



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
2 July 2012

Original: English

Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names

New York, 31 July-9 August 2012

Item 5 of the provisional agenda*

Reports on the work of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, its divisions, working groups and task teams since the Ninth Conference

Report of the Task Team for Africa

Summary**

Since the twenty-sixth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, several actions have been taken by the Task Team for Africa.

Among them, particular mention is made of the following:

(a) The joint meeting with the Government of Botswana, the Economic Commission for Africa and the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, held in Gaborone in November 2011, at which a declaration entitled “Gaborone Action Plan” was adopted.

As the result of an analysis of the situation of the standardization of geographical names in Africa, a detailed plan defining the mechanisms that would revitalize and promote the toponymic activities in Africa was set and attached to the Gaborone Action Plan.

At its meeting held in December 2011 in Cape Town, South Africa, the Statistical Commission for Africa endorsed the recommendations contained in that plan.

(b) In addition, several steps have also been initiated with the Economic Commission for Africa in order to boost the toponymic activities in Africa. It was decided that the Commission should be more involved in raising awareness about the benefits of the standardization of geographical names in different sectors: economic, cultural, social, security, emergency in case of natural disasters, and so forth.

* E/CONF.101/1.

** The full report was prepared by the Task Team for Africa and is available in the language of submission only from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf10.html>.



Thus, it was decided, by mutual agreement, that the subject of geographical names be included in the agenda of various meetings organized by the Commission, notably that of the Committee on Development Information, Science and Technology.

(c) In addition, the Task Team for Africa and the African experts, in collaboration with the Chair, the Vice-Chair of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names and representatives of the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union, took the opportunity to participate in the Workshop on the Standardization of Geographical Names, held by the South African Department of Arts and Cultures in April 2012 in Johannesburg, South Africa, to review and discuss again the Gaborone Action Plan, especially regarding the financial difficulties that may impede its implementation.

To that end and to capitalize these actions and allow the Task Team for Africa to continue to carry out properly its actions in favour of African countries and to make the intergovernmental structures at the continental and regional levels benefit from the advantages of the standardization of geographical names in the economic and social development of African countries, it was decided to send letters to the different African continental structures, such as the African Development Bank and the Economic Commission for Africa, to solicit their aid and support in implementing the provisions of the Gaborone Action Plan.

(d) Another African achievement that deserves to be mentioned is the recent development by the Economic Commission for Africa of the Africa GeoNyms software, which is being tried out by many African countries.

Finally, the Task Team for Africa, would like to express its gratitude and appreciation to all the countries that have offered their help and assistance especially for allowing some participants from African countries to attend the Conference.
