

**Twenty-eight session
28 April – 2 May 2014**

Item 4 of the Provisional Agenda

Report of the divisions

Report of the Asia South-East (ASE) Division *

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Report of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names Asia South-East Division (UNGEGN ASED)

A. Overview

The Philippines is the new Chair of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names for Asia South-East Division (UNGEGN ASED), being elected during the 2nd Divisional Meeting held in Bandung, Indonesia on 02 April 2014. The Chairmanship shall be for a period of four (4) years from April 2014 to April 2018. The UNGEGN ASED, in accordance with the adoption of Resolution X/5, now comprises twelve (12) member countries namely Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. At present, activities of the Division include establishment of UNGEGN ASED website organized by Indonesia and maintenance and update of the Regional Map and Gazetteer in coordination with Australia.

B. Divisional Activities

1. Meetings

Since the 10th United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names held at UN Headquarters in 2012, which adopts Resolution X/5 splitting the Asia South-East and Pacific South-West (ASEPSW) Division into the Asia South-East Division and Pacific South-West Division, the meetings of the Division included:

- 1.1. The 1st Divisional Meeting was held in Brunei Darussalam on 14 May 2013. Delegates from Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Singapore participated in the meeting to discuss Resolution X/5. The numbering of Divisional Meetings will start with one, following the split of the ASEPSW Division into two. The UNGEGN Asia South-East Division now consists of twelve member countries namely Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.
- 1.2. The 2nd Divisional Meeting was held in Bandung, Indonesia on 02 April 2014. Delegates from Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Vietnam participated in the meeting.

2. Chairmanship

- 2.1. During the 2nd Divisional Meeting in Indonesia, member countries elected the Philippines as the new Chairman from April 2014 to April 2018.
- 2.2. The Chairmanship of UNGEGN ASE Division shall be for a period of four (4) years. Previous chairmanships were Malaysia from 2010 to 2014 and Indonesia from 2006 to 2010.

3. Resolutions of 2nd Divisional Meeting on 02 April 2014

- 3.1. The term of Chairmanship for ASE Division is four (4) years.
- 3.2. The Division will coordinate with Australia to transfer maintenance and update of the Regional Map and Gazetteer to Indonesia. A meeting with Dr. Bill Walt of Australia is proposed at the UNGEGN 28th Session in New York.

4. Summary of Country Reports During the 1st and 2nd Divisional Meetings

4.1. Brunei Darussalam

Jawatankuasa Kebangsaan Nama Geografi (JKNG), the national committee on geographical names of Brunei, conducted extensive field investigations and meeting with local villages to gather data for geographical names in 2013. Additionally, ongoing activities of JKNG include finalizing the list of approved Geographic Names, publication of Brunei Official Gazetteer Second Edition and information dissemination through JKNG Newsletter and other public/private bulletin and websites. The initiatives on geographical names of JKNG were recognized which facilitated cooperation and commitment from all agencies.

4.2. Indonesia

The Indonesian National Committee for the Standardization of Topographical Names developed a toponym data acquisition system, also known as Topkit, which has shown a remarkable success in simplifying the task of the Committee in field data collection. The Committee also conducted trainings on Toponymy at the national and international levels. Recent activities of the Committee includes preparation of guidelines for standardization of geographical names, publication of Popular Book Encyclopedia of small islands in select provinces of Indonesia, and adoption of government regulation on Gazetteers of Islands Names and Administrative Names Region of Indonesia. An institutional development marked a significant progress on geographical names through the establishment of Committees on Standardization of Topographical Names at the provincial and regencies level in Indonesia.

4.3. Malaysia

The National Technical Committee on Geographical Names conducted a series of meetings, forums and workshops in Malaysia to develop, promote and establish database for geographical names. The Malaysian Geographical Names Database (PDNG) and the Web Gazetteer are accessible online and linked to the UNGEGN website. Documentation and updating of naming of islands and off-shore geographic entities are also being developed. The Committee drafted a document entitled "Toponymic Guidelines for Map and Other Editors for International Use" which is in English and Malay

language. Malaysia is still finalizing the guidelines which aims to provide understanding in the implementation of initiatives for geographical names.

4.4. Philippines

The Philippines has implemented several activities to support geographical names. The National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA), being the central mapping agency of the country, submitted initial data to the World Geographical Names Database of UNEGN. Future activities include establishing and updating geographic names database through detailed topographic maps, strengthening collaboration with the academe and updating the Philippine Gazetteer. The geographical names database will also be included in the Philippine Geoportal Project, a web application to discover, use and share geospatial data in the Philippines.

4.5. Singapore

The Street and Building Names Board (SBNB) is the naming authority in Singapore which issues guidelines on name placing for buildings and streets. It has a web portal where approved street and building names can be accessed. Since the whole country is mapped already, there are no major naming activities aside from the functions of SBNB.

4.6. Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka established a committee on Standardization of Geographical Names under the Survey Department and it consists of members from different sectors. Recent activities of the committee includes compilation of place names and other relevant information from topographic and statistical databases. All place names will be published in a geoportal to obtain public support in the standardization of geographical names.

4.7. Vietnam

The Department of Survey and Mapping Viet Nam (DOSMVN), the agency responsible for geographical names, has developed and issued several gazetteers since 2005. Since different agencies conducts various activities and regulations in the collection, naming and standardization of geographical names, DOSMVN implements standardization and establishment of geographical names database that will be published in the official gazette and be available online. They will also establish a National Committee on Geographical Name which will be responsible for overall coordination of all activities and regulations for geographical names.

C. Activities of UNGEGN ASED

1. ASE Division Website and Newsletter

At present, Indonesia is the organizer of the website and newsletter of ASE Division. The Chairman asked member countries to support the Division's newsletter by sending articles which shares each country's initiative on geographical names. Regarding the website, the Chairman suggested that a link to Australia's website be included in the Division's website. Indonesia suggested conduct of joint activities to foster cooperation and closer relationship among member countries.

2. Regional Generic Terms

The compilation of Regional Generic Terms is ongoing. This is a divisional project which aims to compile a glossary of generic terms used in South-East Asia region.

3. Regional Map and Gazetteer Project

The ASE Division would like to obtain a copy of the Regional Map and Gazetteer database which is maintained by the Pacific South-West Division in Australia before the split into two divisions. The ASE Division will coordinate with Australia to work on the transfer of the Regional Map and Gazetteer to Indonesia. After the transfer of database, all ASE Division member countries are encouraged to update their respective geographical names.

4. Venue of Next UNGEGN ASE Divisional Meeting in 2015

The next Divisional meeting will be held on May 2015 in Hanoi, Vietnam.