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English

**United Nations Group of Experts On
Geographical Names
2019 session
New York, 29 April – 3 May 2019
Item 5 (c) of the provisional agenda *
Reports: Working Group on Country Names**

Report of the Working Group on Country Names

Submitted by the Working Group on Country Names**

Summary :

The full report describes the activities of the Working Group on Country Names since the Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, held in August 2017, including updates made since the Conference to the Working Group document entitled “List of country names”.

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Report of the Working Group on Country Names

The main objective of the Working Group on Country Names is to develop and maintain a list of the names of all countries recognized at the UN in the language or languages used in an official capacity within each country, and to present an updated version of this document to each session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN).

Meetings. Since the 11th UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in 2017 the Working Group (WG) has held two meetings, one at the UNCSGN in New York on 16 August, 2017 and another in Paris, France on 19 March 2018.

- At the 2017 meeting in New York, an agenda item on updating the *UNGEGN List of Country Names* document included discussions on the entries for the following countries: Algeria, Brunei Darussalam, Equatorial Guinea, Fiji, Iraq, Lesotho, Marshall Islands, Mongolia, Morocco, Nauru, Pakistan, Uganda, and United Arab Emirates. Discussions were held on the role of the United Nations Terminology Database (UNTERM) with regard to the document. The Working Group agreed on the manner in which the State of Palestine would be added to the list. The Group discussed other potential documents to be developed, including a compilation of lists of country names from national authorities and other authoritative sources. A separate meeting held at the 11th Conference with members of the terminology team of the UN language services was attended by Working Group members, where discussions were held on coordinating efforts to improve the country names found in the UNTERM database, the source for the “UN Official” names found in the UNGEGN list.
- The 2018 meeting in Paris focused on following up on action items from the 2017 meeting. Discussions included adoption of the new UN Romanization system for Arabic in the *UNGEGN List of Country Names* document, efforts at including National Official country names for minority official languages, including Tifinagh in Morocco, and comparing existing lists of country names to identify discrepancies. It was also decided that an effort would be made to develop the list of country names from national authorities and other authoritative sources.

Activities. The Working Group has updated the *UNGEGN List of Country Names* document. The version presented to this Session is current as of March 2019 and contains country name spellings that reflect the recent UNGEGN-approved Romanization system for Arabic. In addition to this and other formatting and minor changes and updates, the new version contains the following major changes from the version submitted as E/CONF.101/25 at the 10th UNCSGN in New York:

Guyana: change in the UN Official formal names from Republic of Guyana (and their equivalents) to Co-operative Republic of Guyana (and their equivalents).

Libya: change in the formal names from Libya (and their equivalents) to State of Libya (and their equivalents).

New Zealand: note added that the Maōri language name of Aotearoa is not completely official.

Palestine, State of: addition of new entry.

Swaziland: change in the short and formal names from Swaziland/Kingdom of Swaziland to Eswatini/Kingdom of Eswatini.

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: change in the short and formal names to North Macedonia/Republic of North Macedonia.

Lastly, the Working Group is looking for someone to serve as co-convenor. Anyone interested in this opportunity please contact either of the present co-convenors listed below.

The co-convenors wish to thank all the Working Group members, and particularly Catherine Cheetham and Peeter Päll, for their contributions to the *List of Country Names* document.

The Working Group invites any interested experts to become a member of the group. Please contact the convenors (dillonli@state.gov and e-calvarin@wanadoo.fr) for any questions.