



UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Advancing geographical names standardization through inclusive, culturally-informed and evidence-based solutions to support sustainable development

2025 Session | 28 April – 2 May 2025 | @UNSD_GEGN, #2025UNEGN



2025 UNGEGN SESSION Side Event

The World Geographical Names Database and a Unique Identifier for Cities

1315 – 1430 - 1 May 2025 - UNHQ CR-C

Background

Identifiers (or ‘geocodes’) are essential infrastructure components that enable the integration of data across various domains and communities, fostering collaborative and cross-disciplinary work. To be effective, identifiers must adhere to several key principles: they should be unique, ensuring no two objects share the same identifier, and each object possesses only one identifier. They also need to be universal, meaning every object should have an identifier. The position paper presented at this present Session outlines concepts for creating unique identifiers (UUIDs) for cities, noting that while geographical classifications exist for regions and countries (such as M49 and ISO 3166-1), none exist for cities. These are also a key foundational resource for enabling the semantic integration of data, through ‘Linked Data’. As such, this side event takes a landscape view of Linked Data, the Position Paper on the development of a global unique identifier for cities, and the World Geographical Names Database.

Objectives

Key items to be discussed at this side event include the management of Universal and Unique Identifiers, and an update on the progress and future of the World Geographical Names Database:

- Highlight the role of Linked Data for the United Nations
- Provide an update on the World Geographical Names Database
- Promote and raise-awareness of the Unique Identifier for Cities concept
- Highlight a pathway forward for enhancing the capacity of Member States in upcoming capacity development fora

Provisional Agenda

- **The Importance of Linked Data for the United Nations** – Mr Luis Gonzalez Morales, United Nations Statistics Division
- **Updating on World Geographical Names Database** – Mr Mark Iliffe, United Nations Statistics Division
- **Expanding the data within the World Geographical Names Database** – Ms Mina Lee, United Nations Office of Information, Communication and Technology
- **Towards a Standardised Unique Identifier for Cities** – Mr Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu, Germany and Convenor of the Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management

Organisers

This Forum is organised by the Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management. Points of Contact:

- Mr Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu (Germany) Pier-Giorgio.Zaccheddu@bkg.bund.de and
- Mr Mark Iliffe (UNGEGN Secretariat) mark.iliffe@un.org

This is an open side event and all are invited