



# Economic and Social Council

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## United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

2025 session

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Item 5 (b) of the provisional agenda\*

Technical expertise: geographical names data management

### Standardization of kanji characters used in the geographical names database

#### Summary\*\*

As a national mapping agency, the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan has developed and manages a database of approximately 420,000 domestic geographical names that appear on national base maps. In Japan, geographical names are often written in kanji, a system adapted from logographic Chinese characters. Many of those characters are used, with slight differences in their form. Because there is no Japanese character set that corresponds to all kanji characters, each administrative agency has used its character set and added its own created characters to the general character set. That practice has resulted in inconsistencies in data exchange and an inability to obtain unique character information. Consequently, there have been problems with the data not displaying correctly on, for example, computers and smartphones.

Recently, the Government of Japan has been preparing character information commonly handled by administrative agencies. In line with that initiative, the Geospatial Information Authority has been working on standardizing and unifying the kanji characters used in the geographical names database. The efforts are discussed in the report.

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\* GEGN.2/2025/1.

\*\* The full report was prepared by the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan. The report will be available at [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th\\_session\\_2025/](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th_session_2025/), in the language of submission only, as document GEGN.2/2025/22/CRP.22.

