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English

United Nations Group of Experts On

Geographical Names

2019 session

New York, 29 April – 3 May 2019

Item 9 of the provisional agenda *

Issues of publicity for the Group of Experts and funding of Group projects (Working Group on Publicity and Funding)

Report of the Working Group on Publicity and Funding

Submitted by the Working Group on Publicity and Funding*

*GEGN.2/2019/1

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Summary

The report highlights the aims and activities of the working group in raising awareness of the need for geographical names standardization and the work of the Group of Experts, particularly in advancing the digital presence of UNGEGN, through updated presence on the web and social media and an updated Media Kit. The report also highlights efforts to find financial support for training and for representatives from developing countries attending UNGEGN Sessions. Substantial effort has also been dedicated to informing about the new UNGEGN structure and guidelines for new experts of UNGEGN.

At the end of the report, recommendations for the future is outlined, particularly concerning the establishment of a sponsorship trust fund to ensure continued participation of experts from developing countries, and the establishment of a formal sponsorship trust fund review board.

Report of the Working Group on Publicity and Funding

Resolutions concerned:

V/21, V/24, VI/5, VI/13, VII/9, VIII/15, IX/10

1. Aims of the Working Group on Publicity and Funding

Established following the Sixth UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in 1992, the Working Group on Publicity and Funding aims to make the activities of the UNGEGN more visible and, where appropriate, to seek or help identify funds to support:

- Publication and dissemination of material relevant to the advancement of geographical names standardization;
- Provision of training for the development and management of geographical names administration;
- Establishment of names authorities; and
- Participation of delegates in UNGEGN events and activities.

2. Working Group Meetings

Meetings of the Working Group on Publicity and Funding are held jointly with the Working

Group on Evaluation and Implementation in Brussels, Belgium. Since last Session, the Working Groups have met on 12 and 13 October 2018, in connection with the UNGEGN Scientific Symposium and Joint Divisions and Working Group Meetings, 10-13 October. The joint meeting was two-part: a two-hour

Session on Friday 12 devoted to reporting progress made since 2017 and a whole-day meeting on Saturday 13 devoted to discussing selected agenda items related to the new UNGEGN structure and upcoming First UNGEGN Session. The first part of the meeting was held in De Prins Albert Club in central Brussels, where 27 participants attended, while the Saturday Session took place in NH Brussels Bloom with the attendance of 13 participants.

Additionally, a joint meeting of the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation with the Working Group on Publicity and Funding is planned for the upcoming UNGEGN Session in New York for Friday 3 May 2019.

3. UNGEGN Session Preparations

One of the concerns since the last UNGEGN Session/UNCSGN Conference in 2017 has been to provide newcomers with information about how to be able to attend UNGEGN Session, and if eligible, how to apply for sponsorship. Thus, information for new delegates is to be issued under *Other Documents* on the upcoming Session homepage, giving advice on e.g. how to get nominated and credentials, Note Verbale info, and paper submission info.

In order to streamline the application procedure for sponsorship for geographical names experts from developing countries to attend UNGEGN Sessions, a new set of procedures have been established. In order to be eligible for funding applicants now have to fill in a designated application form, supply a letter of support, passport details and, where applicable, supply proof of visa. This procedure will be used for sponsorship application at all coming UNGEGN Sessions. For more on the actual selection of applicants, please see item 5. Funding below.

4. Press and Publicity Efforts

Press releases: A press release for the opening of the First UNGEGN Session in New York was published on April 28th 2019: "Standardization of Geographical names matters" to be addressed by new body as it meets for its First Session *at UN Headquarter*. In addition, a press release was published on May 3 in connection with the conclusion of the Session: *Benefits of Standardizing Geographical Names in focus as Experts Conclude First Session at Headquarters*. Both press releases were prepared by the Convenor of this Working Group. The press releases highlight both the reformation of UNGEGN as well as the benefits of accurate nationally approved geographical names for easy national and international communication and use in all aspects of life if treated, stored and disseminated properly.

Webpage: As agreed at the WG meeting in October 2018, work on a new, updated UNGEGN webpage was undertaken in late 2018 by a focussed webpage group. With the help of UN webpage experts, the ideas and vision for a new UNGEGN webpage is emerging and this Convenor and the webpage group are pleased to show an early version of the new UNGEGN webpage at: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/>. We are looking forward to receiving input and constructive criticism from delegates at the session.

Media Kit: Having been available since early 2011 (and acting on UNCSGN Resolution IX/10), the Media Kit has been continuously updated since August 2013, kindly undertaken by former UNGEGN President, Ms. Helen Kerfoot. However, special effort must be given to a general update of the Media

Kit to reflect the new UNGEGN structure. For this, a group led by Ms. Catherine Cheetham, United Kingdom, have completed this for the English language version. The text is being placed in the Media Kit template, as are new pictures being sourced. Updates will follow in coming Bulletin issues.

The Working Group encourages countries and experts who have previously translated the Media Kit to also to take part in the revision work to assure updated Media Kits in as many languages as possible.

UNGEKN Information Bulletin: The Information Bulletin is being published biannually and informs UNGEGN Experts about current and upcoming items of interest to the organization. According to the UNGEGN Secretariat, there are more than 700 persons and institutions on the mailing list.

Since 2014, the Bulletin has had themed issues, where themes relevant to UNGEGN and standardization of geographical names are explored. Since the last report, the Bulletin has been issued with the following themes:

- #53 (November 2017) - 50 Years of UNGEGN and UNCSGN. This has been ongoing for the last
- #54 (May 2018) - Geographical Names Supporting Sustainable Development
- #55 (December 2018) - Legislation on Geographical Names

There can be little doubt that the transition to thematic issues have meant an increase in numbers of readers, as the Bulletin is now a more attractive and relevant medium for information and for contributions. In order to keep this positive development ongoing, the Working Group urges experts to keep contributing with relevant articles for the bulletin.

Wikipedia information: The Wikipedia entries for UNGEGN are kindly being kept updated by WG Rapporteur Mr. Gerhard Rampl. There are entries for UNGEGN in English, German and Russian.

5. Funding

Sponsorship: The need for supporting representative of developing countries remains as crucial as ever to this Working Group. With the generous assistance of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, we are pleased to announce the sponsorship of the expert from Madagascar. The UN Statistics Division has sponsored experts from Egypt, Jamaica, Laos, Peru and Uruguay. The Working Group extends it welcome to these six experts and wish them a fruitful Session. This being said, several applicants did not receive funding, thus highlighting the need for as much additional support as possible and any sponsorship possibilities will be gratefully considered.

Training events: The Working Group would very much like to hear from experts or organizations planning or wishing to undertake training events, international or, regional in cooperation with UNGEGN at this Session, in order to initiate the proper procedure for establishing training events. Training events with UNGEGN assistance must be presented to the Session through a resolution prepared in consultation with the Working Group on Publicity and Funding.

6. A recommendation for consideration by the Group of Experts

With a new UNGEGN structure in place, it is time to consider if it is not also time for this working group to get reorganised to reflect and aid the new structure. In the following paragraphs, I will be outlining a recommendation that this convenor sees as being the most pressing one.

6.1. Establishment of a Sponsorship Trust Fund (UNGEGN-STF)

One of the biggest challenges over the years as convenor of this working group has been securing sponsorship for experts from developing countries. With the successful implementation of an application procedure for this UNGEGN Session, it is time to consider the possibilities of the establishment of a sponsorship trust fund (UNGEGN-STF) and a supporting operations mechanism in the form of a formal review board.

Sources of trust fund funding

The majority of funding has hitherto come from the UN Statistics Division and this is also envisaged for the coming contributions to the UNGEGN-STF. However, individual nations and organisations are invited to contribute also. External sources of funding may have special conditions for funding. Such conditions will have to be presented to the review board for consideration.

Trust fund review board

The UNGEGN-STF review board should consist of a fixed number of experts. This convenor recommends a group of five members comprising the WG Convenor, a member of the UNGEGN Secretariat and three appointed UNGEGN experts. The review board will select the experts to receive sponsorship and at regular intervals review the economy of the trust fund. The review board will also provide the UNGEGN-STF guidelines which should include the following items:

- What kind of sponsorship is available from the Fund?
- Who can qualify for sponsorship?
 - How must a request for sponsorship be submitted?
 - What constitutes sponsorship document proforma?
- How are sponsorship applications reviewed?
- Outline of formal sponsorship grant obligations?
- Who can contribute to the UNGEGN-STF?
 - What are acceptable special conditions for funding contribution?
- How to review the success of the UNGEGN-STF