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**Economic and environmental questions:
geospatial information**

Report of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names on its 2025 session

(New York, 28 April–2 May 2025)

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I. Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

A. Draft decision for adoption by the Council

1. The United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decision:

Report of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names on its 2025 session and provisional agenda and dates of its 2027 session

The Economic and Social Council:

- (a) Takes note of the report of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names on its 2025 session (E/2025/70);
- (b) Decides that the 2027 session of the Group of Experts shall be held in New York from 3 to 7 May 2027;
- (c) Approves the provisional agenda of the 2027 session ([GEGN.2/2025/L.1](#)).

B. Decisions brought to the attention of the Council

2. The following decisions adopted by the Group of Experts are brought to the attention of the Council:

Decision 2025/1

Advancing geographical names standardization through inclusive, culturally informed and evidence-based solutions to support sustainable development

The Group of Experts:

- (a) Welcomed the theme of its 2025 session, “Advancing geographical names standardization through inclusive, culturally informed and evidence-based solutions to support sustainable development”;
- (b) Also welcomed the convening of the panel discussion on the same theme, noting with appreciation the interests and diverse viewpoints expressed by the five panellists;
- (c) Recognized the efforts of Member States to align the standardization of geographical names with the focuses of inclusivity, culturally informed approaches and evidence-based decision-making, as reported during the session;
- (d) Encouraged Member States to report on further developments made under those three focuses at future sessions.

Adopted under agenda items 3, 4, 6 and 8

Decision 2025/2

Work of the Group of Experts since the 2023 session

The Group of Experts:

- (a) Took note of the report of the Chair and the report of the Secretariat, and appreciated the work of the Chair, the Bureau and the working group conveners and coordinators, as well as the support from the Secretariat and the Statistics Division in arranging and preparing for the 2025 session;

(b) Decided to request a legal opinion from the Legal Counsel of the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs on the following questions:

(i) Is it in line with the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council and of the Group of Experts to call the outcomes and conclusions of the Group of Experts “decisions” and “resolutions”, using the term “resolutions” for those outcomes of the Group of Experts that do not require the Council’s final approval?

(ii) If the above-mentioned terminology is not in line with the rules of procedure of the Group of Experts, what would be the correct denomination of conclusions of the Group of Experts, namely, those transmitted to the Council and those not transmitted to the Council?

(iii) What is the legal status of the decisions and resolutions of the Group of Experts, whether endorsed by the Council or not, with regard to the 211 resolutions of the eleven United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names (held until 2017) and the decisions and recommendations adopted by the Group of Experts since 2019. Under what procedure(s) and condition(s) can the Group of Experts amend or repeal decisions and resolutions of the old body or the new Group of Experts, explicitly or implicitly?

(c) Renewed the call expressed in its decision 3/2023/2 for the organization of an appropriate framework to support the strengthening or creation of national names authorities as well as a Group of Experts trust fund.

Adopted under agenda items 3 (a) and (b)

Decision 2025/3

Implementation of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names strategic plan and programme of work 2021–2029

The Group of Experts:

(a) Took note of the report of the Vice-Chair and welcomed his assessment of how the Bureau, working groups, coordinators and divisions of the Group of Experts and Member States had facilitated the implementation of the strategic plan and programme of work 2021–2029, and in that regard called for the Group of Experts to accelerate its efforts in delivering a comprehensive and inclusive programme on the standardization of geographical names;

(b) Reaffirmed that the strategic plan and programme of work 2021–2029 would continue to serve as a guiding framework for the Group of Experts and for geographical names standardization of Member States;

(c) Accepted the amendments proposed by the Bureau as detailed in the background document to the report (GEGN.2/2025/161/CRP.161/Add.1), and supported appropriate measures to revitalize necessary frameworks;

(d) Encouraged the Bureau, working groups, coordinators, divisions and Member States to contribute to the ongoing implementation of the strategic plan and programme of work;

(e) Decided to begin analysing the current strategic plan and programme of work to inform the development of the next strategic plan and programme of work for discussion at the 2027 session.

Adopted under agenda item 3 (c)

Decision 2025/4**Strengthening of the divisions of the Group of Experts**

The Group of Experts:

(a) Took note of the report of the Bureau and the Secretariat, the reports submitted by divisions and the reports on national and international meetings and conferences;

(b) Requested the Bureau to continue convening biannual virtual meetings with the Divisional Chairs to foster coordination, to facilitate the communication between the Bureau and divisions, to facilitate the development and provision by the Bureau of common tools to support the work of the divisions, and to encourage the active participation of divisions in the implementation of the strategic plan and programme of work 2021–2029;

(c) Encouraged Member States to participate in divisional activities and to revitalize inactive divisions;

(d) Deferred for reworking and resubmission at the 2027 session the guidelines for the creation and dissolution of divisions proposed in the report of the Bureau and the Secretariat;

(e) Took note of the adoption in 2024 of a strategic plan for the Arabic Division and a number of related decisions and recommendations, consistent with the Group of Experts strategic plan and programme of work 2021–2029.

Adopted under agenda items 4 (a) and (d)

Decision 2025/5**Reports of Governments on the situation in their countries and on the progress made in the standardization of geographical names**

The Group of Experts:

(a) Took note of the reports submitted by 50 countries under this agenda item and expressed appreciation for the thematic consideration and presentations of those reports in the form of a national dialogue addressed throughout the session;

(b) Noted that the reports covered themes including national names standardization processes, cultural aspects of geographical names such as Indigenous and minority names, technology and toponymic databases and intergovernmental and inter-organizational cooperation, promotion and training on geographical names, and encouraged experts to refer to the full national reports.

Adopted under agenda item 4 (b)

Decision 2025/6**Revitalizing the task team for Africa**

The Group of Experts:

(a) Heard interventions by experts from African countries regarding the challenges faced in standardizing geographical names in their countries;

(b) Welcomed the convening of the meeting of the Bureau and African Member States, and took note of their geographical names standardization policies, and the organizational and technical challenges that needed to be addressed;

(c) Agreed to adopt a systematic approach to support the African Member States, including identifying and prioritizing needs, grouping them by time span and working on actionable items step by step;

(d) Requested the Bureau and the Working Group on Funding and Training Courses in Toponymy, with the support of the Secretariat, to revitalize the Task Team for Africa in liaison with the Economic Commission for Africa, including the establishment of new leadership, as the convenership had remained vacant since the 2023 session.

Adopted under agenda item 4 (c)

Decision 2025/7

Names collection, office treatment, features beyond a single sovereignty and international cooperation

The Group of Experts:

(a) Took note of the reports;

(b) Appreciated the inclusion of topics such as the application of artificial intelligence tools for standardization tasks; the interplay between use, meaning and origin in traditional narratives; name collection and standardization in desert environments; sharing the *Manual for the Collection of Geographical Names* covering the end-to-end process; recognizing legal and administrative challenges associated with variations and inconsistencies in current standardization practice, and in that regard:

(i) Encouraged ongoing discussion between participating Member States under the Working Group on Romanization Systems and suggested consultation with local authorities to address the challenges in collecting geographical names;

(ii) Requested the support of the Bureau and the Secretariat to facilitate workshops for Member States requiring assistance with standardization practices.

Adopted under agenda item 5 (a)

Decision 2025/8

Geographical names data management

The Group of Experts:

(a) Welcomed the information made available, the active participation and the efforts undertaken by Member States to inform on and enhance geographical names data management;

(b) Took note of the reports and affirmed the support for strategy 1, Technical expertise, of the strategic plan and programme of work 2021–2029, and the willingness of Member States to participate and contribute to the action items identified within the programme of work;

(c) Acknowledged the importance of the integration of unique identifiers and cross-referencing systems for evidence-based standardization, the usage of artificial intelligence, mobile applications and the exploration of how digital platforms could serve multiple user groups;

(d) Appreciated the redevelopment of the World Geographical Names Database as a reliable and extendable technical platform and requested the Secretariat to work with Member States and entities of the United Nations system to integrate authoritative sources of geographical and toponymic data at the country and city levels;

(e) Requested Member States to provide standardized geographical names to the Secretariat to ensure that the Database is operationalized as a practical mechanism for implementing the global fundamental geospatial data theme “Geographical names” for Member States and the United Nations system;

(f) Urged Member States to mobilize resources to support the development of capacity across all Member States and welcomed the possibility of convening a workshop on Linking Geographical Names, the Disaggregation and Localization of Sustainable Development Goals, and the Semantic Web from 11 to 15 August 2025 at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in Santiago;

(g) Adopted the concept for a universal unique identifier for cities as detailed in the document on the development of a globally unique identifier for cities and requested the Statistics Division to implement the concept within the Database as a consistent and reliable unique identifier for cities.

Adopted under agenda item 5 (b)

Decision 2025/9

Writing systems and pronunciation

The Group of Experts:

(a) Welcomed the reports on aspects relating to writing systems and to pronunciation;

(b) Noted with appreciation the significant advances on the innovative tools that had been developed on romanization and agreed to continue to investigate such methods to be used for romanization;

(c) Noted the work on transliteration of non-Roman script writing systems, including on the proposals regarding the unification of Arabic transliteration, and encouraged Member States to continue such projects and share their progress with the Working Group on Romanization Systems;

(d) Encouraged all Member States to continue to share ongoing work with the Working Group towards further implementation of existing United Nations romanization systems and the development of systems to be considered for approval as United Nations romanization systems;

(e) Noted the innovative progress on audio files that had been used for the collection of pronunciation of Māori names, and encouraged the Group of Experts to share similar pronunciation activities.

Adopted under agenda item 5 (c)

Decision 2025/10

Toponymic terminology

The Group of Experts:

(a) Took note of the report of the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology and welcomed the progress made with the online terminology database;

(b) Adopted the two new terms and the change to the definition of one in the terminology database;

(c) Urged Member States to mobilize resources to submit and update changes in the terminology database;

(d) Acknowledged the importance of the Working Group in advancing the standardization of toponymic terminology to facilitate consistent international communication about geographical names and urged the Working Group to consider selecting a new convener.

Adopted under agenda item 5 (d)

Decision 2025/11
Updating the list of country names

The Group of Experts:

- (a) Took note of the report presented by the coordinator of the list of country names;
- (b) Approved the list of country names as submitted to the Group of Experts at its 2025 session.

Adopted under agenda item 5 (e)

Decision 2025/12
Relationship with the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management

The Group of Experts:

- (a) Took note of two reports covering progress on activities such as the establishment of a new and enlarged secretariat for the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, the establishment of United Nations global geospatial centres of excellence in China, Germany and Saudi Arabia, and the collaborative project of the Group of Experts and the Committee of Experts;
- (b) Thanked Indonesia and the United States of America for leading the collaborative project;
- (c) Invited views on the efforts to strengthen collaboration in furthering the standardization of geographical names;
- (d) Supported the report of the joint expert group on the collaborative project, informed by analysis and collation of the questionnaire results and other initiatives, to be presented to the Committee of Experts in August 2025;
- (e) Took note with appreciation of the future publication of the compendium of good practices and recommendations for effective collaboration between mapping and naming authorities within a country, and expressed its intent to actively support those recommendations.

Adopted under agenda item 6 (a)

Decision 2025/13
Relationships with international organizations, including academia

The Group of Experts:

- (a) Took note of the reports;
- (b) Recognized the active approach that each body had taken in developing programmes that positively affected standardization outcomes across the globe, and how these programmes might be enforced;
- (c) Encouraged Member States to become familiar with the resources offered by those bodies, providing understanding and promotion of standardized geographical names, with a view to becoming members of the bodies;
- (d) Noted the efforts made to spread knowledge on geographical names and to foster geographical and cartographic research in toponymy.

Adopted under agenda item 6 (c)

Decision 2025/14
Effective work programmes

The Group of Experts:

(a) Took note of the reports and considered the measures taken and proposed for the implementation of resolutions and recommendations, evaluation of the work of the Group of Experts, social and economic benefits of supporting sustainable development, and toponymic guidelines for international use by map and other editors;

(b) Welcomed the efforts of Member States and experts in implementing the resolutions, recommendations and decisions from past United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names and sessions of the Group of Experts, and in developing new frameworks for that purpose, and encouraged the continuation of those efforts;

(c) Appreciated the progress made by the Co-Coordicators for Evaluation, Implementation and Publicity in monitoring the implementation of resolutions and recommendations, as well as in maintaining and optimizing the use of resources of the Group of Experts, including the multilingual database of resolutions and recommendations, its evaluation surveys of biennial sessions and its website, Information Bulletins and publications;

(d) Reaffirmed that the standardization of geographical names in support of sustainable development would bring economic and social benefits and recognized the good practices achieved in that regard;

(e) Welcomed the recent updates to the inventory of toponymic guidelines and their dissemination through the website of the Group of Experts and urged Member States to prepare new guidelines or update existing ones and report to the Group of Experts at its subsequent sessions.

Adopted under agenda item 7

Decision 2025/15
Recognition of geographical names as culture, heritage and identity

The Group of Experts:

(a) Acknowledged the important work conducted by Member States, including the development of guidelines, and thanked them for their efforts;

(b) Noted the importance of public engagement and awareness as a means of safeguarding geographical names as cultural heritage, and the importance of using geographical names as a tool to bring about positive social change;

(c) Supported the work of the revitalized Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage, noting its terms of reference and workplan;

(d) Encouraged Member States to respond to the Global Survey on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage and to consider participating in the revitalized Working Group;

(e) Welcomed the experts from Australia and Iceland as Co-Conveners of the revitalized Working Group;

(f) Recognized, as a model that could be promoted, a framework implementing dual oversight systems that combine scientific committees for standardization and advisory boards for cultural heritage preservation.

Adopted under agenda items 8 (a) and 10

Decision 2025/16**Recognition of Indigenous, minority and regional languages and multilingual issues**

The Group of Experts:

(a) Noted and commended the work undertaken by Member States and by the Focus Group on Indigenous Geographical Names, especially activities and initiatives linked to the United Nations Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022–2032), and encouraged them to continue that work;

(b) Noted and appreciated efforts by Member States to standardize Indigenous and minority language geographical names;

(c) Requested the Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage, with the assistance of the Bureau and in close consultation with Member States, to build relationships with other relevant entities of the United Nations system such as the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization;

(d) Decided to appoint the expert from the Livonian Institute at the University of Latvia to act as a liaison officer to the Global Task Force for Making a Decade of Action for Indigenous Languages, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Group of Experts.

Adopted under agenda item 8 (b)

Decision 2025/17**Exonyms**

The Group of Experts:

(a) Took note of the reports and appreciated the work on exonyms conducted by the Group of Experts;

(b) Reaffirmed its decision 2/2021/12, as well as its decision 3/2023/16, in which it was stated that there was a need to issue a recommendation that reconciles the resolutions of the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names on exonyms and its acknowledgement of exonyms as part of cultural heritage; and appreciated the work and deliberations conducted by the experts of an increasing number of countries since 2021 towards achieving this;

(c) Agreed that further discussion on the matter remains necessary to fulfil the need as described in decision 3/2023/16;

(d) Encouraged experts to consider the previous work of the Working Group on Exonyms and to take into account the concepts, as well as the various concerns, that were addressed in the process of developing the draft resolution on exonyms and cultural heritage.

Adopted under agenda item 8 (c)

Decision 2025/18**Strengthening publicity and increasing awareness of the importance of standardized geographical names**

The Group of Experts:

(a) Took note of the innovative approaches by Member States to promote public awareness of standardized geographical names through social media, competitions, encyclopedias and multimedia content;

(b) Encouraged Member States to continue to develop inclusive, culturally informed approaches to geographical names documentation and standardization, with particular emphasis on leveraging digital tools to engage younger generations.

Adopted under agenda item 9 (a)

Decision 2025/19

Toponymic training and education

The Group of Experts:

(a) Took note of the significant educational gap relating to professionals' lack of formal training in geographical names management, and requested the support of the Bureau and the Secretariat to implement efficient training models combining in-person workshops with online resources, prioritizing database management, standardization principles and cultural heritage aspects;

(b) Noted the development of the terms of reference designed to guide the activities of the Working Group on Funding and Training Courses in Toponymy.

Adopted under agenda item 9 (b)

Decision 2025/20

Funding of capacity-building initiatives

The Group of Experts:

(a) Noted the need to mobilize resources to support contributions by Member States to the Group of Experts, so that experts from developing countries can be supported to attend sessions and training activities;

(b) Decided to recommend the establishment of a trust fund to enhance training frameworks and address the funding challenges that affect the mission of the Group of Experts of building capacity in geographical names standardization across all regions and attendance in its activities.

Adopted under agenda item 9 (c)

II. Items considered by the Group of Experts

3. At its 9th meeting, on 2 May, the Group of Experts took action on all draft decisions under items 3–10 of its agenda, contained in an informal paper introduced by the Rapporteurs (see sect. I.B, decisions 2025/1–2025/20).

A. Reports of the Chair and the Secretariat

4. The Group of Experts considered item 3 of its agenda at its 1st and 9th meetings, on 28 April and 2 May 2025.

Report of the Chair (item 3 (a))

5. The Chair of the Group of Experts introduced his report (GEGN.2/2025/4/CRP.4).

Report of the Secretariat (item 3 (b))

6. A representative of the Secretariat introduced the report of the Secretariat (GEGN.2/2025/5/CRP.5).

Monitoring and evaluation of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names strategic plan and programme of work 2021–2029 (item 3 (c))

7. A Vice-Chair (Republic of Korea) introduced the report entitled “Monitoring and evaluation of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names strategic plan and programme of work 2021–2029” (GEGN.2/2025/161/CRP.161) on behalf of the Bureau. The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/043932ef-7778-4ca0-baf2-148be62b31ff/2025-04-28>.

B. Reports (national, divisional, activities on the standardization of geographical names in Africa, and national and international meetings and conferences)

8. The Group of Experts considered item 4, concerning national and divisional reports, reports on activities on the standardization of geographical names in Africa and a report on national and international meetings and conferences, at its 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th, 8th and 9th meetings, from 28 April to 2 May 2025.

Divisions of the Group of Experts (item 4 (a))

9. At the 1st meeting, a representative of the Secretariat and the representatives of Italy, China, Poland, Slovenia, Iceland and New Zealand, respectively, introduced the divisional reports contained in documents GEGN.2/2025/158/CRP.158, GEGN.2/2025/58/CRP.58, GEGN.2/2025/42/CRP.42, GEGN.2/2025/28/CRP.28, GEGN.2/2025/20/CRP.20, GEGN.2/2025/57/CRP.57 and GEGN.2/2025/61/CRP.61. The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/043932ef-7778-4ca0-baf2-148be62b31ff/2025-04-28>.

Governments on the situation in their countries and on the progress made in the standardization of geographical names (item 4 (b))

10. At its 2nd meeting, the Group of Experts heard presentations in the form of a national dialogue on national names standardization by Italy, Poland, Estonia, Japan, Malaysia, Denmark and Cyprus. The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/d4aa9142-f53b-453d-a75c-07757a286845/2025-04-28>.

11. At its 4th meeting, the Group of Experts heard presentations in the form of a national dialogue on cultural aspects of geographical names standardization by Saudi Arabia, Canada, Brunei Darussalam, Slovenia and Sweden. The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/1bad5c44-d6c0-4474-bee3-649a1c58d9b4/2025-04-29>. The representatives of Cyprus and Türkiye made statements in the exercise of the right of reply.

12. At its 6th meeting, the Group of Experts heard presentations in the form of a national dialogue on technology, innovation and standards for geographical names data management by Mexico, Norway, Australia, India, Austria, the Russian Federation, Hungary and Brazil. The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/b0da84f1-c9bc-4396-a74e-be2ee1ab3f8c/2025-04-30>.

13. At its 8th meeting, the Group of Experts heard presentations in the form of a national dialogue on cooperation, training and promotion by New Zealand, Iceland, the Republic of Korea and Czechia. The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/f2bfeefb-c23b-46d4-a957-211d655bf43a/2025-05-01>.

Activities on the standardization of geographical names in Africa (item 4 (c))

14. At its 2nd meeting, the Group of Experts considered item 4 (c). The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/d4aa9142-f53b-453d-a75c-07757a286845/2025-04-28>.

National and international meetings and conferences (item 4 (d))

15. At the same meeting, two representatives of the Arabic Division introduced the report of the International Symposium on the Standardization of Geographical Names, entitled “Tenth Arab Forum on Geographical Names” (GEGN.2/2025/45/CRP.45). The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/d4aa9142-f53b-453d-a75c-07757a286845/2025-04-28>.

C. Technical expertise

16. The Group of Experts considered item 5 of its agenda at its 3rd, 4th and 9th meetings, on 29 April and 2 May 2025.

Names collection, office treatment, features beyond a single sovereignty and international cooperation (item 5(a))

17. At the 4th meeting, representatives of the Norden Division, the Arabic Division and the Portuguese-speaking Division introduced the reports contained in documents GEGN.2/2025/6/CRP.6, GEGN.2/2025/7/CRP.7, GEGN.2/2025/49/CRP.49, GEGN.2/2025/53/CRP.53 and GEGN.2/2025/60/CRP.60. The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/1bad5c44-d6c0-4474-bee3-649a1c58d9b4/2025-04-29>.

Geographical names data management (item 5 (b))

18. At the 3rd meeting, representatives of the Norden Division, the Asia East Division (other than China), the Arabic Division, the Dutch- and German-speaking Division and a representative of the Secretariat introduced the reports contained in documents GEGN.2/2025/8/CRP.8, GEGN.2/2025/22/CRP.22, GEGN.2/2025/51/CRP.51, GEGN.2/2025/52/CRP.52, GEGN.2/2025/83/CRP.83, GEGN.2/2025/102/CRP.102, GEGN.2/2025/115/CRP.115, GEGN.2/2025/21/CRP.21 and GEGN.2/2025/84/CRP.84. The Convener of the Working Group on Geographical Names Data introduced the report of the Working Group (GEGN.2/2025/82/CRP.82). The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/a3b98b2c-f7c2-4040-a999-31dc7a6e7233/2025-04-29>.

Writing systems and pronunciation (item 5 (c))

19. At the 4th meeting, the Convener of the Working Group on Romanization Systems introduced the report of the Working Group (GEGN.2/2025/26/CRP.26); representatives of the Arabic Division and Pacific South-West Division introduced the reports contained in documents GEGN.2/2025/48/CRP.48, GEGN.2/2025/63/CRP.63 and GEGN.2/2025/142/CRP.142. The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/1bad5c44-d6c0-4474-bee3-649a1c58d9b4/2025-04-29>.

Toponymic terminology (item 5 (d))

20. At the 3rd meeting, a representative of the Norden Division introduced, on behalf of the Convener of the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology, the report of the Working Group (GEGN.2/2025/37/CRP.37).

Country names (item 5 (e))

21. At the 4th meeting, the Chair introduced the report entitled “Updated world country names: short and formal names” (GEGN.2/2025/122/CRP.122).

D. Relationships, links and connections

22. The Group of Experts considered item 6 of its agenda at its 2nd, 3rd and 9th meetings, on 28 and 29 April and on 2 May 2025.

Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (item 6 (a))

23. At the 2nd meeting, representatives of the Arabic Division and the United States of America/Canada Division introduced the reports contained in documents GEGN.2/2025/140/CRP.140 and GEGN.2/2025/143/CRP.143. The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/d4aa9142-f53b-453d-a75c-07757a286845/2025-04-28>.

Economic Commission for Africa (item 6 (b))

24. At the 3rd meeting, the Chair made a summary statement regarding agenda item 6 (b).

International organizations, including academia (item 6 (c))

25. At the 3rd meeting, representatives of the International Council of Onomastic Sciences and the East Central and South-East Europe Division introduced the reports contained in documents GEGN.2/2025/18/CRP.18 and GEGN.2/2025/150/CRP.150.

E. Effective work programmes

26. The Group of Experts considered item 7 of its agenda at its 7th and 9th meetings, on 1 and 2 May 2025.

Measures taken and proposed for the implementation of resolutions and recommendations (item 7 (a))

27. At the 7th meeting, representatives of the Norden Division and Pacific South-West Division introduced reports (GEGN.2/2025/11/CRP.11 and GEGN.2/2025/64/CRP.64). The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/739d4b0e-61a5-4fa4-8695-63fe8e701694/2025-05-01>.

Evaluation of the work of the Group of Experts (item 7 (b))

28. At the same meeting, the report of the Co-Coordination for Evaluation and Implementation and Publicity (GEGN.2/2025/36/CRP.36) was introduced.

Social and economic benefits of supporting sustainable development (item 7 (c))

29. Also at the same meeting, representatives of the China Division and Pacific South-West Division introduced reports (GEGN.2/2025/44/CRP.44 and GEGN.2/2025/70/CRP.70). The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/739d4b0e-61a5-4fa4-8695-63fe8e701694/2025-05-01>.

Toponymic guidelines for international use by map and other editors (item 7 (d))

30. Also at the 7th meeting, the Coordinator for Toponymic Guidelines for Map and Other Editors for International Use introduced his report (GEGN.2/2025/116/CRP.116).

F. Culture, heritage and language recognition

31. The Group of Experts considered item 8 of its agenda at its 4th to 6th and 9th meetings, on 29 and 30 April and on 2 May 2025.

Geographical names as culture, heritage and identity (item 8 (a))

32. At the 4th meeting, an expert of the Norden Division introduced the report entitled “Addressing culturally and socially sensitive geographical names: a framework for standardization” (GEGN.2/2025/13/CRP.13), and the Co-Convener (Australia) of the Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage introduced the report of the Working Group (GEGN.2/2025/31/CRP.31). The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/1bad5c44-d6c0-4474-bee3-649a1c58d9b4/2025-04-29>.

33. At the 5th meeting, representatives of the Arabic Division, the Portuguese-speaking Division, the Pacific South-West Division and the Asia East Division (other than China) introduced the reports contained in documents GEGN.2/2025/47/CRP.47, GEGN.2/2025/54/CRP.54, GEGN.2/2025/65/CRP.65, GEGN.2/2025/68/CRP.68, GEGN.2/2025/159/CRP.159, GEGN.2/2025/164/CRP.164 and GEGN.2/2025/165/CRP.165. The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/54277cd3-1071-48af-833b-03dd034f722a/2025-04-30>.

Indigenous, minority and regional languages and multilingual issues (item 8 (b))

34. At the same meeting, representatives of the Pacific South-West Division, the United States of America/Canada Division and the Dutch- and German-speaking Division introduced the reports contained in documents GEGN.2/2025/69/CRP.69, GEGN.2/2025/94/CRP.94 and GEGN.2/2025/147/CRP.147. The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/54277cd3-1071-48af-833b-03dd034f722a/2025-04-30>.

Exonyms (item 8 (c))

35. Also at the same meeting, representatives of the Baltic Division and the Dutch- and German-speaking Division introduced the reports contained in documents GEGN.2/2025/10/CRP.10, GEGN.2/2025/17/CRP.17 and GEGN.2/2025/19/CRP.19; and the Convener of the Working Group on Exonyms introduced the reports of the Working Group contained in documents GEGN.2/2025/71/CRP.71 and GEGN.2/2025/72/CRP.72. The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/54277cd3-1071-48af-833b-03dd034f722a/2025-04-30>.

36. At the 6th meeting, the Convener of the Working Group on Exonyms continued his introduction of the report of the Working Group (GEGN.2/2025/72/CRP.72). A representative of the Baltic Division introduced the report on foreign names in Estonian (GEGN.2/2025/108/CRP.108). The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/b0da84f1-c9bc-4396-a74e-be2ee1ab3f8c/2025-04-30>.

G. Promotion and capacity-building

37. The Group of Experts considered item 9 of its agenda at its 6th, 7th and 9th meetings, on 30 April and on 1 and 2 May 2025.

Strengthening publicity and increasing awareness of the importance of standardized geographical names (item 9 (a))

38. At the 6th meeting, a representative of the Asia South-East Division introduced the report entitled “Fostering public participation by conducting competition to uphold and protect geographical names” (GEGN.2/2025/125/CRP.125). The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/b0da84f1-c9bc-4396-a74e-be2ee1ab3f8c/2025-04-30>.

39. At the 7th meeting, representatives of the Arabic Division and the Asia East Division (other than China) introduced the reports contained in documents GEGN.2/2025/160/CRP.160 and GEGN.2/2025/166/CRP.166. The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/739d4b0e-61a5-4fa4-8695-63fe8e701694/2025-05-01>.

Toponymic training and education (item 9 (b))

40. At the same meeting, the Convener of the Working Group on Funding and Training Courses in Toponymy introduced the reports of the Working Group (GEGN.2/2025/14/CRP.14 and GEGN.2/2025/153/CRP.153) and representatives of the Norden Division and the Asia South-East Division introduced the reports contained in documents GEGN.2/2025/80/CRP.80 and GEGN.2/2025/128/CRP.128. The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/739d4b0e-61a5-4fa4-8695-63fe8e701694/2025-05-01>.

Funding of capacity-building initiatives (item 9 (c))

41. Also at the same meeting, the Group of Experts considered item 9 (c). The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/739d4b0e-61a5-4fa4-8695-63fe8e701694/2025-05-01>.

H. Other geographical names issues

42. The Group of Experts considered item 10 of its agenda at its 7th and 9th meetings, on 1 and 2 May 2025. At the 7th meeting, a representative of the Norden Division introduced the report entitled “Example laws on geographical names standardization and cultural heritage protection” (GEGN.2/2025/9/CRP.9). The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/739d4b0e-61a5-4fa4-8695-63fe8e701694/2025-05-01>.

I. Other business

43. The Group of Experts considered item 12 of its agenda at its 7th meeting, on 1 May 2025. The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/739d4b0e-61a5-4fa4-8695-63fe8e701694/2025-05-01>.

J. Special presentations

44. During the session, the Group of Experts heard three special presentations and had stimulating interactive discussions. They were as follows:

(a) A presentation on the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022–2032), delivered at the 1st meeting, on 28 April, by the Director of the Livonian Institute at the University of Latvia, Valts Ernštreits. The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/043932ef-7778-4ca0-baf2-148be62b31ff/2025-04-28>;

(b) A presentation on artificial intelligence and the future of geographical names standardization, delivered at the 3rd meeting, on 29 April, by the founder and Board President of the Artificial Intelligence Society of Saudi Arabia, Fatmah Baothman. The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/a3b98b2c-f7c2-4040-a999-31dc7a6e7233/2025-04-29>;

(c) A presentation on geographical names education in the context of the Norwegian Language Council, delivered at the 7th meeting, on 1 May, by a Professor at the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences and Special Adviser on Toponyms for the Norwegian Language Council, Ingvil Brugger Budal. The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/739d4b0e-61a5-4fa4-8695-63fe8e701694/2025-05-01>.

K. Panel discussions

45. During the session, the Group of Experts heard three panel discussions and had stimulating interactive discussions. They were as follows:

(a) “Advancing geographical names standardization through inclusive, culturally-informed and evidence-based solutions to support sustainable development”, held at the 2nd meeting, on 28 April. The panellists were as follows: the Head of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Chair in Inclusive Place Naming and Professor at the University of Geneva, Frédéric Giraut; the Technical Lead at Google Maps, Dieter Laskowski; the Co-Convener (Iceland) of the Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage, Emily Diana Lethbridge; the Rapporteur (Brazil) of the Group of Experts; and a member of the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Allison Dollimore. The panel discussion was facilitated by the Vice-Chair (Republic of Korea) of the Group of Experts. The record of speakers in the discussion is available at <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/d4aa9142-f53b-453d-a75c-07757a286845/2025-04-28>;

(b) “Artificial intelligence and the future of geographical names standardization”, held at the 3rd meeting, on 29 April. The panellists were as follows: the founder and Board President of the Artificial Intelligence Society of Saudi Arabia; the Convener of the Working Group on Funding and Training Courses in Toponymy, Peter Gammeltoft; the Co-Convener (Australia) of the Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage, Rafe Benli; and the Convener of the Working Group on Romanization Systems, Catherine Cheetham. The panel discussion was facilitated by the Convener of the Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management, Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu. The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/a3b98b2c-f7c2-4040-a999-31dc7a6e7233/2025-04-29>;

(c) “Toponymic training 2030: building capacity for tomorrow’s geographical names challenges”, held at the 6th meeting, on 30 April. The panellists were as

follows: a toponymic expert, Peter Jordan; an expert on educational sciences and theories at the University of Montreal, Marie Thériault; the Acting Surveyor General in the Survey Department of the Ministry of Development of Brunei Darussalam, Nor Zetty Akhtar binti Haji Abd Hamid; and a doctoral fellow at Stellenbosch University, Oswald Chanda Penda. The panel discussion was facilitated by the Convener of the Working Group on Funding and Training Courses in Toponymy. The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/b0da84f1-c9bc-4396-a74e-be2ee1ab3f8c/2025-04-30>.

III. Provisional agenda, venue and dates of the 2027 session

46. The Group of Experts considered item 11 (c) of its agenda at its 9th meeting, on 2 May 2025. A representative of the Secretariat introduced the provisional agenda for the 2027 session ([GEGN.2/2025/L.1](#)) and the Group of Experts approved it. It was decided that the 2027 session of the Group of Experts would be held in New York from 3 to 7 May 2027 (see sect. I.A).

IV. Adoption of the decisions and the report

47. The Group of Experts considered items 11 (a) and (b) of its agenda at its 9th meeting, on 2 May 2025. The Rapporteurs introduced the informal paper containing the draft decisions of the session and the draft report on the 2025 session of the Group of Experts ([GEGN.2/2025/L.2](#)).

48. Also at its 9th meeting, the Group of Experts adopted the draft report on its 2025 session, together with the draft decisions contained in the informal paper, as orally revised (see sect. I.B), and entrusted the Rapporteurs with finalizing the report by reflecting the proceedings of the meeting. The record of speakers in the discussion is available at: <https://journal.un.org/en/new-york/meeting/officials/00cc90d4-1f06-4392-b462-790519322ed4/2025-05-02>.

V. Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

49. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council decision 2023/338, the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names held its 2025 session at Headquarters from 28 April to 2 May 2025. It held nine meetings.

B. Attendance

50. The session was attended by 227 participants representing 64 States Members of the United Nations and the linguistic and geographical divisions of the Group of Experts. The list of participants is contained in document [GEGN.2/2025/INF/1](#).

C. Officers of the session

51. The officers of the session were as follows:

Chair:

Pierre Jaillard (France)

Vice-Chairs:

Wendy Shaw (New Zealand)¹
Sungjae Choo (Republic of Korea)

Rapporteurs:

Ana Cristina da Rocha Berenger Resende (Brazil)
Majdi Hamed AlHarbi (Saudi Arabia)²

52. For a list of the geographical and linguistic divisions and the names of their Chairs, see <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/divisions/>. For a list of officers of the working groups, see <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/bureau/>.

D. Opening statements

53. The Chair opened the session on 28 April, made opening remarks and summarized the tasks ahead. The Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs made a statement.

E. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

54. At its 1st meeting, on 28 April, the Group of Experts adopted its provisional agenda (GEGN.2/2025/1) and approved its organization of work (GEGN.2/2025/3/Rev.1).

55. 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; Google; International Cartographic Association; International Council of Onomastic Sciences; International Geographical Union; King Abdulaziz University; Norwegian Language Council; Pan American Institute of Geography and History; Federico Villarreal National University; University of Montreal; University of Geneva; and University of Latvia.

F. Documentation

56. The documents before the Group of Experts are available on the website of the Statistics Division, at https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th_session_2025/#documents.

¹ Appointed by the Chair to complete the unexpired portion of the term of office of Susan Birtles, who had relinquished her functions as Vice-Chair.

² Appointed by the Chair to complete the unexpired portion of the term of office of Wendy Shaw, who had relinquished her functions as Rapporteur.