

Zero Draft Resolution for adoption by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
Upon the recommendation of the 11th Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names

Future organization and methods of work of the Group of Experts on Geographical Names

The United Nations Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolution 715 A (XXVII) of 23 April 1959, in which the Council requested the Secretary General to set up a small group of consultants to consider technical problems and to draft recommendations for the domestic standardization of geographical names and to report to the Council on its next steps;

Taking note of the Group's First Report that it is imperative to hold an international conference and ECOSOC's successive decisions on convening the Conferences;

Recalling also its decision 1314 (XLVI) of 31 May 1968, which approved the terms of reference for the Ad Hoc Group of Experts, which was later renamed as the "United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names" by the decision taken by the Council at its 1854th meeting on 4 May 1973;

Reaffirming the aims of the Group of Experts, derived from decision 1314 (XLVI) of 31 May 1968, in particular the aim to emphasize the importance of the standardization of geographical names at the national and international levels and to demonstrate the benefits to be derived from such standardization;

Recalling that, in its decision 1988/116 of 25 May 1988, the Council approved the statute and rules of procedure of the Group of Experts, and that in its decisions 1993/226 of 12 July 1993 and E/2002/306 of 25 October 2002 it approved new versions of the statute;

Taking into account General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", and *stressing* the importance of the implementation of this new ambitious Agenda, including the relevance of geographical names standardization;

Recalling the decision 29/101 (contained in E/2016/66) of the Group of Experts which welcomed the initiative of the Bureau of the Group of Experts to reflect on how its working methods could be improved, noted the specific proposals that were made and agreed that it was useful to periodically review the working methods of the Group of Experts in order to respond effectively to evolving policy needs and the changing information and communications technology environment;

Recalling its resolution (2016/27) entitled 'Strengthening institutional arrangements on geospatial information management', which stresses the need to strengthen the coordination and coherence of global geospatial information management, in capacity-building, norm-setting, data collection, data dissemination and data sharing, among others, through appropriate coordination mechanisms, including in the broader United Nations system, building on the work of the Committee of Experts and its links to the work of the Group of Experts;

Emphasizing the breadth of experience in and the contribution of the Group of Experts towards the standardization and administration of geographical names at national, regional and global levels, its impact across all global development themes, and the need to continue its work programme;

Recognizing that a robust, voluntary, participatory and integrated mechanism and structure consisting of working groups and linguistic/geographical divisions within a modern framework with revised methods of work will result in operational efficiencies and cost savings to Member States and across the United Nations system;

1. *Decides* that the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names and the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names will be discontinued in their current formats, and be subsumed by a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council [ECOSOC] that will retain their respective mandates, where relevant, as well as the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names resolutions and their implementation thereof, be named United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, hereafter known as UNGEGN, which will be composed of representatives of Member States of the United Nations, including government appointed experts, and which will focus on technical issues associated with the standardization of geographical names that may, where appropriate, support relevant aspects of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
2. *Decides* that UNGEGN will convene biennial sessions, in principle, over a period of five days beginning in 2019, the full authority to set its strategic direction and adopt resolutions to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council to be able to address the needs of a rapidly changing and expanding technical environment in a timely manner;
3. *Decides* that UNGEGN will convene its sessions in New York, with the option to convene sessions in an alternative United Nations venue or in a specific country, should a Member State commit to hosting and funding the session.
4. *Reaffirms* the need to consider how to avoid duplication and overlapping efforts, if any, as well as to strengthen the joint work between the UNGEGN and the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM), taking into account that geographical names should have a geospatial location established through the Global Geodetic Reference Framework (GGRF)
5. *Decides* that the Rules of Procedure will be drafted by the Bureau in close consultation with the Member States of the United Nations and tabled for adoption at the Economic and Social Council, in line with relevant ECOSOC bodies, in advance of the first session of UNGEGN. These rules will be the subject of an open negotiation process and will cover, among other matter, the following points:
 - (a) Identification of the structure of the Bureau, election methods and terms of service.
 - (b) Operational structures of UNGEGN, including the role and scope of any plenary sessions, technical committees, working group, or divisional structure aimed at providing support for countries in the development or refining of programs for the standardization of geographical names.
 - (c) Development of a draft agenda for the first session reflecting, wherever possible, the agendas of the most recent UNGEGN session and UNCSGN.
 - (d) Review methods for the organization structures and methods of work.
 - (e) Participation

6. Decides that the elected UNGEGN Bureau will be maintained to oversee the 2017 to 2019 transition, on an exceptional basis.