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Reports by Governments on the situation in their countries and on the progress made in the standardization of geographical names since the Eighth Conference

Report of Hungary

Submitted by Hungary**

Summary***

The present paper gives an overview on the legal basis for deciding on geographical names in Hungary. Administrative names are decided by higher legal measures: by the Constitution in the case of the country and capital city, by the Parliament for names of counties, and by the President of the Republic in the case of cities, towns and villages. Decisions on other names, such as those of physical features (landscapes, relief and hydrographic forms), and names in the area of nature-related protection and conservation, as well as names of small rural features, are the responsibility of the Committee on Geographical Names. The Committee is acting based on a government decree dating from 1989, but a new legal measure to replace it is being prepared.

The activity of the Committee in general, and particularly during the past five years, is highlighted. Characteristic types of decisions have been those on names of settlements (with the avoidance of homonyms), of parts of settlements, of street names, railway stations and bridges, and of nature conservation areas. Examples are also given, including the curious Internet-based voting on the name of a major bridge close to Budapest.

Part of the report deals with minority names. Thirteen groups of minorities are recognized by law, the largest of them being the Roma (Gypsy) ethnic group. An example of minority toponyms of small features in a village with a Slovene minority is given, as well as a list of settlement names in the relevant minority language as written on the town/village nameplate.

* E/CONF.98/1.

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*** The full text of the paper is being issued in English only as document E/CONF.98/88/Add.1.

