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)

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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1 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)²

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
Convenor:
   Brahim Atoui

Toponymic guidelines for map and other editors for international use
Convenor:
   Jasper Hogerwerf

Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy
Convenor:
   Peder Gammeltoft

Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management
Convenor:
   Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu

Working Group on Toponymic Terminology
Convenor:
   Trent Palmer

Working Group on Romanization Systems
Conveners:
   Peeter Päll
   Catherine Cheetham

Working Group on Country Names
Convenor:
   Pierre Jaillard

Working Group on Publicity and Funding
Convenor:
   Peder Gammeltoft

Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation
Convenor:
   Sungjae Choo

Working Group on Exonyms
Convenor:
   Kohei Watanabe

² 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.
10. Toponymic education.
11. Toponymic terminology.
12. Geographical names as culture, heritage and identity, including Indigenous, minority and regional languages and multilingual issues.
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

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