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## Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial

### Information Management

#### Twelfth session

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Item 16 of the provisional agenda\*

### Collaboration with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

## Collaboration with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

### Note by the Secretariat

#### Summary

The present paper contains the report of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) for consideration by the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management.

At its eleventh session, held virtually on 23, 24 and 27 August 2021, the Committee of Experts adopted decision 11/112, in which it congratulated the Group of Experts on the adoption of its strategic plan and programme of work for the period 2021–2029 at its session in May 2021, and noted that the strategic plan would provide information to external bodies including the Committee of Experts and promote collaboration between United Nations bodies towards wider standardization of geographical names. The Committee supported efforts and actions for strengthening interaction and collaboration between the Bureaux of the Committee and the Group of Experts, including opportunities for partnership such as raising awareness of the importance of toponymy, sharing guidelines, methods and practices for the standardization of geographical names and the preservation of indigenous place names as part of the cultural heritage of a country. Furthermore, the Committee encouraged Member States to improve communication, coordination and cooperation between geospatial information management authorities and geographical names authorities at the national and regional levels, including across thematic areas, to strengthen geospatial information management.

In this report, the Group of Experts presents its activities conducted during the intersessional period to implement decision 11/112. The report also provides an overview of the implementation of the Group of Experts strategic plan and programme of work for the period 2021–2029, including the work being carried out to redevelop the World Geographical Names database and encourage Member States to prepare guidelines for the application and use of geographical names on printed and digital products (toponymic guidelines). The report also contains a collaborative project proposal on the development of a compendium of institutional arrangements and operational good practices, which is aimed at strengthening relations between the Committee of Experts and the Group of Experts.

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\* E/C.20/2022/1

## I. Introduction

1. At its eleventh session, held virtually on 23, 24 and 27 August 2021, the Committee of Experts adopted decision 11/112, in which it congratulated the Group of Experts on the adoption of its strategic plan and programme of work for the period 2021–2029 at its session in May 2021, and noted that the strategic plan would provide information to external bodies including the Committee of Experts and promote collaboration between United Nations bodies towards wider standardization of geographical names. The Committee supported efforts and actions for strengthening interaction and collaboration between the Bureaux of the Committee and the Group of Experts, including opportunities for partnership such as raising awareness of the importance of toponymy, sharing guidelines, methods and practices for the standardization of geographical names and the preservation of indigenous place names as part of the cultural heritage of a country.

2. Furthermore, the Committee of Experts encouraged Member States to improve communication, coordination and cooperation between geospatial information management authorities and geographical names authorities at the national and regional levels, including across thematic areas, to strengthen geospatial information management. The Committee also noted the slow progress in the development of the new interface to enhance the current version of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) GeoNyms system and the Africa Gazetteer project to produce a ubiquitous application for the capturing and validating of geographical names nationally and in the continent and invited interested partners to join in the efforts for the redevelopment of the Africa Gazetteer project.

3. This present report contains an overview of the Group of Experts activities conducted during the intersessional period to implement decision 11/112. The Group of Experts also provides an overview of the implementation of its strategic plan and programme of work for the period 2021–2029, including the work being carried out to redevelop the World Geographical Names Database. In the report, the Group of Experts encourages Member States to prepare guidelines for the application and use of geographical names on printed and digital products (toponymic guidelines). The report also contains a collaborative project proposal on the development of a compendium of institutional arrangements and operational good practices, which is aimed at strengthening relations between the Committee of Experts and the Group of Experts. The Committee of Experts is invited to take note of the report and to express its views on supporting the proposed collaborative project. Points for discussion and decision are provided in paragraph 47.

## II. UNGEGN's Intersessional Activities

### **Implementation of UNGEGN Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021-2029**

4. The UNGEGN Strategic Plan and Programme of Work was approved in May 2021 by the Group of Experts at its 2021/second session. As a living document intended to guide the work of the Group of Experts over the period 2021–2029, the Strategic Plan and Programme of Work provides a forward and focused vision, directs the prioritization of activities, allows for more effective communication within the Group of Experts and across its stakeholders, strengthens the Group's accountability, and deepens the impact of its work. Further, ECOSOC, at its management segment meeting on 22 July 2021, approved UNGEGN's 2021 report (E/2021/69) and recommendation one, on the Group of Experts Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021-2029.

5. The Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021-2029 and supporting documentation are available on the [UNGEKN website](#). The Strategic Plan and Programme of Work is available in English and Spanish and has been formatted and styled to be user friendly and for easy reading. A [two-page leaflet](#) containing only the Strategic Plan is also available.

6. The UNGEGN programme of work has five strategic areas, which are further broken down into 18 major objectives, supported by 51 action items. Oversight and coordination of

the implementation of the Strategic Plan and Programme of Work is being done by UNGEGN vice-chairs and working group convenors, referred to as “Caring colleagues”.

Strategies	No. of Objectives	Total Action Items
1. Technical expertise	3	10
2. Relationships, links and connections	3	10
3. Effective work programmes	4	12
4. Culture, heritage and language recognition	4	12
5. Promotion and capacity building	4	7
<b>5</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>51</b>

*Table 1: UNGEGN Strategic Plan and Programme of Work – Strategies, Objectives and Action Items*

7. The Group of Experts has adopted a few exemplary approaches towards implementing their Strategic Plan and Programme of Work. For example, to support awareness raising and communication efforts, a section in the UNGEGN Bulletin is used to share updates on implementation activities. In the most recent issue, [UNEGN Bulletin number 63](#), two articles were included, one addressed Strategy 3, specifically action item 3-ii-2, reviewing the current versions of UNGEGN publications, and the other provided an overview of the tasks being done to implement Strategy 1, Technical Expertise. The article on Strategy 1 focused on first findings, the challenges of geographical names data management and the plan of work for the next months. This strategy is managed by the UNGEGN working group on Geographical Names Data Management, which uses a Wiki to communicate, share and collaborate its work. In both articles there was an open call, inviting experts to contribute to the work items, which may be considered as a form of crowd sourcing of technical expertise. It should be noted that the UNGEGN Bulletin is circulated to over 720 recipients.

#### **Contribution to ECOSOC’s new Coordination Segment and ECOSOC’s review of its functional commissions and subsidiary bodies**

8. The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is the central platform within the United Nations system to advance the economic, social and environment dimensions of sustainable development. ECOSOC links a diverse family of [subsidiary bodies](#) and UN entities ([Organigram](#)) dedicated to sustainable development, providing overall guidance and coordination. These include regional economic and social commissions, functional commissions facilitating intergovernmental discussions of major global issues, expert bodies establishing important global normative frameworks, and specialized agencies, programmes and funds at work around the world to translate development commitments into real changes in people’s lives.

9. The annual ECOSOC Coordination Segment with the chairs of its functional commissions and expert bodies, and the annual high-level segment, including the high-level political forum (HLPF) on sustainable development goals (SDGs) follow-up and review, are two mechanisms which are used by the United Nations to encourage other multilateral processes, agencies and entities to participate and present the alignment of their work with the SDGs, national to global COVID-19 recovery efforts and their contribution to the processes.

10. On 4 February 2022 two members of the UNGEGN Bureau, the Chair from France and the Vice Chair from Australia, virtually attended the inaugural [ECOSOC Coordination Segment](#). The objectives of the Coordination Segment were to steer the

ECOSOC system towards an efficient and integrated workflow and provide forward-looking policy guidance to subsidiary bodies.

11. The meeting was well attended and focused on the annual theme of ECOSOC and the HLPF, “Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. [UNGEKN Chair’s video and text](#) shared the technical importance of the Group’s work, how it contributes to the 2030 Agenda, and new areas of work on exploring potential connections between geographical names standardization and the environment. In preparation for the Coordination Segment, the UNGEKN Secretariat and Bureau also prepared and submitted an infographic on work being done by the Group of Experts and SDG mapping which shows the alignment of UNGEKN’s work to each of the 17 SDG’s<sup>1</sup>.

12. The output from the meeting was a [summary by the President of ECOSOC](#), which highlighted three recommendations: 1) for ECOSOC to host an event on structural measures to prevent conflict and atrocity crimes; 2) organize an event on innovative and blended financing; and 3) create more spaces for civil society and youth groups at all levels to work together towards building back better and achieving the SDG’s.

13. Further to the General Assembly resolution [72/305](#) on the review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/1 on the strengthening of ECOSOC, (paragraphs 28 and 29) and subsequent to the mandate as per resolution [75/290A](#) of June 2021, the Vice President of ECOSOC from Bulgaria led the review exercise. The objectives of the review were to ensure that subsidiary bodies are fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda and produce high-quality assessments and policy recommendations on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, while promoting integrated and action-oriented approaches in doing so. It should also ensure that the subsidiary bodies adequately support the work of the Council while also furthering ways for the Council to better integrate their outcomes into its own work.

14. In fulfilment of the mandate in resolution 72/305, through letter of 23 February 2022, the UNGEKN Bureau was requested to provide assessments and recommendations of its sessions. The assessments were guided by five questions which were based on General Assembly resolutions 75/290 A and 72/305. With support from the UNGEKN Secretariat a response was prepared and submitted to ECOSOC. The compiled [assessments prepared by the Bureaux of ECOSOC functional commissions and expert bodies](#) are available on the ECOSOC website.

15. In addition to the assessment exercise, informal intergovernmental consultations were conducted. There was broad agreement on the importance of the work of the functional commissions and expert bodies. The review was also seen as aiming to enhance the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of the work of subsidiary bodies, and at encouraging integrated approaches as part of improving the coordination and oversight functions of the Council. The output from the review process was a [Summary of Recommendations](#) by the Vice President. It is to be noted that on the matter of coordination and cooperation among subsidiary bodies, the long-standing collaboration between the Committee of Experts and the Group of Experts was highlighted on page 14 of the Summary of Recommendations document.

16. The summary document was adopted as per ECOSOC decision 2022/334 at its 2022 Management Segment. The decision invited the President and Bureau of the Council, the chairs and bureaux of the functional commissions and expert bodies of the Council, all Member States and the Secretariat to implement, to the extent possible

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<sup>1</sup> [Full Mapping subs bodies vs SDGs \(60 × 30 cm\) \(un.org\)](#) Mapping of the work of ECOSOC functional commissions and expert bodies and the sustainable development goals, (UNGEKN is found on page 12 of 18)

within existing mandates and resources, the recommendations contained in the summary, and decided to review the implementation of the recommendations at its 2026 session.

### **UNGEGN Bureau, Expanded Bureau and Divisional Meetings**

17. During the intersessional period the UNGEGN Secretariat planned and convened four expanded virtual Bureau (Bureau and convenors of working groups and task teams) meetings, three virtual core Bureau meetings and for the first time a Bureau and Divisional meeting in November 2021.

18. The inaugural meeting of the UNGEGN Bureau and Division Chairs was the first of planned future initiatives with the objective of engaging UNGEGN's divisional leadership, to listen and learn of their geographical names standardizations concerns and requirements. [UNGEGN's divisions](#) were created to support the work of Group of Experts and serve as the bridge to Member States. The UNGEGN divisions are entrenched, and codified structures buttressed by binding instruments such as the UNGEGN Rules of Procedure and resolutions dating back some 50 years.

19. The meeting sought to begin the process of identifying strategies, priorities, and actions relevant to addressing specific divisional organizational and operational issues, revitalization of inactive divisions and strengthening their involvement and contribution to implementing the Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021-2029.

20. In attendance were 25 participants, with 13 of 24 linguistic/geographical divisions represented. The following five priorities were identified during the discussions:

- a. Identification of divisional members, maintenance of their contacts and employing strategies to retain their participation;
- b. Supporting the revision of UNGEGN publications;
- c. Identifying strategies to support the maintenance of divisional websites
- d. Strengthening research and partnerships with universities and
- e. Preparation of terms of reference/guidelines for the management of divisions.

21. It was decided that two meetings of the core Bureau and Divisions are to be held each year. Future divisional action items are the five priority items identified during the meeting, in addition to task 3-iii-7 of the UNGEGN Strategic Plan and Programme of Work, which is to review the function and operation of Bureau, Working Groups and Divisions and consider any change in the organizational structure of UNGEGN.

### **World Geographical Names Database**

22. The Statistics Division, as the Secretariat of UNGEGN, maintains the "World Geographic Names Database," an authoritative data repository containing multilingual, multiscriptural geo-referenced short and full geographical names (in all six UN languages) for countries (the 193 UN Member States), their capitals, major cities with population over 100,000 and related audio files. The data contained in the database are generally submitted by national geographical names authorities, the UN Protocol office and extracted from the [UNTERM database](#). The World Geographical Names Database is accessible from the UNGEGN website, <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/geonames/>.

23. The initiative to redevelop the World Geographical Names Database continued during the intersessional period with contributions from the UNGEGN expanded Bureau special task group, the UNGEGN Secretariat, supported by members of UNSD's Data Innovation Section, and technology contractors. The redevelopment exercise was funded through the Statistics Division's allocation under the Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation.

24. The following components have been developed:
- An Administration Module for the management and maintenance of the database. Further development and extension of functionality of the Administration module includes bulk upload of geographical names and the development of a ‘Temporal Module’ that bring the time dimension to instances of the city, country and ‘geography’) and less with visualization and presentation (less emphasis on user interface);
  - A Public Web application programming interface (API). A GeoJSON API that provides read-only access to the WGN database, which will enable broader integration and interoperability of geographic names in-line with the UN Secretary General’s Data Strategy vis-a-vis Open Data, but also UNSD’s prevailing needs for integration across its database applications; and
  - A Public Dashboard. This is a public facing website that provides enhanced user experience and supports multilingualism (six official languages). It is expected that this will primarily be used by the UNGEGN community, entities within the UN system and other geographic names stakeholders.
25. Work currently in progress includes integration with other UN databases, including geographical features of the Demographic Yearbook<sup>2</sup> and UNTERM<sup>3</sup>. This integration exercise is being done to strengthen the geographic completeness of the data (cities with population over 100,000 in six UN languages) held in the World Geographical Names Database. The continued development beyond the components already created will require identifying additional funding.

#### **Promoting the use of Toponymic Guidelines**

26. Standardizing geographical names requires substantial work, which includes creating the processes for collecting and registering names and defining rules and regulations for the orthography of names, among many other tasks. A significant aspect of names standardization is having a good communication strategy. This ensures that standardized geographical names are accepted and applied within the government, private companies and among the public. Geographical names use is heavily influenced by what people see in web applications and on websites such as Google Maps, OpenStreetMap and Wikipedia, in navigation software, on the news, in social media and other sources.

27. The challenge is to strengthen the awareness and the importance of using authoritative geographical names. The Toponymic Guidelines, as promoted by UNGEGN, can help in this strategy, both nationally and internationally. This is possible with toponymic guidelines which should ideally contain all essential information about the country’s national and minority languages with their legal status, writing system, spelling rules, pronunciation particularities and toponymic terminology; contact details of the names authority; and references to source material for standardized geographical names.

28. In 1982, the then UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names [resolution IV/4](#) recommended that “*countries should be encouraged to publish and keep up-to-date toponymic guidelines for map and other editors which may enable cartographers of other countries to treat correctly all problems of cartographic*

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<sup>2</sup> [The United Nations Demographic Yearbook](#) compiles and disseminates official demographic and social statistics on a wide range of topics.

<sup>3</sup> [UNTERM](#) is a multilingual terminology database maintained jointly by the Secretariat (including the main duty stations and regional commissions) and certain specialized agencies of the United Nations system, including the International Maritime Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization and the World Meteorological Organization.

*toponymy of the countries that produced such guidelines, and which may be of help to all users in interpreting maps*". Forty countries have since published their [Toponymic Guidelines](#), which has helped map makers around the world in their work to produce maps with authoritative geographical names.

29. Toponymic Guidelines is an important and useful tool that supports the dissemination of national names standardization work. It is also necessary to review and keep toponymic guidelines current given changes in official languages, spelling rules of a language, the administrative division of a country, the toponymic terminology and abbreviations used on topographic maps, the contact details of the national geographical names authority and the source material for authoritative names.

30. The Group of Experts therefore encourages Member States not having toponymic guidelines, or having outdated guidelines, to develop and/or revise their guidelines. This can be achieved through collaboration between national mapping agencies and national geographical names authorities.

### **Capacity Development**

31. During the intersessional period, the UNGEGN Secretariat planned and convened a two-hour webinar on '*Developing Digital Gazetteers Using Free and Open-Source Software*' held on Tuesday 10 May 2022. The objective of the webinar was to increase awareness and strengthen capacity within the UNGEGN community on the use of free and open-source software to develop digital gazetteers. The webinar also supported the implementation of UNGEGN's Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021-2029, specifically Strategy 1 (technical expertise) and Strategy 5 (promotion and capacity building).

32. The chair of the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy facilitated the webinar and the Director of the Statistics Division and the Chair of UNGEGN delivered opening remarks. Over 120 participants from 49 countries benefited from the presentations made by experts from Brazil, Germany and New Zealand.

33. All three presentations offered unique perspectives and shared the challenges and lessons learned from using open-source software to deliver up-to-date, authoritative, and accurate geographical names data. A common feature of all presentations was the historical evolution of gazetteers, which referenced paper-based mapping products, followed by using spreadsheets at the start of the electronic age, and then the merging of databases with geospatial tools to represent both point and complex geometry. An important technical point shared was that data dictionaries and relational modelling and schemas, in addition to the structure of fields, were common fundamental planning tools. Further, it was noted that many countries deal with border complexities that need to be addressed in gazetteers and therefore base maps and projections are critical for context. Participants were reminded that user requirements are at the forefront of designing and deploying a seamless, intuitive online application, to easily and freely access the geographical names data needed to create and to re-use products.

34. The webinar ended with an extensive round of question and answers. Questions included creating gazetteers of sea names, open-source compatibility with languages such as Arabic, geometry transformation from point to polygon, Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) standards, methodology changes in naming practices driven by data versus cultural heritage, requests for code to be shared, sign language capability, and meeting accessibility standards. Members were able to gauge how their national gazetteers were placed relative to other international gazetteers. Internationally, countries were at very different stages of collecting and distributing geographical names information. Some were at the start of their journey while others were using

similar platforms for their own gazetteers.<sup>4</sup> Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive.

35. Other technical webinars will be scheduled on a regular basis to continue to strengthen the UNGEGN community's capabilities, and forge connections with toponymic experts in other countries. A webinar on "Linked Open Data developments – what's in it for UNGEGN and its experts?" is scheduled to be held on 30 September 2022. This webinar is aimed at providing an overview on the most relevant challenges and opportunities associated with linked open data and will showcase implementation done by selected countries. Also, to be addressed is the application of methods and transforming current geographical names data (maintained according to well-known geospatial standards from ISO and OGC) into linked open data. The Committee of Experts and broader UN-GGIM community is invited to attend this webinar.

### III. Collaborative activities

36. This section provides an overview of the activities undertaken to encourage stronger relations between UNGEGN and the Committee of Experts. These collaborative activities include: (i) partnering with the Regional Committee for UN-GGIM Americas for the Caribbean Geospatial (CARIGEO) initiative; (ii) UNGEGN's participation in the eleventh session of the Committee of Experts; and (iii) a proposed joint project to prepare a compendium of institutional arrangements on shared good practices for geographical names standardization between national mapping agencies and national names authorities.

#### Collaboration with UN-GGIM Americas, CARIGEO initiative

37. The Regional Committee for UN-GGIM Americas- [Caribbean Geospatial Development Initiative](#) (CARIGEO), UNGEGN and the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-ECLAC), jointly staged the webinar "Geographical names standardization supporting national development" on Tuesday 31 August 2021, for two and a half hours.

38. The webinar sought to build awareness of geographers, geospatial professionals, linguists, cartographers, and cultural historians across the Caribbean on the importance of geographical names standardization and the principles and techniques of geographical naming with a special focus on cultural heritage and practices and procedures in creating and managing a geographical names authority.

39. A global audience of over 105 participants, from 39 countries attended the webinar. There were nine countries from the Caribbean, eleven from the Americas, five from Africa, seven from Europe and seven from Asia and the Pacific. The core content of the webinar was delivered by the chair of the UNGEGN working group on Training Courses in Toponymy, Mr. Peder Gammeltoft, Scientific Manager, Norwegian Language Collections, University of Bergen (Norway) and his colleague UNGEGN member, Mr. Johnny Grandjean Gøgsig Jakobsen, Associate Professor of Name Research at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. The items covered were: a) the significance and benefits of geographical names – language, culture, history, and tourism; b) framework for effective names standardization; c) legal and administrative requirements; d) effective communication and awareness raising strategies; and e) an overview of UNGEGN and CARIGEO.

40. The webinar was an example of successful global and regional collaboration among entities across the UN system, the private sector, academia and NGO's, all

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<sup>4</sup> Information about the webinar and copies of the presentations and videos are available here: [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/working\\_groups/webinars/10May2022.cshtml](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/working_groups/webinars/10May2022.cshtml).



working together to increase and strengthen awareness on the benefits of national names standardization and what is needed to create national names authorities.

### **Participation of UNGEGN at the eleventh session of the Committee of Experts**

41. At the eleventh virtual informal session of the Committee of Experts in August 2021, the Group of Experts was represented by its Chair from France. The Chair presented the [report of the Group](#) under agenda item fourteen “Strengthening of collaboration with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.” Based on the paper presented, 14 statements were delivered. Ten were from the following Member States, in the order received, (United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, Argentina, India, Mexico, Canada, Sweden, Saudi Arabia and Jamaica), three from the UN-GGIM Regional Committees for Europe, Americas and Africa, and one from an Observer, (EuroGeographics).

42. The Committee of Experts, in making decision 11/112, supported efforts and actions for strengthening interaction and collaboration between the Bureaus of the Committee of Experts and the Group of Experts, including opportunities for partnership, and also encouraged Member States to improve communication, coordination and cooperation between geospatial information management authorities and geographical names authorities at the national and regional levels, including across thematic areas, to strengthen geospatial information management.

43. Previous decisions of the Committee of Experts on strengthening relations and identifying joint work opportunities with the Group of Experts, was further supported by decision 11/112 of the Committee of Experts at its eleventh session and also further by General Assembly resolution A/RES/72/305, *Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/1 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council*. In pursuance of these decisions and resolutions, the Group of Experts proposes a collaborative project to prepare a compendium of institutional arrangements on shared good practices between national mapping agencies and national names authorities. This will be further elaborated in Appendix 1 of this report.

## **IV. Other Possible collaborative work items**

44. Once again, the Group of Experts wishes to note that both intergovernmental bodies have acknowledged the need to strengthen their relations, have mutual representation and identify items for collaborative work. This is supported by decision 8/114 of the Committee of Experts at its eighth session, where it welcomed the proposal to create a liaison group tasked with defining operational working relations and coordinating future collaborative work. The call for the creation of a liaison body was further strengthened at the tenth session of the Committee of Experts. In the report [E/2021/46-E/C.20/2020/35](#) decision 10/112 supported the establishment of a liaison group between the Committee of Experts and the Group of Experts to act as a guiding mechanism to manage the flow of information between the two bodies and to continue to identify areas of joint work, and welcomed the proposal to convene a joint meeting of the Bureau of the Committee and the Bureau of the Group in early 2021.

45. Promoting further strengthening of collaboration among functional commissions and expert bodies of ECOSOC is also supported in the [Summary of Recommendations](#) (section III, paragraphs 15, 19, 22 and 24) adopted by ECOSOC at its 2022 Management Segment, an outcome of its review process. It is hoped that should the collaborative project be supported, the ensuing work will provide the opportunity and impetus to finally establish a liaison group between both bodies, thereby fulfilling decision 8/114.

46. The Group of Experts once again calls upon the Committee of Experts to consider the following potential areas for collaboration and future action: (i) work

jointly at the global, regional and national levels to encourage and communicate the benefits of geographical names standardization and the importance of creating names authorities; and (ii) at the global level, pursue joint capacity building initiatives, particularly for those countries in transition and on the cusp of implementing national geospatial information management systems.

## V. Points for discussion

### 47. The Committee of Experts is invited to:

a. Take note of the report of the Group of Experts, and exemplary practices outlined with a view to consider the possibility of adopting/adapting those which may prove useful to strengthen intra-coordination across the UN-GGIM architecture;

b. Encourage Member States and their national mapping agencies not having toponymic guidelines or having outdated guidelines, to develop and/or revise guidelines in collaboration with their national geographical names authorities.

c. Support the proposed collaborative project to prepare a compendium of institutional arrangements on shared good practices for geographical names standardization, between national mapping agencies and national names authorities. Member States are invited to indicate their interest in participating in the proposed project. (Refer to details in Appendix 1.)

d. Participate in UNGEGN's webinar on *Linked Open Data developments – what's in for UNGEGN and its experts?* on 30 September 2022 and to attend the UNGEGN biennial (third) session from 1 to 5 May 2023 in New York.

## APPENDIX 1

### Collaborative work item UN-GGIM and UNGEGN project proposal

**Title:** Preparation of a compendium of institutional arrangements on shared good practices between national mapping agencies and national names authorities

#### Background

For the past five years papers, reports, proposals have been presented on strengthening relations between UN-GGIM and UNGEGN.

A significant achievement for UNGEGN on strengthening relations, was to have had two nominated experts who actively participated in work of the Committee of Experts Working Group on Global Fundamental Geospatial Data Themes. They made considerable contributions to preparing the description of the theme “Geographical Names”, one of the 14 adopted Global Fundamental Geospatial Data Themes.

Further proposals to the Committee of Experts included: (i) meetings of both Bureaux, (ii) creating an inventory of institutional arrangements to be used to develop a typology of UN-GGIM and UNGEGN organizations, to be circulated to both bodies for discussion; (iii) exploring the possible collaboration with the UN-GGIM Academic Network to consider including geographical names in the delivery of GIS education and training; and (iv) pursuing the creation of a liaison group with representatives from both bodies to provide a regular flow of information between both expert bodies.

Both ECOSOC bodies may consider (i) forging links to share and exchange technical expertise, share geographical names data, and conduct joint data collection exercises among other cost saving and efficiency initiatives; (ii) work jointly at the global, regional and national level to encourage and communicate the benefits of geographical names standardization and the importance of creating names authorities; and (iii) at the global level pursue joint capacity building initiatives particularly for those countries in transition and on the cusp of implementing national geospatial information management systems.

#### Objectives

This proposal invites National Mapping Agencies (NMAs) and National Geographical Names Authorities (NGNAs) to collaborate and contribute to the development of a compendium of institutional arrangements and operational good practices that strengthens working relations between mapping and geographical names authorities to support the collection, management, and dissemination of standardized geographical names.

1. To build a stronger relationship between the Group of Experts and the Committee of Experts.
2. To identify, collate and document relevant and acceptable principles, examples of good practices and guidelines/recommendations that may be used by national geospatial information management/mapping authorities across Member States.

#### Problem Statements

1. In many countries NMAs and NGNAs are in separate organizations and often operate in silos with minimal collaboration on relevant and related geographical names mapping activities. In other cases, both NMAs and NGNAs are within the same government agency/organizations, yet sometimes have limited or no relations. Having no relations often leads to duplication of effort, multiple and inconsistent names data sets and overall inefficient use of resources.
2. Lack of awareness of and sensitivity to the importance and benefits of geographical names, and the competencies required for the authoritative standardization of geographical names.
3. Budgetary and human resources constraints and lack of prioritization of the importance of geographical names standardization activities and operations.

## Tasks

The following are the initial tasks identified required to undertake the exercise. They are subject to further refinement, identification of responsible parties, time frame. It is envisioned that the activities to be conducted will be voluntary and cost neutral.

### Initial High-Level Tasks

1. Select and solicit participation of NMA's and NGNA's
2. Decide on areas to be queried and prepare questions to be asked of NMA's and NGNA's by way of interviews and or surveys.
3. Conduct desk study - one on one discussion/interview session or on-line surveys
4. Collate and analyze data from interviews.
5. Prepare first draft of compendium of good practices.
6. Review and feedback to finalize compendium of good practices.
7. Present the compendium at 2023/third UNGEGN session and thirteenth session on UN-GGIM.
8. Conduct joint side events to discuss findings and identify future activities.

### Areas for geographical names data management to be considered for interview sessions with NMA's and NGNA's.

1. Legislation, policies, standards, guidelines and strategies
2. Institutional arrangements – human resources, working structures
3. Technology
4. Data management – from collection and storage to dissemination and use
5. Communication, public relations and engagement with stakeholders
6. Financial management

### Stakeholders/Partners

1. Representatives from the UN-GGIM Bureau
2. Representatives from the UNGEGN Expanded Bureau
3. Selected NMA's and NGNA's. Two tables are provided showing countries and NMA's and NGNA's, the first table lists countries having NMA's and NGNA's in the same organization and the other table list countries not where NMA's and NGNA's are not in the same organization.
4. UNSD -UN-GGIM and UNGEGN Secretariats
5. Consultants/Interns/Fellows

Country	UNGEGN Organization	UN-GGIM Organization
	<b>Geographical Names and Geospatial Data Management in same organization</b>	
<b>Argentina</b>	National Geographic Institute	National Geographic Institute
<b>Austria</b>	Austrian Board on Geographical Names	Federal Office of Metrology and Surveying
<b>Botswana</b>	Department of Surveys & Mapping	Department of Surveys and Mapping
<b>Brazil</b>	Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, Centro de Referencia em Nomes Geograficos	Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics
<b>Canada</b>	Natural Resources Canada	Natural Resources Canada
<b>Chile</b>	Instituto Geografico Militar	Ministry of National Property
<b>Cyprus</b>	Cyprus Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names, Department of Lands and Surveys	Cyprus Department of Lands and Surveys
<b>Czechia</b>	Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre	Land Survey Office of the Czech Republic
<b>Democratic Republic of the Congo</b>	Institut Géographique du Congo (IGC)	Institut Géographique du Congo (IGC)
<b>Egypt</b>	Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics	Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics
<b>Finland</b>	National Land Survey of Finland	National Land Survey of Finland
<b>France</b>	IGN France International	National Institute of Geographic Information
<b>Germany</b>	Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy	Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy
<b>Hungary</b>	Institute of Geodesy, Cartography and Remote Sensing	Institute of Geodesy, Cartography and Remote Sensing (FÖMI)
<b>Indonesia</b>	Geospatial Information Agency	Geospatial Information Agency
<b>Islamic Republic of Iran</b>	National Cartographic Center of Iran	National Cartographic Center of Iran
<b>Italy</b>	Commission for the Italian Official Toponymy, Italian Geographic Military Institute	Italian Geographic Military Institute
<b>Japan</b>	Geospatial Information Authority of Japan	Geospatial Information Authority of Japan
<b>Lithuania</b>	State Enterprise Centre of Registers of the Republic of Lithuania	State Enterprise "Centre of Registers"
<b>Madagascar</b>	National Institute for Cartography and Hydrography	National Institute for Cartography and Hydrography
<b>Mexico</b>	Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geografía e Informática	Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geografía e Informática
<b>New Zealand</b>	New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa	Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand
<b>Philippines</b>	National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA)	National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA)
<b>Republic of Korea</b>	National Geographic Information Institute	National Geographic Information Institute
<b>Russian Federation</b>	Real Estate Department, Ministry of Economic Development	Ministry of Economic Development
<b>Singapore</b>	Singapore Land Authority	Singapore Land Authority
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	Survey of Sri Lanka	Survey Department of Sri Lanka
<b>Sweden</b>	Institute of language and folklore Lantmäteriet,	Lantmäteriet, (The Swedish mapping, cadastral and land registration authority)

\* Note names of organizations may not be correct as they may have changed

Country	UNGEGN Organization	UN-GGIM Organization
<b>Geographical Names and Geospatial Data Management are not in the same organization</b>		
<b>Algeria</b>	National Council of Geographical Information	National Institute of Cartography and Remote Sensing (Algeria)
<b>Australia</b>	Department of Natural Resources Mines and Energy - Permanent Committee on Place Names	Geoscience Australia
<b>Cameroon</b>	Geographical Research Division, National Commission on Toponymy	National Institute of Cartography
<b>China</b>	Ministry of Civil Affairs	National Administration of Surveying, Mapping and Geoinformation of China
<b>Denmark</b>	Copenhagen University	Danish Geodata Agency
<b>Estonia</b>	Place Names Board of Estonia, Institute of Estonian Language	Estonian National Land Board
<b>Ireland</b>	Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht	Ordnance Survey Ireland
<b>Netherlands</b>	Dutch Language Union	Cadastre and Land Registry Agency and Mapping Agency
<b>Norway</b>	The Language Council of Norway/Ministry of Culture	Norwegian Mapping Authority
<b>Poland</b>	Commission for Standardization of Geographical Names outside Poland, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration	Geodesy and Cartography of Poland
<b>Romania</b>	Institute of Geography of the Romanian Academy	National Agency for Cadastre and Land Registration of Romania
<b>Saudi Arabia</b>	National Committee on Geographical Names in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	General Commission for Survey
<b>South Africa</b>	Department of Arts and Culture, south African Geographical Names Council	Department of Rural Development and Land Reform
<b>Sweden</b>	Institute for Language and Folklore Lantmäteriet	Lantmäteriet (The Swedish mapping, cadastral and land registration authority)
<b>United Kingdom</b>	Permanent Committee on Geographical Names	Ordnance Survey
<b>United States</b>	U.S. Board on Geographic Names U.S. Department of State	U.S. Census Bureau

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