

27 March 2025

English

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

2025 session

New York, 28 April – 2 May 2025

Item 4 (b) of the provisional agenda *

**Reports: Governments on the situation in their countries
and on the progress made in the standardization of geographical names**

**Cuba's report on the work of standardization of geographical
names, 2025**

Submitted by Cuba**

* GEGN.2/2025/1

** The full report was prepared by Cuba

The National Commission on Geographical Names, hereinafter referred to as the CNNG of Cuba, is a permanent interagency commission, under the authority of the Council of Ministers and presided over by the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces. It is also composed of specialists in various fields of knowledge, representing twenty-five agencies and entities of the State's Central Administration. Since its creation, it has been carrying out a systematic work aimed at the study and research of all the toponyms in the country, with the objective of unifying the entire toponymic heritage of the nation.

Cuba, aware of the presence of geographical names in all human activities and of the importance of preserving them in view of their patrimonial value, has the objective of standardizing all the toponyms of the national territory and determining the way of writing the names of those features located outside the national territory. To this end, it began its work on May 15, 1980, with the promulgation of DECREE LAW No. 67, by which the CNNG was created.

Three years later, Technical Advisory Groups on Geographical Names were created in each province and in the Special Municipality of Isla de la Juventud (Isle of Youth), under the methodological guidance of the National Commission, in charge of toponymic studies and research in the area.

Among other things, the CNNG carried out a toponymic inventory of the municipalities, which are the political-administrative units closest to the place where the registered geographical features are located. This made it possible to inventory about 23,000 toponyms with a minimum of basic information for their identification and location. In turn, these inventories were used by the Technical Advisory Groups to create a database of toponyms located in their respective territories with systematically enriched information.

As a result of these local toponymic studies, nearly 20,000 toponyms have been studied in depth, representing approximately 80% of the total number of names registered in the National Inventory. This constitutes a second toponymic database with a wealth of information, which is then incorporated into the Provincial Geographic Dictionaries and the Geographic Dictionary of Cuba, the latter of which was published in 2000 and is currently being updated.

The CNNG, in the performance of its duties, has achieved the following results:

- 1) Drafting of the list of names of countries and capitals and of the main geographical features of the world.
- 2) Development of a television course on the Geographical Names of Cuba, with the objective of disseminating the results of the work of this Commission among the population, contributing to the expansion of knowledge in toponymic matters and enriching the general culture of the people. This course was accompanied by a printed supplement that includes the basic aspects of the given classes, which was purchased by interested people in news-stands.
- 3) Creation of the web pages of the CNNG and the Technical Advisory Groups, where the results obtained are presented, with access through the Geoportal of the Spatial Data Infrastructure of the Republic of Cuba at the web address <http://www.iderc.co.cu/gta>, located next to the web page of the National Commission of Geographical Names <http://www.iderc.co.cu/cnng>, all incorporated in this portal, as a tribute to it, by the CNNG.
- 4) Preparation of a Cuban Standard on Toponymy (Terms and Definitions), in which 221 terms related to toponymy are summarized with their definitions, allowing the correct interpretation of documents whose content is related to the standardization of geographical names.

5) The drafting of a book on Cuban Geographical Names, which will provide information on the peculiarities of toponymic studies and research in Cuba, and will collect a wide and varied range of information on toponymy, the characterization of national toponymy, and the treatment provided to foreign geographical names.

In addition to all of the above, there are other activities that promote the development of national toponymy studies, such as the following:

- Holding of workshops on geographic names every two years in the different regions of the country.
- Holding meetings of the Presidents of the Technical Advisory Groups that allow the presentation and discussion of works related to toponymy, which favors the exchange of criteria among specialists, as well as the deepening of knowledge about geographical names.
- Conducting diploma theses related to toponymy developed by students of the Faculties of Geography and of Arts and Letters of the University of Havana, and by students of the Universities of Pedagogical Sciences, all of which contribute to the enrichment of the study of the national toponymy.
- Systematic development of toponymic research by the Technical Advisory Groups for the preparation of provincial geographic dictionaries and the enrichment and updating of the Cuban Geographic Dictionary.

The immediate work of the CNNG is aimed at:

- The improvement, updating and enrichment of the Geographical Dictionary of Cuba.
- The technological modernization, updating and enrichment of the National Gazetteer of Geographical Names of Cuba and the web pages of the CNNG and the Technical Advisory Groups.
- The creation of a digital Toponymic Map of Cuba, which will contain the entire standardized toponymic universe of Cuba. It will be used for immediate consultation by those responsible for the preparation of maps of all types, and will serve to guarantee that the toponymic content of all maps prepared has the required quality.
- Systematic dissemination of the results of CNNG's work and the Technical Advisory Groups through television and radio.

All the standardized geographical names whose use is required in the different results of the CNNG's work, as well as in different types of publications, are duly validated by the legal documents that support the work of the CNNG and the Technical Advisory Groups.

The National Commission of Geographic Names of Cuba has all the results of its work in digital support. We believe that we are in a position to continue advancing, despite the difficulties imposed by the present times.

We are currently taking advantage of having all the results in digital format to speed up the work of standardization of geographical names, their dissemination and their use in different activities through the use of new techniques.