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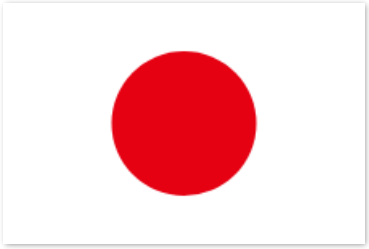
English

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

United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

Standardization of Geographical Names in Japan **



* GEGN.2/2025/1
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National report		
A	**Summary** *A short summary, which describes main points of the national report. This part is also usually sent in a separate document before the national report.*	In Japan, geographical names are collected, arranged and standardized by relevant governmental agencies to promote their administrative activities. As a consequence, the standardization of geographical names is a well-coordinated effort involving various related organizations that all have clearly defined tasks. Efforts towards standardization include the following: the standardization of geographical names of administrative districts; the unification of geographical names of natural features; the standardization of geographical names of undersea features; the adoption of Antarctic geographical names; and the national geographical names gazetteer.
B	**Member state report on the situation in their country** *The progress made in the standardization of geographical names since the last UNGEGN session (news in the field of geonames in the country, progress of ongoing projects, finished projects, issues and use cases for inspiration for other countries, changes in database of geonames).*	Recently, the Japanese government has been preparing character information commonly handled by administrative agencies. In line with this initiative, the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan (GSI) has also been working on standardizing and unifying the *kanji* characters used in the geographical names database, so that the *kanji* characters of geographical names are uniquely and correctly displayed when the map is displayed on general computers and smartphones.
C	**National and international meetings, conferences, symposiums, publicity and publications** *- date of the meeting* *- name of the meeting* *- place of the meeting* *- main theme* *- useful information from the meeting* *- in case of publications, guidelines: how often are they issued, what is the content of these publications* *- publicity: articles in international professional magazines, publication of own professional magazines.*	not applicable
D	**Measures taken and proposed to implement United Nations resolutions on the standardization of geographical names, including the economic and social benefits** *Information, recommendations, guidelines in legislative, control management.*	not applicable

E	**National standardization**	
Ea	***Field collection of names***	without changes
Eb	***Office treatment of names***	1. Standardization of geographical names of administrative districts Municipalities are composed of small administrative districts called *cho* or *aza* in Japanese. The names of small administrative districts are regulated by law, and new names and their areas are published in public notification from local governments. Therefore, the areas, notations, and pronunciations of residential geographical names, as well as their names on maps, are standardized. The names are used in the Japanese address system. 2. Unification of geographical names of natural features In the natural feature names, the name conventionally called by the local are shown on maps and charts. In 1960 the Joint Committee on the Standardization of Geographical Names was established to standardize geographical names by the GSI which compiles maps of land areas, and the Hydrographic and Oceanographic Department of the Japan Coast Guard which compiles maps of mostly marine areas. Since then, the Committee holds every year and about 25,000 geographical names had been determined to be used unified on maps and charts.
Ec	***Treatment of names in multilingual areas***	without changes
Ed	***Administrative structure of national names authorities, legislation, policies and procedures***	without changes
Ee	***Toponymic guidelines for map editors and other editors***	"Toponymic guidelines for map and other editors, Japan" has been developed in 1987. After the development, it was updated in line with changes to regulations regarding romanization and so on. So far, the 3rd edition updated in 2007 is released.
F.	**Geographical names as culture, heritage and identity** *Including indigenous, minority and regional language names.*	without changes
G.	**Exonyms** *New exonyms, extinct exonyms, projects regarding exonyms.*	without changes
H.	**Toponymic data files and gazetteers**	
Ha	***Content requirements and standards***	without changes
Hb	***Data management and interoperability***	As a national mapping agency, the GSI has developed and manages a database of approximately 420,000 domestic geographical names that appear on the national base maps. In Japan, geographical names are often written in *kanji* characters which was adapted from the logographic Chinese characters for Japanese writing, and many of these *kanji* characters are used, including slight differences in their form. On the other hand, because there is no Japanese character set that corresponds to all *kanji* characters, each administrative agency has used the character set that added its own created characters to the general character set. This practice has resulted in inconsistencies in data exchange and the inability to obtain unique character information. Consequently, there were problems with these data not displaying correctly on computers, smartphones, etc. Recently, the Japanese government has been preparing character information commonly handled by administrative agencies. In line with this initiative, the GSI has also been working on standardizing and unifying the *kanji*

		characters used in the geographical names database, and that is what is discussed in the report submitted in Agenda Item 5(b).
Hc	***Data services, applications and products*** *Including gazetteers and web services.*	1. National Geographical Names Gazetteer The Japanese government made "Gazetteer of Japan" in accordance with the resolutions of the 1st United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names in 1967. After that, it continues to be updated at the right time. This gazetteer contains more than 4,000 geographical names from 1:1,000,000-scale maps prepared by the GSI, as well as 1:1,000,000-scale bathymetric charts and 1:3,500,000-scale international charts prepared by the Hydrographic and Oceanographic Department of the Japan Coast Guard. 2. Japan Map in Multilingual Notation The website "Japan map in multilingual notation" with geographical name reading function in Japanese pronunciation, which displays geographical names of Japan in English, French, Chinese (Simplified and Traditional), and Korean has been developed in 2020. The website is currently releasing on a trial basis.
I	**Terminology in the standardization of geographical names** *New or changed definitions and terms.*	not applicable
J	**Writing systems and pronunciation**	
Ja	***Romanization***	without changes
Jb	***Conversion into non-Roman writing systems***	without changes
Jc	***Writing of names in unwritten languages***	without changes
Jd	***Pronunciation***	without changes
K	**Country names** *New or changed country names from the UNGEGN List of Country Names that were imported to the list of geonames in this country (in language of this country).*	without changes
L	**Toponymic education** *Toponymical courses, works in organisation, issues and solution of problems.*	without changes
M	**Features beyond a single sovereignty and international cooperation**	
Ma	***Features common to two or more nations***	not applicable
Mb	***Bilateral and multilateral agreements***	not applicable
Mc	***Coastal seas***	without changes
Md	***Geonames of international waters and marine features in international waters***	Names of the undersea features that have been discovered or surveyed by Japan's maritime survey organizations, and those that have been used historically have been standardized by the Japanese Committee on Undersea Feature Names, which consists of academic experts and maritime survey institute staff, and is operated by the Hydrographic and Oceanographic Department of the Japan Coast Guard, to be followed when used in nautical charts and publications. The names are deliberated with reference to "Standardization of Undersea Feature Names" originally developed through collaboration between the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO) Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names (SCUFN) and the Working Group on Undersea and Maritime Features of the United Nations Group of Experts on

		Geographical Names. As of December 2024, approximately 1,600 standardized names have been assigned to undersea features.
Me	***Geonames in Antarctica***	With the exception of geographical features found in the region south of 60 degrees S that have either been named by other countries or used internationally, the topographical features discovered by the Japanese Antarctic Research Expeditions (JARE) and points of major geodetic or observational interest are tentatively named based on the "Code of Antarctic Geographic Naming (enacted by the Headquarters for the Japanese Antarctic Research Expedition)". These tentative names are submitted by the Antarctic Place-names Committee of Japan to the Headquarters for the Japanese Antarctic Research Expedition, which approves the official names. As of December 2024, about 374 Antarctic place-names had been officially approved and registered.
Mf	***International cooperation*** *Cooperation with institutions, countries – specific project.*	not applicable
N.	**Arrangements for the UNGEGN** *Creating national and other reports, creating articles for Bulletin, communication, cooperation and fulfilment of tasks from the UNGEGN.*	without changes
O	**Supporting sustainable development** *Activities related to geonames that support sustainable development.*	not applicable
P	**Other** *If the country has worked on something special, that is not mentioned in this model.*	not applicable