chairs and their responsibilities

1. providing a **focal point for information flow** both ways between UNGEGN/UNGEGN Secretariat and the countries of the division
2. **keeping informed** about both UNGEGN and regional activities and passing this information along
3. **stimulating the concepts of** national and international **geographical names standardization** in the division
4. **encouraging non-participating countries** to consider aspects of names standardization
5. **working** with those countries that are wishing/endeavouring **to establish names authorities**
6. **organizing** some **form of forum for discussion** of common linguistic/geographical naming issues
7. **facilitating the learning experience** among divisional members
8. **co-ordinating any projects** on common aspects of toponymic activities of the countries that make up the division
9. discussing, assisting, etc. with **follow up of UN Conference resolutions/Session Recommendations** within the division
10. **representing the division at UNGEGN meetings**; including preparing and submitting a divisional report
11. **maintaining a list of contacts** for names authorities, experts, etc. within the division
12. **contributing** pertinent information from the division for **UNGEGN Information Bulletins**
13. **ensuring the continuity** of geographical names standardization activities at the divisional level in future years
14. **forging links with other UNGEGN divisions** and/or Working Groups, as appropriate
15. **promoting the concepts of names standardization** to relevant government/academia/agencies
16. **encouraging divisional participation** at UNGEGN sessions



Status of Divisions

Divisions can be grouped in various ways – this is one possible grouping:

1. Divisions that are active, meet regularly with substantial participation and have ongoing cooperation between the member states, often with division-wide projects.
2. Divisions that have some active member states, but with little cooperation between them.
3. Divisions that are inactive, through lack of communication between member states, and/or lack of leadership for the division.

For those divisions not functioning as hoped, there is a range of issues to be addressed to improve the situation, for instance: lack of contact between member states, lack of a Division Chair, a low-level of geographical names activity within the member states, political differences between member states.



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Draft Decision on the use and safeguarding of exonyms

1. **Considering** the United Nations Charter adopted on 26 June 1945, and notably its Article 1 referring to the principle of self-determination of peoples, which implies at the same time the right of peoples who inhabit a place to name it and the right of other peoples to refer to that place in their own language without foreign interference;
2. **Considering** the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on 17 October 2003, which implies the safeguarding of languages and the safeguarding of geographical names which are “vehicles of the intangible cultural heritage”;
3. **Recalling** that decision 1967/I/4 (C, 1) has set up the objective that “unnecessary changing of names be avoided”;
4. **Recalling** that decisions 1972/II/28, 2002/VIII/9, 2007/IX/4 and 2012/X/3 have recognized some geographical names, either endonyms or exonyms, as part of the intangible cultural heritage, and that decisions 1972/II/36, 1987/V/22, 2002/VIII/1 and 2007/IX/5 have underlined the legitimacy of using indigenous and minority geographical names in addition to the name in the majority language;
5. **Recognizing** that most exonyms, coined by common usage, generally indicate a familiarity of the language community or its sub-group(s) to the denominated features without any idea of domination on them, unlike some of those created artificially;



Draft Decision on the use and safeguarding of exonyms

6. **Recognizing** that the relationship between geographical names, either endonyms or exonyms, and geographical features cannot be absolutely unambiguous like for a data processing identifier, but only be relatively unambiguous to a language community or its sub-groups, which has to define an acceptable scope of ambiguity;
7. **Recognizing** that technical advances in data management have dramatically lessened the practical need for reducing the use of exonyms since the early Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names;
8. **Recalls** that exonyms should be reduced in international and especially diplomatic use and that the possible use of an exonym in such a context should be done with consideration of political and cultural sensitivity, taking also into account the relevant provisions of last paragraph of decision 1982/IV/20, as well as the precedence of national official forms;
9. **Recalls** that exonyms should be used in combination with the corresponding endonym, wherever possible, in uses without context like databases, gazetteers or maps (printed or digital);



Draft Decision on the use and safeguarding of exonyms

10. **Recommends** that national standardization should register, standardize and safeguard as living and vital parts of languages those exonyms coined by a long enough and still current usage which meet the criteria listed by decision 2012/X/3;
11. **Recommends** that national standardization should not initiate the formation of exonyms, except by conversion from one writing system to another, by the omission, addition or alteration of diacritics or the article, by declension or derivation, or by the translation of a generic term;
12. **Considers** outdated the provisions of previous UNGEGN decisions which would be inconsistent with this decision, such as those calling for a blanket reduction of exonyms.

Divisional Chairs invited to circulate the draft decision on Exonyms to their members for review and submit their comments to the UNGEGN Secretariat





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UN-GGIM/UNGEGN project proposal

Project Title

Preparation of a compendium of institutional arrangements on shared good practices between national mapping agencies and national names authorities

Objectives

This proposal invites National Mapping Agencies (NMAs) and National Geographical Names Authorities (NGNAs) to collaborate and contribute to the development of a compendium of institutional arrangements and operational good practices that strengthens working relations between mapping and geographical names authorities to support the collection, management, and dissemination of standardized geographical names.

- i. To build a stronger relationship between the Group of Experts and the Committee of Experts.
- ii. To identify, collate and document relevant and acceptable principles, examples of good practices and guidelines/recommendations that may be used by both NMAs and NGNAs across Member States to strengthen their operations.



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UN-GGIM/UNGEEN project proposal

Initial High-Level Tasks

1. **Select and solicit participation** of NMA's and NGNA's
2. **Decide on areas to be queried and prepare questions** to be asked of NMA's and NGNA's by way of interviews and or surveys
3. **Conduct desk study** - one on one discussion/interview session or on-line surveys and on-line web searches of NMA's and NGNA's websites
4. **Collate and analyze** data from interviews, surveys and desk study
5. **Prepare first draft** of compendium of good practices.
6. **Review and feedback** to finalize compendium of good practices
7. **Present the (draft) compendium** at the 2023/third UNGEEN session and thirteenth session on UN-GGIM
8. Conduct joint side events to **discuss findings and identify future activities.**



UN-GGIM/UNGEEN project proposal

Project Implementation

How the project is to be staffed is to be addressed. Several options have been identified and are to be explored to determine feasibility. This requires further scoping of the project in terms of factors to be considered, number of countries to be included in the survey – ensuring geographical balance across UN member states and duration among others.

Option 1

The UNSD identifies and assigns existing staff within the division to coordinate and conduct the project and tasks.

Option 2

The UNSD seeks the services of a UN intern for a period of six months. Lead time will be required to contract an intern.

Option 3

NMA's and NGNA's identify staff to be placed on virtual secondment for an agreed time and duration.

Option 4

NMA's and NGNA's conduct a self-study to identify good practices according to a template/questions to be designed.

Option 5

Contract the services of a consultant to complete the project. This option is only feasible should funding be made available through UNSD existing resources or trust fund support of a UN Member State.



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Next Meeting and Action Items

Date of next Bureau and
Divisional Meeting – Thursday
30 March 2023 at 7:00 am
eastern time

Feedback on support and
options for
UN-GGIM/UNGE GN
collaborative project to
be sent to Secretariat on
Tuesday 16 January 2023

Update of Divisional
Chairs
responsibilities –
Helen volunteered to
suggest updates





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