

4 May 2023

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**United Nations Group of Experts on  
Geographical Names**  
2023 session  
New York, 1–5 May 2023

## Draft report

*Rapporteurs:* Ms. Wendy **Shaw** (New Zealand)  
Mr. Trent **Palmer** (United States of America)  
Ms. Catherine **Cheetham** (United Kingdom of Great Britain and  
Northern Ireland)<sup>1</sup>

## Organization of the session

### A. Opening and duration of the session

1. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2021/261, the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names held its 2023 session at United Nations Headquarters from 1 to 5 May 2023. The Group of Experts held \_\_\_ meetings.

### B. Attendance

2. The session was attended by \_\_\_ participants representing \_\_\_ States Members of the United Nations and the geographical and linguistic divisions of the Group of Experts (see annex). The list of participants is contained in document [GEGN.2/2023/INF/3](#).

### C. Officers of the session

3. The Officers of the session were as follows:

*Chair:*  
Pierre Jaillard (France)

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<sup>1</sup> The Chair appointed Ms. Cheetham to complete the unexpired portion of the term of office of Mr. Palmer, who relinquished his functions as Rapporteur on 4 May 2023.



*Vice-Chairs:*

Susan Birtles (Australia)  
Sungjae Choo (Republic of Korea)

*Rapporteurs:*

Wendy Shaw (New Zealand)  
Trent Palmer (United States of America)  
Catherine Cheetham (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)<sup>2</sup>

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:*

Jasper Hogerwerf

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

*Convener:*

Pierre Jaillard

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

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<sup>2</sup> The Chair appointed Ms. Cheetham to complete the unexpired portion of the term of office of Mr. Palmer, who relinquished his functions as Rapporteur on 4 May 2023.

Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage

*Convener:*

Annette Torensjö

#### **D. Opening statements**

4. The Chair opened the session on 1 May, made the opening remarks and summarized the main tasks ahead. The Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development also made a statement.

#### **E. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work**

5. At its first meeting, on 1 May, the Group of Experts adopted its provisional agenda ([GEGN.2/2023/1](#)), as orally revised:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Organizational matters:
  - (a) Adoption of the agenda;
  - (b) Organization of work;
  - (c) Credentials of observers.
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) Activities on the standardization of geographical names in Africa;
  - (d) National and international meetings and conferences.
5. Cooperation and liaison with other organizations:
  - (a) International organizations;
  - (b) Economic Commission for Africa;
  - (c) 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.
8. Monitoring and evaluation of the strategic plan and programme of work 2021–2029, and of the work of the Group of Experts.
9. Issues of publicity for the Group of Experts and funding of Group projects.

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. Geographical names data management.
  15. Writing systems and pronunciation.
  16. Other geographical names issues.
  17. Presentation and adoption of decisions.
  18. Adoption of the report on the 2023 session.
  19. Arrangements for the 2025 session of the Group of Experts.
  20. Election of officers for the two subsequent sessions.
  21. Other business.
  22. Closing of the session.
6. At the same meeting, the Group of Experts approved its organization of work ([GEGN.2/2023/2/Rev.2](#)), as orally revised.
7. Also at the same meeting, the Group of Experts invited the following intergovernmental organizations and other entities to participate in the work of the session as observers: Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc.; Google; Herder Institute for Historical Research on East Central Europe; International Cartographic Association; International Council of Onomastic Sciences; International Geographical Union; International Hydrographic Organization; Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers; Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography; Mapbox; Pan-American Institute of Geography and History; Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research; Société savante algérienne d'onomastique; Universidad Nacional Federico Villareal; and University of Latvia.

## **F. Documentation**

8. The documents before the Group of Experts at its 2023 session are available on the website of the Statistics Division, at [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/3rd\\_session\\_2023/#documents](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/3rd_session_2023/#documents).

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## Annex

### List of geographical 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

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