11 March 2025

English

**United Nations Group of Experts On
Geographical Names**
2025 session
New York, 28 April – 2 May 2025
Item 5 (d) of the provisional agenda *
Technical expertise: Toponymic terminology

Report of the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology, 2023–2025

Submitted by the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology**

Summary

The full report provides an overview of the activities of the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology since the 2023 session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names. The report provides information on a few terminology changes agreed to at the Working Group's meeting during the 2023 session and through subsequent work by correspondence. In addition, the Working Group Convenor is seeking a volunteer to take over the activities of the Working Group.

Background
The Working Group on Toponymic Terminology (WG TT) was established by the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) at its 14th session in Geneva in May 1989. In 2002, the Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical, including 375 terms and their definitions in the six official UN languages, was published in one combined volume with appropriate cross-referencing. At the ninth UNCSGN in New York (2007) an Addendum with a total of 23 entries was ratified and approved for insertion in the Glossary. The revised Glossary (that includes the Addendum as a separate Annex) is available for download from the UNGEGN website (on the UNGEGN Publications page). An online database of toponymic terminology (www.ortsnamen.at/ungegn_glossary)[1] was established in 2019.

Recent Activities
The Working Group has not met since the UNGEGN 2023 session. The Working Group maintains a docket of proposed changes to the glossary/database. The docket (currently version 4.1) contains more than 100 terms subject to a range of actions (addition, modification of a definition, deletion, etc.). Several recommendations remain incomplete (e.g., a proposed term with no associated definition) and will not be considered by the Working Group until fully composed. A handful of edits have been identified, communicated with the Working Group through correspondence, and are being moved forward for incorporation and/or correction in the database are submitted for endorsement by the Group of Experts and are listed in the Annex.

At the meeting held during the 2023 session, the working group considered the following terms: ***indigenous, international name, linked data, politonym,*** and ***urbonym*** without reaching a consensus decision.

Since 2023, the Working Group's page on the UNGEGN website (https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/working_groups/wg3.cshtml) has been updated and improved.

Online Terminology Database
When initialized, the database contained the 2002 Glossary plus the 2007 Addendum, except for Chinese and Arabic terms from the 2007 Addendum. Since then, some of the additional changes approved by the Working Group have been added, but with terms and definitions in English only. No updates have been made to the database since the 2023 session. Several volunteers have expressed interest in working to provide missing translations. When database work resumes, this work may commence.

Upcoming Actions for 2025 – 2027
- The Working Group will continue to address the docket of proposals for the Glossary.
- The Working Group will consider how best to address the issues related to the successful sustainment of the database.
- The Working Group Convenor is seeking any interested volunteer to take over leadership of the group. If no positive contact with the database manager can be made, a new home for the database may need to be sought.

Points for discussion

The Group of Experts is invited to:
(a) Take note of the report of the Working Group
(b) Volunteer to assist with translations of terms and definitions missing in the terminology database;
(c) Submit proposals for changes to the terminology database; and,
(d) Endorse the Working Group's recommendations for additions and changes to terminology database.

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[1] The database is graciously supported by the Austrian Board on Geographical Names (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kartographische Ortsnamenkunde) and hosted by the University of Innsbruck.

Glossary/Database changes approved by the Working Group

Additions

TASK NO.	TERM	COMMENT
93	regional language	add as a cross-reference to **minority language** (150)
94	limnonym	add as a cross-reference **to lacustrine name** (A218)

Changes

TASK NO. COMMENT	NO.	TERM	DEFINITION
47 Cross-reference to 'file format' (now deleted)	101	format	Size and general arrangement of a written or printed document. removed from definition