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

Virtual, 3–7 May 2021

Item 12 of the provisional agenda\*

**Geographical names as culture, heritage and identity,  
including indigenous, minority and regional languages and  
multilingual issues****Interactive indigenous place names map for Canada****Summary\*\***

The naming of places is a cultural phenomenon dating back to the earliest of human history. Assigning names to places is a practice that serves many purposes. Indigenous place names reinforce an intimate relationship with the land, convey a broad range of knowledge such as travel routes and traditional hunting and fishing grounds, and are touchstones for history and legends. They also embody and honour the teachings of elders and are a tool for educating young people.

On National Indigenous Peoples Day in 2019, Natural Resources Canada and the Geographical Names Board of Canada released “Stories from the land: indigenous place names in Canada”, an interactive map of selected places in Canada with names that have origins in multiple indigenous languages. The sample of names on the map shows the history and evolution of indigenous place-naming in Canada.

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

\*\* The full report was prepared by Kristina Kwiatkowski, Geographical Names Board of Canada secretariat, Natural Resources Canada. The report will be available under document symbol GEGN.2/2021/61/CRP.61, 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/).

