
**UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
Asia South East Division (UNGEGN ASED)**

**Twentieth Divisional Meeting
Brunei Darussalam 14 May 2013**

Divisional Chairman's Report

1. Chairmanship

- a. Malaysia has been elected as a new Chairman of UNGEGN ASEPSW during the 17th Divisional Meeting in Sydney, Australia on 10 April 2010.
- b. The period of Chairmanship extend for five years as from August 2010 to August 2015. The previous Chairmanship of Indonesia was for the period of August 2006 to August 2010.

2. Activities During the Period of 2012

- a. The previous 19th Divisional Meeting was held in Manila, Philippines on 28 February 2012. The country participants were Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Singapore. A seminar was also organized mainly for the local participants. During this seminar, speaker from Malaysia was invited to present the geographical naming activities of the country.
- b. The Twenty-Seventh Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names was held in New York on 30th July and 10th August 2012.
- c. The Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names was also held in New York on 31 July – 9 August 2012.

- d. Ten member countries from Australia (3), Brunei Darussalam (3), Indonesia (13), Malaysia (6), New Zealand (1), Philippines (2), Singapore (2), Sri Lanka (5), Thailand (6) and Vietnam (2) attended and presented papers during the Tenth UN Conference for the Standardization of Geographical Names and the Twenty-Seventh Session of United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.

3. Actions from the 19th ASEPSWD Meeting, 28 February 2012, Manila, Philippines

- a. This meeting was primarily to prepare for the 27th Session of the UNGEGN and Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in New York on 30 July – 10 August 2012.
- b. One of the issues raised during the discussion is the proposed split of the Asia South East and Pacific South West (ASEPSW) Division into two groups namely Asia South East Division and Pacific South West Division.
- c. Brunei Darussalam reiterated the status of splitting the division from the members of the meeting. After due deliberation, all participants of this meeting agreed to split the division subject to the approval of the majority of the member countries.
- d. In the event of the split, Indonesia has kindly accepted to take over the management of the Division website which is currently maintained by Australia.
- e. On the Regional Map Gazetteer, the Chairman encouraged all the member countries to send their comments to Sr Ng Eng Guan.

During the 19th Meeting the proposed resolutions are;

- a. The meeting agreed to make use of diplomatic channel via their mission to the UN in order to get the response from other member countries who have not attended in this meeting. Should there be no response received from those countries by end of April 2012, then it can be considered as agreeable to the splitting of the Division.
- b. Division Chair will write to the absentee member countries' mission to the UN to seek their immediate response.

4. Report on the Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSGN) and Twenty-Seventh Session United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names in New York, 30 July – 10 August 2012

The following is a summary from the United Nations Group of Experts (UNGEGN) report of the UNCSGN in New York in which our member countries have participated.

1. The Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names was held at United Nations Headquarters from 31 July to 10 August 2012. The Conference was attended by 289 participants. The Conference elected, by acclamation, as President of the Conference, Mr. Botolv Helleland (Norway). At its 1st plenary meeting, on 31 July 2012, the Conference elected Vice-Presidents: Mr. Abdul Kadir Taib (Malaysia) and Mr. Milan Adamič (Slovenia).
2. At the beginning of the meeting, on 31 July 2012, the President drew the attention of the Conference to former members of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names who had passed away since the Ninth Conference. These included Luís Abrahamo of Mozambique, Eeva Maria Närhi of Finland and Jacob Rais of Indonesia.

3. The representative of New Zealand reported on the implementation of five Conference resolutions by the New Zealand Geographic Board, Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa. The report also listed the 20 other current resolutions that will be reported on by New Zealand in the future.

Agenda : Field collection of names

4. The representative of Indonesia presented a report describing guidelines for the collection of names of natural features in Indonesia. The report covered the aims and scope of the guidelines and detailed the stages of collection. The Committee discussed the work of Indonesia on other feature types, the treatment of cross-border features and the use of information collected in the field.
5. In the conference room paper presented by the representative of Australia, the crowdsourcing of geospatial information for use in national gazetteers was examined and the key themes and findings of research conducted, such as the necessity of some form of quality control to ensure adherence to the principles of the Group of Experts, were described. The distribution, publication and scale of the collected data were discussed, as was the level of acceptance of names gathered. A comment was made by the representative of Google.

Agenda : Office treatment of names

6. The report of Indonesia described the ongoing process of standardizing the names of islands in Indonesia and outlined the timeline for the various stages of work. Furthermore, problems in data collection were examined and a number of conclusions were made.

Agenda : Administrative structure of national names authorities, legislation, policies and Procedures

7. The Regulation on the Guidance for the Establishment of the Topographical Names Standardization Committee, issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, was

detailed by the representative of Indonesia. The report of Indonesia included the text of the law, which stipulated the composition and responsibilities of the various Committees established at the national, provincial and district/municipality levels. Linguistic experts played a consultative role in establishing appropriate standardized spellings.

8. A second report from Indonesia contained the text of the Regulation on the Guidance for the Standardization of Topographical Names, issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, and detailed the general principles and procedures to be followed.
9. The representative of Indonesia presented a further report that detailed the background and aims of the standardization process for Government administrative areas.
10. A fourth report was submitted by Indonesia, in which the urgent need to standardize the names of the islands in Indonesia was outlined. To date, 13,466 island names have been standardized.

Agenda : Toponymic guidelines for map editors and other editors

11. The report of Malaysia contained the country's guidelines for the determination of geographical names, containing 21 key naming principles, the application submission procedures and the organizational structures involved in the standardization of names.

Agenda : Geographical names as culture, heritage and identity (including indigenous, minority and regional language

12. The representative of Australia reported on Australian indigenous names projects, highlighting the importance of engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and culture. The report noted progress made in the recording and use of indigenous names in Australia and described national initiatives and legislative changes.

13. A second report from Australia described a commemorative naming process to mark the centenary of the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps landings at Gallipoli, Turkey, in 2015. Project phases were outlined and supporting departments noted. The names would commemorate the men and women who served in the Australian and New Zealand Defense Forces; endonyms in Gallipoli would also be included in consultation with Turkey.

Agenda : Data maintenance

14. The report of Malaysia outlined the development of an authoritative geographic names database and web gazetteer since 2004. The database includes local names, historical information and data authorized for Government use. There are modules included that utilize Arabic characters and audio in Malay. The current development will incorporate names at a scale of 1:10,000 and be published in 2013.

15. Indonesia reported on new laws providing for the mandatory collection of place names in a database maintained by the Indonesian Geospatial Information Agency. Since 2004, names have been field-collected for the national gazetteer at a scale of 1:25,000 and 1:50,000. Name collection is currently being undertaken in regions previously unsurveyed, including Papua. The aim is to incorporate the gazetteer into the Indonesia Spatial Data Infrastructure as the authoritative source of geographic names.

Agenda : Data standards and interoperability

16. In the report of Australia, the matching of identifiers across data sets was discussed and it was proposed that multi-sector data analysis be assisted by linking information through a gazetteer framework. Re-engineering gazetteer services using linked data mechanisms is the focus of the project funded by the Australian Agency for International Development and developed by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization with the support of the Office of the Chief Information Technology Officer of the United Nations

Secretariat. The project is being piloted in Indonesia through collaboration with the Indonesian Geospatial Information Agency. Members of the Group of Experts were encouraged to consider participating; a detailed workshop presentation was provided on 8 August.

17. Australia presented a conference room paper on a project in the State of Western Australia to integrate the State gazetteer with addressing and other Government geospatial information data sets. The process required cleansing of data as the State topographic data set was matched against the official gazetteer. As a result, the topographic data set now contains a unique ID for all feature names that are directly drawn from the official gazetteer, resulting in direct benefits for users.

Agenda : Data services, applications and products

18. The report of New Zealand outlined details of a new gazetteer system due for release on the web and within the existing data service through Land Information New Zealand late in 2012. The New Zealand Geographic Board is developing a modern standards-based gazetteer system that will allow access to official and unofficial names. The system will provide direct access and updates to users both within and outside Government.

Agenda : Terminology in the standardization of geographical names

19. The report presented by the representative of Australia outlined difficulties when relating and merging multiple feature types from different countries to a linked gazetteer structure, as revealed during the development of a prototype gazetteer framework for Indonesia. It was recommended that a common feature type list (multilingual and in multi-script format) be developed for implementation by all countries, in order to contribute towards the proposed United Nations Spatial Data Infrastructure, and that a special committee be established to undertake this task.

20. The representative of Indonesia presented a report covering standardization of regional language generic terms, to be completed by 2014. These standardized forms were to be used to verify names in the toponymic database.

Agenda : Toponymic education

21. The report introduced by the representative of Indonesia detailed advice on technical assistance given to local government officials throughout Indonesia to build their capacity for carrying out their name standardization duties. The training has been led by the national team since 2010, with four sessions per year to cover all provinces, regencies and municipalities. The content is comprehensive, seeking to improve skills and capacity and facilitate more effective communication between the local and national teams.

22. A second paper by the representative of Indonesia informed the Committee of a fourth international toponymic training course, in cooperation with UNGEGN, to be held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, from 17 to 21 September 2012. Up to 60 participants are expected from members of the new Asia South-East Division, as well as officials from central and local government agencies in Indonesia.

Resolutions adopted by the Conference

X/1. Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names and twenty-eighth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

The Conference,

Noting the achievements and the progress made in the work of standardization of geographical names at the national and international session,

Recognizing the necessity of continuing this important work with the support of the Economic and Social Council,

1. Recommends to the Economic and Social Council that the Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names be convened in 2017;
2. Also recommends to the Council that the twenty-eighth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names be convened in the first half of 2014;
3. Invites the Bureau of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names to initiate a process of reflection on how to further improve the working methods of the Conference and its report for the next session.

X/2. Organization of the twenty-eighth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names on the Asian Continent

The Conference,

1. Noting that thus far the sessions of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names have been held in Europe, North America and once in Africa,
2. Noting also the need for greater progress for many Asian countries in the field of standardization of geographical names,
3. Recognizing that the majority of Asian countries experience difficulties in participating in sessions of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names in Europe or North America,
4. Affirming the important role of geographical names in economic, social and cultural development, particularly in the developing countries,
5. Recommends that the twenty-eighth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names be held on the Asian continent, in cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, at a United Nations duty station, provided that the necessary support facilities, including for

interpretation in the six official languages of the United Nations, are made available.

X/3. Criteria for establishing and evaluating the nature of geographical names as cultural heritage

The Conference,

1. Noting the existence of a number of resolutions that address toponymy as part of a nation's cultural heritage and the necessity to preserve toponymic heritage,
2. Recalling recommendation C of its resolution I/4 on the principles of office treatment of geographical names,
3. Considering that, to develop these principles, it is recommended that unnecessary changes to geographical names should be avoided and that the treatment of names should not result in the suppression of significant toponymic elements,
4. Considering also that none of these principles describe how to recognize a name that should be protected for its cultural heritage qualities,
5. Recommends that, to recognize and protect such a geographical name or a corpus of geographical names, the following criteria be used:
 - (a) The age of a name, as indicated by the date of the oldest possible record of the name;
 - (b) The resilience of a name, as indicated by the duration of its continued use up to the present or by its notable capacity to transcend history;
 - (c) The rarity of a name or of a toponymic phenomenon pointed out by the name;
 - (d) The "testimoniality" of a name, or its capacity to clearly embody a cultural, geographical, historical, social or other reality that is specific to the place and an essential component of local, regional or national identity;
 - (e) The appeal of a name, which corresponds to a feeling of belonging associated with the name and the place it designates;

(f) The image ability of a name, or its capacity to inspire ideas or strong, rich images within users, without these images or ideas necessarily referring to history or local trivia.

X/4. Discouraging the commercialization of geographical names

The Conference,

1. Recognizing that the use of geographical names that seek a commercial purpose and the buying and selling of geographical names are practices that exist, especially in urban areas,
2. Considering that these practices transform the places and names they affect into commodities that will likely promote the replacement of geographical names with long-standing local usage and threaten the integrity of geographical nomenclatures of nations,
3. Recalling its resolution VIII/9, in which it recognized the importance of geographical names as part of a nation's historical and cultural heritage, and its resolution IX/4, in which it recognized that geographical names were part of the intangible cultural heritage, within the meaning of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on 17 October 2003,
4. Noting that, in the Operational Directives for the Implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, it is stated that commercial activities should not threaten the viability of the intangible cultural heritage and that particular attention should be paid to avoiding commercial misappropriation and to ensuring that the commercial use does not distort the meaning and purpose of the intangible cultural heritage for the community concerned,
5. Considering that the use of geographical names that seek a commercial purpose and the buying and selling of geographical names are practices that harm the

stability of geographical names with long-standing local usage and threaten the quality of the names as useful geographical references,

6. Considering that the use of geographical names that seek a commercial purpose and the buying and selling of geographical names are practices that harm the stability of geographical names with long-standing local usage and threaten the quality of the names as useful geographical references,
7. Noting that, on the one hand, a number of geographical names generated from commercial practices also have a long-standing local usage and serve as effective reference points and that, on the other hand, a number of geographical names with long-standing local usage were named spontaneously by users of the territory owing to a company's presence in the area,
8. Noting also that some toponymic authorities around the world have already adopted standards to limit or prohibit such commercial toponymic practices,
9. Recommends that national toponymic authorities discourage the designation of geographical names that seek a commercial purpose, as well as various practices involving the commercialization of geographical names, by adopting standards that address these issues.

X/5. Split of the Asia South-East and Pacific South-West Division into the Asia South-East Division and the Pacific South-West Division

The Conference,

1. Considering that the Asia South-East and Pacific South-West Division is, with twenty-two members, the largest Division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, and noting that the high number of members has significantly impeded decision-making and the implementation of geographic naming activities,
2. Noting that, at its twenty-seventh session, the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names agreed to split the Asia South-East and Pacific South-

West Division into the Asia South-East Division and the Pacific South-West Division,

3. Recommends that the Asia South-East Division and the Pacific South-West Division be granted full recognition as linguistic/geographical divisions of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.

X/6. Romanization of Belarusian geographical names

X/7. Romanization of Bulgarian geographical names

X/8. Romanization of Iranian geographical names

X/9. Romanization of Ukrainian geographical names

X/10. Support for the work on the standardization of geographical names

X/11. Web-based course on toponymy

X12. Expression of thanks