

**Statement on  
United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)**

**3<sup>rd</sup> High Level Forum on UN-GGIM**

**22-24 October, Beijing, China**

As the Vice Chair of UNGEGN, I would like to take this prestigious opportunity to mention the role of geographical names, an integral and very useful part of geospatial information in sustainable development, and also to recall the link between the UNGEGN and the UN-GGIM.

A topographic map, for instance, may have until 14 layers but if the layer of geographical names is missing, the map is not useful. Also if you are walking through a city and you don't find road panels with correct names, you may easily get lost.

This is why while talking about geospatial data, standardization and data integration; it is necessary to think about standardized geographical names, as they provide a key indexing and linking tool between geospatial data sets and enable the data integration as well.

UNGEGN was created since 1959 to promote the geographical names (GN) world, to seek solutions for GN issues and to help countries setting up national geographical names authorities in order to set directions and solutions relevant to GN as part of the spatial data framework.

Another important player that is actually contributing to the promotion of the geographical names is UN-GGIM which is the umbrella for UNGEGN. UN-GGIM is developing data strategies for UNGEGN in assisting nations to develop effective GN standardization programs as an important part of their spatial data strategies.

Ladies and gentleman, the 3<sup>rd</sup> HLF of UN-GGIM is gathering honourable personalities, many of them are heads of mapping authorities or of authorities dealing with geospatial information, their contribution to the promotion of GN will be an asset and the easiest way to do could be by initiating the idea of creating national toponymic authorities and first encouraging the participation of their countries to the UNGEGN activities. UNGEGN holds sessions every 2 years and the UN conferences on the standardization of geographical names (UNCSGN) every 5 years.

<http://www.unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN>

Geographical names are a very important part of geospatial information, more than that they are part of countries cultural heritage that need to be preserved.

Distinguished delegates, your contribution will be very much appreciated.

**Eng. Naima FRIHA, Tunisia**

**UNGEGN Vice Chair.**