

3. May 2021

English

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**United Nations Group of Experts on  
Geographical Names  
Second session  
New York, 3 – 7 May 2021  
Item 10 of the provisional agenda  
Toponymic Education**

**Summary report on the activities of the Working Group on Training Courses in  
Toponymy**

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

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\*\* Prepared by Dr. Peder Gammeltoft (Norway), Convenor, Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy.

## **Summary**

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 future work on virtual TCT Toponymy courses, and the composition of the working group.

# Report of the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy

## 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 first UNGEGN Plenary Meeting in 2019, there have been no regional UNGEGN Training Courses on Toponymy, owing to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the TCT had engaged with Indonesia on a regional training program for 2020, but which had to be postponed for safety reasons.

### 2. International/regional training courses planned

To date, no international training courses under the auspice of UNGEGN are planned for 2021 or 2022, or however long the COVID-19 pandemic continues. Safety reasons prevents regional TCTs from being held for the time being. The activities for the next interim period until 2023 will mainly focus on developing online training courses. Inspirational activities has been outlined under this agenda activity, cf. GEGN.2/2021/20/CRP.20, GEGN.2/2021/31/CRP.31, GEGN.2/2021/66/CRP.66.

### 3. National training

In 2020 the Badan Informasi Geospasial (BIG) of Indonesia launched a series of webinars on toponymy training, cf. GEGN.2/2021/31/CRP.31. The training took place as a live webinar and was subsequently published on BIG's YouTube channel. The course drew massive interest with more than 1,000 participants for each live seminar and a further 2,000-3,000 views on YouTube.

### 4. Training material

#### Online toponymy training courses

The Working Group member of the Netherlands has suggested the making of a series of virtual TCT cf, GEGN.2/2021/66/CRP.66. The recent pandemic has seen the need for such arrangements to be put in place, although the matter probably needs further refinement before the plan can be finalized.

The courses suggested in the report are:

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).

## 5. Working group composition

Since 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

The team is in need of update and replenishing. This will take place in relation to an online meeting of the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy later in 2021, where also a change in convenorship needs to be decided.

## 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.*