



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
14 February 2025

Original: English

United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names 2025 session

New York, 28 April–2 May 2025

Item 8 (b) of the provisional agenda*

**Culture, heritage and language recognition: Indigenous,
minority and regional languages and multilingual issues**

Focus group on Indigenous geographical names

Summary**

Under the Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, the focus group on Indigenous geographical names, led by Canada, aims to support the international recognition and promotion of the significance of geographical names that originate from Indigenous languages. It also aims to support Member States in establishing, updating or improving their operational and standardization practices related to Indigenous geographical naming.

Representatives of interested Member States participated in the first official meeting of the focus group at a side event during the 2023 session of the Group of Experts, on 3 May 2023. Participants introduced themselves, outlined their interests and identified next steps. Since then, the membership has expanded and efforts have been under way to revitalize activities. The focus group met on 26 November 2024 and is exploring areas of work for 2025. That work could include developing terms of reference; establishing a web presence linked to existing information on Indigenous geographical names; exploring Member State experiences; and, potentially, collecting information on Indigenous geographical names and languages through surveys, including a survey related to the International Decade of Indigenous Languages.

Member States that wish to participate and provide input, guidance or support to the focus group are invited to email their expressions of interest to the following address: geonames-toponymes@nrcan-rncan.gc.ca.

* GEGN.2/2025/1.

** The full report was prepared by Nicole Halseth and Steve Westley (Canada), Natural Resources Canada. The report will be available at https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th_session_2025/, in the language of submission only, as document GEGN.2/2025/94/CRP.94.

