

**Doc. Symbol:** GEGN.2/2023/53/CRP.53

**Title:** Greenlandic place names: status and plans

**Agenda item no.:** 4(a) Reports: Governments on the situation in their countries and on the progress made in the standardization of geographical names.

**Name of the speaker:** Arnaq Johansen – Greenland (Denmark)

## PAPERTALK:

Dear Chair. Thank you for the opportunity to present the work on Greenland place names. In this presentation I will focus on *The Greenland Place Names Committees* updated authorization guidelines, and new features resulting from the melting Inland Ice.

The Greenland Inland Ice is melting, forming new islands, small straits, bays, reefs, and nunataks. In the authorization guidelines, it is emphasized that the local population itself must name new features using the Greenlandic cultural naming method when it takes new areas into use

The cultural naming method has a basis in a communicative function. Please see the light blue square in the powerpoint. In the following, I will mention a few and simple examples, using both Oqaasileriffiks data but also include naming methods categorizations made by several experts in Inuit Studies:

**Naming happens in resemblance between a word for a location and the place name**, for example the name of the capital city of Greenland is *Nuuk*, which its direct interpretation means “a cape” of the land area. Naming may also describe **the characteristic conditions of the terrain**, for example *Maniitsoq* means “the uneven [terrain]”. Place names may also state **the location of the place**, for example *Avalleq* means “the outermost”, *Kujalleq* means “the southernmost”, while *Timerleq* means “the innermost”.

Place names also tell about that the place has been or still is used as winter-, spring- or summer place whether you say *Ukiivik*, *Upernivik* or *Aasivik*.

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**Now to the new features in the landscape.** On the powerpoint slide, there are 2 maps: the one to the left is from the fifties, while the one to the right is a satellite image from approximately 2020. Red and purple lines tells about how much the Greenland Inland Ice has retracted. Yellow and blue circles were nunataks on the Inland Ice, but they are islands now. Green line and the squares are the new features in the landscape that the locals must name when they begin to use these areas, using the Greenlandic cultural naming methods.

Thank you Chair.