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English

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

2023 session

New York, 1 – 5 May 2023

Item 4a of the provisional agenda *

**Reports: Governments on the situation in their countries
and on the progress made in the standardization of
geographical names**

Report of Brazil

Submitted by ** Brazil

Summary:

The full report provides a description of efforts taken by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics towards the standardization of geographical names from May 2021 to the present. Such efforts were focused mainly on the successful reactivation of the Portuguese-speaking Division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, of which Brazil is currently Vice-Chair, and on solving inconsistencies in geographical names in the digital base maps at the 1:1,000,000, 1:250,000 and 1:100,000 scales.

The Institute has also been seeking greater integration and alignment between its representation at the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management and the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, aiming at greater coherence and efficiency in the role played by the Institute in these two United Nations bodies.

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Report of Brazil

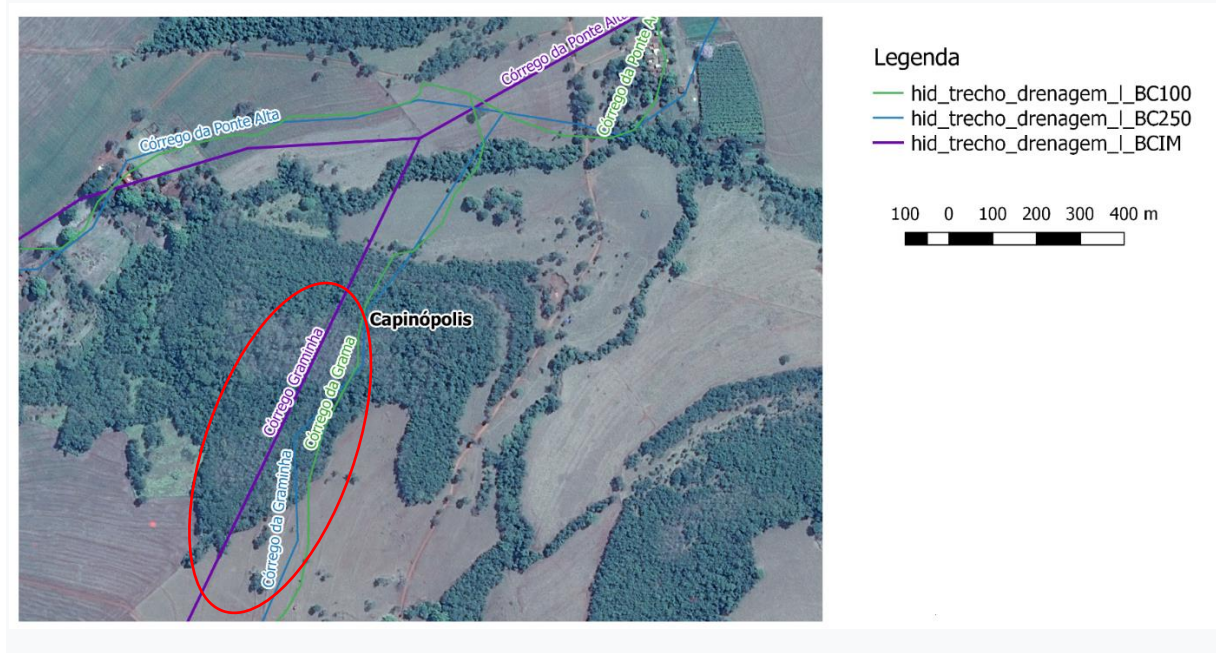
Since May 2021, the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics – IBGE, aware of the benefits of taking active part in the work of the divisions of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, has invested in the successful reactivation of the Portuguese-speaking Division of the Group of Experts, of which Brazil is currently Vice-Chair.

In November 2022, Brazil, represented by the IBGE, was invited by the Pan American Institute of Geography and History - PAIGH to take part in the Program for Capacity Building on Geographical Names and Geospatial Information for Experts of PAIGH Member States, offered by the National Geographic Institute – NGII of the Republic of Korea. The course took place in the city of Swon.

The Program involved lectures and discussions as well as visits to the NGII's Map Museum/National Land Satellite Center, Swon Fortress and the Demilitarized Zone. Not only were the lectures and visits very fruitful regarding capacity building and exchange of experiences, but also this initiative led to other meetings of the Latin American countries. This resulted in Brazil's resuming its participation in the Latin America Division of UNGEGN, having attended their last two divisional meetings, which took place in the first quarter of 2023.

Since 2017 the Geographical Names Department of The IBGE has been concentrating efforts on solving the inconsistencies in geographical names among the digital base maps in the 1:1,000,000, 1:250,000 and 1:100,000 scales.

Such inconsistencies are due to many reasons. Considering the dynamic character of geographic names, the fact that the digital bases maps are composed of mappings carried out at different times and using different methodologies cause numerous divergences. Some mappings, for example, date back to the 60s while others are very recent. The frequent changes in the spelling rules of the Brazilian Portuguese along the years and the occurrence of different spellings in the same document creating elements (ex. municipalities and Environmental Preservation Areas) aggravate the problem, causing the occurrence of inconsistencies within the base maps and also among the base maps in different scales. Figure 1 shows an example of such inconsistencies:



In order to solve these problems, the geographic names contained in the base maps in the three scales are compared in a semi-automatic process and discrepancies are analyzed individually by toponymists, who establish the correct name through desk research, whenever possible. Some cases need to be referred for field research. The objective is the internal coherence of the bases and also among them.

The IBGE has also been seeking greater integration and alignment between its representations at the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management and the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, aiming at greater coherence and efficiency in the roles played by the Institute in these two United Nations bodies, especially at present, when Brazil is co-Chair of the Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information.

Finally, in an effort to expand the availability of geospatial reference material to the Portuguese-speaking community, the IBGE is currently translating into Portuguese the *Fundamental Geospatial Data Themes* and has translated the *Global Statistical Geospatial Framework*, which will soon be available at <https://ggim.un.org/UNGGIM-expert-group/>.