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**United Nations Group of Experts on
Geographical Names
2023 session**

New York, 1–5 May 2023

Item 4 (a) of the provisional agenda*

**Reports: Governments on the situation in their countries
and on the progress made in the standardization of
geographical names****Greenlandic place names: status and future plans****Summary******Greenland's Language Secretariat: polygons and updating the data**

Beginning in January 2023, Greenland's Language Secretariat (Oqaasileriffik) is now permanently funded by the Government of Greenland, allowing two positions for place names work instead of one. This is a historic milestone: for the first time, Greenland will have two permanent employees carrying out work on place names, which means that data updates of the place name register will improve considerably.

Updating of data has proceeded in parallel with the last part of the polygonization of place names in Greenland, but with updating postponed somewhat after polygonization. During polygonization, about 33,000 place names are divided into different categories depending on whether the item has already been approved for official use or whether it should be examined further before approval. Approved place names will be publicly available, while the rest will be available once formally approved by the Greenland Place Names Committee.

The polygonization of place names has been carried out in collaboration with the Danish Agency for Data Supply and Infrastructure under the project to map the ice-free area of Greenland from 2018 to 2022.

Greenland Place Names Committee: updating authorization guidelines

The Greenland Place Names Committee has updated the basis for its approval of proposals for place names, which are often sent by tourists and researchers who would like to name certain places based on personal preferences. Greenland's inland ice melts, forming "new" islands, straits, bays, reefs and nunataks. In the authorization guidelines, it is emphasized that the local population itself must name

* GEGN.2/2023/1.

** The full report was prepared by the project manager for the collection of place names in the Language Secretariat of Greenland (Oqaasileriffik), Arnaq B. Johansen. The report will be available at https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/3rd_session_2023/, in the language of submission only, as document GEGN.2/2023/53/CRP.53.



the “new” spaces when it begins to use these places and begins to name them according to the Greenlandic cultural naming method.

Telework during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) lockdowns

The COVID-19 lockdown periods have been real eye-openers into the need to focus on the digitization process again. Before the pandemic, the digitization of the place name archive happened randomly and was unsystematic.

At present, Oqaasileriffik has taken the first steps towards a digital archive, and place name lists derived from the 1930s and 1950s have already been digitized for internal use. Maps containing references to the lists are in the process of being examined and tagged to give an overview of their different characteristics, for example which maps are too large for the scanner, which ones are copies of the originals, and which ones are fragile. Once an overview along these lines has been established, the next step will be to plan for future digitization.
