



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
2 July 2012

Original: English

Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names

New York, 31 July-9 August 2012

Item 11 (c) of the provisional agenda*

Toponymic data files and gazetteers: data maintenance

Development of the Malaysian geographical names database

Summary**

Given that accurate place names are an element of effective communication, it has become critical for Malaysia to have standardized geographical names. Accordingly, a comprehensive, consistent and authoritative database of geographical names has been built and information can be retrieved swiftly by stakeholders through a web-based application. The database is designed to contain official place names and to be of benefit to, among other things, trade and commerce, national population statistics, property rights and cadastral surveys, urban and regional planning, environmental management, natural disaster relief, security strategies and peacekeeping operations, map and atlas production, automatic navigation, tourism and communication, including postal and news services.

The development of the database began with the establishment of three working groups under the national committee on geographical names. Work began in 2004 using a map on the scale 1:100,000. In 2009, the scale was reduced to 1:25,000 owing to increased urbanization. Modules using Arabic characters and modules with audio in Malay were introduced in 2011. At the current rate, the production of the State gazetteer is expected to be completed by the end of 2012 and the next iteration of the database, using town maps on the scale 1:10,000, is expected to be rolled out in 2013.

* E/CONF.101/1.

** The full report was prepared by Fuziah Abu Hanifah, Chair of the Malaysian working group on the national geographical names database and gazetteer, and is available in the language of submission only from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf10.html>.

