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**Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial
Information Management
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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

The Secretariat has the honour to bring to the attention of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management the report prepared by the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, which will be available in the language of submission only from the relevant web page of the Committee of Experts (<https://ggim.un.org/meetings/GGIM-committee/15th-session/>). The Committee is invited to take note of the report and to express its views on the standardization of geographical names and actions pursued to strengthen relations between the Committee of Experts and the Group of Experts.

Summary of the report

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.

* E/C.20/2025/1.



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 for 2021–2029; the launch of the questionnaire on “Good practices of national mapping agencies and 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.
