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Item 3 (b) of the provisional agenda*

Reports of the Bureau and the Secretariat

Report of the Secretariat

Summary**

In keeping with the practice of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names and in accordance with the draft agenda approved by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 2018/264, and pursuant to the resolutions and decisions adopted at the Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names and the thirtieth session of the Group of Experts, the Secretariat has prepared a report detailing the activities undertaken by the Group of Experts during the intersessional period. The Group of Experts is invited to review the report and to provide comments.

At its 2023 session, held from 1 to 5 May 2023, the Group of Experts adopted decision 3/2023/2, in which it expressed appreciation for the report of the Secretariat and the call to strengthen the operations and work of the Group of Experts, and noted that the Secretariat had suggested an approach to address the review of the working groups and had committed to further discussion on providing guidance on how that exercise might be efficiently conducted. The Group of Experts also welcomed the model national report submitted by the East Central and South-East Europe Division and called for the organization of an appropriate framework to support the strengthening or creation of national names authorities as well as a Group of Experts trust fund.

The full report provides a summary of the major activities conducted by the Group of Experts, with the support of the Secretariat, during the intersessional period from May 2023 to March 2025, to advance the important work of promoting the standardization of geographical names. In the report, the Secretariat highlights the major activities conducted pursuant to recommendations made and decisions adopted at the 2023 session, and also highlights relevant tasks, as outlined in the Group of Experts strategic plan and programme of work 2021–2029.

* GEGN.2/2025/1.

** The full report was prepared by the Secretariat. It will be available under document symbol GEGN.2/2025/5/CRP.5, in the language of submission only, at https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th_session_2025.



In its report, the Secretariat highlights the work undertaken in the following areas: (a) strengthening the operations of the Group of Experts through regular strategic meetings of the Bureau, the expanded Bureau (Chairs of the working groups and Chairs of the task teams), and the Bureau and the Chairs of the divisions; (b) publicity and awareness-raising activities, including maintaining and upgrading the Group's web pages; (c) supporting capacity-development initiatives; (d) strengthening relations with the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management and other United Nations entities, including the collaborative project with the Committee of Experts (which will be presented in a separate working paper); (e) redevelopment and deployment of the World Geographical Names Database (to be reported on in full in a separate report); (f) supporting the participation of the Group of Experts in activities of the Economic and Social Council; and (g) coordinating preparations for the 2025 session of the Group of Experts. The Secretariat also provides an outline of existing challenges and tenders possible options and recommendations for consideration by the Group of Experts.
