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REPORTS OF THE DIVISIONS

Brunei Darussalam Country Report

submitted by the Geographical Names Committee, Survey Department,
Brunei Darussalam

COUNTRY REPORT - SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES.

INTRODUCTION

Brunei Darussalam has been a member of the United Nation Group of Experts on Geographical Names for the Asia, South East and Pacific, South West Division since 1960. It has been quite actively involved in the regional activities aiming towards the development of standards and to develop cooperation in the sphere of intellectual, scientific and economic activities.

National Activities

Initiated through the Survey Department, a National Geographical Names Committee was formed which is responsible for the determination of names standardisation policy within the country. The committee members consist of surveyors, cartographers, linguists, district officers and other experts. The National Geographic Names Committee is responsible for the correct usage and application of names, correct spelling and new names of geographical features. The committee

work to formulate, adopt and define the guiding principles and practices that are normally applied in the course of operation in considering name proposals to cover various factors:

- a) current local usage
- b) historical background
- d) avoiding repetition of names
- e) avoidance of more than one name for one feature
- f) clarification of the precise extent of each individual geographical name
- g) elimination of objectional names

A preliminary National Gazetteer was prepared encompassing the names appearing on 1:50,000 scale Topographical Map Series. The National Gazetteer is to be produced and continuous revision to be carried out of all its standardised geographical names. An inhouse Toponymy database system is created to keep the inventory of geographical names based upon the field investigation.

The collection of geographical names is handled by the Mapping Section of the Survey Department and in early 1993 a proper Toponymy Unit is formed under the Mapping Section with personnels responsible for the collection of names. However, during the last six years, considerable amount of additional data has been collected with the publication of a new map series at 1:10,000 scale. This map series now covering major part of the developed areas, will eventually cover the whole country. The name collection for 1:10,000 series of maps is progressing very rapidly and these names are being added to the preliminary National Gazetteer.

The field research is done as complete as possible and the names collected are based on:

- a) The local spoken form of the name and they are recorded on tape and as far as possible written in the phonetic notation approved by the National Geographical names committee.
- b) The character, extent and position of the feature named are determined and recorded as accurate as possible, and the meaning of the generic terms used locally are clearly defined.
- c) Written and spoken form of the name and its meaning according to local inhabitants.

At present an investigation is being carried out within Survey Department as to the names which have already received approval from the National Geographical Names Committee. Upon approval by the Committee, the National Gazetteer is distributed to the Chairman of the United Nation Group of Experts for Geographical Names for the Asia, South East and Pacific, South West Division.

Training

Two officers from Survey Department of Brunei Darussalam participated in the Toponymy Training Centre held during 16th - 28th Oct 1989, at Cipanas, Indonesia. The discussion of the 18 working papers and the field collection of data session have helped the participants to get an insight into the application of Toponymy in mapping. It was the first time Brunei Darussalam participated in Toponymy course and the experienced gained from it is extremely valued.

Considering the importance of such activity in the process of collecting geographical names, it is proposed that similar courses/training be organised more often. It will not only give benefit in widening the knowledge of the participants, and particularly the map maker but it will contribute towards the continuity and maintaining the standardisation of names within the region.