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## Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management

### Fifteenth session

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Item 16 of the provisional agenda\*

### Standardization of geographical names and collaboration with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

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### Note by the Secretariat

#### Summary

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

At its fourteenth session, held in New York from 7 to 9 August 2024, the Committee of Experts adopted [decision 14/114](#), in which it welcomed the report prepared by the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (see E/C.20/2024/18) and the activities conducted during the intersessional period to implement its strategic plan and programme of work for the period 2021–2029, including the strengthening of its operations through increased interaction across its 24 geographical and linguistic divisions, the renewed collaboration with the Pan-American Institute of Geography and History, and its focus on the value of spiritual and emotional aspects of cultural and linguistic heritage for improved belonging of peoples. The Committee also acknowledged the redevelopment of the Group of Experts World Geographical Names database as a reliable and extendable technical platform to be integrated with other authoritative place names, including from the United Nations system, and in that regard, encouraged the development of a consistent and reliable unique identifier for cities to be implemented for the database.

The Committee of Experts also welcomed the progress of the collaborative project between the Committee of Experts and the Group of Experts, appreciated the leadership provided by Indonesia and the United States of America and encouraged Member States to contribute to the upcoming activities, including self-assessment exercises to identify and document good practices and other related tasks under the project, which supports the recognition of cultural heritage associated with geographical names.

In the report, the Group of Experts presents its activities conducted during the intersessional period to implement decision 14/114. It also provides a general update on the implementation of its strategic plan and programme of work 2021–2029; the launch of the questionnaire “Good practices of national mapping agencies and

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\* [E/C.20/2025/1](#).

national geographical names authorities” as a first step towards developing a compendium that outlines effective institutional arrangements and operational practices in the standardization of geographical names; the adoption of a universal unique identifier for cities, including a discussion on steps for its implementation by the Secretariat; and details the Bureau’s participation in the activities of the Economic and Social Council, such as the annual meetings of its subsidiary bodies and other events.

The Group of Experts also reports on the outcomes of its 2025 session, held in New York from 28 April to 2 May 2025. These include the renewal of its Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage; its activities towards operationalizing the “Geographical Names” theme of the global fundamental geospatial data themes through the World Geographical Names database; its efforts to improve publicity and awareness of the importance of geographical names standardization for technical as well as cultural purposes and, in turn, efforts aimed at developing national geographical names capacity; and its engagements with other subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council, including the Committee of Experts, as a means of supporting the Council in implementing the recommendations of its 2022 review of the Council’s functional commissions and expert bodies, among other matters.

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## I. Introduction

1. This report contains an overview of the Group of Experts' activities conducted during the intersessional period. In making decision 14/114 at its fourteenth session, the Committee welcomed the activities conducted during the intersessional period to implement the Group's strategic plan and programme of work for the period 2021–2029, including the strengthening of its operations through increased interaction across its 24 geographical and linguistic divisions, and its focus on the value of spiritual and emotional aspects of cultural and linguistic heritage for improved belonging of peoples. The Committee of Experts also welcomed the progress of the collaborative project with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, appreciated the leadership provided by Indonesia and the United States of America and encouraged Member States to contribute to the upcoming activities, including a global survey to identify and document good practices.

2. In making decision 2025/13 at its 2025 session, the Group of Experts noted the establishment of a new and enlarged secretariat for the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, the establishment of United Nations global geospatial centres of excellence in China, Germany and upcoming in Saudi Arabia, and the collaborative project between the Group of Experts and the Committee of Experts. The Group of Experts also invited views on the efforts to strengthen collaboration in furthering the standardization of geographical names, welcomed the future publication of the compendium of good practices and recommendations for effective collaboration between mapping agencies and naming authorities within a country, and expressed its intent to support those recommendations actively. Furthermore, the Group also thanked Indonesia and the United States of America for leading the collaborative project.

3. The Committee of Experts is invited to take note of the report and to express its views on the work of the Group of Experts in strengthening collaboration with United Nations entities, and to identify other synergies and possible collaborative ventures that are mutually beneficial to both the Group and the Committee. Points for discussion and decision are provided in paragraph 26.

## II. UNGEGN Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021 - 2029 – Key updates

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

4. At the 2025 Session, in its decision 2025/3, the Group of Experts took note of the co Vice-Chair's report<sup>1</sup> on the Implementation of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021-2029<sup>2</sup> during the period of 2023-2025, and welcomed their assessment of how the

<sup>1</sup> See GEGN.2/2025/161/CRP.161

[https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th\\_session\\_2025/documents/GEGN.2\\_2025\\_161\\_CRP161\\_item3c.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th_session_2025/documents/GEGN.2_2025_161_CRP161_item3c.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> During its 2021 session, the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) adopted Recommendation 1, addressing the adoption of the UNGEGN Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021-2029 (SP&PoW). This recommendation was subsequently approved by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as decision 2021/69. The decision includes provisions for the periodic evaluation of its implementation, as well as updates and amendment as deemed necessary. In line with this decision, the 2023 session acknowledged the report on the implementation of the SP&PoW for the period of 2021-2023 (GEGN.2/2023/22) and recognized the progress achieved. Furthermore, the session reaffirmed that the SP&PoW would continue to serve as a guiding framework for the Group of Experts and for the standardization

Bureau, Working Groups, Coordinators and Divisions of the Group of Experts, and Member States had facilitated the implementation of the UNGEGN Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021-2029, and in that regard called for the Group of Experts to accelerate its efforts in delivering a comprehensive and inclusive programme on the standardization of geographical names. The Group of Experts accepted several amendments to its Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021-2029 and also decided to begin analyzing the current strategic plan and programme of work to inform the development of the next strategic plan and programme of work for discussion at the 2027 session.

#### **As a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council**

5. During the Economic and Social Council Coordination Segment<sup>3</sup>, convened at UNHQ on 6 - 7 February 2025, the Chair of the Group of Experts from France contributed to the Panel entitled “Conversation with Executive Secretaries of the Regional Commissions and Chairs of Functional Commissions and Expert Bodies on Accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals including by leveraging the outcomes of the Summit of the Future” underscored<sup>4</sup> how “the standardization of geographical names is relevant to all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), so that everyone can benefit from sustainable solutions, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda and their national priorities”. This complemented contributions from the co-Chairs of the Committee of Experts, whereby the Co-Chair from Belgium noted<sup>5</sup> that “Geospatial is a foundation for evidence-based decisions, by grounding decisions and actions in science and spatially intelligent data” and the Co-Chair from Côte d’Ivoire highlighted that “by strengthening geospatial information policies and capacities, we are democratizing access to data and knowledge that enables governments to drive planning and manage resources effectively” further noting that “these efforts are essential to reducing the ‘digital divide’”.

6. In his remarks to ECOSOC at its Coordination Segment on 6 February, the Chair of the Group of Experts observed “the standardization of geographical names can only succeed if it is genuinely adopted by those for whom it is intended, be it the whole of a community, public officials subject to hierarchical power, or even just some of them... Therefore, it's clear that the standardization of geographical names is relevant to all SDGs, so that everyone to advance sustainable solutions, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda and their national priorities”. The Chair continued to underscore the importance of collaboration across other bodies of the Council, as aligned with the recommendations of the 2022 review of ECOSOC, and noted that the Group of Experts has a strong relationship with the Committee of Experts, anchored by the UNGEGN and UN-GGIM Collaborative Project, but that the Group of Experts is also seeking broader engagement with the other subsidiary bodies of ECOSOC, such as the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (when considering Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage and Indigenous Geographical Names) and the Statistical Commission (in support of its work on the unique identifier for cities).

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of geographical names among Member States (UNEGN decision 3/2023/5)

<sup>3</sup> See: <https://ecosoc.un.org/en/what-we-do/ecosoc-coordination-segment/2025/2025-coordination-segment>

<sup>4</sup> See: [https://ecosoc.un.org/sites/default/files/2025-02/UNEGN\\_Conversation\\_ECOSOC\\_SubsidariesEN5Feb2025.pdf](https://ecosoc.un.org/sites/default/files/2025-02/UNEGN_Conversation_ECOSOC_SubsidariesEN5Feb2025.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> See: [https://ecosoc.un.org/sites/default/files/2025-02/ECOSOC\\_UNGGIMcoordinationsegment\\_20250201VandenBergheENrev\\_clean.pdf](https://ecosoc.un.org/sites/default/files/2025-02/ECOSOC_UNGGIMcoordinationsegment_20250201VandenBergheENrev_clean.pdf)

### III. The 2025 Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

7. The 2025 session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names<sup>6</sup> (UNGEGN) was convened from 28 April to 2 May 2025 on the theme “Advancing geographical names standardization through inclusive, culturally-informed and evidence-based solutions to support sustainable development”. In all, 227 experts representing 64 Member States across UNGEGN’s geographical and linguistic divisions and observers participated. 155 reports were tabled from 57 countries<sup>7</sup>, and 14 from its 24 geographical/linguistic Divisions<sup>8</sup>.

8. Opening the session, the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, Department of Economic and Social Affairs highlighted that less than five years remain to meet the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and emphasized that standardized geographical names are essential to achieving the SDGs, observing that “far from being mere labels, place names underpin data collection, analysis, and decision-making that shape sustainable outcomes worldwide”.

9. Member States shared national progress in several “National Dialogues” thematically arranged segments<sup>9</sup>, sharing innovative good practices from Member States in geographical names management. These contributions demonstrated the breadth of national approaches to standardization, preservation, and innovation.

10. The Committee of Experts reaffirmed its strong collaboration with the Group of Experts, in recognising that geographical names as a Global Fundamental Geospatial Data Theme, acknowledging the work done as part of its “Collaboration Project: good practices of National Mapping Agencies and National Geographical Names Authorities” (as expanded upon below and in GEGN.2/2025/143/CRP.143<sup>10</sup>) and detailed progress and plans in the Committee’s work in enhancing activities in the area of global geospatial information management. Further, in its decision 2025/13, the Group of Experts took note of two reports covering progress on activities such as the establishment of a new and enlarged secretariat for the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, the establishment of United Nations global geospatial centres of excellence in China, Germany and upcoming in Saudi Arabia and welcomed the future publication of the compendium of good practices and recommendations for effective collaboration between mapping agencies and naming authorities within a country, and expressed its intent to actively support those recommendations.

<sup>6</sup> The website of the 2025 Session of UNGEGN:

[https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th\\_session\\_2025/](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th_session_2025/)

<sup>7</sup> Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greenland, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Latvia, Malaysia, Mauritania, Mexico, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Peru, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Romania, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Zambia, and Zimbabwe

<sup>8</sup> Africa Central Division, Arabic Division, Asia East Division, Asia South-East Division, Baltic Division, China Division, East Central and South-East Europe Division, Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division, Latin America Division, Norden Division, Pacific South-West Division, Portuguese-speaking Division, Romano-Hellenic Division, and the USA/Canada Division

<sup>9</sup> See: [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th\\_session\\_2025/#dialogue](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th_session_2025/#dialogue)

<sup>10</sup> See: Progress report on the Group of Experts and Committee of Experts collaborative project on shared good practices between national mapping agencies and national names authorities  
[https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th\\_session\\_2025/documents/GEGN.2\\_2025\\_143\\_CRP143\\_item6a.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th_session_2025/documents/GEGN.2_2025_143_CRP143_item6a.pdf)

11. The Group of Experts' adoption of the concept of a Universal Unique Identifier for Cities<sup>11</sup> (see GEGN.2/2025/84/CRP.84) marked a significant advance in harmonising geospatial data infrastructure and updates on the World Geographical Names Database<sup>12</sup> (see GEGN.2/2025/21/CRP.21), highlighting how Member States can provide their geographical names to the United Nations in different languages and scripts. The Group of Experts noted and welcomed the elaboration and support of the United Nations Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information, as detailed within its report<sup>13</sup> tabled at its 2025 session.

12. The Group of Experts' have previously reported to the Committee of Experts on its work on Exonyms. As reported in 2023, "the Group of Experts is deepening the discussions and decided in 2021 to find guidelines that reconcile its former views on exonyms and its recognition of them as part of the cultural heritage. Several ideas have already emerged from these discussions that could form the basis of re-issuing a decision based on current views. Firstly, any future recommendation on the use of exonyms should be considered as limited to international use or to those that require political sensitivity. On the other hand, safeguarding a linguistic heritage depends above all on its linguistic use within a community of speakers".

13. In its 2023 – 2025 intersessional period, the Group of Experts, through its working group on Exonyms continued to discuss how to maintain the reduction of exonyms in international use, while safeguarding those comprising a part of the cultural heritage and reconciling the past decisions and recommendations of the Group of Experts and the past resolutions of the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names. In this regard, a draft decision on this topic was formulated<sup>14</sup> but following inclusive and participatory discussions, including at a side event at the 2025 session, it was decided, via its decision 2025/18, that further discussion was necessary. In this regard, the Group of Experts' looks forward to making further progress on this item in the coming biennial period, through further consultation with Member States and experts.

14. Interactive panel discussions<sup>15</sup> throughout the session addressed the cultural, linguistic, and developmental dimensions of geographical names, underscoring their role in fostering inclusive, culturally informed, and evidence-based development approaches. Further, a small side event programme<sup>16</sup> was convened, notably, two on "Geographical names as cultural heritage", the first featuring a keynote by the, Chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and ex-President of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI - the representative body of the Nunavut Inuit), who emphasized protecting names as living expressions of identity within and across borders and generations. Another side event shared updates on the World Geographical Names Database and efforts to develop the concept for the Unique Identifier for Cities.

<sup>11</sup> GEGN.2/2025/84/CRP.84 Concept of globally unique identifier for cities see:

[https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th\\_session\\_2025/documents/GEGN.2\\_2025\\_84\\_CRP84\\_item5b.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th_session_2025/documents/GEGN.2_2025_84_CRP84_item5b.pdf) and its annex

[https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th\\_session\\_2025/documents/ANNEX\\_GEGN.2\\_2025\\_84\\_item5b.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th_session_2025/documents/ANNEX_GEGN.2_2025_84_item5b.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> See GEGN.2/2025/21/CRP.21

[https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th\\_session\\_2025/documents/GEGN.2\\_2025\\_21\\_CRP21\\_item5b.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th_session_2025/documents/GEGN.2_2025_21_CRP21_item5b.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> E/CN.20/2025/13/Add.1

<sup>14</sup> GEGN.2/2025/72/CRP.72 See:

[https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th\\_session\\_2025/documents/GEGN.2\\_2025\\_72\\_CRP72\\_item8c.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th_session_2025/documents/GEGN.2_2025_72_CRP72_item8c.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> See: [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th\\_session\\_2025/#panel](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th_session_2025/#panel)

<sup>16</sup> See: [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th\\_session\\_2025/calendar.cshtml](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th_session_2025/calendar.cshtml)

15. On the emergent topic of Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Group of Experts also convened a special session on “AI and the future of geographical names standardization” including discussions on generative AI applications for Arabic geographical names, underscoring the Group of Expert’s role in facilitating the consideration and agreement towards one romanization system for each non-Roman writing system. In this regard, the work of the Group of Experts is illustrating how emerging technologies can support consistency, romanization, linguistic respect, and national capacity development. The ongoing work presented at this session on the future geospatial information ecosystem, particularly as it relates to geospatially enabled artificial intelligence offers an opportunity to share mutual experiences of good practice and work towards the development of norms and standards, reducing duplication whilst enhancing impact in the relative areas of work.

16. From updates on national naming policies to deep dives into language recognition, cultural heritage, and the role of standardization in sustainable development, the 2025 session of the Group of Experts showcased the richness and relevance of geographical names. It also highlighted innovative tools, celebrated cross-country and interdisciplinary collaboration, and reaffirmed a shared global commitment to inclusive, culturally respectful, and evidence-based naming practices as part of a sustainable, evidence-based, and equitable future.

#### **IV. The collaborative project of the Group of Experts and the Committee of Experts**

17. At its 2025 session, the Group of Experts received the report<sup>17</sup> of Indonesia and the United States of America as the Convenors of the “Joint Expert Group on Geographical Names and Geospatial Information Management”, which detailed the actions and steps taken to implement the collaborative project between our two bodies. This included detailing the development and execution of a 10-section questionnaire, anchored to the nine strategic pathways of the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF), as a basis towards the development of a compendium of shared good practices between national naming authorities and national geospatial information agencies. The questionnaire was promoted via the UNGEGN Information Bulletin #67<sup>18</sup> “Good practices emerging from relations between National Mapping/Geospatial Data Management Agencies and Geographical Names Authorities” and by letter to both communities.

18. In the background document to this report, the Joint Expert Group on Geographical Names and Geospatial Information Management of the collaborative project provides an analysis of the preliminary findings of the questionnaire. This is presented to the Committee of Experts to update on the progress of the collaborative project and to provide a basis for suggested actions for the forthcoming intersessional period, including the development of recommendations for enhancing the implementation of the ‘Geographical Names’ theme of the Global Fundamental Geospatial Data Theme.

19. To date, responses have been received from 73 responses from 62 countries, from across both communities, with a heavier weighting of contributions from National Naming Authorities (NNA). Initial findings underscore that geographical naming is broadly underprioritized at the policy level and that there is significant diversity in how NNAs are organized—ranging from centralized offices to committees or decentralized bodies—contrasted with the generally uniform structure of National Geospatial Information Agencies. Despite formal legal

<sup>17</sup> GEGN.2/2025/143/CRP.143. See:

[https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th\\_session\\_2025/documents/GEGN.2\\_2025\\_143\\_CRP143\\_item6a.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/4th_session_2025/documents/GEGN.2_2025_143_CRP143_item6a.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> See: [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/pubs/Bulletin/UNGEgn\\_Bulletin\\_no.67.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/pubs/Bulletin/UNGEgn_Bulletin_no.67.pdf)

frameworks existing in many nations, persistent challenges include inadequate funding and financial arrangements, a limited awareness of the value of geographical names, and fragmented institutional responsibilities. A notable gap is the absence of formal NGIA-NNA relationships in some countries, raising concerns about governance, policy and legal frameworks, data quality, and a lack of partnerships.

20. Initial recommendations call for the development of example policy and legal instruments, a focus on stronger advocacy for the strategic value of geographical names, investment in digital infrastructure, standardized engagement with Indigenous communities, and improved funding models that recognize the long-term benefits of coordinated mapping and naming efforts. Yet, these are still to be finalized.

21. In this regard, and in consideration that contributions from NGIAs could be further enhanced, the Convenors of the collaborative project invite further contributions from NGIAs until 26 September 2025. Following this, the Convenors would seek to finalize the report of its findings, providing a comprehensive analysis of the broad area in which both bodies are situated. Following this, the Convenors will initiate outreach to both communities via an online webinar to share findings and invite contributions to the forthcoming “Compendium of good practices and recommendations”, while inviting, via template, examples of good practice. Upon completion of these activities, it is anticipated that the recommendations and accompanying examples of good practice will form the basis of the Compendium. This Compendium will be circulated through a global consultation process involving both bodies, to ensure alignment with their respective work programmes and strategic priorities. Following this consultation, the finalized Compendium will be presented for adoption at the sixteenth session of the Committee of Experts, and subsequently submitted for endorsement by the Group of Experts at its 2027 session.

## **V. Summary**

22. The ‘Geographical Names’ theme of the Global Fundamental Geospatial Data Themes is a nexus point between both the Group of Experts and the Committee of Experts. The operationalization of this theme is a priority for the Group of Experts, as a practical step towards embedding toponymic data within national and global geospatial frameworks. This theme promotes interoperability and data governance across sectors, providing a foundation for collaborative efforts in capacity development, technical guidelines, and institutional cooperation between both bodies.

23. Enhancing the collaboration between and within national geospatial information agencies and national names authorities is a vital platform for bringing together the technical, cultural, and strategic dimensions of geographical naming. Crucially, this is also foundational for the work of the Committee of Experts, including its work on advancing the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF), specifically, Strategic Pathway 4 “Data” but other elements of the anchor framework of the Committee also have a broad relevance to the overall work programme of the Group of Experts. For example:

- (a) The Group of Experts’ Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage, as part of its ongoing revitalization efforts, is seeking to re-establish its Focus Group on the Legislative and Policy-Driven Aspects of Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage. This Focus Group is anchored by the consideration that policy and legal issues are central to the protection, use, and dissemination of geographical names. Challenges such as naming controversies, intellectual property, and geopolitical sensitivities require coordinated



guidance. The Group of Experts will be seeking to develop and provide guidance that helps Member States navigate the legal dimensions of toponymy in a digital and changing world, but must not do this in isolation. In this regard, the working group aims to keep the Committee of Experts' working group on policy and legal frameworks for geospatial information management apprised of its efforts, and invites participation from interested expert members of the Committee;

- (b) The Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information has been instrumental in providing a framework for the integration of geographical names data for the World Geographical Names Database, as well as offering the Group of Experts' working group on Geographical Names Data Management a mechanism of review for its now adopted unique identifier for cities, presented to the Committee for endorsement in the report of the Expert Group at this present session (see E/CN.20/2025/13). In consultation with the Expert Group, and with the endorsement of the Committee at this session, it is intended that this concept is then presented to the Statistical Commission for their endorsement;

24. Through the ongoing work of the collaborative project, additional areas for collaboration can be identified, alongside the development of good practice recommendations for national geospatial information agencies, national names authorities, and other relevant national institutions. The collaborative project also underscores the need for both the Committee of Experts and the Group of Experts to align their efforts across diverse national landscapes and provides an opportunity to leverage each other's frameworks to accelerate implementation. In reviewing other reports tabled at the recent Session, such as the status report (GEGN.2/2025/158/CRP.158) on the 24 divisions of the Group of Experts or decision 2025/6 to revitalize the Task Team for Africa, some questions emerge: Could enhanced engagement with the Committee's regional networks unlock new opportunities? How might our respective structures be mutually leveraged to promote global consistency and expedite the implementation of our separate mandates and work plans?

25. Accordingly, in the coming intersessional period, the Group of Experts is seeking to increase its efforts to collaborate across other subsidiary bodies of ECOSOC. Past decisions and resolutions of the Group of Experts have recognized that language and cultural heritage lie at the heart of toponymy and that geographical names serve as living records of history, identity, and linguistic diversity. Their protection and standardization contribute directly to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage and promote inclusivity, particularly for indigenous peoples and linguistic minorities. In this regard, the work of the Group of Experts offers its support to the Committee of Experts as it seeks to implement its mandates, guided by ECOSOC resolution 2022/24 and seeks to identify further touchpoints whereby the Committee of Experts can support the Group of Experts in the implementation of its mandates.

## **VI. Points for Discussion**

**26. The Committee of Experts is invited to:**

- (a) Take note of the report and the Group of Experts' efforts in the standardization of geographical names, including the outcomes of its 2025 session, held in New York from 28 April to 2 May 2025;**
- (b) Express its views on the collaborative project, and encourage Member States to contribute their experiences to the questionnaire**

**“Good Practices of National Mapping Agencies and National Geographical Names Authorities”;**

- (c) Raise awareness of, and contribute to, the forthcoming compendium that outlines effective institutional arrangements and operational practices between national geospatial information agencies and naming authorities, and support the expert group in finalising the compendium for ratification in 2027;**
- (d) Encourage national contributions to the World Geographical Names Database;**
- (e) Take note of and endorse the concept of the Universal Unique Identifier for Cities; and,**
- (f) Encourage the participation, where relevant and appropriate, in the substantive programme and Divisions of the Group of Experts.**