

6 May 2021

Original: English

**United Nations Group of Experts on
Geographical Names**
2021 session
New York, 3–7 May 2021

Draft report

Rapporteurs: Wendy **Shaw** (New Zealand)
Trent **Palmer** (United States of America)

Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

1. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council decision 2021/213, and taking into account the prevailing conditions related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic affecting the working arrangements and the available technological and procedural solutions in the interim period, the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names did not hold formal meetings during its second session. The Group of Experts held 10 online informal meetings with remote simultaneous interpretation from 3 to 7 May 2021, pursuant to Council decision 2018/2.

2. The Group of Experts conducted its business during the second session through correspondence and informal consultations and considered proposals under the silence procedure, pursuant to Council decision 2021/213.

B. Attendance

3. Each meeting of the session was attended by an average of 127 participants representing the geographic and linguistic divisions of the Group of Experts (see annex).



C. Officers of the session

4. The officers of the session were as follows:

Chair:

Pierre Jaillard (France)

Vice-Chairs:

Susan Birtles (Australia)

Sungjae Choo (Republic of Korea)

Rapporteurs:

Wendy Shaw (New Zealand)

Trent Palmer (United States of America)

For the names of the Chairs of the divisions, see <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/divisions>. The officers of the working groups were:

Task Team for Africa

Convener:

Brahim Atoui

Toponymic guidelines for map and other editors for international use

Convener:

Gerhard Rampl

Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy

Convener:

Peder Gammeltoft

Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management

Convener:

Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu

Working Group on Toponymic Terminology

Convener:

Trent Palmer

Working Group on Romanization Systems

Conveners:

Peeter Päll

Catherine Cheetham

Working Group on Country Names

Conveners:

Vacant

Working Group on Publicity and Funding

Convener:

Peder Gammeltoft

Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation

Convener:

Sungjae Choo

Working Group on Exonyms

Convener:

Kohei Watanabe

Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage

Convener:

Annette Torensjö

D. Opening statements

5. The Chair, Pierre Jaillard (France), opened the session on 3 May 2021. He made opening remarks and summarized the main tasks ahead.
6. The Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development and Chief Economist, Elliott Carlton Harris, made a statement.

E. Adoption of the agenda

7. The Group of Experts adopted its provisional agenda ([GEGN.2/2021/1/Rev.1](#)) under the silence procedure, pursuant to Council decision 2021/213, as follows:
 1. Opening of the session.
 2. Organizational matters:
 - (a) Adoption of the agenda;
 - (b) Organization of work.
 3. Reports of the Chair and the Secretariat.
 4. Reports:
 - (a) Governments on the situation in their countries and on the progress made in the standardization of geographical names;
 - (b) Divisions of the Group of Experts;
 - (c) Working Group on Country Names;
 - (d) National and international meetings and conferences.
 5. Cooperation and liaison with other organizations:
 - (a) International organizations;
 - (b) Economic Commission for Africa and Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management.
 6. National and international standardization of geographical names:
 - (a) Names collection, office treatment, national authorities, features beyond a single sovereignty and international cooperation;
 - (b) Toponymic guidelines for map and other editors for international use.
 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.
 8. Issues of publicity for the Group of Experts and funding of Group projects.

9. Activities on national standardization in Africa.
 10. Toponymic education.
 11. Toponymic terminology.
 12. Geographical names as culture, heritage and identity, including indigenous, minority and regional languages and multilingual issues.
 13. Exonyms.
 14. Toponymic data files and gazetteers.
 15. Writing systems and pronunciation.
 16. Other geographical names issues.
 17. Arrangements for the 2023 session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.
 18. Other business.
 19. Presentation and adoption of decisions.
 20. Adoption of the report on the 2021 session.
 21. Closing of the session.
8. The Group of Experts approved its organization of work ([GEGN.2/2021/3](#)) under the silence procedure, pursuant to Council decision 2021/213.

F. Adoption of the report

9. The Group of Experts adopted the draft report on the activities of its second session ([GEGN.2/2021/L.1](#)) under the silence procedure, pursuant to Council decision 2021/213, for submission to the Council, and authorized its Rapporteurs to finalize the report, in consultation with the bureau and secretariat of the Group of Experts.

G. Documentation

10. The documents before the Group of Experts at its second session are available on the website of the United Nations Statistics Division, at https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/2nd_session_2021/#documents.

Annex**List of geographic and linguistic divisions**

Africa Central Division
Africa East Division
Africa South Division
Africa West Division
Arabic Division
Asia East Division (other than China)
Asia South-East Division
Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic)
Baltic Division
Celtic Division
China Division
Dutch- and German-speaking Division
East Central and South-East Europe Division
Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division
East Mediterranean Division (other than Arabic)
French-speaking Division
India Division
Latin America Division
Norden Division
Pacific South-West Division
Portuguese-speaking Division
Romano-Hellenic Division
United Kingdom Division
United States of America/Canada Division
