

# United Nations Nations Unies

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Dear Colleagues,

## Second Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) 3-7 May 2021

I extend best wishes to you and members of your team on the beginning of the new year, hoping that you are healthy and have been satisfactorily adjusting to changes brought upon us by the global COVID-19 pandemic.

As in so many aspects of our lives, the pandemic has also impacted the convening of meetings at the UNHQ in New York since March 2020. Further, it is anticipated that the impact and limitations will continue well into 2021. Notwithstanding the challenges, the subsidiary bodies of ECOSOC have continued to execute their mandates and provide policy guidance to Member States.

In this regard, I am writing to inform you that preparations are being made to proceed with the convening of the second session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) in the week of 3 to 7 May 2021 in a virtual format. Given that UNGEGN sessions are held every two years, it is imperative that critical and substantive work items, such as the Strategic Plan and Programme of Work, will be advanced to ensure continuity and revitalization of the “new” UNGEGN.

Please note that logistical details such as, duration, format and technical arrangements for the second session should be formally decided in the next weeks. However, we are committed to keeping you, our national representatives, informed on the progress of session arrangements. Therefore, we encourage you to continue to monitor UNGEGN’s website and be alert for emails from [geoinfo\\_unsd@un.org](mailto:geoinfo_unsd@un.org) for updates.

In terms of substantive arrangements, I wish to advise that the theme for the second session of UNGEGN is “*Geographical Names Supporting Sustainable Development and Management of the Pandemic*”. The theme supports General Assembly resolution 70/1, which called for ECOSOC inter-governmental bodies and forums to reflect the integrated nature of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) as well as the interlinkages between them. Governments are encouraged to consider the integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the SDGs with their work done on the standardization of geographical names. A special focus on the theme of the session is welcomed, however, the submission of documents focusing on general issues and challenges of geographical names standardization is also encouraged.

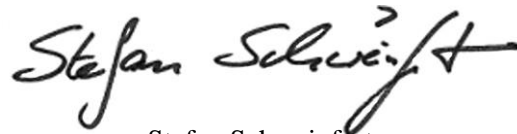
In addition, the provisional agenda ([GEGN.2/2021/1](#)) and an advanced unedited version of the guidelines for document preparation ([GEGN.2/2021/INF/1](#)) have been posted to the UNGEGN second session website. Governments and their experts are encouraged to submit their summaries on or before **22 January 2021**, and their full documents no later than **15 March 2021**.

Experts who plan to participate in the second session of UNGEGN will need to still comply with the formality of requesting your Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York to advise the Secretary-General in writing of your intention to participate in the meeting, and provide the name(s) and e-mail addresses of all the members of your delegation. The contact information for your Permanent Mission is available on the following website: <http://www.un.org/en/member-states/index.html>.

Should you have additional questions or need assistance regarding the forthcoming Session, please do not hesitate to contact the UNGEGN Secretariat ( Ms. Cecille Blake, email [blake1@un.org](mailto:blake1@un.org) and Ms. Vilma Frani, email [geoinfo\\_unsd@un.org](mailto:geoinfo_unsd@un.org) ).

Given the uncertainty and evolving situation surrounding the pandemic, we ask for your kind consideration and understanding as we work together to adapt our working methods to prepare for the convening of the second session. I hope to be able to welcome you albeit virtually to the second session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.

Yours sincerely,



Stefan Schweinfest

Director

UNGEGN Secretariat

United Nations Statistics Division/DESA