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

Second session

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Item 10 of the provisional agenda *

Toponymic education

Streamed audiovisual lectures on toponymy

Submitted by the Netherlands**

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Existing teaching material offered by the WG

Until now the educational material developed and offered by the UNGEGN Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy consists of handouts during contact courses, proceedings of such contact courses, either printed, on DVDs, or also downloadable from the web (see for instance the proceedings of the Rio course held in 2017), an online course for self-study and a manual.

The first regular published course proceedings were those of the second toponymy course in Indonesia, held in 1989 in Cipanas (*Proceedings of the workshop on Toponymy held in Cipanas, Indonesia*, ISSN No 0126-4982, edited by T.R. Tichelaar, printed and published by Bakosurtanal, Cibinong, Indonesia in 1990). The training course in Pretoria comes second (*UNGEGN training course in Toponymy for southern Africa* (edited by P.A. Hattingh, N. Kadmon, P.E. Raper and I. Booysen, ISBN 0—86979-909-6, printed and published by the Department of Geography of the University of Pretoria in September 1993). The German *Bundesamt für Kartographie und Geodäsie* produced the proceedings of the *Training Course on Toponymy* held in Enschede, Frankfurt and Berlin in 2002 (edited by F.J. Ormeling, K. Hans Stabe and Jörn Sievers, and published as Band 28 of the *Mitteilungen des Bundesamtes für Kartographie und Geodäsie* in 2003). In 2006 Bakosurtanal in Cibinong published the proceedings of the 3rd UNGEGN Training course held in 2005 in Batu, Malang, Indonesia (edited by Jacob Rais, Widodo Edy Santoso and Titiek Suparwati).

Not all proceedings were printed, some of them were presented and distributed in digital form: examples are the CD produced in January 2005 by the Geographical Names Board of New South Wales of the 2004 Toponymy Training Course held in Bathurst, the CD produced by the Austrian *Bundesamt für Eich- und Vermessungswesen* for the Training Course in Toponymy held in 2006 in Vienna, the CD produced by the Topographic Agency (*Foiben Taosarintanin I Madagasikara*) in Antananarivo, Madagascar with the proceedings of the 2013 International Training of Trainers on Toponymy, or the CD of the Workshop on Geographical Names held in Tunis, January 2015, aimed at the training of members of names commissions. The problem of these CDs or DVDs is that they are less easily procurable by non-participants as compared to the printed proceedings, even if they are easier to distribute.

The teaching material offered at the 2017 Rio de Janeiro IBGE-UNGEGN toponymy course as well as that of the NAMRIA-UNGEGN toponymy course held in Manila in 2018 were uploaded to the UNGEGN website, and can be accessed, for instance at [HTTPS://UNSTATS.UN.ORG/UNSD/UNGEGN/WORKING_GROUPS/WG6.CSHTML](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/working_groups/wg6.cshtml). The teaching material prepared by WG members for the 2009 course in Kenya can be accessed on the website of the Dutch and German-speaking division of UNGEGN (see UNGEGN-Divisions): https://www.stagn.de/DE/3_DGSD/TrainingCourses/training_node.html.

The online toponymy course prepared in conjunction with the International Cartographic Association can be accessed at https://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/docs/data_ICAcourses/index.html. It consists of teaching material aimed at self-study: texts and illustrations, articles, questions and tasks, divided over 18 chapters (see appendix A). It is quite basic and tries to make trainees aware of the terminology used in names standardization, the resources available and the issues that can be handled with them. It was developed in the 1990s and its development was finalized in 2005

To provide more advanced teaching material, the *Toponymy training manual* was developed (edited by H. Kerfoot, F.J. Ormeling and P.G. Zaccheddu in 2017). With some 40 chapters produced by a wide range of experts it provides more up to date and more in-depth coverage of relevant toponymic issues. The subjects covered are listed in appendix B. The Training manual can be downloaded from <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/pubs/documents/Training%20Manual.pdf>.

Of course, reports on the training courses have also been published, many of which have been listed on the UNGEGN website, under the heading of the WG on Training Courses in Toponymy. The first of these is the report on the Pilot Training course in toponymy held at Cisarua, Bogor, Indonesia 7-

18 June 1982, and the last, for the time being, is the report on the NAMRIA training course held in 2018 in Manila, published in the UNGEGN Information Bulletin no 54 (May 2018), pp 21-23.

Proposed extension of the teaching material

During the current pandemic, distance teaching, using power point presentations with registration of the spoken comments or streaming became a run-of-the-mill experience, and that is why the WG on Training Courses in Toponymy is now considering to extend its offer of teaching material with these newly regularized presentation modes. A series of lectures is envisaged that can be downloaded from the WG link at the UNGEGN website. Ideally, this series would cover the whole field of toponymic standardization, but practical considerations probably would initially restrict this programme to a limited series of subjects that are of current importance for the issues toponymists and name standardization experts are confronted with.

Advantages of this programme of streamed lectures as compared with the online course are that there is much more room for presenting and explaining the issues concerned; moreover, spoken comments instead of written-down ones would be much more engaging. All the same, it still would be a one-way communication, as the WG does not see it as feasible to provide feed-back from the lecturers on questions by trainees, a problem we also have with the online course.

If such a programme of streamed lectures is considered useful and realistic, the UN technical services would be asked to set the technical parameters this series of streamed lectures should adhere to, as these lectures would have to be downloadable from the UNGEGN website. The duration and structure of the lectures would be set by the WG, in order to give all lectures a similar lay-out. A template could be produced to which lectures would have to fit. On the basis of the teaching needs perceived by the UNGEGN participants, the WG would select a number of priority themes or subjects, and farm them out to interested parties that would have the expertise and didactical and technical skills to produce such lectures. The WG is thinking of people working at topographical surveys, or in university linguistics or geography departments, apart from members of the UNGEGN Working Groups or other UN sections such as the geospatial information section. The level of the lectures would have to be comparable to the Toponymy Training Manual (bachelor's).

Call for reporting gaps in current items offered

The WG needs the help of the UNGEGN session participants to identify the themes or subjects they would like to have lectures for. The subjects listed under Appendix A and B might provide some guidance, but these lists are already dated, and currently lectures on other items might be wished for. The WG suggests participants to contact the WG convenor (peder.gammeltoft@uib.no) in order to let him know what subjects should be covered in the streamed lecture programme, so that it can be discussed within the WG and farmed out to interested competent parties.

Whatever the outcome of the suggestions by UNGEGN experts, there should be some general framework, that provides coordination, and the WG intends to provide these, should this proposed streamed lecture programme find favor within UNGEGN. The WG is considering the following five basic lectures:

1. **The naming process** (how and why are geographical features being named, and what functions do these names have)
2. **Standardization of toponyms** (why is it essential that these geographical names bestowed during the naming process are standardized, what are the issues in this process and what is best practice)
3. **Collection of geographical names** (in the field, in interviews, through crowd sourcing) including attribute information (such as pronunciation, location, cultural heritage aspects)
4. **Office processing of geographical names** (linguistic checks, records to be established, role and status of name commissions, interaction with the public/local residents)
5. **Producing names databases** (building, maintaining and updating national names databases, publishing their contents, e.g. through gazetteers)

The WG still has to decide on the proposal in this paper, and their decision will also be based on the input from the UNGEGN experts. Most likely, the WG members will try to have these five lectures ready for the next session, which will give the experts an opportunity to gauge this proposed programme and decide whether it will be worthwhile to continue it.

Points for discussion

The Group of Experts is invited to:

1. Take note of the report and suggestions made on behalf of the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy
2. Express its views on the way forward concerning the Working Group's online lecture programme and the upcoming actions for 2021-2023
3. Express its support on the creation and maintenance of this online lecture programme on toponymy as a useful tool for the education and training of present and future staff engaged in toponymic standardization
4. Comment and provide guidance on the subjects to be addressed in this proposed lecture programme.

Appendix A: Contents of the Online toponymy course (2005)

- Conversion systems for writing systems
- Editorial issues for names in atlases
- Exonyms
- Field collection methods for toponyms
- Functions of geographical names
- Languages and their influence on toponyms
- Legal status of geographical names
- Minority names
- Multilingual areas and geographical names
- Names as cultural heritage
- Names placement on maps
- Naming process for geographical features
- National toponymical agencies – function, composition, operating mode
- Office processing for geographical names standardization
- Reference systems for locating named objects
- Toponymical data files
- Toponymical guidelines
- Toponymical planning
- UNGEGN role in dealing with toponyms
- Writing systems

Appendix B: Subjects dealt with in the Toponymy Training manual (2017)

- Areal names on adjoining map sheets, multiple naming
- Assessing optimal names density on topomaps
- Auditing place name records
- Building placename gazetteers
- Database management for geographical names
- Distribution of standardized toponyms
- Etymology of geonames
- Fieldwork interviews for collecting toponyms
- Geographical names as cultural heritage
- Geographical names for tourist maps
- Geographical names standardization
- History of place names
- Database management for toponyms
- Maintaining, publishing and updating national names databases
- Managing national geonames programmes
- Media cartography
- Names databases and the production of a national map series
- Names on nautical charts
- Open source vs commercial options for web services
- Producing names databases for atlases
- Pronunciation of geographical names
- Street name standardization
- UNGEGN world geographical names database
- Visualizing geographical names databases
- Webservice infrastructure