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### Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names

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Item 9 (b) of the provisional agenda\*

**National standardization: office treatment of names**

### **Place names and the Heritage Conservation Act**

**Submitted by Sweden\*\***

#### **Summary\*\*\***

As of 1 July 2000, there was an additional paragraph included in Sweden's Heritage Conservation Act (Sw. 4 § lagen 1988:950 om kulturminnen m.m., amended in 2000:265), prescribing that in State and local government operations, "good place-name practice" shall be observed. In other English translations, this Act is sometimes referred to as the Ancient Monuments and Finds Act.

The National Heritage Board of Sweden supervises the application of the Act on a national level, including the preservation and management of place-names. In an attempt to further explain and implement the place-name paragraph, the National Heritage Board produced an illustrated booklet in 2001 called "Place-names and the Heritage Conservation Act: the interpretation and application of good place-name practice". This booklet — up until now available only in Swedish — was distributed free of charge to all local and regional authorities in Sweden. At the Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, we present for the first time — as a separate document and as part of a working paper — an English translation of the text, inserted in the complete printed and illustrated Swedish version.

Good place-name practice is specified in the Heritage Conservation Act in four rather compact phrases — no more. After a brief historical outline and also some reminders of the different roles of place-names, these short phrases are further elaborated and commented on in the booklet using 11 concrete examples from

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\*\*\* The full text of the paper is being issued in English only as document E/CONF.98/58/Add.1.



various State and local operations. What does “established” and “long usage” mean in connection with place-names? The Act states that such names shall not be changed without good cause. How shall “generally accepted rules for linguistic correctness” be understood? What is the idea behind the following words appearing in the Act: “the impact on names established by long usage shall be taken into account when forming new place-names”? And finally, how shall we handle place-names “in parallel” in the multilingual areas in northern Sweden where Finnish and Saami are spoken alongside Swedish?

Six years after the place-name paragraph took effect — in 2006 — an attempt was made by the National Heritage Board to evaluate — among other things — how the paragraph and the booklet had been received so far by the 290 local municipalities in Sweden. The results from this inquiry are presented in a printed report in Swedish, also available on the Internet. More details about this evaluation is found in the national report of Sweden.

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