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**United Nations Group of Experts on
Geographical Names
2019 session**

New York, 29 April – 3 May 2019

Item 6 (a) of the provisional agenda *

Cooperation and liaison with other organizations, International organizations

**Report of the Joint International Cartographic Association-
International Geographical Union Commission on Toponymy**

Submitted by Joint ICA/IGU Commission on Toponymy**

Summary

The full report highlights the activities of the Joint International Cartographic Association-International Geographical Union Commission on Toponymy since the thirtieth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, held in New York in August 2017, and contains its programme for 2019. The Commission is a joint venture of the two global umbrella institutions for cartography and geography, the International Cartographic Association and the International Geographical Union, and was founded in 2011. Its main goal is to foster toponymic research in the fields of geography and cartography as a complement to multidisciplinary forums such as the Group of Experts and the International Council of Onomastic Sciences. It therefore organizes scientific events and publishes proceedings. Since August 2017, the Commission has organized or co-organized four symposiums and sessions during conferences in four countries in four continents. In 2019 it will be involved with four symposiums and sessions during conferences in three countries in three continents. It has also supported the publication of six proceedings. The Commission's flagship project is to establish a consortium on geographical names made up of several universities where courses on toponymy are offered on the basis of a common curriculum approved by the Commission and delivered by lecturers, among others, from the Commission..

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**Prepared by Peter JORDAN (Austria), ICA Chair, Joint ICA/IGU Commission on Toponymy

Report of the Joint ICA/IGU Commission on Toponymy

The report highlights the activities of the Joint ICA/IGU Commission on Toponymy since the 30th Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names in New York in August 2017 and presents the Commission's program for 2019.

1 On the Commission's foundation, mission and organization

The Joint ICA/IGU Commission on Toponymy was in 2011 established under the auspices of the contemporary chairs of UNGEGN (Helen KERFOOT), the International Cartographic Association, ICA, Georg GARTNER), and the International Geographical Union (IGU, Ron ABLER) as a joint venture of the two global umbrella organizations of cartography and geography, ICA and IGU.

The Commission's statutory goal is to foster toponymic research in geography as well as in cartography complementary to UNGEGN with its focus on standardization and the International Council of Onomastic Sciences (ICOS) with its focus on linguistics. This goal is to be achieved by organizing sessions in the framework of international conferences (mainly the biannual International Cartographic Conferences and the almost annual IGU conferences) as well as by separate symposia on specific topics, mostly in cooperation with a local institution.

The Commission is headed by a chair from the ICA side (currently Peter JORDAN, Austria, the former convenor of the UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms), a chair from the IGU side (currently Cosimo PALAGIANO, Italy), a common vice-chair (currently Paulo DE MENEZES, Brazil) as well as a steering board with the chairs and five additional members (Peter RAPER, South Africa, former UNGEGN chair, Ferjan ORMELING, the Netherlands, former UNGEGN vice-chair, Sungjae CHOO, Republic of Korea, current convenor, UNGEGN Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation, Kohei WATANABE, Japan, current convenor, UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms, and Yaïves FERLAND, Canada). Thus, the Commission is closely associated with UNGEGN. In addition, as of 11 January 2019, the Commission has 144 Corresponding Members from 43 countries and all continents.

Website: www.igu-icatonymy.org

2 Symposia and sessions up to August 2017

Up to August 2017, the Commission organized or co-organized 16 symposia and sessions in the framework of conferences in 9 countries and at 5 continents. They are listed below in temporal sequence.

- (1) Session “Place names as markers and ingredients of space-related identity” in the framework of the **32nd International Geographical Congress, Cologne [Köln], Germany, 26-30 August 2012**
- (2) Session in the framework of the **IGU Regional Conference Kyoto [Kyōto], Japan, 4-9 August 2013**
- (3) **Seminar “Historical maps, atlas maps, and toponymy”, Leipzig, Germany, 21-23 August 2013**
- (4) Session in the framework of the **26th International Cartographic Conference (ICC) Dresden, Germany, 26-30 August 2013**
- (5) Session in the framework of the **4th EuGeo Congress Rome [Roma], Italy, 5-7 September 2013**
- (6) Session in the framework of the **IGU Regional Conference Cracow [Kraków], Poland, 18-22 August 2014**
- (7) **Symposium on place-name changes, Rome [Roma], Italy, 17-18 November 2014**
- (8) Session in the framework of the **IGU Regional Conference, Moscow [Moskva], Russian Federation, 17-22 August 2015**
- (9) **Symposium on Atlases, Toponymy and the History of Cartography, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 20-21 August 2015**
- (10) Sessions in the framework of the **27th International Cartographic Conference, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 23-28 August 2015**
- (11) Session in the framework of **EuGeo Budapest, Hungary, 30 August – 2 September 2015**
- (12) **Symposium “Place names, diversity and heritage”, Clarens, Free State, South Africa, 17-18 September 2015**
- (13) Session in the framework of the **33rd International Geographical Congress, Beijing, China, 21-25 August 2016.**
- (14) **International Panamerican Symposium on Toponymy, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 3-5 May 2017.**
- (15) **ICC Joint Pre-Conference Workshop: Charting the Cosmos of Cartography: History – Names – Atlases, Washington, D.C., USA, 28-30 June 2017,**
- (16) Sessions in the framework of the **28th International Cartographic Conference, Washington D.C., USA, 2-7 July 2017.**

3 Symposia and sessions since August 2017

Since August 2017, the Commission organized or co-organized 1 symposium and 2 sessions in the framework of conferences in 3 countries and at 3 continents. They are listed below in temporal sequence.

- (17) **International Symposium on Place Names: Critical Toponymy – Place names in political, historical and commercial landscapes, Windhoek, Namibia, 18-20 September 2017**, jointly organized by the University of the Free State, the University of Namibia and the Joint ICA/IGU Commission (Peter JORDAN and Cosimo PALAGIANO). 28 papers were presented by the following speakers (in alphabetical sequence): Nancy AYODI (Kenya), Matthias BREZINGER (South Africa), Jani DE LANGE (South Africa), Liketso DUBE (Zimbabwe), Sikholiwe DUBE & Nhlanhla SIBANDA (Zimbabwe), Theodorus DU PLESSIS (South Africa), Cornelia GELDENHUYS (South Africa), Matjaž GERŠIČ et al. (Slovenia),

Kathryn HUDSON (USA), Elga HUNGWE (Zimbabwe), Vincent JENJEKWA (Zimbabwe), Peter JORDAN (Austria), George KAHARI (Zimbabwe), Beatrice LANTERN & Thamsanqa MOYO (Zimbabwe), Chrismi-Rinda LOTH (South Africa), Chrismi-Rinda LOTH et al. (South Africa), Godwin MAKAUDZE (Zimbabwe), Tendai MANGENA (Zimbabwe), Mike MAZURU (Zimbabwe), Felicitas MBEREMA et al. (Namibia), Lucie MÖLLER (South Africa), Sambulo NDLOVU (Zimbabwe), Bertie NEETHLING (South Africa), Sibusio NTUU (South Africa), Cosimo PALAGIANO (I), Peter RAPER (South Africa), Umali SAIDI (Zimbabwe), Georg SCHUPPENER (Slovakia).

(18) IGU Thematic Conference, Moscow [Moskva], Russian Federation, 4-6 June 2018.

Session “Use of Place Names in Public Space”, organized by Cosimo PALAGIANO and Peter JORDAN, chaired by Cosimo PALAGIANO and Paulo DE MENEZES, 7 papers presented (in alphabetical sequence) by Paulo DE MENEZES, Manoel DO Couto FERNANDES, Kairo DE SILVA SANTOS & Tainá LAETA (Brazil), Josip FARIČIĆ & Lena MIROŠVIĆ (Croatia), Tamara GALKINA (Russia), Andrey HERZEN (Russia), Cosimo PALAGIANO & Franco FATIGATI (Italy), Z. PRNJAT, M. TADIĆ & Lj. MARKOVIĆ (Serbia), Patrik TÁTRAI & Ágnes ERŐSS (Hungary).

(19) IGU Regional Conference, Quebec, Canada, 6-10 August 2018.

Session “Place Names as Means of Structuring Geographical Space”, organized by Cosimo PALAGIANO and Peter JORDAN, chaired by Yaïves FERLAND, 9 papers presented (in alphabetical sequence) by Béatrice COLLIGNON (Canada), Yaïves FERLAND (Canada), Matjaž GERŠIČ (Slovenia), Judy GUENETTE (Canada), Myriam HALLÉ (Canada), Cosimo PALAGIANO (Italy), Marcella SCHMIDT (Italy), Pier-Luc TÉTU (Canada).

4 Symposia and sessions in 2019

- (1) In the framework of the **29th International Cartographic Conference (ICC), Tokyo [Tōkyō], Japan, 15-20 July 2019**, the Commission will organize a session open for all toponymic issues.
- (2) Within a **pre-conference symposium of ICC Tokyo, [Tōkyō], Japan, 15 July 2019**, locally organized by Kohei WATANABE, the Commission will highlight role and structure of national names boards. This is to support considerations to establish a national names board of Japan, for which international models and benchmarks could be helpful. The call for papers addresses especially UNGEGN experts with names boards in their countries. It would be great and a fine synergy effect of cooperation between UNGEGN and the Commission, if potential members of a future Japanese board could be confronted with the successes and problems of other boards, also of boards of divergent competences and structures.
- (3) Together with the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa, the Commission will organize the **5th International Symposium on Place Names: Recognition, regulation, revitalisation: place names and indigenous languages, in Clarens, South Africa, 18-20 September 2019**. The theme of this symposium is inspired by the United Nations declaration of 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages (<https://en.unesco.org/IY2019>).

The toponymic landscape of any place is inscribed with names from different periods of human history. These place names are not only records of natural and social events, but also of indigenous languages and language contact. Very often, place names are all that remain of certain languages and even communities. However, place names are often not recorded in their original languages, but have been adapted or translated into other languages over time. Researching the etymology of place names is one way of uncovering this treasure of indigenous knowledge. The symposium aims to explore the link between the processes of researching, maintaining and restoring indigenous place names, and the preservation and promotion of the indigenous languages from which these place names originate. It will be preceded (16-17 September) by a toponymic training course for locals, for which still some lecturers are needed.

- (4) At the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Austrian Board's foundation, the Commission will organize together with the Austrian Board on Geographical Names, the UNGEGN Dutch- and German-speaking Division (DGSD), the Federal Office of Metrology and Surveying and the Austrian Geographical Society a symposium in **Vienna, Austria, 6-8 November 2019** on the general topic **“Place names and migration”**, where aspects and examples of historical and recent migrations with a focus on the question how newcomers dealt with the names they found can be highlighted. The symposium will figure under the DGSD trademark “GeoNames symposia”, the last of which took place in Vienna in 2008. Migration is a global and all-time phenomenon. Ever since humankind exists, people were migrating – individually or in groups. Concerning place names, it is interesting to look on how people – often with a different linguistic and cultural background – deal with the existing namescape. Related to place names, this prompts a number of delicate questions: How do migrants deal with place names? Do they adapt them to their own language by translation, morphological or phonetic adaptation? Do they create new names (for already named places)? And how do long-term residents of the place react to these attitudes? Questions like these get addressed in traditional fields of onomastics as well as in recent fields of study like “critical onomastics” and “colonial onomastics”. The symposium intends to highlight in this respect various historical situations as well as recent migration events in all parts of the world. Potential subthemes (with no claim to be exhaustive):

- Place-name use in historical and in recent situations of migration
- Reactions of long-term residents to the place-name use by migrants
- Attempts of integrating migrant place names into the official namescape
- Place-name use of migrants by feature categories and by kinds of migration
- Transfer of place names from the former home to the new place
- Use of exonyms of the local community by migrants

5 Publications

Papers presented at events organized or co-organized by the Commission have so far been published in the following books and journal issues:

- DEMHRDT I., JORDAN P., LOSANG E. (eds.) (2018), *Charting the Cosmos of Cartography: History – Names – Atlases*. (= *The Cartographic Journal*, 55, 2018, 2). London, The British Cartographic Society – Taylor & Francis.
- DA ROCHA BÉRENGER RESENDE A.C., JÉNEY J. (eds.), *Symposium on Atlases, Toponymy and the History of Cartography*. Proceedings of the ICC 2015 Pre-Conference Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 20–21 August 2015. *Sine loco* [Rio de Janeiro], ICA International Cartographic Association.
- JORDAN P., WOODMAN P. (eds.) (2016), *Place-Name Changes*. Proceedings of the Symposium in Rome, 17–18 November 2014 (= *Name & Place*, 5). Hamburg, Verlag Dr. Kovač.
- MOSER J. (ed.) (2016), *Joint Commission Seminar on Historical Maps, Atlases and Toponymy* (= *forum IfL*, 30). Leipzig, Leibniz-Institut für Länderkunde.
- Nomina Africana*, *Journal of the Names Society of Southern Africa*, 30, 1, 2016: special issue containing 10 papers presented at the Symposium “Place names, diversity and heritage”, Clarens, Free State, South Africa, 17–18 September 2015.
- Semestrare di Studi e Ricerche di Geografia*, XXV, 2, Roma 2013: Special issue including toponymy papers presented at the IGU Regional Conference Kyoto, Japan, 4–9 August 2013. (<http://www.semestrare-geografia.org/index.php/sdg/issue/view/3>)

6 Flagship project

Establishing a geographical names consortium of several universities, where according to a common curriculum approved by the Commission and with lecturers (among others) from the Commission courses in toponymy are offered. This project evolves from an idea and initiative of Peter RAPER and Theodorus DU PLESSIS (both South Africa) and started with some universities in Southern Africa and is later to spread to other countries and continents. This project conforms to the task “to disseminate the scientific knowledge on processing and use of toponyms within geography and cartography” in the Commission’s terms of reference. It has been initiated also with the consent and kind support of the former convenor of the UNGEGN Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy, Ferjan ORMELING, and will complement UNGEGN courses, which will also be continued.