
United Nations Group of Experts On

Geographical Names

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Toponymic education (Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy)

Report of the Convenor of the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy 2017-2019

Submitted by the Convenor of the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy

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Summary of the Report:

This Report constitutes a record of the activities of the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy (TCT) since the 11th and final UNCSGN Conference, in New York in 2017, namely a report on the UNGEGN TCT held in the Philippines, 2018. Note is made of the currently available UNGEGN Advanced Toponymy Manual and the composition of the working group.

Convenor's Report

1. International Training Courses

A. Outline

UNGEGN stimulates the organisation of training courses in toponymy in order to increase awareness of the need for geographical names standardization and, especially, to help fill the need for qualified personnel. The general model of such courses is a one or two-week programme of lectures, alternated by exercises, fieldwork and instructions in techniques in digital geographical names recording, handling and storage. The idea is to hold at least one TCT course every year for an international audience. Indeed this has been the standard since 1982. A valuable resulting effect of these activities is the substantial collection of lecture material, manuals and fieldwork notes from which TCT lecturers can gain valuable information and inspiration. In addition to activities by UNGEGN WG-TCT, a parallel series of courses has been organised by the Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH), have since 1987 been provided for Latin American countries - the latest of which was in 2014.

B. Toponymy Training Courses Held

Since the 11th UNCSGN in 2017, there have been, two regional UNGEGN Training Courses on Toponymy have been held, namely the NAMRIA-UNGEGN 1st Regional Training Program in Toponymy and the ADEGN Regional Training Course in Toponymy.

NAMRIA-UNGEGN 1st Regional Training Program in Toponymy

Since the 11th UNCSGN in 2017, there has been one TCT held in the Philippines, March 19-24 2018 - the NAMRIA-UNGEGN 1st Regional Training Program in Toponymy, with a special focus on Marine Toponymy. The training course was a collaboration between the UNGEGN Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy and the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority of the Philippines (NAMRIA). The course was attended by 50 participants and seven trainers/coordinators from ten Member States. Course participants were from six countries in the UNGEGN Asia South East Division namely, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam and represented a cross section of names disciplines.

The six-day course consisted of 40 hours of lectures, exercises and group discussions, plus 16 hours of fieldwork. Topics covered included principles and concepts of geographical naming, national standardization toponyms, best practices in geographical names data collection, geographical names history in South East Asia, toponyms as cultural heritage, underwater topography and sea and coastal naming, toponymic database building and design and development of gazetteers. Fieldwork was

conducted in the municipalities of Mabini and Taal and included the collection of the names of marine features, a first for this WG. All course material for this training course is available online at https://unstats.un.org/UNSD/geoinfo/UNGEGN/Toponymy_Training_Manila.html.

Part of the course was dedicated to giving representatives of the participating countries a possibility to reflect on and describe the current naming policies in their own country, as well as possibilities and issues with fieldwork and interview techniques.

ADEGN Regional Training Course in Toponymy

A training course on Geographical Names was held at the Headquarter of the UNGEGN Arab Division of Experts on Geographical Names (ADEGN) March 25th-29th 2018 in Jordan-Amman. The course was conducted in collaboratively between the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre (RJGC) and Experts of the ADEGN, and was attended by 15 participants from six Member States: Qatar, Oman, Algeria, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates and Jordan.

The objective of the course was to share ADEGN's activities in disseminating knowledge about the importance of geographical names, in particular in providing the required scientific and practical skills for those who work in the field of geographical names in the Arab countries, and inform them of updates on both Arab and International level. Thus, the course comprised several topics such as:

- Geographical names and their importance,
- Arabic language basics in relation to geographical names,
- Office and field collecting of geographical names,
- Rules for representing landmarks on maps,
- Representing geographical names on digital maps,
- Jordanian experience in the field of geographical names,
- Gazetteers and public names in compound geographical names,
- Origin and significance of names of ancient sites for registration of sites on the global cultural heritage list,
- The Standardized Arab System of Romanization adopted at the 11th UNGCN in 2017,

In addition to lectures, the course also included practical exercises.

2. International/regional training courses planned

To date, no international training courses under the auspice of UNGEGN are planned for 2019,. However, enquiries for UNGEGN assistance in TCTs have been made from the Dominican Republic and Indonesia. So far, this has not resulted in concrete plans.

3. National training

In the autumn of this year, in conjunction with the ICA/IGU Commission's symposium on indigenous names, in Clarens South Africa, a national TCT will take place on September 16th-17th. More about this training course will be detailed in working paper under agenda item 6(a).

4. Training material

New Advanced Toponymy Manual

Since 2017, the Advanced Toponymy Manual of the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy has been available on the UNGEGN website, so far under the publications section: <https://unstats.un.org/UNSD/geoinfo/UNGEGN/publications.html>, although this URL will change with the launch of the new UNGEGN website. The manual is 30 chapter long, comprehensive, manual covering a wide array of aspects relating to geographical names standardization. 21 authors from 12 countries have contributed to the manual and more chapters are on the way. Although the advanced toponymy manual is intended as a follow-up for people who have previously taken a toponymy web course, it is recommended all experts to read.

New location for WG-TCT Toponymy Training Material

The WG-TCT toponymy training material was in 2018 transferred from the website of StAGN, the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names of the German-speaking countries to the UNGEGN WG-TCT webpage, in order to secure and maintain a consolidated repository for toponymy training. Experts can currently access the educational material from: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/wg6.html>, although this URL will change with the new iteration of the UNGEGN-webpage planned for 2019.

The toponymy training material covers a variety of geographical names standardization topics and include past UNGEGN international TCT workshops held in Madagascar (2013), Kenya (2009), Austria (2006) and Netherlands-Germany (2002).

Online toponymy training courses

Currently, there are web-based toponymy training courses being developed or maintained in English, French and Spanish. These have been covered in the previous WG report of 2017, cf. WP 3.3.

Distance training programmes are also offered by ENSG Ecole de la géomatique in Noisy le Grand, Cité Descartes (close to Paris). In 2019 it offers three modules on toponymic topics:

- *Linguistic Toponymy,*
- *Toponymic Training for French-Speaking Countries,*
- *Cartographic toponymy.*

These courses are available here: <http://cours-fad-public.ensg.eu/course/index.php?categoryid=41>.

5. Working group composition

From 2017, the UNGEGN Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy have effectively consisted of a team of:

- Mr Brahim Atoui
- Mme Elisabeth Calvarin
- Ms Babo Gabalape

- Mr Peder Gammeltoft
- Ms Helen Kerfoot
- Mr Ferjan Ormeling
- Mr R. Payne
- Ms Lucy Phalaagae
- Mr Peter Raper
- Mr Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu

A meeting of the Working Group on Training courses in Toponymy is planned for the coming UNGEGN Session, the time of which will be announced at the Session.

For 2020, plans for a WG meeting is still very much on the drawing board, but may include a meeting in Jordan, in connection with a symposium suggested by Jordan.

6. Useful literature in toponymic education

- Kadmon, Naftali, 2000: *Toponymy: The Lore, Laws of Language of Geographical Names*. New York: Vantage Press.
- *The world of maps*. (manual on cartography and GIS. Can be downloaded from the ICA website (<http://mapyear.org/the-world-of-maps-overview/>))
- *United Nations Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names*. New York, 2002. (free download)
- *United Nations Manual for the national standardization of geographical names*. New York, 2006. (free download available in all 6 UN languages)
- *United Nations Technical reference manual for the standardization of geographical names*. New York, 2007. (free download)

Please inform the Convenor of any new additions to this bibliography.