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

Virtual, 3–7 May 2021

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**

## **Functioning of the national authority for geographical names in Madagascar**

### **Summary\*\***

Although the national committee on the standardization of geographical names in Madagascar (KPMA) was established in 1973 and overhauled in 2001, it does not appear to be functioning satisfactorily at present. New members need to be appointed to replace those who have retired or been promoted to other roles. A project aimed at revitalizing the committee has already been initiated; however, owing to various difficulties, the decree on the revival of the committee has yet to be signed into law.

Nevertheless, by analysing the problems associated with geographical names usage, we have already been able to draw up an action plan, which will be presented to the committee as soon as it becomes operational.

Given the carelessness or lack of awareness with regard to the existence of standardized geographical names, an effective communication strategy must be put in place to ensure the effective use of standardized names, in particular in official documents. In addition, in the light of the different ways in which users spell various toponyms, it is essential to review the grammatical rules to be applied specifically for geographical names, the dialectal rules of the local districts, and the rules governing the use of compound names. In short, linguistic rules need to be established, not only to ensure that names are written correctly but also to facilitate data entry and promote consistency.

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\* [GEGN.2/2021/1](#).

\*\* The full report was prepared by Nary Herinirina Iarivo, Head of the Cartography Department, Foiben-Taosarintanin'i Madagasikara (FTM) (National Geographical and Hydrographical Institute). It will be available under document symbol GEGN.2/2021/41/CRP.41, in the language of submission only, at [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/2nd\\_session\\_2021/](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/2nd_session_2021/).



Lastly, a long-term project is the establishment of a toponymic database, to include historical information, the meanings of terms and any other useful material, which requires proper planning, taking as a basis, for example, the databases listed on the website under the web page “Toponymic databases and web services”.

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