



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
12 February 2025

Original: 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**

Report of New Zealand

Summary**

The report for the 2025 session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names highlights the progress made by the New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa towards delivering its statutory functions and fulfilling its strategic intentions.

The Board's commemoration of its 100th anniversary in 2024 is a key focus of the report. Digital "milestones and moments" articles were published online, offering a snapshot of significant events of the past 100 years. The Board also posted a 100-year timeline with biographical information on all past and present Board members. The centenary offered an opportunity to refresh the look and feel of the online New Zealand Gazetteer (including improving accessibility shortfalls), to add more history, origin and meaning as a result of structured research methods, and to increase the audio files for the pronunciation of Māori geographical names. One hundred years of operation has revealed how far New Zealand has come from the early days when naming places helped to ensure that mail was delivered, phone calls were connected and passengers knew where their trains were going. Correct spelling and standardized nomenclature, as well as collecting original Māori place names, were requirements from the outset in 1924. In the following decades, the Board has made many significant and controversial decisions on geographical names, each providing a window into the country's unique cultural heritage.

* GEGN.2/2025/1.

** The full report was prepared by Wendy Shaw, Secretary of the New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa. The report will be available at https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th_session_2025/.



The report will also address relevant headings from the Group of Experts model national report template. It will cover topical items from the past couple of years that have been implemented to improve processes, policies and practices which contribute to efficiencies, education and engagement. For example, some of the Board's activities include new publications, virtual field trips, Treaty of Waitangi commitments and annual reporting.
