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Agenda item 18 (i)

**Economic and environmental questions:
geospatial information****Report of the United Nations Group of Experts on
Geographical Names on its 2019 session****(New York, 29 April–3 May 2019)***Summary*

The 2019 session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names was held at United Nations Headquarters from 29 April to 3 May 2019, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution [2018/2](#).

The present report describes the activities during the session and presents the major findings of the Group of Experts, focusing primarily on the importance of its work to support Member States in the collection, standardization and dissemination of geographical names and the establishment of national geospatial names authorities.



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

A. Recommendations 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:

Recommendation 1

The Economic and Social Council:

(a) Decides that, in close consultation with States Members of the United Nations, the Bureau of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names should undertake the development of a draft strategic plan and programme of work for the new Group of Experts, which, *inter alia*, should take into account:

- (i) The mandate and structure of the Group;
- (ii) Support for the creation of new national geographical names authorities and strengthening the operation of existing ones;
- (iii) The establishment of funding mechanisms (such as a trust fund) to support the implementation of the strategic plan;
- (iv) Appropriate branding and publicity for the Group;
- (v) The focus and core goals of its parent body, the Economic and Social Council;
- (vi) A suitable planning time frame;

(b) Also decides that the draft strategic plan and programme of work shall be circulated to Member States for consideration prior to adoption at the second session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.

Recommendation 2

The Economic and Social Council:

Decides that, in close consultation with Member States, the Bureau of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names shall review the procedures and timing for the preparation of country reports and their submission to the sessions of the Group of Experts, as well as facilitate interactive processes for presentation of the material contained therein.

Recommendation 3

The Economic and Social Council:

Decides that the appropriate working groups of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (i.e. the Working Groups on Evaluation and Implementation, Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage and Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers) shall review the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions noted in document [GEGN.2/2019/83](#) for their relevance to the work of the Group of Experts and submit the information report of their review, where appropriate, to the Group of Experts at its second session for consideration.

Recommendation 4

The Economic and Social Council:

Decides that the Bureau of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, through the Task Team for Africa, shall continue to urge the Economic Commission for Africa to collaborate with the Group of Experts, for example on the development of the GeoNyms application and implementation of the Gaborone Action Plan on Geographical Names Activities in Africa, as steps to achieve geographical names standardization in the countries of Africa.

Recommendation 5

The Economic and Social Council:

Decides that the Group of Experts shall establish an ad hoc group under the umbrella of the Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage to determine the benefits and scope of investigating the principles and methodology of writing geographical names emanating from unwritten languages.

Recommendation 6

The Economic and Social Council:

Encourages the Group of Experts to continue its ongoing liaison with staff of the Documentation Division of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management to help to facilitate their work and their optimal use of geographical names, as a follow-up to the discussion held between members of the Group of Experts and staff of the Documentation Division.

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 1/2019/1**Report of the Chair**

The Group of Experts:

- (a) Took note of the report of the Chair of the Group of Experts;
- (b) Appreciated the leadership of the Chair, the work of the Bureau and the working group conveners, the support from the Statistics Division and all other input from the actors related to the United Nations in achieving a successful change to its structure but with the same aims and focus;
- (c) Noted the urgency of achieving the aims of the Group of Experts and of aligning its work in support of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals;
- (d) Encouraged the expansion and continuation of active involvement from delegates and members of the Group.

Decision 1/2019/2
Report of the Secretariat

The Group of Experts:

(a) Took note of the report of the Secretariat describing the activities undertaken in the two-year period in support of the work of the Group of Experts, particularly the work for preparing the first session of the new Group of Experts;

(b) Appreciated the work done by the Secretariat, the Statistics Division and volunteers of the Group of Experts to redesign and launch the Group's website and support the continued development of the web-based, georeferenced World Geographical Names database to replace the existing proprietary application;

(c) Took note of the suggestion of the Secretariat to develop a strategic plan and work programme for the future direction of the Group of Experts.

Decision 1/2019/3
National, divisional and Working Group on Country Names reports

The Group of Experts:

(a) Took note of the reports submitted by 41 countries and expressed appreciation for the breadth of information made available, and noted that the reports covered topics including toponymic databases, minority and indigenous group names, geographical names and addressing, publications, special symposiums, crowdsourcing, and democratization of geographical names;

(b) Emphasized that the content of the submitted country reports should be viewed as models for adoption by countries that may have an inactive or no programme of standardization;

(c) Encouraged the continued reference and adherence to resolutions from the past 11 United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names in order to demonstrate their effectiveness and the value of their existence;

(d) Took note of the reports submitted by 12 out of the 24 geographical/linguistic divisions of the Group of Experts and expressed appreciation for the rich body of information presenting relevant methods, issues and techniques;

(e) Encouraged divisions to model work based on the feedback provided on the operations of other divisions and also encouraged individual countries to continue supporting the activities of divisions, particularly for those divisions which are not functioning as they should;

(f) Took note of the report of the Working Group on Country Names accompanied by the Group of Experts list of country names, and two other reports regarding country names used in the respective countries;

(g) Acknowledged the work of the Working Group on Country Names and expressed its appreciation to the Working Group for its efforts.

Decision 1/2019/4
Cooperation and liaison with other organizations

The Group of Experts:

(a) Took note of the reports submitted by the liaison officers of the International Council of Onomastic Sciences, the Joint International Cartographic Association/International Geographical Union Commission on Toponymy and the

International Hydrographic Organization, as well as by the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management;

(b) Recognized that it is important to maintain the relationship between the Group of Experts and the organizations with which it maintains liaison;

(c) Took note of the reports submitted by the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management and by the Bureau of the Group of Experts with regard to the cooperation between the Group of Experts and the Committee of Experts;

(d) Welcomed the existing cooperation between the Group of Experts and the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management and encouraged Member States to endeavour, at the national level, to enable further such cooperation.

Decision 1/2019/5

National and international standardization of geographical names

The Group of Experts:

(a) Took note of the 14 reports for presentation and 1 report for information submitted under this agenda item;

(b) Welcomed the interesting exploration of issues emerging in the range of national standardization programmes presented in the reports;

(c) Congratulated countries that have achieved great advancements in the development or analysis of their programmes of work;

(d) Noted several trends, including the importance of safeguarding identity and cultural heritage, engagement with local communities on naming issues, publicity and clarification of principles, procedures and processes of standardization, as well as the improvement, enhancements and expansion of the scope in the collection, treatment or cataloguing of geographical names;

(e) Welcomed the recent updates to the inventory of toponymic guidelines available through links to various sources;

(f) Encouraged Member States that had not yet prepared toponymic guidelines to do so in accordance with the template suggested by the Coordinator and regularly update those guidelines and report to the subsequent sessions of the Group of Experts;

(g) Suggested that the template and format of the toponymic guidelines document be examined for possible improvement and modernization.

Decision 1/2019/6

Social and economic benefits, supporting sustainable development, measures taken and proposed for the implementation of resolutions and evaluation of the work of the Group of Experts (Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation)

The Group of Experts:

(a) Took note of the reports submitted under this agenda item;

(b) Appreciated the work done by the Working Group to improve the functional efficacy of the Group of Experts, especially in the transition to the new modalities, and the efforts to motivate the implementation of resolutions, including the establishment of the multilingual database for resolutions;

(c) Also appreciated the work done to incorporate the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into the sphere of geographical names standardization at both the levels of the Group of Experts and individual Member States.

Decision 1/2019/7

**Issues of publicity for the Group of Experts and funding of Group projects
(Working Group on Publicity and Funding)**

The Group of Experts:

- (a) Took note of the two reports for presentation submitted under this agenda item;
- (b) Welcomed the interesting exploration of issues emerging in the area of publicity and funding of Group projects presented in the reports;
- (c) Encouraged further collaboration schemes in order to develop a more sustainable model for the funding of projects.

Decision 1/2019/8

Activities on national standardization in Africa (Task Team for Africa)

The Group of Experts:

- (a) Took note of the report submitted by the Coordinator of the Task Team for Africa and recognized the actions taken for the standardization of geographical names in Africa;
- (b) Encouraged taking appropriate measures to increase the participation of experts from Africa in the light of the low participation rate at the current session;
- (c) Urged the maintenance of connection with the Economic Commission for Africa for further collaboration on the standardization of geographical names.

Decision 1/2019/9

Toponymic education (Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy)

The Group of Experts:

- (a) Took note of the report for presentation submitted under this agenda item;
- (b) Welcomed the announcement of two training courses in toponymy by Indonesia and the request for a training course to be held in the Caribbean region by Jamaica and encouraged further exploration of possibilities;
- (c) Noted the request for a list of regions in which toponymy training courses could potentially be held.

Decision 1/2019/10

Activities relating to the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology

The Group of Experts:

- (a) Took note of the reports presented under this agenda item;
- (b) Congratulated the Working Group on the establishment of the online terminology database;
- (c) Encouraged the Working Group to continue to address proposals for additions, modifications and corrections to the database of toponymic terminology.

Decision 1/2019/11**Geographical names as culture, heritage and identity, including indigenous, minority and regional languages and multilingual issues (Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage)**

The Group of Experts:

- (a) Took note of the reports submitted under the agenda item;
- (b) Noted the wide range of issues that the topic of geographical names as cultural heritage contains;
- (c) Supported the continuation of the sharing of national experiences and engagement with indigenous groups as a way to educate others within the Group of Experts and promote the work;
- (d) Welcomed the initiative from the Coordinator of the Task Team for Africa on creating an ad hoc group on non-written language transcription systems.

Decision 1/2019/12**Exonyms (Working Group on Exonyms)**

The Group of Experts:

- (a) Took note of the reports presented under this agenda item;
- (b) Appreciated the further deliberation on the nature of exonyms and exchange of information on exonyms from specific language areas through the Working Group;
- (c) Encouraged the continued compilation and distribution of lists of exonyms and invited other language and national groups to contribute to this work.

Decision 1/2019/13**Toponymic data files and gazetteers (data processing and tools, database management, data dissemination: products and services) (Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers)**

The Group of Experts:

- (a) Took note of the Working Group Convener's report on the recent and current activities of the Working Group and the nine further reports submitted by experts from eight different Member States;
- (b) Expressed appreciation for the information made available and the active participation of the plenary session in their interventions;
- (c) Observed that most activities in the countries focused on the establishment of national geographical names databases, services and applications to provide geographical names data for a variety of purposes, for example land management, health, emergency and other services;
- (d) Recognized technological methods such as linked data for the provision of geographical names data to be considered by the Working Group in the future;
- (e) Noted that the developments were fully in line with resolution VIII/6 of the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, which recommended better integration of geographical names into national and regional spatial data infrastructures;
- (f) Encouraged the continued activities of Working Group members.

Decision 1/2019/14

Writing systems and pronunciation (Working Group on Romanization Systems)

The Group of Experts:

(a) Took note of the Working Group Convener's report on the recent and current activities of the Working Group;

(b) Encouraged the Member States that do not have a national romanization system to liaise with the Working Group on Romanization Systems to create an approved system.

Decision 1/2019/15

Cooperation with the Documentation Division

The Group of Experts:

(a) Took note of the oral report on the panel discussion of the practices related to geographical names which was attended by the members of the Group of Experts and the Documentation Division of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management;

(b) Encouraged the establishment of a communication channel between these two groups in order to facilitate the exchange of information on the appropriate use of geographical names.

II. Items considered by the Group of Experts

A. Reports of the Chair and the Secretariat

3. The Group of Experts considered item 4 of its agenda at its 1st and 10th meetings, on 29 April and 3 May 2019. It had before it the report of the Chair (see [GEGN.2/2019/4](#)), which was presented by the Chair of the Group of Experts, and the report of the Secretariat (see [GEGN.2/2019/5](#)), which was introduced by the representative of the Secretariat.

4. At the 1st meeting, on 29 April, representatives of the Member States, speaking also on behalf of their respective geographical and linguistic divisions, representatives of the Secretariat and the Chair made statements.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

5. At its 10th meeting, on 3 May, the Group of Experts adopted two draft decisions submitted by the Rapporteurs, as orally amended (see sect. I.B, decisions 1/2019/1 and 1/2019/2).

B. Reports (national, divisional and Working Group on Country Names reports)

6. The Group of Experts considered item 5 (a) to (d), concerning national, divisional and Working Group on Country Names reports, of its agenda at its 2nd and 10th meetings, on 29 April and 3 May 2019. At its 2nd meeting, the Group of Experts had before it, for information and discussion, 60 reports submitted by the Member States, its geographical and linguistic divisions and the Working Group on Country Names.

7. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Member States, also on behalf of their respective geographical and linguistic divisions, as well as by the Chair and the Convener of the Working Group on Country Names.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

8. At its 10th meeting, on 3 May, the Group of Experts adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs, as orally amended (see sect. I.B, decision 1/2019/3).

C. Report on liaison with other organizations

9. The Group of Experts considered item 6 of its agenda at its 3rd and 10th meetings, on 30 April and 3 May 2019. At its 3rd meeting, it had before it six reports for information and discussion, which were introduced by the representatives of the relevant organizations.

10. At the same meeting, representatives of the Member States, speaking also on behalf of their respective geographical and linguistic divisions, and the Chair made statements.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

11. At its 10th meeting, on 3 May, the Group of Experts adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs (see sect. I.B, decision 1/2019/4).

D. National and international standardization of geographical names

12. The Group of Experts considered item 7 of its agenda at its 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 10th meetings, on 30 April and 1 and 3 May 2019. At its 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th meetings, it had before it 20 reports for information and discussion, which were introduced by the representatives of the Member States and conveners of the relevant working groups.

13. At its 3rd and 4th meetings, on 30 April, representatives of the Member States, speaking also on behalf of their respective geographical and linguistic divisions, and the Chair made statements.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

14. At its 10th meeting, on 3 May, the Group of Experts adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs (see sect. I.B, decision 1/2019/5).

E. Social and economic benefits, supporting sustainable development, measures taken and proposed for the implementation of resolutions and evaluation of the work of the Group of Experts (Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation)

15. The Group of Experts considered item 8 of its agenda at its 6th and 10th meetings, on 1 and 3 May 2019. At its 6th meeting, it had before it six reports for information and discussion, which were introduced by the representatives of the Member States and the Convener of the Working Group.

16. At the same meeting, representatives of the Member States, speaking also on behalf of their respective geographical and linguistic divisions, and the Chair made statements.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

17. At its 10th meeting, on 3 May, the Group of Experts adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs, as orally amended (see sect. I.B, decision 1/2019/6).

F. Issues of publicity for the Group of Experts and funding of Group projects (Working Group on Publicity and Funding)

18. The Group of Experts considered item 9 of its agenda at its 6th and 10th meetings, on 1 and 3 May 2019. At its 6th meeting, it had before it two reports for information and discussion, which were introduced by the representatives of the Member States and the Convener of the Working Group.

19. At the same meeting, representatives of the Member States, speaking also on behalf of their respective geographical and linguistic divisions, and the Chair made statements.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

20. At its 10th meeting, on 3 May, the Group of Experts adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs (see sect. I.B, decision 1/2019/7).

G. Activities on national standardization in Africa (Task Team for Africa)

21. The Group of Experts considered item 10 of its agenda at its 7th and 10th meetings, on 2 and 3 May 2019. At its 7th meeting, the Group of Experts had before it the report of the Task Team for Africa (see [GEGN.2/2019/15](#)), which was introduced by the Coordinator of the Task Team for Africa.

22. At the same meeting, representatives of the Member States, speaking also on behalf of their respective geographical and linguistic divisions, the Coordinator and the Chair made statements.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

23. At its 10th meeting, on 3 May, the Group of Experts adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs (see sect. I.B, decision 1/2019/8).

H. Toponymic education (Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy)

24. The Group of Experts considered item 11 of its agenda at its 7th and 10th meetings, on 2 and 3 May 2019. At its 7th meeting, it had before it a conference room paper (GEGN.2/2019/CRP.107) for information and discussion, which was introduced by the Convener of the Working Group.

25. At the same meeting, representatives of the Member States, speaking also on behalf of their respective geographical and linguistic divisions, and the Convener made statements.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

26. At its 10th meeting, on 3 May, the Group of Experts adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs (see sect. I.B, decision 1/2019/9).

I. Toponymic terminology (Working Group on Toponymic Terminology)

27. The Group of Experts considered item 12 of its agenda at its 7th and 10th meetings, on 2 and 3 May 2019. At its 7th meeting, it had before it a conference room paper (GEGN.2/2019/CRP.102) for information and discussion, which was introduced by the Convener of the Working Group. It also had before it a report (see [GEGN.2/2019/48](#)) which was introduced by the Coordinator of the Task Team for Africa.

28. At the same meeting, representatives of the Member States, speaking also on behalf of their respective geographical and linguistic divisions, the Convener of the Working Group and the Coordinator of the Task Team for Africa made statements.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

29. At its 10th meeting, on 3 May, the Group of Experts adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs (see sect. I.B, decision 1/2019/10).

J. Geographical names as culture, heritage and identity, including indigenous, minority and regional languages and multilingual issues (Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage)

30. The Group of Experts considered item 13 of its agenda at its 7th, 8th and 10th meetings, on 2 and 3 May 2019. At its 7th meeting, it had before it 11 reports for information and discussion, which were introduced by the Convener of the Working Group.

31. At the 7th and 8th meetings, on 2 May, representatives of the Member States, speaking also on behalf of their respective geographical and linguistic divisions, the Convener and the Chair made statements.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

32. At its 10th meeting, on 3 May, the Group of Experts adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs (see sect. I.B, decision 1/2019/11).

K. Exonyms (Working Group on Exonyms)

33. The Group of Experts considered item 14 of its agenda at its 8th and 10th meetings, on 2 and 3 May 2019. It had before it six reports for information and discussion, which were introduced by representatives of the Member States and the Convener of the Working Group.

34. At the 8th meeting, on 2 May, representatives of the Member States, speaking also on behalf of their respective geographical and linguistic divisions, the Convener of the Working Group and the Chair of the Group of Experts made statements.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

35. At its 10th meeting, on 3 May, the Group of Experts adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs (see sect. I.B, decision 1/2019/12).

L. Toponymic data files and gazetteers (data processing and tools, database management, data dissemination: products and services) (Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers)

36. The Group of Experts considered item 15 of its agenda at its 8th, 9th and 10th meetings, on 2 and 3 May 2019. At its 8th meeting, it had before it 10 reports for information and discussion, which were introduced by the representatives of the Member States and the Convener of the Working Group.

37. At the 8th and 9th meetings, on 2 and 3 May, representatives of the Member States, speaking also on behalf of their respective geographical and linguistic divisions, the Convener of the Working Group and the Chair of the Group of Experts made statements.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

38. At its 10th meeting, on 3 May, the Group of Experts adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs (see sect. I.B, decision 1/2019/13).

M. Writing systems and pronunciation (Working Group on Romanization Systems)

39. The Group of Experts considered item 16 of its agenda at its 9th and 10th meetings, on 3 May 2019. At its 9th meeting, it had before it a report (see [GEGN.2/2019/11](#)) for information and discussion, which was introduced by the Co-Convener of the Working Group. It also had before it a report on Sami writing systems in Sweden (see [GEGN.2/2019/59](#)).

40. At the same meeting, the representative of a Member State, speaking also on behalf of the Arabic Division, the Co-Convener of the Working Group and the Chair of the Group of Experts made statements.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

41. At its 10th meeting, on 3 May, the Group of Experts adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs (see sect. I.B, decision 1/2019/14).

N. Other toponymic issues

42. No document was submitted under agenda item 17.

O. Special presentations

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

(a) “The 2030 Agenda, ECOSOC and the HLPF” delivered at the 3rd meeting by the representative of the Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The Chair and representatives from the Asia South-East Division, the Dutch- and German-speaking Division and the Asia East Division (other than China) made comments and raised questions, to which the presenter responded;

(b) “Second administrative level boundaries”, delivered at the 5th meeting by the representative of the Geospatial Information Section of the Office of Information

and Communications Technology. The Chair and the representatives from the International Cartographic Association, the Norden Division, the United Kingdom Division, the United States of America/Canada Division, the Asia South-East Division, the Africa East Division, the India Division, the Arabic Division, the Asia East Division (other than China) and the Romano-Hellenic Division made comments and raised questions, to which the presenter responded;

(c) “Indigenous issues and cultural heritage”, delivered at the 7th meeting by the representative of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The representatives from the Baltic Division, the International Cartographic Association, the United Kingdom Division, the Asia South-East Division, the Norden Division and the French-speaking Division made comments and raised questions, to which the presenter responded;

(d) “Experiencing discrepancies in ‘reputable data’ in the disaster management cycle”, delivered at the 9th meeting by the representatives from the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre and the International Research Institute for Climate and Society. The representatives from the Arabic Division, the Asia East Division (other than China), the Asia South-East Division, the French-speaking Division and the Latin America Division made comments and raised questions, to which the presenters responded.

III. Provisional agenda, venue and dates of the second session, in 2021

44. The Group of Experts considered item 18 of its agenda at its 10th meeting, on 3 May 2019. It had before it the provisional agenda for the 2021 session ([GEGN.2/2021/1](#)) and the dates and venue. It decided that the second session of the Group of Experts would be held at United Nations Headquarters, in New York, from 3 to 7 May 2021.

45. At the same meeting, experts from the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Korea made comments and raised questions. The Chair and the Director of the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs made statements and responded to questions.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

46. At its 10th meeting, on 3 May, the Group of Experts approved the provisional agenda for the 2021 session ([GEGN.2/2021/1](#)) along with the dates and venue, as orally revised.

47. At the same meeting, the Group of Experts, under item 22 of its agenda and in accordance with rules 7 and 8 of the rules of procedure, as set out in Economic and Social Council decision 2018/264, elected by acclamation the officers of the second session as follows:

Chair:

Pierre Jaillard (France)

Vice-Chairs:

Hasanuddin Abidin (Indonesia)

Sungjae Choo (Republic of Korea)

Rapporteurs:

Trent Palmer (United States of America)

Wendy Shaw (New Zealand)

IV. Adoption of the report

48. The Group of Experts considered item 21 of its agenda at its 10th meeting, on 3 May. It had before it the draft report on its 2019 session ([GEGN.2/2019/L.1](#)), together with an informal paper containing draft conclusions, recommendations and decisions of the session, which were introduced by the Rapporteurs.

49. At the same meeting, the Chair, the Rapporteurs and experts from the Islamic Republic of Iran, Norway, Germany, France, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Latvia and the Republic of Korea made statements and raised questions, in the course of which amendments to the draft report and informal papers were introduced.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

50. At its 10th meeting, on 3 May, the Group of Experts adopted the draft report on its 2019 session, as orally amended, together with the draft conclusions, recommendations and decisions contained in the informal paper, and entrusted the Rapporteurs with finalizing the report by reflecting the proceedings of the meeting.

V. Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

51. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution [2018/2](#), the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names held its first session at United Nations Headquarters from 29 April to 3 May 2019. The Group of Experts held 10 meetings.

B. Attendance

52. The session was attended by 280 participants representing 70 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.2/2019/INF.4](#).

C. Officers of the session

53. The officers of the session were as follows:

Chair:

Bill Watt (Australia)

Vice-Chairs:

Hasanuddin Abidin (Indonesia)

Peder Gammeltoft (Norway)

Rapporteurs:

Sungjae Choo (Republic of Korea)

Trent Palmer (United States of America)

54. For the names of the Chairs of the divisions, see <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/divisions/>.

55. The officers of the working groups were:

Task Team for Africa

Coordinator:

Brahim Atoui

Toponymic guidelines for map and other editors for international use

Coordinator:

Gerhard Rampl

Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy

Convener:

Peder Gammeltoft

Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers

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

Conveners:

Élisabeth Calvarin

Leo Dillon

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

Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage

Convener:

Annette Torensjö

D. Opening statements

56. The Assistant-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs opened the session on 29 April 2019 and presided over the election of the Chair. The Chair, Bill Watt (Australia), made the opening remarks and summarized the main tasks to be addressed during the session.

57. The Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council, Kira Christianne Danganan Azucena (Philippines), made a statement on behalf of the President of the Council. The Assistant-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs also made a statement.

E. Adoption of the agenda

58. At its 1st meeting, on 29 April, the Group of Experts adopted its provisional agenda ([GEGN.2/2019/1/Rev.1](#)), as follows:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Organizational matters:
 - (a) Adoption of the rules of procedure;
 - (b) Adoption of the agenda;
 - (c) Organization of work, including establishment of subsidiary bodies;
 - (d) Credentials of representatives.
4. Reports of the Chair and the Secretariat.
5. 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) Working Group on Country Names;
 - (d) National and international meetings and conferences.
6. Cooperation and liaison with other organizations:
 - (a) International organizations;
 - (b) Economic Commission for Africa and Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management.
7. 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.
8. Social and economic benefits, supporting sustainable development, measures taken and proposed for the implementation of resolutions and evaluation of the work of the Group of Experts (Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation).

9. Issues of publicity for the Group of Experts and funding of Group projects (Working Group on Publicity and Funding).
 10. Activities on national standardization in Africa (Task Team for Africa).
 11. Toponymic education (Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy).
 12. Toponymic terminology (Working Group on Toponymic Terminology).
 13. Geographical names as culture, heritage and identity, including indigenous, minority and regional languages and multilingual issues (Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage).
 14. Exonyms (Working Group on Exonyms).
 15. Toponymic data files and gazetteers (data processing and tools, database management, data dissemination: products and services) (Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers).
 16. Writing systems and pronunciation (Working Group on Romanization Systems).
 17. Other toponymic issues.
 18. Arrangements for the 2021 session of the Group of Experts.
 19. Other business.
 20. Presentation and adoption of decisions.
 21. Adoption of the report on the 2019 session.
 22. Election of officers of the 2021 session.
 23. Closing of the session.
59. At the same meeting, the Group of Experts approved its organization of work ([GEGN.2/2019/3](#)).

F. Documentation

60. The documents before the Group of Experts at its first session are available on the website of the Statistics Division, at <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/2019-new-york-ungegn-1st-session/#documents>.
61. The summaries of the 10 meetings of the 2019 session are available on the website of the *Journal of the United Nations*, at <https://journal.un.org>.

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
