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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 Eight Conference**

National Report of the Republic of Indonesia

Submitted by Indonesia **

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** Prepared by the Secretariat of National Team for Standardization of Geographical Names, Indonesia.

National Report of the Republic of Indonesia

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Main Issues:

1. Establishment of a National Names Authority.
(Ref.: Resolution 4/1967 :Recommendation A on National Standardization and Resolution 15/1987 on Establishment of Geographical Names Authorities).
2. National Priorities for Naming the Islands.
Being an Archipelagic State (UNCLOS 1982 Part IV), about 46.7% of the number of islands have no names yet.
(Ref.: Publication of the Ministry for Home Affairs as at 30 November 2006).
3. National Programs: Naming the Maritime and Undersea Features.
Being an Archipelago between three global tectonic plates, Indonesia is rich in underwater features, such as ridges, troughs, basins, undersea volcanoes, seas, bays and capes, the majority of these have no names and even if the names exist they have not been standardized yet.
4. No national gazetteers produced by the national names authority yet to cover standardized names for official use for the government as well as for the public.

Background Information

Indonesia has a long history of population movements and settlements in the past and being a melting pot of all races coming from the Pacific, South and South-East Asia, China, Middle East and Europe, Indonesia has around 600 local/ethnic languages that make up the Indonesian population and enrich the national unity language “Bahasa Indonesia”. These local/ethnic languages has enriched the generic names of topographic

features. We do not recognize “minority group” of languages, but we just adopt the ethnic generic names as the standard Indonesian language.

A. National Names Authority in Indonesia

The Government of Indonesia finally established a national geographical names authority, enacted through a Presidential Regulation No. 112/2006 on December 29, 2006. The organization is called the “National Team for Standardization of Topographical Names”. The Minister of Home Affairs is designated the authority and chaired the Team, supported by a cabinet level members, comprising the Minister of Defense, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, and the Minister of National Education, The Secretariat of the Team consists of two secretaries:

- a. the First Secretary is the Head of the National Coordination Agency for Surveys and Mapping (the National Mapping Agency acronym for BAKOSURTANAL), and
- b. the Second Secretary is the Director General of Public Administration of the Ministry for Home Affairs.

The mandate of the Team is to implement national standardization of topographical names/geographical names.

The national standardization of names is based on local names. For that purpose a local names committee in each province is established.

At the national level, an advisory group has been established comprising the respective institutions/agencies, governments as well as educational institutions, related to geographical names/toponymy activity.

From the above-mentioned group, two working groups have been established:

- a. Working Group on Naming Maritime Features, including Islands, chaired by the Department/Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries with inter-departmental members since 2004 {Refer to Agenda Items 9 (a) and (b) of this Conference};
- b. Working Group on Underwater Features, Chaired by the Director of the Institute of Marine Geology, also with members of a number of related institutions, since 2005;

- c. Other Working Groups are in the pipeline, such as WG on National Gazetteer, WG on Topographic Features, WG on Digital Toponymy, WG on Training, and WG on a National Geographical Names Information System.

The Address of the Secretariat of National Team for Standardization of Topographical Names:

1. BAKOSURTANAL, Jalan Raya Bogor Km 46, Cibinong 16911, Indonesia:
<http://www.bakosurtanal.go.id> . Fax: +62-21-8754592.
E -mail: secre.timnas@bakosurtanal.go.id
2. Department for Home Affairs, Directorate General of Public Administration,
Jalan Kebon Sirih No. 31, Jakarta Pusat. Tel.: +62-21-3142142, Ext. +62-21-3172142; Fax: +62-21-31925519. <http://www.ditjenpum.go.id>; E-mail: sekretariat@ditjenpum.go.id

B. National Priorities in Naming the Islands

Introduction

Being an Archipelagic State, Indonesia found around 17,504 islands on existing maps from various sources from the colonial period up to the current one, while the names as reported by all provincial and kabupaten/kota¹ governments amount to around 9,336 names². Around 46.7% of islands have no names yet, while names as appeared in those maps sometimes were conflicting in names spelling and others were corrupted from colonial names as well as in its positions. There was no standard procedure for collecting, standardizing and validating island names, before the national names authority exists. Since 2004, the Government has established priority of naming islands. To proceed with Recommendation B of UN Resolution 4/1967, the Ministry of the Marine Affairs and

¹ *Kabupaten* / *Kota* are the second levels of governments within a province. *Kabupaten* is equivalent to “Regency”, whilst *Kota* is a Municipality within a Province. A Province comprises *Kabupaten* dan *Kota*. Province, *Kabupaten* and *Kota* are autonomous regions.

² Department of Home Affairs, Directorate General of Public Administration, Sub-directorate of Toponymy Publication, 2006.

Fisheries has embarked on intensive small island surveys, visiting each of the islands, however remote they are, in order to get the names from local people, its geographic coordinates by GPS surveys and other ancillary data, such as biophysical data.

Cases found in the field, among others, one island has three names (named by local ethnic people who settled on the island in the past) or three distinct islands have only one name, that is the name of the group of three islands, such as “Pulau Tiga” in the Sunda Strait, which literary means “Island Three”. “Pulau” is the generic name of island and “Tiga” is the number, as specific name “3” in wording. An important aspect of naming of islands in Indonesia is that we adopt the generic names of “island” in the various local/ethnic languages, which according to the Language Institute, there are around 700 ethnic or local languages, which enrich the national language “Bahasa Indonesia”. Behind the generic names, there is a long history of human settlement in Indonesia.

Definition of Island

Indonesia adopts the definition of island according to UNCLOS 1982, Article 121, that is “land, naturally formed, surrounded by water and which is always above water at high tides”. However there is no explanation what “land” means. Surrounded by water is to mean that islands formed in rivers or formed by deltas are considered as islands and hence, they should have names.

Verification and Validating Islands’ Names

The number of islands’ name collected from field surveys in the years 2005 to 2006 are 10,000 names, and about 2000 names have been verified and validated.

C. National Programs

- a. Validating of the existing (land) geographical names in the past
- b. Geographical Names Database Networking;
- c. Production of National Gazetteer
- d. Maritime and Undersea feature’s names;
- e. Capacity building for government’s apparatus;

- f. Socialization of the importance of geographical names to public at large;
- g. Development of awareness and the need of standardized geographical names.

D. Conclusion

By the establishment of a national names authority, the development of standardized geographical names in Indonesia will provide an impact on economic and social development.

Standardized names will strengthen the local languages that make up the national language.