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Item 5 (a) of the provisional agenda*

**Reports: Governments on the situation in their countries
and on the progress made in the standardization of
geographical names**

Report of Belarus

Executive summary**

Activities relating to the names of geographical objects in Belarus are regulated by the Belarus Law on names of geographical objects of 16 November 2010. The drafting of the Law took account of the principle of bilingualism enshrined in Belarus through the Constitution (Belarusian and Russian have the status of official languages, while Belarusian is the national language).

Coordination of the work to develop a single approach to the names of geographical objects is carried out by the Toponymic Commission under the Council of Ministers of Belarus, consisting of 24 representatives of ministries, local authorities, scientists of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and higher education institutions and cartography specialists. The current composition of the Toponymic Commission was approved in March 2018.

The State's list of names of geographical objects takes the form of the State catalogue of names of geographical objects of Belarus, which is available to the public at <http://maps.by>.

As at 1 January 2019, the State catalogue contained 36,461 names of geographical objects. In 2018, the experts responsible for the maintenance of the State Catalogue established 50 legal norms (most of them local authority decisions); these resulted in 192 changes to the Catalogue.

Names of geographical objects are recorded in the State catalogue in Belarusian and Russian, as well as in Latin letters, in accordance with the Belarusian romanization system approved at the Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, held in 2012.

* GEGN.2/2019/1.

** The full report was prepared by Irina Borodich, State Committee on Property of the Republic of Belarus. The report will be available at https://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/1st_session_UNGEGN.html, in the language of submission only, as document GEGN.2/2019/43/CRP.43.



Belarusian geographical names are transcribed into Latin letters on maps produced for foreign tourists. The most recent example of this is the maps issued for the second European Games (Minsk, 21–30 June 2019).

Information from the State catalogue is used as the basis for annual updates to the “Belarus” section of the electronic newsletter containing changes to geographical names in the participating States of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The newsletter contains changes made to the names of administrative and geographical subdivisions of the Republic of Belarus since 1997. Twenty five entries were added in 2017, and sixty three entries were added in 2018. As at 1 January 2019, the newsletter includes 1,031 names.

Since 2012, the Republic of Belarus has been standardizing names across the road network in order to bring uniformity to the use of names in Belarusian and Russian. The names used across the national road network (by population centre) are recorded in the national register of addresses, available to the public at <http://nca.by>.

The prospects for the development of Belarusian toponymy lie in the standardization and harmonization of all existing names, expansion of the State catalogue and the issuing of reference and regulatory material required for the optimization of work by local authorities and natural and legal persons, including individual entrepreneurs, when carrying out activities involving geographical names.
