

1 May 2023

English

**United Nations Group of Experts on
Geographical Names****2023 session**

New York, 1 – 5 May 2023

Item 4(a) of the provisional agenda ***Reports: Governments on the situation in their countries and
on the progress made in the standardization of geographical names****National Report of Zambia**

Submitted by Zambia**

Zambia is made up of 73 ethnic languages and dialects which are clustered around seven national languages namely, Bemba, Kaonde, Lozi, Lunda, Luvale, Nyanja and Tonga. Zambian Sign Language was recently added to the list as the eighth national language. English, a legacy of British colonisation, is the official language. This diverse linguistic heritage is also visible in geographical names.

Administration of geographical names in Zambia is decentralised in city/town councils. Administratively, the 752 618 square kilometres country of 19.6 million inhabitants is divided into ten provinces and 116 towns, 156 constituencies and 1626 wards. The ward councillors discharge local government functions in the lowest unit – the ward. These elected officials work together with their respective mayors (for large or medium size cities/towns) or council chairpersons (for small towns). Of these towns, six have attained city status. Each city or town council has its own method of geographical name administration. There is no national geographical name authority in Zambia; city/town councils take charge.

The National Addressing and Postcode Project

The comprehensive National Addressing and Postcode Project, which resonates with one of UNGEGN's aims, is a quest to fulfil the Zambia Information and Communications Technologies Agency (ZICTA)'s function to promote universally accessible postal and courier services that are responsive to consumer needs. In addition to developing a public, web-based database of addresses, the project involves the actual installation of addressing infrastructure including street name signage and house numbers in collaboration with local authorities.

The project's key deliverables include:

- i) Street-Naming & Numbering
- ii) Signage Installation
- iii) Database with GIS
- iv) Addressing Standards
- v) Public Awareness

* GEGN.2/2023/1

** Prepared by Oswald Chanda Penda

As a result, streets have been named systematically in some neighbourhoods after prominent journalists, politicians and former soccer stars, Chipolopolo, who perished in a plane crash in 1993, in Mass Media, PHI and Bauleni neighbourhoods, respectively. In all, streets named after women are likely to be names of those related to powerful men.

Lack of National Policy Framework

At the moment, each council is expected to formulate guidelines on how they will conduct street addressing. There is currently no national document that guides the process. The draft, which has for years been pending official approval, is still unavailable at the time of UNGEGN's Third Session.

Challenges in Achieving Standardization of Geographical Names

The major challenges in Zambia are:

- i) Lack of a National Policy to guide on the process
- ii) Disjointed databases among various public entities which have addressed properties differently
- iii) Lack of prioritising addressing by councils especially for the recently built-up areas
- iv) Financial challenges due to constrained budget

Zambia's Involvement in UNGEGN

Zambia has not participated in the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) sessions since 2002. However, involvement in UNGEGN would provide Zambia with opportunities for possible meeting participation and access to web resources such as training, policies and manuals. This would translate into significant improvement in the capacity for administration of geographical names at both national and local (council and ward) levels. Prior to the Third Session, the Director of National Planning, under whose directorate geographical name administration falls, in the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development expressed her wish for UNGEGN to invite the government to participate in future activities, as the State would like to establish a working relationship with the Group of Experts at the United Nations.