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English

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**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 progress made in the standardization of geographical names**

**Report on Iran's actions regarding the standardization of geographical  
names over the past two years (2023-2025)\*\***

Submitted by Iran (Islamic Republic of)

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The Iranian Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names (ICSGN) is a national body composed of representatives from relevant organizations, under the responsibility of the National Cartographic Center of Iran. The committee pursues its objectives by developing regulations and guidelines on one hand, and by monitoring and ensuring their implementation on the other. The committee maintains communication with representatives of all organizations involved in geographical naming that play a role in decision-making. It reviews and monitors the progress and challenges of affiliated organizations in the standardization of geographical names during committee meetings. The resolutions of the committee are communicated to various organizations and entities for implementation. It is important to note that the decisions of the committee regarding the standardization of geographical names are legally binding for other organizations.

The key measures implemented by the committee are as follows:

### **Compilation of the Comprehensive Book on Iranian Toponymy**

This book is the result of the efforts of the Transcription Working Group of the ICSGN and serves as a comprehensive resource to assist users in the correct pronunciation, transcription, writing, and application of Iranian geographical names. The book includes methods and criteria for transcription and Latinization, characters and orthography, the introduction of the official language and other prevalent languages in Iran, their geographical distribution, and their scope of usage. The book is compiled with a local perspective, following the model recommended by the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN). The chapters of this book cover topics such as the fundamentals of phonetics and phonology, phonetic symbols of the Persian language, Persian orthography (based on the Persian Academy of Language and Literature's approved guidelines), and the phonological and phonetic characteristics of other prevalent languages in Iran. Each section first provides an approximate or primary scope of the language's prevalence across provinces and counties, followed by detailed explanations regarding the language family, linguistic group, dialects, and its precise geographical distribution down to the village level.

### **Obtaining a License for the Application of Transcription in Iranian General Education Textbooks**

The Publications and Education Working Group of the ICSGN, recognizing that the general education sector of any country is the cornerstone of national progress and development and plays a fundamental role in cultural development and shaping individual behavior in societies, prioritized obtaining a license for the application of geographical name transcription in general education textbooks. The working group successfully obtained a license for the transcription of geographical names in the social studies textbooks for the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades of the first cycle of secondary education (2025 edition) from the Office of Textbook Compilation of the Ministry of Education. Future goals of the working group include the publication of books, newsletters, informational brochures, documents, and journals related to the standardization of geographical names, the preparation of various maps with transcription for different educational levels, webinars for teacher training, the introduction of the National Database of Geographical Names to teachers, and training students on the use of the National Database of Geographical Names of Iran.

### **Obtaining a License for the Publication of the Iranian Geographical Names Journal**

The significant importance of geographical names and their preservation as part of the national culture of countries and the intangible cultural heritage of humanity is undeniable. Therefore, the Secretariat of the ICSGN, as the sole national, sovereign, and authoritative body responsible for toponymy and the unification of geographical names, has taken steps to advance and implement its objectives in the standardization and unification of geographical names and cultural development in this regard. The Secretariat obtained a license from the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance for the publication of a specialized, non-online journal titled "Iranian Geographical Names" in both Persian and English. Subsequently, the bylaws of the journal were prepared, and the National Cartographic Center was designated as the responsible and copyright holder for the publication of the biannual journal.

## **Development and Completion of the National Database of Geographical Names of Iran (IGNDB)**

The responsibility for the development and completion of the National Database of Geographical Names of Iran (IGNDB) lies with the Database and Website Working Group of the ICSGN. Since information on villages with fewer than 20 households has not yet been entered into the database, the working group has taken initial steps to include these population centers in the IGNDB and has outlined the related processes. Additionally, discrepancies between the IGNDB and the data of other authoritative entities, including the Statistical Center of Iran, have been identified, and measures have been taken to resolve these discrepancies. Furthermore, the working group has initiated efforts to revise the Persian orthography of geographical names in the IGNDB in accordance with the guidelines of the Academy of Persian Language and Literature.

The address of the National Database of Geographical Names of Iran (IGNDB) is: <https://gndb.ncc.gov.ir>

## **Development and Completion of the Geographical Names Database for the South-West Asian Linguistic and Geographical Group (Excluding Arabic)**

The initial structure of the Geographical Names Database for the South-West Asian Linguistic and Geographical Group (excluding Arabic), which includes the Islamic Republic of Iran, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Cyprus, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, was established years ago with limited information by the Iranian Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names (ICSGN). Through the efforts of the Foreign Names Working Group of the ICSGN, initial steps have been taken to develop and complete the information in this database.

The address of the Geographical Names Database for the South-West Asian Linguistic and Geographical Group (excluding Arabic) is: <https://swgeonames.ncc.gov.ir>

## **Evaluation of Processes Related to Geographical Names in Member Organizations of the ICSGN**

Over the past two years, organizations and ministries that are members of the Iranian Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names (ICSGN), particularly new members (Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Ministry of Education), as well as the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and the Statistical Center of Iran, have presented processes related to geographical names in their affiliated institutions and entities during official ICSGN meetings. Appropriate decisions have been made to promote the use of standardized geographical names. Additionally, all specialized working groups of the ICSGN, including those for historical names, maritime and seabed names, administrative divisions, publications and education, foreign names, transcription, and the database and website of Iranian geographical names, have carried out valuable and effective activities in line with their objectives and responsibilities.

## **Protection of Historical Geographical Names**

Following the use of a fabricated name instead of the standard and historical name of the Persian Gulf in Issue 66 of the UNGEGN publication and on the official website of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Secretariat of the Iranian Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names (ICSGN), in accordance with its defined responsibilities, formally expressed the objection of the Islamic Republic of Iran to these actions to the UNGEGN Secretariat, as well as to the Department of Environment and the National Commission for UNESCO in Iran as collaborating organizations with the IUCN in Iran, for follow-up and action.

## **Application of Transcription for Geographical Names in Government Resolutions**

The National Cartographic Center of Iran, as the responsible body for the Iranian Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names (ICSGN), in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior, has initiated

preliminary measures and coordination to improve processes related to the presentation of administrative division resolutions and the digitization of maps attached to government resolutions. These efforts aim to ensure that the names of administrative elements in resolutions are presented alongside their transcriptions.