

Distr.: General
22 March 2021

Original: English

United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

2021 session

Virtual, 3–7 May 2021

Item 2 (a) of the provisional agenda

Organizational matters: adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda

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Annotations

1. Opening of the session

The provisional programme for the opening meeting should include an opening address by the Chair of the session, in which he informs the Group of the activities of the Bureau during the intersessional period and provides the vision for the 2021 session. This will be followed by welcome and opening remarks from the Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development and Chief Economist. Additional speakers may be added to the programme for the opening meeting.

2. Organizational matters

(a) Adoption of the agenda

At its 10th meeting, on 3 May 2019, the Group of Experts approved the provisional agenda for the 2021 session ([GEGN.2/2021/1](#))

Documentation

Annotated provisional agenda ([GEGN.2/2021/1/Rev.1](#))

(b) Organization of work

The proposed organization of work and times for the 2021 session of the Group of Experts has been prepared pursuant to relevant decisions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Bureau of the Group of Experts to facilitate the consideration of agenda items within the time and services allocated to the Group. The proposed organization of work and documents for the session will continue to be updated in the course of the preparations for the session.

Documentation

Organization of work ([GEGN.2/2021/3](#))

3. Reports of the Chair and the Secretariat

The Chair of the Bureau and the representative of the Statistics Division will present reports on the activities undertaken during the intersessional period in accordance with decisions and resolutions, future plans and priorities of the Group.

Documentation

1. Report of the Chair ([GEGN.2/2021/4](#))
2. Report of the Secretariat ([GEGN.2/2021/5/CRP.5](#))

4. Reports

(a) Governments on the situation in their countries and on the progress made in the standardization of geographical names

The Group of Experts will have before it, for information, reports submitted by Member States. The reports contain information on the situations in their countries and on the progress made in the standardization of geographical names. The Chair or his designate may present a summary report on this agenda item and may also request that the reports of Member States be brought forward for discussion should there be a matter of topical interest with regard to standardization, such as name changes, multiple naming and challenges to and solutions for the standardization of names.

Documentation

National reports are available from the following countries:¹

Argentina, Austria, Australia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

(b) Divisions of the Group of Experts

The Group of Experts will have before it, for information, the reports submitted by its geographical and linguistic divisions. The Chair may request that a division report be brought forward for discussion should there be a matter relating to its work or its structure and the creation or dissolution of a division.

Documentation

1. Report of the Pacific South-West Division ([GEGN.2/2021/7/CRP.7](#))
2. Report of the Norden Division ([GEGN.2/2021/11/CRP.11](#))
3. Report of the Dutch- and German-speaking Division ([GEGN.2/2021/27/CRP.27](#))
4. Report of the Asia South-East Division ([GEGN.2/2021/36/CRP.36](#))
5. Report of the Romano-Hellenic Division ([GEGN.2/2021/82/CRP.82](#))
6. Actividades realizadas por México como presidente de la División de América Latina del Grupo de Expertos de las Naciones Unidas en Nombres Geográficos ([GEGN.2/2021/84/CRP.84](#))

¹ Available at https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/2nd_session_2021/.

7. Report of the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division (GEGN.2/2021/CRP.98)
8. Report of the Baltic Division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (GEGN.2/2021/CRP.101)
9. Report of Arabic Division activities in the field of geographical names 2019–2020 (GEGN.2/2021/CRP.102)
10. Rapport de Division Afrique Centrale (GEGN.2/2021/CRP.103)
11. Report of the China Division (GEGN.2/2021/CRP.111)
12. Report of the East Central and South-East Europe Division (GEGN.2/2021/CRP.115)
13. Rapport de la division francophone (GEGN.2/2021/CRP.121)

(c) Working Group on Country Names

The Group of Experts will have before it, for information, an updated list of country names (GEGN.2/2021/CRP.130). The list is contained in a working paper that is presented to the Group of Experts at each of its sessions. The list is intended to serve as a general reference document and to facilitate the exchange of information within the Group of Experts.

(d) National and international meetings and conferences

The Group of Experts will have before it, for information and discussion, reports from Member States and from divisions, working groups and liaison bodies of the Group of Experts detailing the convening and outputs of meetings, conferences, symposiums and workshops held in support of sharing knowledge, experiences and thoughts on the standardization of geographical names. This is in accordance with resolution II/19 of the Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, in which the Conference recommended that each division prepare a programme of meetings to be submitted to the United Nations.

Documentation

International Seminar on Sea Names, 2019–2020 (GEGN.2/2021/CRP.123)

5. Cooperation and liaison with other organizations

(a) International organizations

In accordance with resolution II/33 of the Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names and section III (h) of its guiding principles, the Group of Experts has established and maintained liaison with scientific and academic international organizations such as the International Cartographic Association; and Technical Committee 211 of the International Organization for Standardization. The appointed liaison officers of the Group of Experts will report on their interaction since 2019 with those international groups and with the following: Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, International Council of Onomastic Sciences, International Council on Indigenous Place Names, International Hydrographic Organization, Pan-American Institute of Geography and History, Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research and Unicode Consortium. The Group of Experts will open discussions for suggested improvements in cooperation and liaison activity with those groups. Discussions may also be held on liaison activity with other international groups. Possibilities for the Group of Experts to establish formal cooperation with additional international groups will be discussed, as necessary.

Documentation

1. Report of the Joint International Cartographic Association-International Geographical Union Commission on Toponymy (GEGN.2/2021/74/CRP.74)
2. Colaboración entre México y la República Dominicana en el marco de la Agencia Mexicana de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo para el fortalecimiento de capacidades en la aplicación técnica de normalización de los nombres geográficos mediante la elaboración de la metodología del nomenclátor de la República Dominicana (GEGN.2/2021/85/CRP.85)
3. Report of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research ([GEGN.2/2021/95](#))
4. Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers report (GEGN.2/2021/CRP.97)

(b) Economic Commission for Africa and Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management

Pursuant to Council resolution [2018/2](#), in which the Council reaffirmed the need to strengthen the joint work between the Group of Experts and the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, the Group of Experts has been endeavouring to build effective and streamlined relations with the Committee of Experts, through collaborative efforts such as joint meetings and participation across working groups. The Group of Experts will have before it the report from the Committee of Experts outlining the activities conducted during the intersessional period and future plans to enhance collaborative efforts.

Documentation

Report of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (GEGN.2/2021/13/CRP.13)

6. National and international standardization of geographical names**(a) Names collection, office treatment, national authorities, features beyond a single sovereignty and international cooperation**

Presentations and discussion should focus on best practices, new approaches, problems faced and possible solutions with regard to achieving national standardization of geographical names. The topic is broad in scope and includes: methods of names collection (field collection, archival sourcing, crowdsourcing, postal surveys, submissions from the general public, etc.); treatment of names in the office (approaches to resolving duplication, name changes, merging of administrative units, commemorative naming, multiple naming and diverse languages and populations, street naming, etc.); legislation, policies and guidelines for names authorities (laws, board structures, principles, programme planning, extent of mandates, relationships of various naming bodies, etc.); names for particular purposes (hydrology, mountain areas, etc.) or standardization requirements of particular user groups (education, emergency operations, different levels of government, etc.). In addition, the agenda item includes names of features beyond a single sovereignty, as well as items relating to international cooperation on geographical names standardization.

Documentation

1. New national geographical names archives service (GEGN.2/2021/12/CRP.12)

2. New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa implementation of three new place naming standards (GEGN.2/2021/19/CRP.19)
3. Local government initiatives in geographical names data acquisition: the Natuna Regency archipelago of Indonesia (GEGN.2/2021/33/CRP.33)
4. The role of geographical name standardization in maintaining cultural identity in Indonesia (GEGN.2/2021/35/CRP.35)
5. Fonctionnement de l'autorité nationale pour les noms géographiques à Madagascar (GEGN.2/2021/41/CRP.41)
6. Geographical names standardization in Greenland (GEGN.2/2021/44/CRP.44)
7. Basis and principles of the standardization of geographical names in Finland (GEGN.2/2021/52/CRP.52)
8. Un guide pour décider du nom d'un lieu (GEGN.2/2021/55/CRP.55)
9. Recognizing Women with Canadian Place Names (GEGN.2/2021/58/CRP.58)
10. Harmonizing names of features intersected by the national boundary of Austria (GEGN.2/2021/72/CRP.72)
11. Mapa Integrado de Norteamérica (GEGN.2/2021/86/CRP.86)
12. Changes in the Estonian Place Names Act (GEGN.2/2021/CRP.108)

(b) Toponymic guidelines for map and other editors for international use

In accordance with resolution IV/4 of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, the Conference recommended that countries should be encouraged to publish and keep up-to-date toponymic guidelines for map and other editors. The Group of Experts will have before it reports prepared by the Member States which outlines the status of updated and new toponymic guidelines and describes efforts to disseminate the guidelines and make them available.

Documentation

1. Update of Toponymic guidelines: Finland ([GEGN.2/2021/53](#))
2. Mapa Integrado de Norteamérica (GEGN.2/2021/90/CRP.90)
3. General remarks by the Coordinator of toponymic guidelines for map and other editors, for international use ([GEGN.2/2021/92](#))

7. 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

The Group of Experts addresses the implementation of tasks assigned as a result of the resolutions adopted by the former United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names and by the new United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names as one of its aims. Under the agenda item, presentations and discussions will focus on measures to implement the resolutions, as well as experiences in implementing them, within the context of the Group of Experts or at the country level. The discussions on implementing the resolutions are expected to lead to further developments by creating social and economic benefits and supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A total of 211 resolutions have been adopted so far. Discussion will also be held with regard to the functioning and efficacy of the Group of Experts, including to look at the need for developing

countries to achieve national standardization of their geographical names and to increase the effectiveness of meetings and subsidiary bodies of the Group of Experts.

Documentation

1. Implementation by New Zealand of resolutions adopted at the United Nations Conferences and Sessions on the Standardization of Geographical Names (GEGN.2/2021/18/CRP.18)
2. The impact of using a geographical names database in Saudi Arabia in the response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic (GEGN.2/2021/50/CRP.50)
3. Report of the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation (GEGN.2/2021/79/CRP.79)
4. A review of the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions and their relevance to the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (GEGN.2/2021/80/CRP.80)
5. Draft strategic plan and programme of work (GEGN.2/2021/94/CRP.94)
6. Geographical names and the environment (GEGN.2/2021/CRP.125)

8. Issues of publicity for the Group of Experts and funding of Group projects

The Group of Experts will have before it, for information, the report prepared by the Working Group on Publicity and Funding in which it outlines the aims and activities of the Working Group in raising awareness of the need for geographical names standardization and in advancing the digital presence of Group of Experts on the web and social media and through the Group of Experts media kit. In its report, the Working Group also highlights efforts to find financial support for toponymic training, to establish national geographical names authorities and to allow for representatives from developing countries to attend sessions of the Group of Experts. The report is intended to facilitate the exchange of information within the Group of Experts.

Documentation

Summary report on the activities of the Working Group on Publicity and Funding (GEGN.2/2021/CRP.126)

9. Activities on national standardization in Africa

At its twenty-second session, held in 2004, the Group of Experts established the Task Team for Africa, to encourage and strengthen the standardization of geographical names across the continent. As at the deadline for the submission of full reports and technical papers (see [GEGN.2/2021/INF/1](#)) no papers had been received under this agenda item.

To facilitate needed discussion under this agenda item, the status, issues and work on geographical names standardization highlighted in the national reports submitted by Member States and geographical and linguistic divisions within the African continent will be addressed.

Documentation

1. Rapport de Division Afrique Centrale (GEGN.2/2021/CRP.103)
2. Situation de la normalisation des noms géographiques au Cameroun et progrès réalisés depuis la session de 2019 (GEGN.2/2021/CRP.104)

10. Toponymic education

The Group of Experts will have before it the report prepared by the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy, in which it describes ongoing work with coordination of and assistance related to toponymy training courses organized by a host country or the relevant division of the Group of Experts. The latest developments in web-based training and e-learning initiatives in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, will also be outlined. A proposal to facilitate the streaming of audiovisual lectures, and a request to have Member States indicate the themes or subject matters of interest to be delivered, is presented for consideration and discussion by the Group of Experts.

Documentation

1. E-learning course on the Norwegian Place Name Act (GEGN.2/2021/20/CRP.20)
2. Webinars on toponymy in Indonesia: an adaptation of toponymic education to the coronavirus disease pandemic situation (GEGN.2/2021/31/CRP.31)
3. Streamed audiovisual lectures on toponymy (GEGN.2/2021/66/CRP.66)
4. Capacitación a la República Dominicana sobre las fases de implementación de la metodología para la elaboración de un nomenclátor (GEGN.2/2021/87/CRP.87)
5. Report on development in virtual toponymy training courses and summary on the activities of the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy (GEGN.2/2021/CRP.127)

11. Toponymic terminology

The Working Group on Toponymic Terminology was formed in 1989. It is responsible for preparing a glossary of toponymic terminology, reviewing updates to the glossary and establishing a functioning terminology database. There have been several editions of the *Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names*, the most recent of which was issued in 2002. At the Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, held in New York in 2007, an addendum to the *Glossary* was approved.

The Group of Experts will have before it the report of the Working Group. In its report, the Working Group highlights its work in reviewing updates to the toponymic terminology glossary and establishing a functioning terminology database. The Group of Experts will also have before it relevant reports prepared by experts from across the divisions of the Group of Experts. The Group of Experts is invited to adopt the report of the Working Group and to provide guidance on the next phase of its work.

Documentation

1. Generic Terms in the Canadian Geographical Names Database (GEGN.2/2021/59/CRP.59)
2. Report of the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology, 2019–2021 (GEGN.2/2021/CRP.105)
3. Publication of the Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names in Korea (GEGN.2/2021/CRP.124)

12. Geographical names as culture, heritage and identity, including indigenous, minority and regional languages and multilingual issues

The Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage was established in response to resolution VIII/1 of the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, held in Berlin in 2002. It was formerly known as the Working Group on the Promotion of Indigenous and Minority Group Place Names.

The aim of the Working Group is to oversee activities relating to the promotion of indigenous and minority geographical names to pursue the retention/revitalization of minority and indigenous group culture. The Working Group serves to bring a focus to the relationship between place names and cultural heritage and to assist countries in developing appropriate processes to ensure that the relationship is maintained. The Group of Experts will have before it the report of the Working Group. In its report, the Working Group highlights its work in fulfilling its current workplan. The Group of Experts will also have before it, relevant reports prepared by experts from across the divisions related to the topic. The Group of Experts is invited to adopt the report of the Working Group and to provide guidance on the next phase of its work.

Documentation

1. Blank areas: naming and renaming landscapes in Germany (GEGN.2/2021/45/CRP.45)
2. Prononciation des toponymes autochtones: intégration de fichiers audio dans la Banque de noms de lieux du Québec (GEGN.2/2021/60/CRP.60)
3. Interactive indigenous place names map for Canada (GEGN.2/2021/61/CRP.61)
4. Indigenous geographical names environmental scan (GEGN.2/2021/62/CRP.62)
5. Putting Frisian names on the map (GEGN.2/2021/68/CRP.68)
6. Utilization of communal autonomy to implement additional bilingual names of populated places and streets in Carinthia (GEGN.2/2021/71/CRP.71)
7. Place name politics in multilingual areas: a comparative study of southern Carinthia, Austria, and the Těšín/Cieszyn region, Czechia (GEGN.2/2021/75/CRP.75)
8. Place Names and Migration (GEGN.2/2021/76/CRP.76)
9. Foreign names of landscapes in Germany (GEGN.2/2021/77/CRP.77)
10. El mapa topográfico en las principales lenguas indígenas de México (GEGN.2/2021/88/CRP.88)
11. Chinese Geographical Names Competition (GEGN.2/2021/CRP.112)
12. Indigenous place naming projects in British Columbia and effects of the COVID-19 pandemic: report from the BC Geographical Names Office (GEGN.2/2021/CRP.118)
13. Report from the Convenor of the Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage (GEGN.2/2021/CRP.128)

13. Exonyms

The Working Group on Exonyms was formed in 2002, pursuant to resolution VIII/4 of the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names. The Group of Experts will have before it, papers submitted by experts from

Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Poland, among others, detailing the current trends in exonym use (pursuant to resolution III/18 of the Third United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names). The Working Group also provides an update on the work done since the first session, which includes reference to the book entitled *The Classification of Exonyms*, which is volume 8 of the series Name and Place and is a collection of papers presented at the 21st meeting of the Working Group in 2018. The Group of Experts is invited to review the documents submitted and to consider further work.

Documentation

1. Second edition of the list of Polish geographical names of the world (GEGN.2/2021/16/CRP.16)
2. Database of German Exonyms (GEGN.2/2021/46/CRP.46)
3. Decline in the number of Danish exonyms in use for European cities (GEGN.2/2021/54/CRP.54)
4. Quatre types d'exonymes (GEGN.2/2021/56/CRP.56)
5. The fiftieth anniversary of the working group on exonyms of the Netherlands (GEGN.2/2021/67/CRP.67)
6. Exonyms as part of the cultural heritage (GEGN.2/2021/73/CRP.73)
7. Report of the Working Group on Exonyms (GEGN.2/2021/78/CRP.78)
8. Los exónimos de los nombres geográficos en las lenguas indígenas de América con respecto al español como lengua franca de América Latina (GEGN.2/2021/89/CRP.89)

14. Toponymic data files and gazetteers

Under item 14 of the provisional agenda, the following will be addressed: issues related to the structure and content of toponymic data files and the creation, maintenance and output of databases and gazetteers. The focus may be on technical topics, such as data collection supported by information technology, data categorization and data modelling and database (web) applications, and more strategic topics, such as the promotion of better integration of geographical names information within national and international spatial data infrastructures and linked data in relation to geographical names standardization. The following may also be addressed: lessons learned through national and international geographical names programmes or projects and best practices employed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management will also provide an update on its intersessional activities and request the ratification of its name change to Geographical Names Data Management.

Documentation

1. Linked Data considerations for geographical names standardization ([GEGN.2/2021/6](#))
2. New edition of the Polish list of official names of localities and their parts (GEGN.2/2021/15/CRP.15)
3. Standardized geographical names by language in the Nordic national mapping agencies' and names authorities' data sets in January 2021 (GEGN.2/2021/26/CRP.26)

4. The development of a geographical name information system to accelerate geographical name standardization in Indonesia (GEGN.2/2021/34/CRP.34)
5. Management of geographical names database and its utilization (GEGN.2/2021/39/CRP.39)
6. Experimental release of webmap: “Japan map in multilingual notation” (GEGN.2/2021/40/CRP.40)
7. Report of the Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management (formerly known as Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers) for 2019 and 2020 (GEGN.2/2021/47/CRP.47)
8. Status report on the European Open Regional Gazetteer (GEGN.2/2021/48/CRP.48)
9. Harmonization of the Canadian Geographical Names Database (GEGN.2/2021/57/CRP.57)
10. Web application for searching geographical names in the topographic database of the Netherlands (GEGN.2/2021/69/CRP.69)
11. Progress Report on the Construction of National Database for Geographical Names of China and Compilation of Standard Geographical Names Atlas, Gazetteers, Dictionaries and Chronicles (GEGN.2/2021/CRP.113)
12. Situación del Proceso de Normalización de Nombres Geográficos en el Perú (GEGN.2/2021/CRP.117)

15. Writing systems and pronunciation

The Group of Experts will have before it, for discussion, the report prepared by the Working Group on Romanization Systems, in which it details the monitoring of the status of various romanization systems either being developed in countries using non-Roman script or the status of United Nations-approved systems being implemented in the countries concerned. Similarly, countries participating in the session may report on their progress in developing and implementing romanization systems for geographical names. Papers submitted may also deal with questions related to the pronunciation of geographical names.

Documentation

1. Verification of geographical names in Indonesia (GEGN.2/2021/32/CRP.32)
2. Report of the Working Group on Romanization Systems: current status of United Nations romanization systems for geographical names (GEGN.2/2021/93/CRP.93)
3. A Brief Introduction to Guidelines on Geographical Names Transformation from Japanese to Chinese (GEGN.2/2021/CRP.114)
4. Transcripator: Solving your transliteration problems? (GEGN.2/2021/CRP.120)

16. Other geographical names issues

It is recognized that Member States, divisions and working groups of the Group of Experts will submit technical papers that do not logically fit under working group subjects related to the items on the agenda. With regard to item 16 of the provisional agenda, the Group of Experts will have before it papers within this category that are not relevant to other agenda items. Item 16 will be considered under the direction of the Chair. As at the deadline for the submission of full reports and technical papers (see [GEGN.2/2021/INF/1](#)) no papers had been received under this agenda item.

17. Arrangements for the 2023 session of the Group of Experts

In accordance with rule 6 of the rules of procedure of the Group, as set out in Council decision 2018/264, the Group will consider its provisional agenda and proposed dates for the 2023 session. Representatives participating in the session may propose items for inclusion in, or amendments to, the provisional agenda.

Documentation

Provisional agenda for the 2023 session.

18. Other business

Member State and division representatives may wish to bring other matters to the attention of the Group of Experts.

Documentation

No request for advance documentation.

19. Presentation and adoption of decisions

All proposals for consideration by the Group of Experts will be presented under this item. The Group of Experts will have before it an informal paper containing the draft decisions and resolutions submitted by the Rapporteurs and will be invited to adopt the draft decisions of the 2021 session.

Documentation

Informal paper with draft decisions.

20. Adoption of the report on the 2021 session

The Group of Experts will have before it the report on the 2021 session covering organizational matters relating to its work. The Group of Experts will be invited to adopt the report on the 2021 session, and to entrust the Rapporteurs with streamlining and finalizing it for submission to the Economic and Social Council.

Documentation

Draft report of the Group of Experts on its 2021 session.

21. Closing of the session

In accordance with rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the Group of Experts, the Chair will declare the closing of each plenary meeting of the Group.
