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English

**United Nations Group of Experts on
Geographical Names
2025 session**

New York, 28 April – 2 May 2025

Item 6 (c) of the provisional agenda *

**Relationships, links and connections: International organizations,
including academia**

**Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH)
activities report**

Submitted by the Liaison Officer for PAIGH

Summary **

The Pan American Institute of Geography and History ([PAIGH](#)) is a technical and scientific body of the Organization of American States specializing in the areas of cartography, geography, history and geophysics in the Americas. Its motto is “Science at the Service of Peace.”

This paper presents an overview of PAIGH and the work undertaken over the past two years to promote Geographic Names in the Americas.

* GEGN.2/2025/1.

** The full report was prepared by the Pan-American Institute of Geography and History (National Section of the PAIGH in the USA, Committee on Geographic Names “José Joaquín Hungria Morell” and Cartography Commission of the PAIGH).

The Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH) is a scientific and technical organization within the Organization of American States, focusing on cartography, geography, history, and geophysics. Established in 1928, PAIGH has fostered collaboration across the Americas by hosting conferences, publishing journals, and organizing workshops. With representation from 21 member states, the institute promotes, coordinates, and disseminates research in cartography, geography, geophysics, and history, along with other related fields of interest in the Americas. Its activities aim to conduct studies, implement projects, and provide training in these areas, while also enhancing cooperation among academic institutions and related organizations throughout the region. Over the past two years the organization has coordinated trainings and spread knowledge in the geography and history fields by participating in the following activities.

On February 17-20, 2025, the “José Joaquín Hungría Morell” Committee on Geographic Names of PAIGH, within the framework of the Project CART 03 - PAT 2024: "Training in Regulations and Guidelines for the Standardization of Geographic Names", and with the assistance of the National Geographic Institute “José Joaquín Hungría Morell” of the Dominican Republic, and the National Geographic Institute of the National Registry (IGN-RN) of Costa Rica, organized the Geographic Names Seminar Costa Rica 2025. The seminar brought together experts from PAIGH Member States in person, while specialists from all over the American continent participated in virtual mode. In addition, it featured presentations by leading specialists from several Member States. Likewise, technical meetings were held by the Latin American Linguistic Division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) and the “José Joaquín Hungría Morell” Committee on Geographical Names of the PAIGH, in which methodologies were analysed and work plans were defined aimed at strengthening toponymic standardization in the region.

The key highlights of the event are listed below:

- The seminar serves as a crucial meeting point for experts from across the Pan-American region, fostering knowledge exchange and collaboration in the field of toponymy.
- This cooperation is fundamental for establishing standards and best practices in the management of geographical names, which in turn facilitates communication and understanding between countries.
- The standardization of geographical names is essential for accuracy in maps, databases, and other geographical information tools.
- The seminar contributes to this objective by promoting the harmonization of toponymic data at the regional level.
- The collaboration with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UN-GEGN) is a highly significant factor. This allows regional activities to align with international standards and recommendations, which gives the event greater relevance.

Within the event's conclusion, the following are mentioned:

- Cooperation among Pan-American countries has been strengthened, establishing strategic alliances to promote the development and standardization of geographical names in the region. These alliances will allow for the sharing of best practices, resources, and knowledge, promoting the harmonization of toponymic data at the regional level.
- Progress has been made in the formation of the members of the Committee on Geographical Names of the PAIGH, which will strengthen this organization's capacity to lead initiatives in the field of toponymy in the region.
- Strategic lines of collaboration have been defined with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UN-GEGN), with the objective of aligning regional activities with international standards and recommendations.
- The seminar has facilitated the transfer of knowledge and experiences among participating countries and institutions, promoting the exchange of information on methodologies, technologies, and best practices in the management of geographical names.

On November 19-21, 2024, the 25th [PAIGH General Assembly met](#) in Santiago, Chile. During the meeting, the General Assembly approved several key actions and directives. These directives include establishing new regulations for the Technical Assistance Program to enhance operational efficiency and transparency. During the meeting seven formal agreements with organizations in academia, national organizations and industry were signed. The PAIGH Secretariat also made a call to the National Sections to publish bibliographic works related to Cartography, Geography, History, and Geophysics, as well as related sciences, with the aim of strengthening the Publications Program, keeping in view the Centenary of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History.

On October 8-10, 2024, PAIGH participated in the [Seventh High-level Forum](#) on United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management. The theme was "Accelerating Implementation: Achieving Resilience" and was held in México City. This forum was conducted in collaboration with the Government of México, through its Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI). The Forum brought together 237 participants from 47 countries, the United Nations, other international organizations, and the private sector. Discussions addressed at the forum ranged from accelerating implementation for the United Nation's 2030 Agenda and beyond, achieving a resilient planet with geospatial information, and building a sustainable future within the context of innovation, technology, and artificial intelligence.

On September 3-6, 2024, an "In-person Workshop on Geographic Names and Geospatial Information" was held in the City of Suwon, South Korea, thanks to the collaboration between the PAIGH and the National Geographic Information Institute (NGII) of South Korea, in which 19 specialists from the PAIGH Member States participated.

On August 7-9, 2024 members attended the [14th Session](#) of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM). The representatives from the Kingdom of Belgium, Côte d'Ivoire and United States of America were elected as co-Chairs. During this meeting, the PAIGH Secretary General introduced 10 interventions on behalf of the organization. These interventions ranged in topics from integrating geospatial and statistical data to the Global Geodetic Reference Frame (GGRF).

On November 1-2, 2023 at the [24th PAIGH General Assembly](#), the members passed Resolution 3 ([English](#), [Spanish](#)). This resolution raised the status of the Geographic Names Working Group to that of a Committee within the Cartographic Commission. The new committee is led by the Dominican Republic National Section of PAIGH and has been named the "José Joaquín Hungría Morell Committee on Geographic Names." Its mission is to unify and coordinate work on geographic names in the Americas, and to represent PAIGH at the Latin America Linguistic Division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographic Names (UNGEGN) and in other international institutions, academic centres, and organizations or that of any Member State. Within the framework of this same assembly, financial support was approved within the Technical Assistance Program for Project CART 03 - PAT 2024: "Training in Regulations and Guidelines for the Standardization of Geographic Names", presented under the responsibility of a specialist from the National Geographic Institute " José Joaquín Hungría Morell " of the Dominican Republic and the support of 13 Member States of the PAIGH.

Over the course of the past year (2024) the committee "José Joaquín Hungría Morell" Committee on Geographic Names of PAIGH within the framework of the Project CART 03 - PAT 2024: "Training in Regulations and Guidelines for the Standardization of Geographic Names", has organized six virtual seminars on various topics such as introduction to geographic names, establishment of geographic names authorities, methodological processes for collecting and processing geographic names, principles, guidelines and procedures for the management of geographic names, geographic names standardization, administration and governance, and international standards for toponymic standardization led by various member states, and a representative of UNGEGN. These workshops featured expert speakers from various countries, each with extensive experience in their respective topics. Approximately 100 participants from across the Americas joined each event.

On September 12-15, 2023, an “In-person Workshop on Geographic Names and Geospatial Information” was held in the City of Suwon, South Korea, thanks to the collaboration between the PAIGH and the National Geographic Information Institute (NGII) of South Korea, in which 18 specialists from the PAIGH Member States participated. Previously, between November 14-18, 2022, the first in-person workshop on this same topic and place was held, in which 19 IPGH specialists participated on that occasion.

In May 2023, United States National Section President Deirdre Dalpiaz Bishop was awarded the Geospatial Ambassador of the Year Leadership Award by Geospatial World for her outstanding contributions to the geospatial community.

In 2023, PAIGH committed support for the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF).

In conclusion, we would like to provide some upcoming activities. On August 16-22, 2025, PAIGH will participate in the 32nd International Cartographic Conference ([ICC 2025](#)), in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. This conference will help foster innovation, collaboration and knowledge exchange within the cartographic and GIScience community. As we look ahead to 2028, PAIGH will celebrate its 100-year anniversary. PAIGH is excited to reflect on its rich history and the contributions made to the field of cartography, geography, history, and geophysics. PAIGH will continue to share updates and details as it approaches this milestone, reinforcing our commitment to advancing geographic knowledge and fostering international cooperation in the Americas.