



PERMANENT MISSION OF ARMENIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Statement by Mr. Aram Gugarats, Deputy Head, Cadastre Committee of the Republic of Armenia
Third Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

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Mr. Chair,

At the outset I would like to commend you, the members of the bureau and the Secretariat for successful preparation of the third session of the Group of Experts and assure you of Armenia's full support to your efforts in guiding its work.

The primary body dealing with the geographic names and related fields is the Cadastre Committee of Armenia.

I must emphasize the important role of digital technologies and online platforms in effective management of the sphere of geographical names. In a rapidly developing world, the primacy of digitalization processes is turning into a key means of activity, and its result - into a goal.

Currently we are in the process of implementation of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure, NSDI of Armenia. Notably, the Government adopted the "Strategic Program for the Creation of the Unified Cadastre" in 2021. Elaboration and adoption of the laws "On Spatial Data" and "On Geodetic and Cartographic Activities" provided a solid legal framework for the creation and implementation of NSDI. The national geoportal of the Republic of Armenia (geoportal.am), which is an integral part of the NSDI, was launched in 2022. It is planned to integrate basic and thematic cartographic layers into this platform, which will be managed by authorized state bodies. In addition, the Cadastral Committee is responsible for the management of basic layers, including geographic names. Currently, work is underway on standardization, verification, publication and distribution of geographical names.

As part of the creation of the NSDI, work continues on the standardization of the unified address register, verification and update of the database.

The creation of directories, thematic maps and other materials is an integral part of maintaining geographical names. In this regard, a considerable amount of work has been carried out in the direction of digitalization and popularization of geographical names. The most valuable is the two-volume "National Atlas" of the Republic of Armenia and its foreign translations, which are also available on the Internet.

Standardization of geographic names plays an important role for achieving of the Sustainable Development Goals. Improvement of quality, and accessibility of geographical names data, including through its digitalization is crucial for collecting relevant information and statistics on the implementation of various SDG indicators, disaggregated by geographic location.

Mr. Chair,

Amongst the biggest challenges for the process of preservation and further standardization of the indigenous geographical names is the deliberate falsification of the Armenian toponyms and promotion of distorted historical narratives denying the millennia-old civilizational presence of the Armenian people in the region.

The falsification of indigenous Armenian geographical names is an integral component of a wider state-policy of use of force, racism, hatred and dehumanization of Armenians. Part of this policy are the attempts to erase the name of Nagorno-Karabakh, which has been referred to in the documents of the UN bodies, agencies and regional organizations and the toponymical names of settlements in Nagorno-Karabakh, widest part of which date back to ancient period.

The strong and consistent stance of the United Nations bodies and agencies is of utmost importance to respond to the policy of falsification of the Armenian geographical names.

In conclusion, we look forward to fruitful and result-oriented deliberations within the Group of Experts on the topic of the interlinkage between the standardization of geographic names and achieving the SDGs, as well as post-pandemic recovery.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.