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English

**United Nations Group of Experts on
Geographical Names**

2023 session

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Item 4 c) of the provisional agenda *

Reports: Activities on the standardization of geographical names in Africa

Report of the Task Team for Africa

Summary **

Like other UNGEGN working groups, the activity of the Task Team for Africa has been very slow over the last two years due to the COVID pandemic.

Nevertheless, several positive results have been recorded, notably those obtained during the GGIM/Africa meeting held in Addis Ababa from 24 to 28 October at the ECA/UN headquarters.

This meeting which saw a strong participation of high officials and decision makers of African cartography has reserved an important part of its agenda to the issue of standardization of geographical names.

Indeed, during this meeting, an important communication was presented on the issue of geographical names in Africa focusing on the difficulties encountered in the effective management of this theme by African countries.

After a rich and lively debate, participants stressed the importance of standardization of geographical names and expressed their desire to revitalize existing structures or to create new ones for countries that do not yet have them.

In addition, it should be noted that several countries have set up new Toponymy Commissions which are very active, such as Mauritania and Senegal, to whom we have given all our encouragement and our availability to help them and provide them with all the expertise of UNGEGN, which they need.

* GEGN.2/2023/1

** The full report was prepared by the Coordinator of the Task Team of Africa. The report will be available under document symbol GEGN.2/2023/114/CRP.114, 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/) .

Also, several delegations have been contacted, including the representative of Burundi, who informed us that the recent toponymic commission of his country is very active, but nevertheless, due to lack of experience, especially methodological, it is experiencing some difficulties for better efficiency. We assured him of our availability to provide all the necessary assistance.

In addition, other countries, which do not yet have a Commission, have committed themselves, that they will proceed as soon as they return to their respective countries, to the creation of structures in charge of toponymic standardization, following the example of Djibouti, Comoros, to whom we have promised to also provide them with all necessary documentation.

Similarly, it should be noted that among the recommendations adopted at the end of the deliberations of the GGIM/Africa, it was decided, after having examined the item relating to the standardization of geographical names and after having taken cognizance of the report of the Chairman of the Task Force for Africa of the United Nations Group of Experts on the standardization of geographical names to promote and elevate the already existing Sub-Working Group on Standardization of Geographical Names in Africa into a Group on the same level as the other four existing Groups at the GGIM/Africa level.

Finally, the Task Team would like to stress that the results we have achieved during the work of GGIM/Africa are largely due to Mr. André Nouergouma, who spared no effort to bring us all the help and encouragement we needed; may he be thanked here.