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PCGN Meeting Minutes, Monday 23rd May 2011

Present

[REDACTED] Intelligence Collection Group (ICG) (Acting Chair)
[REDACTED] Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)
[REDACTED] Intelligence Collection Group (ICG)
[REDACTED] Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)
[REDACTED] Hydrographic Office (HO)
[REDACTED] Intelligence Collection Group (ICG)
[REDACTED] BBC Monitoring (BBCM)
[REDACTED] BBC Monitoring (BBCM)
[REDACTED] Ordnance Survey (OS)
[REDACTED] Head PCGN
[REDACTED] PCGN Toponymist
[REDACTED] PCGN Toponymist

[REDACTED] acting as Chairman in the absence of the [REDACTED], who, as newly appointed Director DGC, would henceforth be the regular Chair, introduced himself and invited other attendees to do likewise. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] were welcomed to the meeting. Apologies for absence had been received from [REDACTED] (ICG); [REDACTED] (Royal Scottish Geographical Society) and [REDACTED]

2. The Minutes of the 183rd Meeting on Monday 22nd November 2010 were considered and approved, and the action items arising studied. Of particular note were that the FCO had endorsed the Cyprus policy¹, input from the EU Geo Officer in Kosovo as to the geographical names policy was still being pursued by ICG², and the ISO codes for the entities formerly constituting the Netherlands Antilles had been finalised³.

Action
ICG

3. [REDACTED] reported on recent work completed by the staff. A thematic report detailing the most significant items had been circulated and [REDACTED] noted that items for particular input and attention by the Members were highlighted. [REDACTED] reported that a preponderance of work had been on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) as a result of events in that region. Additionally, considerable work on Operational

Action
Members

¹ See Minutes of 183rd Meeting, 22nd November 2010, paragraph 12

² See Minutes of 183rd Meeting, 22nd November 2010, paragraph 16

³ See Minutes of 183rd Meeting, 22nd November 2010, paragraph 18 and paper *Netherlands Antilles: a concluding note*, May 2011

products had been completed for ICG, including on the creation of Perso-Arabic script maps over Afghanistan, and responses to *ad hoc* queries had been provided on a large variety of subjects and regions for other Members' departments. A significant proportion of time had also been spent on international work, with the United Nations, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), and the Unicode Consortium and on bilateral work, with the US BGN.

4. Attendees reported on toponymic matters arising in their respective organisations. ICG reported in more detail on their work covering MENA and Afghanistan, showing an example of the Perso-Arabic script mapping already mentioned, and described a project to compile a country-specific gazetteer service in an ArcReader format for dissemination across government to maximise access to up-to-date names data. Ten such projects had been compiled, and customer feedback on these had been positive.
5. [REDACTED] reported that BBCM was in the process of moving to a new IT system, and certain restructuring was taking place which would affect the publication of certain products. [REDACTED] noted that PCGN used a number of these products as they provided vital access to global information, and was disappointed to learn that they would no longer be available. BBCM confirmed that much information would still be available, but that the compilation of this material in digestible 'publications' would in some cases have ceased. [REDACTED] would forward a list of changes to PCGN. Action
BBCM
6. [REDACTED] reported that PCGN had reviewed and updated the content of charts over UAE, Iran and Oman, and particularly noted [REDACTED] assistance with these.
7. Ordnance Survey reported that a new database management system was being developed, which, amongst other developments, would allow retention of historical records, rather than the current linear data-replacement structure that meant superseded data was lost. It was also reported that, given a relaxation of licensing constraints, OS was to connect with the *EuroGeoNames* project, a portal linking to national mapping agencies names data across Europe; and that, through the *Location Lingo* project, in collaboration with the English Project, OS was also engaged in collecting place names used colloquially⁴. [REDACTED] additionally thanked OS for providing information on UK geographical names which had been used in the report of the UK Division at the recent Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) (and see paragraph 17 below).
8. FCO had undergone an organisational restructure: [REDACTED] had taken over the mapping service role, and this service was to be expanded. The continual review and update as required of briefing maps continued. Work on a thesaurus and a geographical taxonomy was underway, and PCGN had provided input for the latter. A potential collaboration with the UK Border Agency had been mooted and would be pursued. Action
FCO &
PCGN
9. [REDACTED] provided the second in a series of Member Department briefings, expanding on the toponymic work at HO, and describing his role as advisor on geographical names. Charts were reviewed and updated according to requirement. The increasing presence of Electronic Navigational Charts (ENCs), and adoption of foreign charts and bilateral exchange agreements, had each brought new challenges of review and update, given sometimes differing policies between governments, and [REDACTED] outlined

⁴ See more at: <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/media/news/2010/oct/locationlingo.html> and www.locationlingo.net

examples relating to South Korea, Greece and Turkey. [REDACTED] noted that he had developed a geographical names training course, which had now been given a number of times to HO staff; it was felt that the organisation's understanding of geographical names issues had accordingly been strengthened. [REDACTED] thanked [REDACTED] for his briefing, and invited other Members to contact [REDACTED] with offers to provide a briefing at the next meeting.

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Members

10. The Members considered matters of geographical names policy formulation. [REDACTED] introduced a PCGN recommendation to alter the romanisation policy for South Korea from the McCune-Reischauer system to the South Korean national system. This national system, developed by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and therefore frequently seen as the MOCT system, had been introduced in 2000 and had been closely monitored by PCGN since that time. It was felt, given its now comprehensive use in South Korea, that for practical purposes the system was more relevant, albeit less technically and linguistically appealing, for use in that country. It was further noted that the US BGN had recently approved the same change. The Members agreed that the romanisation policy for South Korea should be altered to adopt the South Korean system.
11. [REDACTED] introduced a paper outlining PCGN policies for countries of North Africa. Members were requested to review the respective policies, in conjunction with regional experts from their organisations, and to provide feedback in order to re-affirm the appropriateness of the policies ahead of a joint meeting with the US BGN where these countries' geographical names were to be discussed.
12. [REDACTED] reported that the policy change to reflect *Hanyu Pinyin* romanisations of Chinese characters for names in Taiwan, as agreed at the 183rd meeting, had been implemented. An information paper had been disseminated outlining the change and detailing a number of "conventional" names, which were felt to be too recognisable in their former Wade-Giles spellings to abandon; these would be retained either instead of, or in addition to, the *Hanyu Pinyin* spelling⁵.
13. PCGN gave a number of briefings on pertinent geographical names issues. [REDACTED] presented a guide to understanding Arabic language toponyms, which included description of language, script and romanisation issues. Feedback on the style and content of the document was solicited.
14. [REDACTED] described the recently compiled *Toponymic Factfiles* for Bahrain and Libya, recalling that this series aimed to provide a short compendium of toponymic information on a relevant political or humanitarian situation. These documents had been compiled as a point of urgency in response to the political events in each of those countries. The additional section listing significant locations was felt to be very useful.
15. [REDACTED] reported on the referendum for the independence for South Sudan, noting that the new country would come into being on 9th July 2011 with the formal name *Republic of South Sudan* and the country name *South Sudan*. It was, however, noted that the inclusion of the Abyei region within South Sudan was not yet decided.
16. [REDACTED] introduced *Toponymic Factfiles* for Syria and Yemen, noting that these documents included lists of the respective countries' second-order administrative divisions.

Action
Members

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Members

⁵ See Minutes of 183rd Meeting, 22nd November 2010, paragraph 13

The Members confirmed that this was valuable supplementary information, and it was suggested that, if it were possible, this information might be included also in map form and co-ordinates given in the list presentation in subsequent documents.

17. [REDACTED] reported on issues relating to country names and coding. An interim government in Fiji had announced the reversion of the state title of that country to *Republic of Fiji* and had stipulated use of the adjectival form *Fijian* in describing the government. Given the political nature of these changes, the FCO's legal team had been contacted for verification of the validity of the adjectival change. This was awaited. It was noted that the FCO's online document *Geographical Names and Information* had already updated the state title.

Action
FCO

18. A further change was the state title *Republic of Hungary* which was to be shortened to *Hungary*. This change was to come in with a new Constitution to be introduced in January 2012. Again it was noted that this was politically charged.

[REDACTED] also reported that the guidance on naming for the *Occupied Palestinian Territories* had been modified, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

20. The requirement of a code for Kosovo was also discussed, and [REDACTED] reported that, in the absence of formal ISO3166 codes, the EU had identified XK and XKS to be recorded as ISO 'user-assigned codes', so that organisations requiring a code for Kosovo had access to standard, albeit interim, codes.

21. Under *Other Business*, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] reported on their participation at the 26th Session of UNGEGN that had taken place 2nd-6th May 2011 at the United Nations in Vienna. It had proven a fruitful, if extremely busy, Session; papers were available on the UNGEGN website⁶, and the PCGN report of the Session would be available shortly. It was also reported that [REDACTED], former Chairman of PCGN, continued as the Convenor of the UNGEGN Working Group on Publicity and Funding, and that he had developed publicity materials to highlight and promote the Group's activities. [REDACTED] work had been warmly appreciated by UNGEGN and [REDACTED] further recorded PCGN's thanks for [REDACTED] endeavours. [REDACTED] noted that given the budgetary constraints, arranging overseas travel was currently very difficult. Additionally, MOD would be suffering 25% civilian staff cuts, and there would be an impact on all expenditure. Progress towards gaining National Security Council endorsement of PCGN's position as the UK Government authority on geographical names had been made, but was not yet finalised.

22. Members would be notified of the date of the next Meeting in due course. The Chairman closed the meeting thanking the Members for their attendance and active participation.

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⁶ See <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/default.html>

Action Items and Key Decisions – Summary

- ICG would continue to pursue input from the EU Geo Officer in Kosovo as to the geographical names policy.
- Members would look through the PCGN Work Report, to follow up on those items requiring their particular input and attention.
- [REDACTED] (BBCM) would forward a list of publications that would be affected to PCGN.
- FCO and PCGN would pursue a potential collaboration with the UK Border Agency.
- Members would contact [REDACTED] with offers to provide a briefing at the next meeting.
- Members agreed that the romanisation policy for South Korea would be altered to adopt the South Korean system.
- Members would review the respective policies for countries of North Africa, in conjunction with regional experts from their organisations, and provide feedback.
- FCO would provide a position on the legal validity of changes in Fiji.
- Members would give feedback on the style and content of the guide to understanding Arabic toponyms.