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Standardization of Geographical Names**

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Item 5 of the provisional agenda\*

**Reports on the work of the United Nations Group of Experts  
on Geographical Names, its divisions, working groups and  
task teams since the Ninth Conference**

**Report of the China Division**

Submitted by the China Division \*\*

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## **Report of the China Division**

Submitted by China

Prepared by: Liu Baoquan, Chairman of the China Division, and Liu Lianan, Researcher of China Institute of Toponymy

### **Summary**

Since the Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in August 2007, China division has carried out the Public Services Project of Geographical Names (PSPGN), established public services system and made progress in the establishment of the geographical names database, the publicity and protection of the culture of geographical names and the proceeding of the standardization of geographical names.

China division has implemented the resolution of the United Nations and promoted the standardization of geographical names actively since the Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in August 2007. And progress has been made in the following fields:

#### **1. Public Services Project of Geographical Names (PSPGN)**

In order to meet the new requirements of economic and social development to the geographical names, and to strengthen the management and services of geographical names comprehensively, China launched the PSPGN from 2005 to 2011. By the end of 2011, four specific tasks, including the specification of geographical names, setting signs of geographical names, the planning of geographical names and establishing database of geographical names, had been completed. The public services system of geographical names had been established initially, and the standardization of geographical names was significantly improved.

#### **2. Geographical names database**

The construction of geographical names database is continued to be carried out. Up to now, 28 provinces, 260 cities and 1985 counties in China have established their local geographical names database. The investigation of geographical names has started in some places, with a result of collecting more than 1.5 million pieces of geographical names data. The result of this investigation is used directly to enrich and update the geographical names database. The public version of national geographic information public service platform "□□□" ( Map world, www.tianditu.cn) increased 6.53 million records of geographical names and addresses in the new version of 2011, which helped the total number of geographical names and addresses reached more than 17.8 million.

#### **3. The planning of geographical names**

With the expansion and acceleration of urbanization, almost 530 cities in China have completed the geographical names planning and the planning is being implemented step by step. It includes the overall planning of urban geographical names, the geographical names planning of development zones and business districts, the special planning of road names and the protection of geographical names. With the compilation and implementation of geographical names planning, the management of geographical names is more scientific and prospective, and a large number of new geographical names can meet standardization requirements. All of these solve the problem of lag in both naming and standardization of geographical names in the urbanization process in China.

#### **4. The publicity and protection for the culture of geographical names**

Beginning from 2004, the research of *the Protection Project for Cultural Heritage of China Geographical Names* and the promotion pilots for protecting counties of thousand years' history have been started. The maxi-series documentary TV play — □□□□ (*Qian Nian Gu Xian, An Ancient County of Thousands Years' History*) has been produced fifty-two episodes. This documentary TV play was played by CCTV (national TV station of China) and was popular with the audience. In 2012, the Ministry of Civil Affairs issued some normative documents such as *Program of the Cultural Heritage Protection of National Geographical Names, Identification Standards of Cultural Heritage Protection of Geographical Names* and the promotion and protection of cultural heritage of geographical names is advancing in the whole country.

#### **5. The standardization of geographical names**

The research for amendment of the transformation rules of geographical names in minority-languages, such as Mongolian, Uighur, Tibetan, was carried out. The book *Basic Research of the Standardization of Transforming of Geographical Names from Minority-Language into Chinese* is compiled. The standard of transforming of geographical names into Chinese which are originally written in English, German, Russian, Spanish and Arabic, is mended. The national standard of transforming of geographical names from Mongolian into Chinese is newly established, and the naming rules of geographic features of the moon, the South Pole and seafloor are established too. Until March, 2011, 873 standard Chinese transformed names of Lunar features were announced, 3 Lunar features were named; 359 Chinese geographical names located in the area of scientific expedition of Chinese scientists in Antarctica were standardization; In 2011, China submitted seven undersea feature names to the 24th Meeting of the GEBCO Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names (SCUFN). These names (including Xu Fu Seamount, and so on) were all adopted.

#### **6. The publications and training of toponymy**

In the field of Toponymy publications, *China Geographical Names Standardization Study Series* has published seven volumes including the *Outline to Geographical Names Management*, for a total of over 1 million words. In addition, *Chinese Gazetteer of Antarctic*, and *Xinjiang Gazetteer* were published too. The training courses for domestic professionals on geographical names have been held, which include the standardization, the planning, the investigation, the transformation, and the protection of cultural heritage of geographical names.

#### **7. Inter-Ministerial Joint Meeting Mechanism on Management of Geographical Names**

Ministry of Civil Affairs is in charge of managing geographic names in China. In order to enhance the enforcement of policy for standardization of geographical names and research the important issues in the national geographic names management, in April 2012, China established the Inter-ministerial joint meeting mechanism on management of geographical names, which is in charge by the Ministry of Civil Affairs and participated by 16 departments such as the Languages Department, the Ethnic Affairs Department and so on.

