

**Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management  
Thirteenth session, 2 – 4 August 2023**

**INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT**

**Agenda item #16. Collaboration with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names**

**Friday, 4 August 2023**

Distinguished representatives and delegates, observers and colleagues

I am very honored to be here – like last year – as a representative of the Expanded Bureau of the Group of Experts to present its report for consideration by the Committee of Experts. As I know both intergovernmental bodies well and as I have been working with them for years, it is a special pleasure for me to present the report again today.

The Chair of the Group of Experts, Mr. Pierre Jaillard, sends his warmest greetings and wishes the Thirteenth Session of the Committee of Experts to be a success.

The present report highlights, amongst others, the intersessional activities. These include the Bureau's participation in activities of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council such as the 'Integration Dialogues', and the 'Annual meeting of the Bureau of the Council'.

The present report also provides an overview on the implementation of the strategic plan and programme of work 2021–2029, including the launch of the redeveloped World Geographical Names Database. This database contains multilingual, multi-scriptural geo-referenced geographical names (in all six UN languages) for almost all UN Member States.

In addition, the present report contains a summary of the preparations for and convening of the last session of the Group of Experts from 1 to 5 May 2023. About 220 delegates from more than 60 Member States were welcomed, including observers, civil society, international organizations, the private sector, and academia, to an open and totally in-person session.

Also covered in the present report is the work being done to strengthen relations between the Committee of Experts and the Group of Experts – as already presented at the 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Committee of Experts. The Group of Experts wishes to establish a coordination mechanism with representatives from both expert bodies. In order to discuss and start activities on the relation the Committee of Experts is kindly requested to consider the five options contained in paragraph 29.

Last but not least, the report informs about already convened and planned Capacity Development activities, amongst others, a one-week geographical names management training session in Bali, Indonesia, as well as about several online webinars. Of particular interest for both bodies was the webinar on 'Linked Open Data Developments' held in September 2022.

In a nutshell, the Committee of Experts is invited to:

- a) Take note of the present report provided by the Group of Experts and to express its views on its intersessional activities;

b) Note the date of the Group of Experts 2025 session, to be convened from 28 April to 2 May 2025 and consider UN-GGIM representation to attend the session, present the report of the Committee of Experts and make a special presentation; and

c) Support the establishment of a coordination mechanism with representatives from both expert bodies, provide nominations from the Committee of Experts as representatives to an “Expert Body Joint Task Team” in order to discuss and consider the five options contained in paragraph 29 towards determining the prerequisites to start producing a compendium of institutional arrangements on shared good practices between national mapping agencies and national names authorities.

I thank you for your attention and remain at your disposal for any discussion you may have.

*Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu, Germany*

*On Behalf of UNGEGN, Member of the Expanded UNGEGN Bureau and*

*Convenor of UNGEGN’s Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management*