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PCGN Meeting Minutes, Monday 22nd November 2010

Present

███████████████ Intelligence Collection Group (ICG), Chair
Intelligence Collection Group (ICG)
Hydrographic Office (HO)
Intelligence Collection Group (ICG)
BBC Monitoring (BBCM)
Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)
Intelligence Collection Group (ICG)
Secretary PCGN
PCGN Toponymist
PCGN Toponymist

1. ███████████ opened the meeting, introduced himself and invited other attendees to do likewise. ███████████ and ███████████ were welcomed to the meeting. Apologies for absence had been received from ███████████ (FCO); ███ (FCO); ███████████ (Royal Scottish Geographical Society); ███ (BBC Monitoring); ███████████ (Defence Intelligence Analysis Staff); ███████████ and ███████ (Ordnance Survey).

2. The Minutes of the 182nd Meeting on Monday 19th April 2010 were considered and approved, and it was noted that the action items arising had been completed.

3. The Chairman described a meeting that had been jointly hosted by ███████████ ███ Commander ICG, and ███████████, Head of Information Management Group, FCO, which had been held on 11th November at FCO and attended by a number of senior government personnel with the aim of publicising PCGN, further engaging HMG with its work and broadening membership across UK government. It was felt to have been a productive meeting, which amongst other things had discussed procedures to reinforce joint MOD and FCO approval and authorisation of PCGN policies. To emphasise PCGN's work as a body of cross-governmental function, endorsement from the National Security Council would be sought.

4. It was noted that the FCO meeting was part of a consultative process to consider the most appropriate and efficacious structure and governance of PCGN, and it was felt that the agreements to reformat the Committee Meeting made at the 182nd meeting[1] would allow the

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[1] See Minutes of Meeting, 19/04/10, paragraph 5.

Committee to function as a consultative group, the meeting providing a forum for staff to put forward policy proposals and discussion topics for the Members' endorsement and input.

5. ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ reported on the results of a questionnaire that had been circulated to Members to elicit feedback on PCGN customer requirements. Responses had reported that whilst Members felt PCGN documentation was distributed to relevant areas of their organisations, general levels of awareness of the function of PCGN could still be much improved. There had been consensus on support for the new style of *Toponymic Factfile* document, and interest, too, in receiving training materials to facilitate promoting the function and work of PCGN.

6. ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ reported on recent work completed by the staff. A report detailing the most significant items, presented thematically, was circulated (and would be provided digitally) and it was hoped that Members and their colleagues would thus be able easily to identify items relevant to their organisation. Particular areas of policy focus had been Afghanistan, Maritime issues, Pakistan and Sudan (on the upcoming referendum on southern Sudan's independence); considerable work on Operational products had been completed for ICG, and responses to *ad hoc* queries on a large variety of subjects and regions for other Members' departments as well as BGN, the United Nations and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) had been provided. It was noted that the style of this report of work would be further modified to include details of the status of policy decisions, with deadlines where appropriate, to facilitate and encourage Members' input.

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7. In the spirit of the greater focus on Members' interests, the attendees were asked to report on toponymic matters arising in their respective organisations. ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮, noting that the BBCM structure was undergoing some change, described recent discussions within BBCM regarding the appropriate representation of names in Ukraine.

8. ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ reported that documentation received from PCGN was systematically circulated to desk officers and research analysts for their feedback, and that efforts to raise the profile of PCGN amongst FCO staff would be undertaken.

9. ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ reported that updates to the UKHO series of charts over the Aegean Sea was now complete. It was further reported that a geographical names module had been included on training courses for new staff at HO. This course had been run to good effect once already and would be run several more times in the coming months.

10. ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ outlined responsibility for names at DGC and reported on the processing of geographical names within the organisation, the Geographical Names Branch providing a bridge between research and production work. ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ reported on recent moves to improve accessibility to such information.

11. Expanding further on the work of the Geographical Names Branch, ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ provided the first in the prospective series of Member department briefings, reporting on the number of work of the Branch at the Defence Geographic Centre, showing a variety of products and describing the consequential interaction with PCGN. The Branch's work included training and promoting awareness of toponymic issues across the DGC, as well as provision of geographical names for all materials produced by DGC. DGC's work towards the cross-governmental focus on geography was also described: the E-Foundation project aimed to make geographical information available in geospatial form across government. A demonstration of the case study project for Afghanistan had been prepared, which included geographical names generated from NGA's GeoNet Names Server. An illustrative PowerPoint document was available for Members on request.

12. The Members considered matters of geographical names policy formulation. ███████ ███ introduced a paper restating the HMG geographical names policy for Cyprus and examining the political implications. The policy had been altered in 2007, in detailed consultation with FCO, and acknowledged both the government of Cyprus' sovereignty over the island but also the reality of Turkish names in northern Cyprus. It was noted that few products had in fact implemented this policy, due either to production scheduling or hesitation, and PCGN was keen to understand the reaction of OGDs to the policy. ███████ ███ reported that the Deputy High Commissioner to Cyprus had written to endorse the 2007 policy, and this letter would be forwarded to DGC, UKHO and PCGN.

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13. ███████████████ described the change that had been agreed by PCGN and BGN to geographical names policy for Taiwan[2] adopting *Hanyu Pinyin* Roman-script spellings for Taiwan. A paper describing the background and current situation in Taiwan had been circulated and ███████████ requested that Members consider the impact of this change within their organisation and present feedback accordingly. Endorsement from the FCO would be awaited and a final policy statement, including a list of proposed "conventional" names, felt to be too recognisable with their former Wade-Giles spelling to abandon, would then be circulated.

Action Members
Action FCO

14. Additionally, and as agreed at the 182nd Meeting, the PCGN staff gave a number of briefings on pertinent geographical names issues. ███████████████ reported on the new Constitution in Burma, describing the background to the PCGN policy for Burma, noting that a romanization system was being developed for the significant Shan minority language, and detailing the changes in the state title and administrative structure of Burma since the implementation of the new Constitution. The report would be distributed digitally for Members' feedback.

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15. ███████████████ described the toponymic policy for Iran and reported on the creation of a new province in that country.

16. ███████████████ re-stated the geographical names policy for Kosovo and reported on the current administrative structure, noting that the establishment of two final Municipalities outlined in the 2008 administrative law was complex and not yet finalised. ███████████ reported that a Research Analyst had provided comments on the paper, and specifically on the creation of the Municipalities, and would forward the response to PCGN. DGC offered to solicit input from the EU Geo Officer.

Action FCO
Action DGC

17. ███████████████ described the recently compiled *Toponymic Factfile* for Mali, recalling that this series aimed to provide a short compendium of toponymic information on a relevant political or humanitarian situation. ███████████████ described a *Toponymic Factfile* for Mauritania, a country which was difficult toponymically given the linguistic complexity and lack of sources. The PCGN policy to use official French-style spellings was often difficult to implement, through both lack of availability and inconsistency. The Arabic forms were often a useful supplement. Comments from Members or the relevant staff in their departments were solicited for each of the *Toponymic Factfiles* and other briefing topics.

Action Members

18. Under *Other Business*, ███████████████ reported that the dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles as a political entity had taken place as outlined in the policy paper[3] that had been distributed in August 2010. ISO was currently finalising the country and administrative codes for the new entities; being members of the expert committee establishing the codes, PCGN

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[2] See Report of 26th BGN/PCGN Conference.
[3] See PCGN paper: *The forthcoming dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles, 10 October 2010*

had been closely involved in the review and discussion process and would circulate ISO's final codes once they were available.

19. The date of the next Committee meeting was yet to be determined, though was likely to be in early spring 2011. The Chairman closed the meeting thanking the Members for their attendance and active participation.

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