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**11th United Nations Conference on the Standardization
of Geographical Names**

New York, 8 -17 August 2017

Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

**Reflection on the past, present and future: the fiftieth anniversary
of the United Nations Conference on the Standardization
of Geographical Names**

**Future organisation and methods of work of the Group of Experts on
Geographical Names (Zero Draft Resolution)**

Submitted by the President of the Conference **

*E/CONF.105/1

**Prepared by the President of the Conference

Zero Draft Resolution for adoption by the ~~UN~~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;

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;

Reaffirms~~Reaffirming~~ the ~~basic~~ 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 which 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 ~~modalities~~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 ~~in~~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. *Reaffirms* that the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names is an expert body of the Economic and Social Council, that is composed of government-appointed experts, and that it will continue to be recognized as same, while ensuring that its work, within its existing mandate, supports relevant aspects of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

2. *Decides* that the United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names will be discontinued, and that the Group of Experts will convene biennial sessions over a period of five days beginning in 2019, with the full authority to set its strategic direction and adopt resolutions to be submitted to the Council to be able to address the needs of a rapidly changing and expanding technical environment in a timely manner;

3. *Reaffirms* that the Group of Experts will continue to 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 the session;

4. *Also reaffirms* that the Group of Experts will continue to be presided over by the Chair, and organized/coordinated in consultation with the Bureau and Working Group Convenors in accordance with the established practice and procedures adopted at previous sessions ~~of the Group of Experts and conferences~~, and that the Chair and Bureau will be elected for a four-year term, beginning in 2017;

5. *Also confirms* that the Statute and Rules of Procedure of the Group of Experts will be reviewed and amended to assure compliance with a two-year cycle of sessions, to address arrangements that will suitably combine the elements of seating by country with seating by division, and will then be tabled for adoption at the thirty first session of the Group of Experts in 2019;

6. *Reaffirms* that the Group of Experts' existing divisional and working group structure within the session agenda will be in principle retained, in view of it being well-known, and effective, with tangible results ~~in its~~ across their primary work items;

7. *Decides* to combine the agendas of the United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names and the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, to retain the items that are most pertinent to report and discuss on geographical names standardization in the coming years ~~taking into account, considering~~ the needs of the Group of Experts, national and global agendas, and changing technology;

8. *Encourages* all Member States and relevant stakeholders including ~~(non-governmental organizations, academia and the private sector)~~, to continue to actively participate, at an appropriately high level, in the work of the Group of Experts and in the implementation of relevant resolutions; and

9. *Also decides* that the Group of Experts shall keep its methods of work under review, including at its thirty-first session in 2019, in order to maintain or adjust them as appropriate.