

United Nations Nations Unies

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New York, 11 February 2021

Excellency,

On behalf of the Bureau of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) I have the pleasure to enclose the proposed modalities for work, and the Provisional agenda (GEGN.2/2021/1) for its 2021 session, scheduled to take place virtually from 3-7 May 2021.

I wish to thank all the Member States for their constructive engagement throughout all this process. The ongoing situation of COVID-19 global pandemic makes it more necessary than ever to work together in order to find possible ways to give solutions to the challenges we face.

Bearing in mind the prevailing conditions, the official guidance received from the President of ECOSOC, and building on the recent experiences from convening of the other subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly and the ECOSOC in 2020, the Bureau has worked with the aim of presenting a realistic and flexible option that would enable all of us to fulfil, together, the responsibilities attributed to the Statistical Commission. We believe that the proposal we present, if not ideal, is the best possibility to move forward with our work, while making it the participation of all Member States from across geographical capitals possible.

The proposals outlined in the attached modalities paper would only be applied as a temporary one-time measure during the extraordinary circumstances imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and would not, in any way, create a precedent for the work of the Commission.

Continuing with our practice of engaging the membership throughout all this process, I share with you this proposal for information and consideration. If you have any serious concerns, you are most welcome to contact me directly within three working days latest by Friday 19 February 2021. Any practical questions or comments may also be addressed to the Secretariat (Stefan Schweinfest, Director of UNSD, schweinfest@un.org, or Irfan Soomro, Secretary of UNGEGN, soomroi@un.org). Further detailed information will of course be shared with all delegations regularly in the coming weeks.

I look forward to working with you in the weeks ahead in order to ensure a successful 2021 session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.

Please accept Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P. Jaillard', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Pierre Jaillard
Chair

United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

To all Permanent Representatives and
Permanent observers to the United Nations
New York