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

New York, 3 – 7 May 2021

Item 7 of the provisional agenda *

Social and economic benefits, supporting sustainable development, measures taken and proposed for the implementation of resolutions and evaluation of the work of the Group of Experts

**Implementation by New Zealand of resolutions adopted at
United Nations conferences and sessions on the
standardization of geographical names”**

Submitted by New Zealand **

Summary

The report provides comments from New Zealand on the implementation of the resolutions adopted at the United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names held between 1967 and 2017, and at the 2019 session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names. It identifies United Nations resolutions that are relevant to the work of New Zealand’s national naming authority, the New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa,¹ and provides a summary of the measures that New Zealand has taken and its experiences in implementing these resolutions. Where appropriate, the report includes comments on how geographical names contribute to relevant social and economic benefits such as language revitalization and restorative tourism, which support cultural identity. The report also identifies how the implementation of certain resolutions adopted at the Conferences contribute to relevant Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, such as reducing inequalities by recognizing and restoring minority groups’ languages through geographical naming.

* GEGN.2/2021/1

** Prepared by Prepared by Wendy Shaw, Secretary, New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa

¹ “Memorial markers of the landscape”.

UNCSGN resolutions previously reported on by New Zealand

New Zealand reported in 2012, 2017 and 2019 on the implementation of relevant UNCSGN resolutions under these headings:

- International cooperation in the Standardization of Geographical Names
- National Standardization
- Education and Training in Treatment of Geographical Names
- Terminology (Including Glossaries)
- Preparation of Gazetteers
- Bibliographies
- Automated Data Processing/Digital Data
- Romanization/General
- Maritime and Undersea Feature Names
- Names of Features Beyond a Single Sovereignty
- Manual of National Name Standardization
- Minority Languages
- Criteria for establishing and evaluating the nature of geographical names as cultural heritage
- Discouraging the commercialization of geographical names
- Split of the Asia South-East and Pacific South-West Division into the Asia South-East Division and the Pacific South-West Division

Relevant UNCSGN resolutions pre 2012 New Zealand is still to report on

- Toponymic Guidelines for Map and other Editors: Resolutions IV/4, V/11, V/14, VI/7
- Regional meetings: Resolution I/7
- List of Country Names: Resolutions III/6, III/17, IV/10, IV/11, VI/10, VII/8, VIII/12
- Exchange of Experience: Resolutions I/6, II/20
- Aids to Pronunciation: Resolution III/7

In this UNGEGN session #2 report, New Zealand will cover the resolutions for *Regional meetings* and *Aids to Pronunciation*.

Relevant recommendations and decisions from the 2019 UNGEGN session #1

This report will also comment on these relevant recommendations and decisions:

Recommendation 1	Members states to consider UNGEGN draft strategic plan and programme of work before UNGEGN session #2
Recommendation 3	Working Groups to review General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions for their relevance to UNGEGN and report to UNGEGN session #2
Recommendation 5	Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage to determine the benefits and scope of investigating the principles and methodology of writing geographical names emanating from unwritten languages
Decision 1/2019/2	Secretariat to develop a strategic plan and work programme for the future direction of the Group of Experts
Decision 1/2019/5	Member States who have not yet prepared toponymic guidelines to do so in accordance with the template and regularly update those guidelines and report to the subsequent sessions of the Group of Experts

Decision 1/2019/11	Continuation of the sharing of national experiences and engagement with indigenous groups as a way to educate others within the Group of Experts and promote the work
Decision 1/2019/13	Encourage the continued activities of Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers

Summary of the measures taken, implementation experiences, relevant social and economic benefits, and relevant Sustainable Development Goals

Regional meetings: Resolution I/7

- (a) Regional and subregional conferences should be held at appropriate intervals to discuss common problems connected with, and to further the standardization of, geographical names;
- (b) Groups of nations having certain common interests and problems should be encouraged to meet at their own initiative and to report on progress made to the appropriate subregional or regional conferences and to the United Nations.

Annual meetings between New Zealand and Australia	
Measures taken by New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Australia and New Zealand Working Group on Place Names (ANZWGPN) has held annual meetings since 1984. New Zealand has actively participated and contributed to the shared goals of the group. Several products have resulted, including strategic goals, a promotional video, teaching package, principles and guidelines, glossary of generic terms and gazetteer. See: https://www.icsm.gov.au/what-we-do/place-names • Through the Pacific South-West Division of UNGEGN, it is anticipated that commonality in geographic naming can be explored, shared and learned from across Australasia. Reporting to UNGEGN is covered in this 2nd session under agenda item 4(b), document GEGN.2/2021/7/CRP.7
Implementation experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the focus can be Australian-centric, the opportunity to share, learn and grow, especially for indigenous naming, has been satisfying and rewarding. • Common issues experienced by all naming jurisdictions are thoroughly discussed, with good practice emerging and available to each jurisdiction for implementation. • New toponymists have been able to draw on the wisdom and experience of others to help better inform their development and understanding.
Social and economic benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The contribution of authoritative geographical name information to fundamental spatial datasets is critical. It helps emergency response, statistical collection and analysis, infrastructure and coordination. • It also allows for culture and language to be treated equitably, especially for indigenous or minority groups where inclusion and revitalisation remain a challenge for most societies. • The benefits to communities are significant in terms of acknowledging heritage, identity and connection. Sense of place and national pride can be brought about through geographical naming.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nation building is a benefit that comes from recognising people’s connection with their land through naming it and having their place names recognised officially.
Sustainable development goals/targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributes to UN Sustainable Development Goal 13: Climate action: 13.B Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities. Contributes to UN Sustainable Development Goal 14: Life below water: 14.C Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in UNCLOS, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of The Future We Want. Contributes to UN Sustainable Development Goal 15: Life on land: 15.4 By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development.

Aids to Pronunciation: Resolution III/7

Group of Experts consider the nature and design of research and experimentation that may help to establish the ranges of comprehensible pronunciation.

Audio for pronouncing Māori geographic names to be added to the New Zealand Gazetteer	
Measures taken by New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An enhancement to the Gazetteer is planned, which will provide an audio of the correct pronunciation of geographic names. All government agencies are required to have a Māori Language Plan (MLP) in place by 30 June 2021. Annual goals include language training, learning about customs and traditions, learning greetings in Māori, publishing material in English and Māori, etc. The New Zealand Geographic Board’s MLP is set to be ratified on 20 April 2021. The Crown’s strategy for revitalising the Māori language (Maihi Karauna²) sets goals for the public service to have minimum levels of language and protocol proficiencies by 2030. The Board is cognisant of this and has linked the goals in its MLP. Digital maps of c1840 Māori geographic names will have an audio via QR code scanning or tap technology that takes users to a website (might be the Gazetteer) with the ‘story’ attached to the geographic name. This is anticipated to be in place 2022-23. Bulk orthographic updates applying macrons as applicable for Māori geographic names have been a priority for the Board in the past couple of years. This has led to a work programme of

² <https://www.tpk.govt.nz/en/a-matou-kaupapa/maihi-karauna>

	approving unofficial names as official under a fast track process, region by region. See to the online process ³ .
Implementation experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board has fully supported and endorsed the above initiatives. • The challenge to fully implement some initiatives has and will continue to experience budget constraints. • For most New Zealanders there is growing expectation that Māori geographic names will be spelled and pronounced correctly. The Board is working hard to meet those expectations. • There will always be detractors and criticism. The Board's message for bulk updates that include macrons is that errors or omissions can be easily corrected in the future. However, in the past several years only two names out of more than a thousand have attracted controversy.
Social and economic benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From a cultural perspective, making Māori geographic names official with their correct orthography in the publicly available <i>New Zealand Gazetteer</i> has enormous benefit to Māori. The official status and associated story offer identity and belonging. • Once published in the <i>New Zealand Gazetteer</i> as official the compliance provisions of the legislation apply. • Crown-Māori relationships are strengthened: actions speak louder than words. • The principles under the Treaty of Waitangi of partnership, protection and participation are upheld. • The inclusion of traditional Māori geographic names adds significant depth to the official record.
Sustainable development goals/targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to UN Sustainable Development Goal 10: Reduced inequalities: 10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard. • Contributes to UN Sustainable Development Goal 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions: 16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.

UNGEKN draft strategic plan and programme of work: Recommendation 2019/1

Members states to consider UNGEKN draft strategic plan and programme of work before UNGEKN session #2: Recommendation 1.

Contribution to UNGEKN draft strategic plan and programme	
Measure taken by New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Zealand has contributed through the UNGEKN Bureau, by developing an initial draft strategic plan and has been proactive with the cultural heritage work programme stream.

³ <https://www.lin.govt.nz/regulatory/place-names/approving-recorded-unofficial-place-names-official>

Implementation experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The process to develop UNGEGN's draft strategic plan and programme of work has been challenging because only virtual meetings were an option due to the COVID pandemic restrictions.
Social and economic benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In accordance with and as expressed in UNGEGN's online published information.
Sustainable development goals/targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The combined draft UNGEGN strategic plan and programme of work offer specific connections to the relevant UN Sustainable Development Goal(s).

General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions: Recommendation 2019/3

Working Groups to review General Assembly and Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolutions for their relevance to UNGEGN and report to UNGEGN session #2.

ECOSOC Resolutions	
Measure taken by New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making sure that New Zealand is aware of this ECOSOC resolution and contributing as requested/required as an UNGEGN Bureau member for reporting up to ECOSOC.
Implementation experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timeframes for feedback can be challenging. High level focus and input required, not so much the details. Limited time to convey UNGEGN messages
Social and economic benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As identified by ECOSOC.
Sustainable development goals/targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As identified by ECOSOC.

Investigate the principles and methodology of writing geographical names emanating from unwritten languages: Recommendation 2019/5

Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage to determine the benefits and scope of investigating the principles and methodology of writing geographical names emanating from unwritten languages.

Unwritten Languages	
Measure taken by New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No measure has been taken by the Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage. Awaiting discussion by the Working Group of which New Zealand is a member.
Implementation experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be advised.
Social and economic benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be advised.
Sustainable development goals/targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be advised.

UNGEGN strategic plan and work programme: Decision 1/2019/2

Secretariat to develop a strategic plan and work programme for the future direction of the Group of Experts.

Contribution to UNGEGN draft Strategic Plan and Work Programme	
Measure taken by New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See response to Recommendation 2019/1 above.
Implementation experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See response to Recommendation 2019/1 above.
Social and economic benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See response to Recommendation 2019/1 above.
Sustainable development goals/targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See response to Recommendation 2019/1 above.

Toponymic guidelines: Decision 1/2019/5

Member States who have not yet prepared toponymic guidelines to do so in accordance with the template and regularly update those guidelines and report to the subsequent sessions of the Group of Experts.

Toponymic Guidelines	
Measure taken by New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No measure taken. This document may not eventuate as the New Zealand Geographic Board is reluctant to direct cartographers and editors on styles and formats for their products. • The main requirement for the Board is that where an official geographic name exists, it must be used. • Re-consideration of this position will be given in the future, but for New Zealand, there is currently no demand for such guidance. • New Zealand's topographic and hydrographic cartographers follow international standards for their products.
Implementation experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be advised.
Social and economic benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be advised.
Sustainable development goals/targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be advised.

Sharing of national experiences and engagement with indigenous groups: Decision 1/2019/11

Continuation of the sharing of national experiences and engagement with indigenous groups as a way to educate others within the Group of Experts and promote the work.

Engagement with Māori	
Measures taken by New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treaty of Waitangi commitments for geographic names remain an important part of New Zealand's work to uphold values and practices important to Māori. Through administrative work supporting cultural heritage and language impacts, the New Zealand Geographic Board continues to add significant value to all New Zealanders' sense of pride in place. • The Board considers geographic name proposals from Te Arawhiti (the Office for Māori Crown Relations) as part of the Treaty of Waitangi claims' settlement process. Officially reinstating traditional Māori geographic names provides visible recognition of a claimant group's cultural identity. It also marks a meaningful connection between the people, the

	<p>natural environment, important ancestors and significant events that link them to those places. Te Arawhiti and the Board work closely with claimant groups to prepare name proposals for consideration. In turn, the Board makes recommendations to Te Arawhiti on geographic names to be included in a Treaty settlement, which are then reported to the Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations. The Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations makes the final decisions on all Treaty settlement geographic names.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board collaborates with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (a tribal group covering most of the South Island or Te Waiponamu) to officially recognise their authentic geographic names in their online cultural heritage atlas, <i>Kā Huru Manu</i>. In the past year the Board approved 29 Ngāi Tahu geographic names as official. The Board also collected 268 Ngāi Tahu geographic names that could not be made official and added them to the Gazetteer so that they are discoverable. • Collecting and encouraging the use of original Māori geographic names and applying their correct orthography are functions of the Board’s legislation. The Board has been actively considering how to more meaningfully engage with Māori groups to achieve these functions and obligations. The Board recognises the Treaty of Waitangi principles of partnership, participation and protection, and gives them practical effect through its processes. • Restorative tourism offers a chance for tourists to reflect on the immediate environment by hearing the traditional stories associated with places and experiencing nature up-close. To the indigenous people of the place (tangata whenua), there is opportunity to reclaim culture and heritage through re-telling traditional geographical name stories, often with a theme of stewardship (kaitiakitanga) that goes hand in hand with sustainability.
Implementation experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A highlight for the Board’s Chairperson was attending the signing of the Deed of Settlement for Moriori on Chatham Island, which will eventually have two other official geographic names, Rēkohu Island and Wharekauri Island.
Social and economic benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as <i>Aids to Pronunciation</i> above.
Sustainable development goals/targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to UN Sustainable Development Goal 10: Reduced inequalities: 10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard. • The New Zealand Geographic Board works to tell stories of places past and present, and to offer the social connection and identity necessary to help protect all that is symbolically and materially associated with named places. The goal being a sustainable future that forms part of New Zealand’s national identity.

Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers: Decision 1/2019/13

Encourage the continued activities of Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers.

Linked data	
Measure taken by New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Zealand examples were provided to the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers, for its report under agenda item 14, document GEGN.2/2021/6/CRP.6
Implementation experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As advised by the Working Group.
Social and economic benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As advised by the Working Group.
Sustainable development goals/targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As advised by the Working Group.

Contact

For more information about geographic naming in New Zealand contact:

Wendy Shaw

Secretary for the New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa

c/- Land Information New Zealand

Radio New Zealand House

155 The Terrace

PO Box 5501

Wellington 6145

New Zealand

Phone +64 4 460 0581

Mobile +64 27 4807 082

Email wshaw@linz.govt.nz