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## United Nations Group of Experts On Geographical Names

**2023 session**

New York, 1–5 May 2023

Item 3 of the provisional agenda\*

**Reports of the Chair and the Secretariat**

### Report of the Secretariat

#### Summary\*\*

In keeping with the practice of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names and in accordance with the draft agenda approved by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 2018/264, and pursuant to the resolutions and decisions adopted at the Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names and the thirtieth session of the Group of Experts, the Secretariat has prepared a report detailing the activities undertaken by the Group of Experts during the intersessional period. The Group of Experts is invited to review the report and to provide comments.

At its 2021 session, held virtually from 3 to 7 May 2021, the Group of Experts adopted decision 2/2021/2, in which it welcomed the Secretariat's report and thanked the Statistics Division for its continued valuable and unfaltering support to the Group, which enabled the strategic plan and programme of work 2021–2029 to come to fruition. The Group of Experts appreciated the work done by the Secretariat in maintaining the website and reviving the online World Geographical Names database and encouraged Member States to supply their authorized data and sound files and/or to update their existing information. Furthermore, the Group noted and supported the recommendations of the Secretariat to further strengthen the operations of the Group of Experts, which included, convening regular virtual meetings of the Bureau and the Chairs of its 24 linguistic and geographical divisions, identifying resources to be used to develop e-learning toponymy platforms to sustain its capacity-development offering, creating a working group on national names standardization, which could incorporate the Task Team for Africa and identifying officers to fill vacant positions and designing succession planning strategies.

The full report provides a summary of the major activities conducted by the Group of Experts, with the support of the Secretariat, during the intersessional period from May 2021 to March 2023, to progress the important work of promoting the

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\* GEGN.2/2023/1.

\*\* The full report was prepared by the Secretariat. It will be available under document symbol GEGN.2/2023/4/CRP.4, in the language of submission only, at [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/3rd\\_session\\_2023/](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/3rd_session_2023/).



standardization of geographical names. In the report, the Secretariat highlights the major activities conducted pursuant to recommendations made and decisions adopted at the 2021 session, and also highlights relevant tasks, as outlined in the strategic plan and programme of work.

In its report, the Secretariat highlights the work undertaken in the following areas: (a) strengthening the operations of the Group of Experts through regular strategic meetings of the Bureau, the expanded Bureau (Chairs of the working groups and Chairs of the task teams), and the Bureau and the Chairs of the divisions; (b) publicity and awareness-raising activities, including maintaining and upgrading the Group's web pages; (c) supporting capacity development initiatives, such as webinars; (d) strengthening relations with the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management and other United Nations entities (the proposed collaborative project with the Committee of Experts will be presented in a separate working paper); (e) redevelopment and deployment of the World Geographical Names Database (to be reported on in full in a separate report); (f) supporting the participation of the Group of Experts in activities of the Economic and Social Council; and (g) coordinating preparations for the 2023 session of the Group of Experts. The Secretariat also provides an outline of existing challenges and tenders possible options and recommendations for consideration by the Group of Experts.

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