



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
21 May 2012
Original: English

Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names

New York, 31 July – 9 August 2012

Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

**Reports by Governments on the situation in their countries and on the progress
made in the standardization of geographical names since the Ninth Conference
(for distribution only).**

Report of Vietnam

Submitted by Vietnam**

* E/CONF.101/1.

** Prepared by Mr. Nguyen Tuan Hung, Director General, Department of Survey and Mapping Vietnam

NATIONAL REPORT ON STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES To 10th UN Conference on the Standardization of geographical names

Until now, Vietnam has no National Names Committee. The Department of Survey and Mapping (DOSM) under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) is responsible for the standardization of geographical names. To implement the task, in 2005, DOSM set up a big project: "Establishment of the geographical name information system (GNIS) for Vietnam and International for mapping purpose". This project was approved and funded by MONRE.

For carrying out this project, DOSM has established regulations and guidelines for the standardization of geographical names. In the 10th SEASC held in Bali, Indonesia, August 2009, these issues were presented and then published in UNGEGN Bulletin N37, 2009.

After completion of the project for 15 mountainous provinces in the Northern Vietnam and transferring 5.800 geographical names for World mapping, the guidelines have been improved and published as Standard for the standardization of geographical names for Vietnam in 2011.

As a result of this project, the following gazetteers have been published:

1. Gazetteer for civil/political subdivision of Vietnam which includes 64 provincial gazetteers standardized names with 11.000 names. All the names are presented with:
 - The written form of the official names;
 - All other known variant names used for the same division since 1945;
 - Location and identification of the administration unit to which the names applies to including:
 - + Its location within a civil/administration division
 - + Geographical coordinates
 - + The standard map series on which the civil/administration division located.A provincial geographical name atlas is attached to every provincial gazetteer.
2. 15 provincial gazetteers for natural and landscape features, constructed features, populated places and location and transport routes, which includes 41.000 standardized names. All the names are presented with:
 - The written form of the official names;
 - All other known variant names used to refer to the same feature, place or area;
 - Location and identification of the geographical entity to which the names applied to including:
 - + Its location within a civil/administration division;
 - + Geographical coordinates;
 - + The standard map series on which the entity located;
 - A standard descriptive term that clearly identifies the type of the entity names.
3. Gazetteer for international names which includes 5.800 standardized names of countries, capitals, main cities and big natural features. All the names are presented with:
 - The written form of the official names;
 - Location and identification of the geographical entity to which the names applied to including:
 - + Its location within a country;
 - + Geographical coordinates;
 - A standard description term that clearly identifies the type of the entity names.

Especially, all Chinese names have been Romanised instead of translated the meaning of Chinese script into Vietnamese language as it have been done before (that is the way Vietnamese used to transferring names in Chinese language to Vietnamese language). This method enables international use/understanding of the geographical names. In this case, both written forms (the Romanised form and the used - familiar form) are standardized.

In 2012, we are carrying out two projects concern the standardization of geographical names: Standardization of geographical names for 6 Central provinces of Vietnam and Establishment of 1/1.000.000 topographic map for Vietnam.

For the second project, we have contacted UNGEGN and UNGEGN ASEPSW for their cooperation and help. We have completed name conversion by transcription and transliteration for about 1.010 geographical names of China, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippine and Brunei.

We have reached significant results but gazetteers are used for mapping purpose only and not yet for publishing and information (radio, television, newspaper...) as there is no National Names Committee to enforce the use of the gazetteers.

During the time for carrying out above mentioned projects, we have organized many training courses on the standardization of geographical names at central and provincial level for people who deal with geographical names. We believe that knowledge and understanding of the value, the important and the profit of the standardization of geographical names has improved greatly in Vietnam. It is strong foundation to carry out other projects in the field and also to set up the National Names Committee in Vietnam.