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### **Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names**

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**National standardization: Administrative structure of  
national names authorities, legislation, policies and procedures**

### **The Urgency for the Standardization of Island Names in Indonesia**

Submitted by Indonesia\*\*

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\*\* Prepared by the Secretariat of National Team for the Standardization of Geographical Names

## Summary

One of the tasks of the National Team for the Standardization of Geographical Names is to standardize names, spelling, writing, and pronunciation location of topographic features in Indonesia to be processed into National Gazetteer. In this paper describes the urgency or background of the importance of naming the islands in Indonesia, process of standardization, the recent result and achievements.

## Background

One of the tasks of the National Team for the Standardization of Geographical Names is to standardize names, spelling, writing, and pronunciation location of topographic features in Indonesia to be processed into National Gazetteer. In carrying out its activities, National Team had been planning stages of standardization of the topographical names activities since the beginning of the formation of up to several years. The priority of topographic features to be standardized is the names of islands. Because there are some crucial reasons should be concerned so the names of the islands should be standardized. Venturing activities, in 2007 National Team standardized the names of the islands in Indonesia. This activity was completed in 2008. The method of collecting names of Islands and office treatment of names of Islands in Indonesia are part of the urgency of naming the islands. Both papers have been presented in the Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in New York, 2007. In this paper describes background of the importance of naming the islands, process of standardization, the recent result and achievements.

## The urgency for the Standardization on Island Names

As an archipelagic state, Indonesia has thousands of islands scattered across the region from west to east in Aceh to Papua. The islands are connected by the sea in Indonesia to form the Republic of Indonesia. Due to the many islands, the data on the islands existence in Indonesia is very important to have. Data related to the island is not just about quantity, but includes the name and position. This will provide benefits to many stakeholders, both nationally and internationally.

For instance, the for national benefits are; *first*, the Indonesian people will know for sure about the islands that it has, what it's called, where their existence, and in what condition. This will cause a sense of belonging to these islands, so that eventually will nurture and sustain the existence of the island as well. *Second*, The other benefit is the islands data are well recorded. It will enhance the orderly administration in Indonesia. With the proper administration, the government performance runs smoothly in various aspects.

The international benefits are, *first*, the world will know the islands existence in Indonesia. Therefore, they will appreciate it as part of respecting the sovereignty of each State. *Second*, the world will know the location and name of the islands in Indonesia, which will be beneficial for many things such as for tourism, disaster, humanitarian, geographic studies, etc.

## **The Commencement of the Standardization on Island Names**

As the first action in standardization of topographical names is the standardization on the island's name. It is considered very crucial to be done because the database on the island in Indonesia is still very limited and has not been integrated from several existing agencies. Moreover, the other reason is because it's valuable benefits when we have the islands' data as described previously. In conducting the standardization on the names of islands, National Team used a method based on field survey, combining with existing data on several agencies and local governments. Here is an explanation of the standardization activities on the island's name has been conducted by the National Team:

### **a. Basis**

In commencing the standardization on the names of islands, National Team used the international rules in determining the definition of island in as stipulated in Article 121 of UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) in 1982, "an island is a naturally formed area of land, surrounded by water, which is above water at high tide ". This definition is very important, considering that Indonesia has thousands of islands or other elements that are sometimes regarded as an island such as mangroves, sand dune, and submerged reefs and rocks at high tide. Thus the standardization on the name of the islands will eventually produce the name and number of islands in Indonesia is "clear" in the sense that there is not ambiguous towards any other element.

Besides using the international rules, national team is also using the national rules on the standardization for topographical names, including the principle of naming topographical features, as well as in the standardization process and the determination of topographical names. Topographical naming principle consists of eight principles, namely: using the Roman alphabet, one name for one element of topographical feature, the use of local names, based on laws and regulations, respecting the existence of race, religion, race and class, avoiding the use of proper names or names of people who are still alive, using the Indonesian language and / or regional languages, and not more than three words. This guideline applies to overall standardization on the names of topographical features in Indonesia including the islands. The island's name is the name proposed by local communities who know the condition of the island.

### **b. Standardization process**

The process of standardization on the name of the island consists of several stages, as follow: studying data and field survey, the verification of the island's name, and setting Gazetteer.

#### **- Studying data and field survey:**

At the beginning of this process, national team reviewed the island data existing on the several agencies. This process is supported by the utilization of maps and satellite images to facilitate the visualization of data. The data is then studied, and the result is used as one basis for the field survey. In a field survey work, the officers went to the location of the island that has been known through previous data. The officers collect data on some factors whilst accompanied by local communities around the island. The

officers conduct a survey of geographic position with GPS, record the name of the island based on the spellings and writings from the sources, capture images of the island, and record the condition of the existing island. In the field survey, there are some obstacles that are sometimes related to poor water conditions, the very long distance of the island, and other obstacles in the field.

- Verification on the name of the island

Once the data was collected through the island's survey, afterward the data is processed, and the results are a matter for the verification process of the island's name. Verifying the name of the island is a process that involves the national team, provincial committee, district/municipality committee, and head sub district. It aims to re-validate the names of the islands that have been collected from the survey, and add other details such as name meaning and history of names, as well as other relevant data. This verification process used the data support such as high-resolution satellite imagery and data from local governments. This is to identify the existence of the island and match them with the results of the survey has been conducted. The verification process is performed on all provinces in Indonesia, so that would be completely obtained the Gazetteer of the islands in Indonesia.

- Gazetteer Determination

Island Gazetteer obtained from the verification process is arranged in the form of National Gazetteer, which officially will be set through a Government Regulation. Official Gazetteer can be used as official reference for central government, local government, scholars, media, public, as well as the international community.

c. The recent results and achievements

Based on the standardization activities of the island's name has been conducted by the National Team, then the National Team so far has been standardized as much as 13.466 islands throughout Indonesia, including the 4.891 islands that have been reported on the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of UNCSGN in New York, USA from 21 to 30 August 2007. The number of islands are dynamic, not a final number of islands in Indonesia. There are few things as the reason, first, the possibility remains of the islands that have not been standardized because the islands are not explored at the time of the survey, or have not been identified in the previous island data, or not visible in satellite imagery because of the size of a very small island. Second, any changes in the condition of the island due to natural events such as earthquakes, rising sea levels, erosion, and the affect of human activities. These things can take the consequential changes to the data island in Indonesia.

### **The Next Programmes**

With the completion of the standardization on the island's name and standardization on the topographical names of the administration area, then in this year the activities continued in the standardization on the topographical names of the natural element. With this continued activity, then one by one topographical element in Indonesia will be standardized, so that eventually the whole Earth's topographical features in Indonesia will be identified, recorded, and standardized officially. The standardization activities on the topographical names will continue, because the elements of these topographical features are dynamic, so data updating is totally required.