Tenth United Nations Conference on the
Standardization of Geographical Names
New York, 31 July-9 August 2012
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 United States/Canada Division for the period
2007-2012

Summary**

Since the Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of
Geographical Names, in 2007, representatives of the United States/Canada Division
have met as often as possible, most often at the national meetings of the names
authorities in each country. Both countries continue to apply the principles and
procedures set out in resolution V/22 of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the
Standardization of Geographical Names, on Aboriginal/native geographical names.
In both countries, activities involve agreements, use and preservation of
Aboriginal/indigenous languages and policy development and enhancement. The use
of databases continues to facilitate the dissemination of official names and to make
names and related data more accessible to the user community.

In Canada, data on geographical names are available without cost. Various data
sets and formats are available. An online database of official names approved by the
Geographical Names Board of Canada has been re-engineered and improved to
provide faster, more customizable searches. In the United States, the Geographic
Names Information System has been redesigned to provide a faster and more
intuitive public interface, with links to current maps. In 2010, the two countries
collaborated on the approval of the name of a transboundary feature, the Salish Sea.
Divisional representatives continue to work with various organizations to exchange
experience and expertise and promote the use of official names. Both countries
participate in United Nations forums and activities to further the goal of
standardization and to develop policies and procedures.

* E/CONF.101/1.
** The full report was prepared by Heather Ross, a toponymist at the secretariat of the Geographical
Names Board of Canada, and Lou Yost, the Acting Executive Secretary of the United States Board
on Geographic Names, and is available in the language of submission only from