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Reports by divisions of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names on the situation in their divisions and on the progress made in the standardization of geographical names since the Eight Conference.

Report of China Division

Submitted by China Division**

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** Prepared by China.

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Summary

The Public Services Project of Geographical Names (PSPGN) has been carried out. The geographical names database establishment, the geographical names signs setting and other areas have been made progress in China division since the Eight United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names.

China division has promoted the standardization of geographical names actively since the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names on August 2002.

1. Public Services Project of Geographical Names

Many geographical names vary rapidly in the progress of China's industrialization and urbanization. To meet the requirement of the social and economic development, Chinese government decided to carry out the Public Services Project of Geographical Names (PSPGN) for 5 years in 2005. The project will improve the management and service level of standard geographical names. The main tasks of the PSPGN include: management standardization, standard geographical names signs setting and perfection, urban geographical names planning, database establishment and maintenance, geographical names information services. The aim is to promote administration and improve the level of geographical names services. The project is boosted smoothly now. The effect emerges step by step.

2. Geographical Names Database

The work of database establishment has achieved staged success. The effect of the activity named Building Advanced Cities on Digital Geographical Names Services is apparent.

Database is the foundation and platform of PSPGN. The work establishing 4-level's database of county, city, province and the whole country is started in 2003. There are 10 provinces, 121 cities and 913 counties have established their geographical names database now. Geographical names information was offered to the society through websites, telephone hotlines and touch screens based on the database. There are 62 websites and 130 telephone hotlines offering geographical names information now in our country. At the same time, the activity named Building Advanced Cities on Digital Geographical Names has been launched. The aim of the activity is to explore ways of digital geographical names service and offer experience to other cities. In addition, Chinese State Bureau of Surveying and Mapping has accomplished the national fundamental geographical information systems database at scale 1:50000 in 2006. There are more than 5 million geographical names in the database.

3. Geographical names sign

The work of setting standard geographical names signs in cities started in 2000. About 53 million standard geographical names signs (including road signs, lane signs, building signs, and doorplates) have been set until 2005 when the work completed.

Chinese government has begun to set standard geographical names signs in counties, towns and villages since 2005. A great deal of standard geographical names signs will be set in urban and rural in 5 years. By the time the work is finished, plenty of standard geographical names signs will bring people convenience all over the country. To ensure the quality of the signs, Ministry of Civil Affairs amended the technical standard on signs facture, and promulgated the Temporary Measures on the Management of Geographical Names Signs.

4. Geographical names planning

According to national geographical names managing statute and other byelaw, the new geographical names are planned in cities on the foundation of cities' construction actuality and development plan. The work benefits the scientific and scheming management of geographical names, and promotes the standardization of geographical names. The Ministry of Civil Affairs and the Ministry of Construction disposed the work of geographical names planning in urban and rural in 2005. The guiding ideas of geographical names planning are the scientific theories of toponymy and urban planning. The basic principles include: the name matches the reality, standardization, suit both refined and popular tastes, easy to remember. The geographical names planning should be in parallel with the urban construction planning. Standardizing general terms assort with optimizing special terms. We hope to improve the transparence, involve more persons in. The public hearings are necessary and more public advice should be listened. Most cities have started the work of geographical names planning. Naming and renaming geographical names in cities will be more scientific and standard.

5. Geographical names culture

As an old-line country, Chinese government puts emphasis on protecting the traditional culture in the progress of economic development. Chinese government has taken measures to protect and publicize the geographical names culture in recent years. For example, we have drawn the Master Plan for Protection Project of China Geographical Names Cultural Heritage. A maxi-series documentary TV play named *An Ancient County of Thousand Years' History* has being produced since 2005. The subject is the names of these counties. Local culture is characterized skillfully during the introduction of geographical names. We plan to select 100 counties with much historic sites and rich cultural meanings from over 700 counties, whose special names have been used continually over 1000 years. Now 30 episodes have been finished. In addition, many exhibitions of painting and calligraphy on the culture of geographical names had been held since 2004. The art of painting and calligraphy is one of the classical traditional Chinese arts, favored by the people. The exhibitions are helpful to improve the self-knowledge of the society to understand and protect the culture of geographical names.

Many old geographical names disappeared when the cities are restructured. So many Chinese cities take measures to protect the geographical names heritage by all ways. Nanjing Shi and Jinan Shi apply the old geographical names for the intangible cultural heritage. Hangzhou Shi, Tianjin Shi and Chengdu Shi have published many books on geographical names. For example, *Hangzhou Streets and Lanes*, *Tianjin Geographical*

Names Culture, Chengdu Geographical Names Story. These are very good measures.

6. Standardization of geographical names and books

The standardization of geographical names had made new progress. A passel of books have published.

China perfected the expert argumentation system in the work of naming and renaming geographical names in recent years. Before the important geographical names were changed, the manifold expert argumentation conference will be held. And the result will be public informed to widely solicited opinions. To standardize Chinese characters and pronunciation of the geographical names, Chinese government has drawn the standard on the geographical names spelling and translation. The standardization of Chinese characters and pronunciation of the names of administrative regions above town and village has been finished. The nation wide field collection of geographical names is planned now. The experiment has been lanuched since 2007.

Ancient and modern Chinese Geographical Names Gazetteer has been published by Shanghai Lexicographic Publishing House in 2005. Over 10 millions Chinese characters and 60 thousands geographical names are contained in the gazetteer. This is the most massive, comprehensive and authoritative gazetteer of ancient and modern Chinese geographical names since 1949.

Administrative Division Atlas of China has been published that edited by the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the State Bureau of Surveying and Mapping. The data of geographical names, administrative regions and basic survey are up to date.

7. Training and Academic Exchanges

We attach importance to geographical names training. Training is more importance recent years along with new works as database establishment and geographical names planning. We have come off many training courses of geographical names in many provinces. The quantity of students arrives several thousands.

National Geographical Names Proseminar has collected more than 400 papers since 2006. The excellent papers will be discussed in the proseminar.