



## Economic and Social Council

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

New York, 31 July-9 August 2012

Item 8 (b) of the provisional agenda\*

**National standardization: office treatment of names**

### **Recommendation on the use of former municipality names after municipal mergers**

**Submitted by Finland\*\***

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

Over the past 10 years, over 120 municipality names have disappeared as a result of municipal mergers in Finland, a trend that appears to be continuing. The areas in the new municipal alliances are often so vast that the name of a major municipality does not provide sufficient information on the location. The shift has caused much confusion about how places should be referred to.

The Finnish Language Board underlines that although many municipalities have lost their independent administrative position, the actual locations and their names still exist. The most important task of a place name is to localize its referent. The name of a place is also part of the identity of its inhabitants.

The Finnish Language Board recommends that the former municipalities included in a new major municipality should continue to be referred to by their old names, just like their previous central villages, unless they have other names. It is best, especially when guiding people to a given place or informing about a danger, to use an established name that is marked on a basic map and specifies the location as clearly as possible.

The name of the new administrative major municipality is necessary when informing about issues that concern the entire new municipality or all of its inhabitants, such as elections, taxation, health care or other respective public tasks, services or obligations.

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\* E/CONF.101/1.

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\*\*\* The full report is available in the language of submission only from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf10.html>.

