




**United Nations Group of Experts  
on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)**

**Prepared by - Rudolph MATINDAS,  
Indonesia and William WATT, Australia**



## **INTRODUCTION**

In 1948 the problem of standardization of geographical names was raised, particularly with regard to cartographic services.

This led to the establishment of UNGEGN

UNGEGN is tasked with:

- Encouraging countries that do not have name standardization mechanisms, databases (digital or manual) or national gazetteers to develop these;
- Supporting the development of single Romanization systems for languages with other forms of script;
- Encouraging the dissemination and wider use of nationally authorized names;
- Developing of communication and training tools.



## What is UNGEGN?

UNGEEN is not:

- Decision making body.
- Agency to compel countries to follow a particular path.

UNGEEN is:

- A forum where best practice methodologies and direction can be presented, reviewed, adapted and adopted at the national level.
- A group of place names experts, cartographers, surveyors, linguists, historians and geographers who work together in a spirit of cooperation to assist each other develop, maintain and improve the process of standardizing place names.



## STANDARDIZATION- What is it?

The methods used to:

•Record existing place names – includes:

- Identification of authoritative sources.
- Method of spelling.
- Romanization of no roman script.
- Feature types.
- Relationship between generic terms and specific names.
- Transliteration of no written languages.

•Creation of new names – includes

- Consultation methods.
- Education strategies
- Implementation strategies

•Legislation

•Office management – includes:

- Central or regional structures.
- Jurisdiction within agencies

•Dissemination of information – includes:

- Mapping
- Databases
- Web based application
- Signage



**ICSM**  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE ON  
SURVEYING & MAPPING

## STANDARDIZATION BENEFITS

### Benefits include:

- Heritage retention and revitalisation;
- Trade and commerce;
- Population censuses and national statistics;
- Property rights and cadastre;
- Urban and regional planning ;
- Environmental management - sustainable development and conservation;
- Natural disaster relief, emergency preparedness and receipt of aid;
- Security strategy and peacekeeping operations;
- Search and rescue operations;
- Map and atlas production;
- Automatic navigation ;
- Tourism ;
- Communications , including postal and new services.




**ICSM**  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE ON  
SURVEYING & MAPPING

## UNGEGN Methodology

Major Conference every 5 years (last one in 2007, next 2012)

### Members

- Report on:
  - Progress of projects
  - Emerging technologies
  - New Initiatives
  - Emerging trends
- Network with other countries facing similar issues
- Attend meetings of Divisions and Working Groups



# UNGEKN Methodology

During the previous 9 conferences, 150 resolutions have been passed, covering:

- Standardization of Geographical Names
- United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names
- International Cooperation in the Standardization of Geographical Names
- Toponymic Guidelines for Map and Other Editors
- National Standardization
- Regional Meetings
- Education and Training in Treatment of Geographical Names
- Terminology, including Glossaries
- List Country Names
- Preparation of Gazetteers
- Bibliographies
- Exchange of Experience
- Automated Data Processing / Digital Data
- Exonyms
- Romanization
- Romanization by Languages
- Maritime and Undersea feature Names
- Names of Features Beyond a Single Sovereignty
- Extraterrestrial Feature Names
- Geographical Names from Unwritten Languages
- Manual of National Name Standardization
- Aids to Pronunciation
- Minority Languages
- Physiographic Names
- Geographical Names on Tourist Maps

Three UNGEKN Sessions between Conferences to monitor the progress of implementation of the resolutions.



# UNGEKN Structure

## UNGEKN Divisions and Working Groups

### Geographic and Linguistic Divisions

<a href="#"><u>Africa Central Division</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>East Central and South-East Europe Division</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Africa East Division</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Africa South Division</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>East Mediterranean Division (other than Arabic)</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Africa West Division</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>French-speaking Division</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Arabic Division</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>India Division</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Asia East Division (other than China)</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Latin America Division</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Asia South-East and Pacific South-West Division</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Norden Division</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic)</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Portuguese-speaking Division</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Baltic Division</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Romano-Hellenic Division</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Celtic Division</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>United Kingdom Division</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>China Division</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>USA/Canada Division</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Dutch- and German-speaking Division</u></a>	



# UNGEGN Structure

## UNGEGN Divisions and Working Groups

### Working Groups

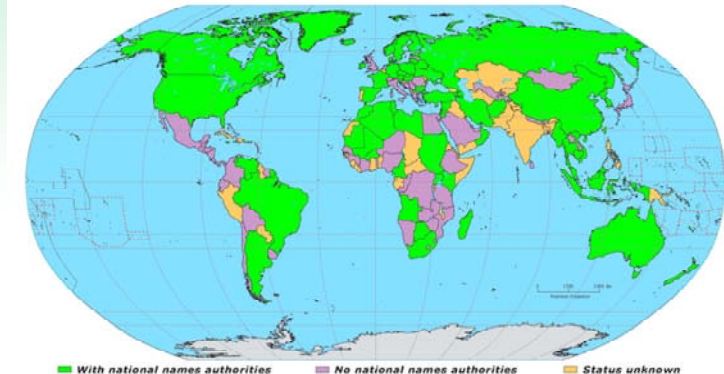
- [Working Group on Country Names](#)
- [Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers](#)
- [Working Group on Toponymic Terminology](#)
- [Working Group on Publicity and Funding](#)
- [Working Group on Romanization Systems](#)
- [Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy](#)
- [Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation](#)
- [Working Group on Exonyms](#)
- [Working Group on Pronunciation](#)
- [Working Group on the Promotion of Recording and Use of Indigenous, Minority and Regional Language Group Geographical Names](#)



# UNGEGN SUCCESS

## Countries with a national names authority

*Geographical Names Authorities (September 2009)*





**ICSM**  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE ON  
SURVEYING & MAPPING

## SUPPORT FROM UNGEGN FOR JURISDICTIONAL PROGRAMS

For countries with an established program:

- Forum for:

- Sharing of ideas
- Keeping current with emerging technologies and issues

- Available through:

- Conferences
- UNGEGN sessions
- Formal structures of divisions and working groups
- Informal networking contacts.



**ICSM**  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE ON  
SURVEYING & MAPPING

## SUPPORT FROM UNGEGN FOR JURISDICTIONAL PROGRAMS

For countries without a working established  
program:

- Publications:

- Manual for the National Standardization of Geographical Names
- Technical Reference Manual for the Standardisation of Geographical Names

- Training sessions (Working Group on Training Courses  
on Toponymy - web site

<http://toponymycourses.geog.uu.nl/>)