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English

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Geographical Names**

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Technical expertise: Geographical names data management

Greenland report

Summary **

The standardization of place names in Greenland can be explained in several ways. The first is the sole authorization of Greenlandic place names. This means that, in cases where a place has two names, one in Greenlandic and the other in another language, only the Greenlandic placename is authorized for official use. This way, the Greenlandic culture and the Greenlandic language are preserved and prioritized.

The Place Names Committee's approval criteria also shows that the Greenlandic cultural way of naming places is prioritized in the authorization(s) of place names. This is expressed in the fact that unnamed places are only named when the local population starts using these places.

The second is that we use the current orthography to write place names throughout Greenland. The current orthography was developed based on the Central West Greenlandic way of writing, although there are three (3) main dialects in Greenland. These are the Thule dialect, the West Greenlandic dialect and the East Greenland dialect. The Thule dialect and the East Greenlandic dialect have different features compared to the West Greenlandic dialect, which is why locals in both North Greenland and East Greenland use their own unofficial orthography in social media.

In its work with place names, the Place Names Committee has tried to include these different dialects in authorizing place names from these areas by adapting some dialectal parts of speech to West Greenlandic, especially in East Greenlandic. In Qaanaaq area, North Greenland, where the Thule dialect is used, there have been only a few adaptations compared to the main dialects so far.

* GEGN.2/2025/1.

** The full report was prepared by Arnaq B. Johansen, Greenland, Oqaasileriffik (The Language Secretariat of Greenland). The report will be available under document symbol GEGN.2/2025/102/CRP.102, in the language of submission only, at https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th_session_2025/