United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management
Fifteenth session
6 – 8 August 2025

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT
Agenda item 16 - Standardization of geographical names and collaboration with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names
Wednesday 6 August 2025

Distinguished Representatives, Delegates, Observers and Colleagues,

The Committee of Experts has before it the report of the report of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names. The report outlines substantive developments from the intersessional period, notably the continued implementation of the Group's Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021–2029, and the outcomes of its 2025 session.

Substantive outcomes of the 2025 Session, as just adopted by ECOSOC, included twenty decisions covering a wide range of topics: from the revitalization of the Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage and the adoption of a universal unique identifier for cities, to the strengthening of divisions, the development of geographical names training frameworks, and the recognition of geographical names as elements of culture and heritage. Significant attention was also given to enhancing data management, leveraging artificial intelligence, and fostering collaboration with UN-GGIM and international partners. National reports from 50 countries showcased diverse experiences in standardization, cultural heritage integration, and technological innovation.

I would like to draw the Committee's attention to three areas of importance:

- The adoption of the concept of a Universal Unique Identifier for Cities—a technical advance that reinforces the integration of authoritative naming data within broader statistical and geospatial systems. This initiative directly supports data interoperability and linked data as well as strengthening the role of geographical names as a foundational component of the Global Fundamental Geospatial Data Themes.
- The collaborative project between our two bodies continues to document good practices identified through a questionnaire distributed to both naming authorities and geospatial agencies. While initial analysis of the responses suggest opportunities for improved coordination and resourcing, the initiative sets the foundation for a compendium of recommendations to guide Member States. We thank Indonesia and the United States of America for their leadership and invite the Committee to contribute to this effort.
- The emergent topic of Artificial Intelligence (AI), underscoring the Group of Expert's role in facilitating the consideration and agreement to enhance linguistic consistency, respect national naming conventions, and develop technological capacities. This offers

an opportunity to share mutual experiences of good practice with the Committee of Experts and work towards the development of norms and standards.

In this context, the Committee is invited to acknowledge the collaborative undertakings detailed within the report and to provide guidance that furthers coherence, strengthens partnerships, and promotes the practical implementation of our shared interest.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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