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**United Nations Group of Experts on
Geographical Names****2021 session**

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Item 6 (a) of the provisional agenda*

**National and international standardization of
geographical names: names collection, office
treatment, national authorities, features beyond a
single sovereignty and international cooperation****New national geographical names archives service****Summary****

The full report provides details on the planning, development and deployment of a new Norwegian national geographical names archives service. The service aims at collecting all known digital and digitized sources for geographical names in one single portal to facilitate the archiving of geographical names documentation. The service is built on open semantic principles using the International Committee for Documentation-Conceptual Reference Model ontology.¹ That will enable the service to exchange data with other data sets – geographical and non-geographical – through an application programme interface. The service currently exists in prototype form, with a limited number of data sets and only some 500,000 geographical name forms. It is envisaged that the service will contain in excess of 7 million name forms, of an estimated 2.5 million individual geographical names.

Historical forms and local pronunciation information often form the basis for determining the correct spelling of geographical names. The report gives a description of the use of the service in standardization matters and how it serves as a tool for regulators and the general public to source historical information about the spelling and pronunciation of Norwegian geographical names. It is envisaged that the service

* GEGN.2/2021/1.

** The full report was prepared by Peder Gammeltoft, Norway. It will be available under document symbol GEGN.2/2021/12/CRP.12, in the language of submission only, at https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/2nd_session_2021/.

¹ A tool for semantic information integration, it defines the underlying semantics of database schemata and document structures used in cultural heritage and museum documentation in terms of a formal ontology to enable semantic interoperability. See www.cidoc-crm.org/.



will make geographical name standardization decisions easier and improve transparency in decision-making.

One aspect that will need further legal investigation is a possible obstacle relating to the digital transformation of archives and collections resulting from the recent enforcement in Norway and the European Union of regulations relating to the General Data Protection Regulation. At worst, these regulations will not allow for an open and free exchange of geographical names information with regulators and the general public.
