MODULE 2: National Agencies, Models, and Procedures

Cecille Blake
UN Statistics

Monday 19 June, 2023
Padma, Bali
CONTENT

1. The United Nations
2. What precipitated the creation of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names
3. Why is geographical names standardization necessary
4. The evolution of UNGEGN
5. UNGEGN Mission, Objectives and Principles
6. UNGEGN Structure and Governance
7. UNGEGN Working Arrangements
8. The UNGEGN Strategic Plan and Programme of Work
9. The Importance of National Names Authorities
10. Identifying the need for the creation of a Names Authority
11. Policy and Legislation to support the National Names Authority
12. Establishing a National Names Authority
13. Models of National Names Authorities
14. What makes for a successful National Names Authority
KEY PRIORITIES ESTABLISHED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development
- Maintenance of international peace and security
- Development in Africa
- Promotion and protection of human rights
- Effective coordination of humanitarian assistance
- Promotion of justice and international law
- Disarmament
- Drug control, crime prevention and combating terrorism

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1. NO POVERTY
2. ZERO HUNGER
3. GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
4. QUALITY EDUCATION
5. GENDER EQUALITY
6. CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION
7. AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY
8. DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
9. INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
10. REDUCED INEQUALITIES
11. SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
12. RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
13. CLIMATE ACTION
14. LIFE BELOW WATER
15. LIFE ON LAND
16. PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
17. PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
Actions requested by the General Assembly

1. An improved and more effective **institutional framework** for sustainable development

2. A global framework for financing development post-2015 - **Data, monitoring and follow-up**

3. **Follow-up and review** of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level

4. Strengthening the Economic and Social Council

5. Impact of **rapid technological change** on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals
### Geographical Names and SDG targets and indicators

**SDG 1: No poverty**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target / Indicator</th>
<th>Place name connection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target 1.4 Equal rights to ownership, basic services, technology and economic resources</td>
<td>Location and extent defined through place names</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indicator 1.1.1 Proportion of poverty by geographic location

Indicator 1.4.1 Access to basic services

Indicator 1.4.2 Legally recognized land ownership

---

**MODULE ACTIVITY – Connecting the SDG’s**

Can you connect geographical names to other SDG'S, targets and indicators?

**Global Indicator Framework after 2023 refinement.English.xlsx** (live.com)

i. Select one goal, one indicator and related target, then describe how geographical names are relevant to the collection of data necessary for the achievement, monitoring and management of the goal.

Copy relevant cells from the excel sheet and add a column -place name connection.
What precipitated the creation of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names

1. Some examples of problems are:
   a. Places having different names in different languages – for example, Jerusalem/El Quds;
   b. Places having different spellings in different languages – for example, Geneva/Geneve/Genf/Ginebra/Ginevra;
   c. Different methods of transliteration from one alphabet to another – for example from Arabic: Wadi el Jabal/Ouadi el Djebel/Ouadi el Gabal;
   d. Different methods of transcribing ideographic languages (for example, Chinese) to alphabetic languages;
   e. Differing methods of rendering names from unwritten languages;
   f. The exact extent of named geographical features;
   g. Variations in the meanings of common geographic terms; for example, “creek” may refer to an inlet from the sea or to a small stream far from the sea
UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names

- A subsidiary body of ECOSOC
- Promotes standardization of geographical names in response to national requirements
- Creates and follows-up on the implementation of resolutions
- Provides a forum for discussion – geographers, linguists, administrators, GIS specialists, cartographers ...
- Supported by a Secretariat at UNHQ (NY)
- Creates working groups and task teams to focus on specific areas of current concern and interest
- Has 24 geographical/linguistic divisions for grassroots work
UNGEGN’s aims

- Encourage the creation of national names authorities
  - backed by legislation
  - respect local usage of names
  - collect, store and disseminate authorized names - for government and public use
- Raise awareness of the value and benefits of geographical names standardization
- Recognize the value of geographical names both to identify place and as elements of cultural heritage
- Develop single scientifically-based systems of romanization
- Contribute to work of UN bodies and collaborate with non-UN organizations
Early days of UNGEGN

- **1959 – Resolution 715A (XXVII) of ECOSOC**
  - To bring together experts to advise on geographical names for use in UN Cartography

- **1960 – 1st meeting of experts in New York**
  - USA, France, UK, Iran, Guatemala, China

- **1967 - First Conference held in Geneva**
  - 11 conferences every 5 years until 2017
  - 30 UNGEGN sessions – two (2) between conferences
    - New York, Geneva, Vienna, Nairobi, Bangkok

Meredith Burrill, USA
### Some Major Milestones – 1970s & 1980s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>First Working Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>“UNEGGN” and first Divisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Toponymic Guidelines started – e.g. Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>First Toponymy Training Course - Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Compendium of Resolutions started</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>First UNEGHN Newsletter (now Bulletin)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Josef Breu, Austria

Ferjan Ormeling, Snr Netherlands
Milestones – 2000s

2001  First brochure published
2002  UNGEGN website launched
2004  Task Team for Africa
       Online UNGEGN World geo-names database
2010  Online database of Resolutions
2012  Web-based training course
2016  Formalized cooperation with UN-GGIM (started in 2010)
UNGEGN Structure

Supported by the UN Statistics Division through the UNGEGN Secretariat

UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)

UNGEIGN Bureau

- Geographical Names Data Management
- Toponymic Terminology
- Romanization Systems
- Funding & Training Courses in Toponymy
- Exonyms
- Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage

Divisions
24 linguistic/geographical divisions

- Evaluation, Implementation & Publicity
- Task Team for Africa
- Toponymic Guidelines
- Country Names

UNGEIGN Secretariat (UN Statistics Division)

UNGEIGN liaison with scientific groups

Working groups
Officers of UNGEGN

Chairperson
• Mr. Pierre Jaillard, France

Vice-Chairpersons
• Mr. Sungjae Choo, Republic of Korea
• Ms. Susan Birtles, Australia

Rapporteurs
• Ms. Wendy Shaw, New Zealand
• Ms. Ana Cristina Resende, Brazil
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Sub-Division</th>
<th>Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa Central</td>
<td>Baltic</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa East</td>
<td>Celtic</td>
<td>Latin America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa South</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Norden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa West</td>
<td>Dutch- and German-speaking</td>
<td>Pacific South-West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>East Central and South-East Europe</td>
<td>Portuguese-speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia East (other than China)</td>
<td>Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia</td>
<td>Romano-Hellenic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia South-East</td>
<td>East Mediterranean (other than Arabic)</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia South-West (other than Arabic)</td>
<td>French-speaking</td>
<td>United States / Canada</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
UNGEGN working groups

- Romanization
- Training
- Geo-names Data Mgmt
- Evaluation / implementation
- Terminology
- Exonyms
- Publicity / funding
- Country names
- Cultural heritage
- Task Team for Africa
- Coordination of Toponymic Guidelines
UNGEGN Liaison with other Organizations

1. International Cartographic Association (ICA)
2. Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)
3. International Council of Onomastic Sciences (ICOS)
4. International Council on Indigenous Place Names (ICIPN)
5. International Hydrographic Organization (IHO)
6. International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Technical Committee 211 (TC/211)
7. Pan-American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH)
8. Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR)
9. Unicode Consortium
The policies and regulations governing the meetings of the UNGEGN are laid out in the Rules of Procedure (Decision 2018/264).

- They constitute a set of procedures and conducts that ensure the proper functioning of meetings.
- All participants are obliged to respect these rules and follow the procedures.

The Rules of Procedure are available here:

UNGE GN Rules of Procedure

- **DEFINITIONS** Rule 2
- **COMPOSITION** Rule 3
- **REPRESENTATION FOR SESSIONS** Rule 4
- **SESSIONS** Rule 5
- **AGENDA** Rule 6
- **BUREAU** Rules 7 to 9
- **SECRETARIAT** Rules 10 to 12
  - **CONDUCT OF BUSINESS** Rules 13 to 24
- **DECISION MAKING** Rules 25 to 36
- **ELECTIONS** Rules 37 to 39
- **LANGUAGES AND INTERPRETATION** Rules 40 to 41
- **DOCUMENTS** Rules 42 to 43
- **RECORDS AND MEETINGS** Rules 44 to 45
- **SUBSIDIARY BODIES** Rules 46 to 47
- **PARTICIPATION OF OBSERVERS** Rule 48
- **AMENDMENTS** Rule 49
Evolution of UNGEGN – recent history

- **2017 – Reorganization to “new” UNGEGN**
  - To convene every 2 years starting in 2019
  - Reports to ECOSOC

- **2019 – Creating Strategic Plan**
  - Including Programme of Work
    - Document (CRP.94) for approval at this session (Ag #7)

- **2021 – After approval of Strategic Plan**
  - Inviting Member States to become involved in the implementation of the Programme of Work
Overview: structure and main contents

Five strategies are:
1. Technical expertise
2. Relationships, links and connections
3. Effective work programmes
4. Culture, heritage and language recognition
5. Promotion and capacity building
Overview: structure and main contents

- Composed of foreword, executive summary, introduction (UNEGGN history, outreach, SWOT), vision, values, aims, five strategies plus alignment to SDGs, programme of work for five strategies, implementation framework (organization, monitoring, reporting and evaluation, and financing), and appendix and abbreviation references.

- Programme of work provides current status and further needs, action items, actors and time frame for each strategy.
Financing, implementation, monitoring and updating

Explore possibility of establishing an **UNGEGN trust fund** for capacity building and enabling participation

**A living document**, subject to continued reassessment and revision

**Monitoring the implementation** of the plan and, proposing adjustments proposed to be done by the Bureau and the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation with the support of the Secretariat, and report the progress to the Group of Experts for approval, at its biennial sessions – every two years
### Benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UN bodies</th>
<th>UNGEGN</th>
<th>Member States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Informed of UNGEGN’s future priorities and seeking for cooperation, coordination and guidance</td>
<td>• Long-term perspective of its development path, including future directions, focuses and priorities • More alignment with other UN bodies and more support to the broader UN initiatives, e.g. the 2030 Agenda • Operational efficiency, effective allocation of resources</td>
<td>• Joining a broader framework of geographical names standardization and sharing good practices • Strengthened support by UNGEGN for standardization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MODULE ACTIVITY - UNGEGN Strategic Plan

Quickly review the UNGEGN Strategic Plan and Programme of work (see leaflet - UNGEGN_A3_Overview_document_Digital_file.pdf)

i. Does your National Names Body have a strategic plan and programme of work?

ii. Consider the work being done or to be done in your National Names Body and think about how the UNGEGN Strategic Plan applies and can support your work.

iii. Select one strategy which is most relevant and explain why.

iv. Based on the Strategy selected, identify/develop one objective and related two activities relevant to your national names body.
Why do we name places?

i. To ensure the capacity to unambiguously identify and locate geographical entities and places, as an essential reference system for services, infrastructure and public administration.

ii. Ensuring that the valuable record of a country’s places names with its variety of sources, reflecting unique patterns of settlement is preserved and accessible.

iii. To preserve geographical names and their variants over time, protect culture and heritage and contribute to historical information.
IDENTIFYING THE NEED FOR THE CREATION OF A NAMES AUTHORITY

One strong argument generally used focuses on the consolidation of effort with less overall costs in geographical names collection, management and dissemination, generating consistent results and greater benefit to whole of government entities, private sector and academic institutions.

UN Resolutions

- UNCSGN resolution I/4a 1967 underlines need to establish national agencies ... again V/15 1987
- Importance of toponyms in spatial data infrastructure ... UN Regional Cartographic Conferences, 2000, 2001 and UN res. VIII/6, 2002
- Preservation of toponyms as elements of identity and cultural heritage ... VIII/9 and IX/4 + link with UNESCO
The IGIF – what is it about?

The IGIF is a multi-dimensional Framework aimed at strengthening national geospatial information management, particularly in developing countries.

Overarching Strategic Framework
PART 1

Implementation Guides
PART 2

Country Level Action Plans
PART 3

WHY?
7 Principles
8 Goals
9 Strategic Pathways

WHAT?
9 Strategic Pathways, provides guidance
3 principle areas of influence
4 key elements per pathway
36 total key elements

HOW, WHEN, WHO?
Specific per country
Identifies what is needed for national GIS
It is prescriptive
9 Strategic Pathways solve the IGIF puzzle ...with 36 Key Elements
THE CREATION OF A NAMES AUTHORITY

i. Identification of a national issue (economic, social, environmental) that standardized names are critical to addressing, the issue preferably relevant to governments national development priority.

ii. Document the requirement, make the case, if possible, prepare a cost benefit analysis. Decision makers always want to know what are the costs and the benefits.

iii. Evaluate existing government structures, the leadership, operational priorities direction and future plans of ministries and departments. Determine which body would be best suited to manage a national names body. Would it be the National Mapping Agency, the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Culture, the National Library and archives, the Ministry of Education.

iv. Identify partners, collaborators, the champion, at the senior executive level, with the advocacy, communication and networking skills needed to open the right doors and make the presentations and appeals needed from the ministry, to Cabinet to parliament (depending on your national governance arrangements.)

v. Establish clearly defined objectives of the names authority, principles and procedures for the conduct of geographical names standardization. Once the goals, principles and procedures have been decided, one must obtain legal authority. This may be received via policy directive, an order, or legislation.
A clearly stated mandate

Many national authorities established through legislation
• Act of Parliament (1998) South Africa (SAGNC)
• Board Act: New Zealand (NZGB, 1946, 2008)
• Decree: Israel (1951); Madagascar (KPMA, 1973)
• Cabinet document: Malaysia (NCGN, 2002)

Some countries have legislation regarding names
• Ireland: Official Languages Act, 2003
• New Zealand: since 1998 Māori place names for maps
• Norway: since 1990 Norwegian, Saami & Finnish names
• Estonia: since 1996 .. include language & spelling rules
ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL NAMES AUTHORITY

Key, essential elements for the operation of an authority are -

1. Leadership - providing strategic direction.
2. Staff - job descriptions outlining required qualification and skills and deciding on numbers depending on the responsibilities based on legislation and responsibilities, given size of names standardization portfolio.
3. A names committee/Board on Geographic names/national Names Advisory Council – consisting of a cross section of experts with varied backgrounds relevant to names standardization representing departments of government, academia, the private sector and civil society. Creates an environment that engenders trust, transparency and inclusion.
4. Funding
5. Communication and Awareness
MODELS OF NATIONAL NAMES AUTHORITIES

The choice depends on the nature of the country

1. Default if no names board
2. Centralized national names board
   • all decisions under one roof
   • by sub-committees: feature types, language
3. Decentralized to regional names boards
   • with central umbrella coordinating authority
   • with regional committees
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Legal Instrument for the Authority</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Geographical Names Board of Canada</td>
<td>Established under Order in Council. First created in 1897</td>
<td>A multi-jurisdictional national body. Chairperson appointed by Minister of Natural Resources Canada (NRCan). Secretariat services provided by NRCan</td>
<td>Representatives from 10 provinces and three territories, departments and agencies of federal government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>Cyprus Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names <a href="http://www.geonoma.gov.cy">www.geonoma.gov.cy</a></td>
<td>Formally established by decision of the Council of Minister 1979</td>
<td>Permanent committee appointed by Minister of Education and Culture; with sub-committees</td>
<td>Cross section of place name experts - surveyors, linguist, archaeologist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechia</td>
<td>The Czech Commission on Geographical Names</td>
<td>Established in 1974</td>
<td>Secretariat of Commission is part of the Czech Land Survey Office.</td>
<td>The Commission cooperates with various institutions and individuals - linguists, onomastics etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Danish Place Name Commission <a href="http://www.stednavne.info">www.stednavne.info</a>, <a href="http://www.danmarksstednavne.dk">www.danmarksstednavne.dk</a>.</td>
<td>Established in 1910 and governed by Governmental Order 1978</td>
<td>Commission and Secretariat in the University of Copenhagen, Institute of Names Research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Commission for Italian Official Toponomy</td>
<td>Special Decree of March 1911 replaced by law N.605 in 1949 which was repealed in 2008.</td>
<td>Commission created in 2011 within the Italian Geographic Military Institute</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>The New Zealand Geographic Board Nga Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa <a href="http://www.linz.govt.nz/regulatory/place-names/about-new-zealand-geographic-board">http://www.linz.govt.nz/regulatory/place-names/about-new-zealand-geographic-board</a></td>
<td>Operates under the New Zealand Geographic Board Act 2008</td>
<td>Committee and sub-committees with secretariat services provided by Land Information New Zealand</td>
<td>inter-agency members with representation from private sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>National Survey Authority</td>
<td>Ministerial decision of 1983</td>
<td>Specialised Branch in the National Survey Authority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Korea</td>
<td>Korea Committee on Geographical Names</td>
<td>Operations based on Act on the Establishment and management of Spatial Information. Committee first founded in 1980</td>
<td>Integrated Committee that is final authority that decides on geographical names</td>
<td>Members from State administration, universities, autonomous communities, academies of languages and other toponymy related institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>National Geographical Institute, Specialised Committee for Geographical Names <a href="http://www.ign.es">http://www.ign.es</a></td>
<td>Royal Decree 1545/2007 - Ministry of Development</td>
<td>State Agencies and Autonomous Communities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESPONSIBILITIES OF A NAMES AUTHORITY

1. Responsibilities and scope of decisions?
2. Developing policies and guidelines to support names approval or rejection
3. Making decisions/recommendations on names
4. Assuring minutes, names decisions ... are made generally available
5. Other tasks?
   - displays, talks, workshops
   - promotion in media, conferences
Reflecting on your national situation, identify two strong arguments in support of creating a national names authority, consisting of a Director, staff for names collection, management and dissemination and the coordination of an Names Advisory Committee.