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REPORTS OF THE DIVISIONS

The work report by China language/geography division

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Experts on Geographical Names

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The work of geographical names in China has made new progress after the Seventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, which hold in January 1999.

1 Formulation of geographical names technical standards

Transformation guideline of geographical names from foreign languages into Chinese, which includes English, French, Germany, Russian, Spanish, Arabian six languages divisions have been finished by China Institute of Toponymy and other related departments. These divisions, which solve the conflicting problems in translating these foreign languages geographical names into Chinese, have been authorized and published as national standards by China

State Bureau of Quality and Technical Supervision. At the other side, the national standard "Place Names Plates" in towns and villages has been set down and published. It gives uniform standard when the geographical names scutcheons in towns and villages are set.

2 The English original book "Glossary of Toponymic terminology", which edited by the Working Group on Toponymiology of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, has been translated into Chinese by Mr. Du Xiangming and will be published by China Cartographical Publishing House soon. The Extracts of the United Nations' Standization Documents on Geographical Names, which edited and translated by China Institute of Toponymy , will be published soon also.

3 The Standard Administrative Regions Names Atlas of the People's Republic of China, which edited by Ministry of Civil Affairs and the Bureau of Surveying and Mapping of the General Staff of the People's Liberation Army, has been published in September 1999. The atlas embodies all the

administrative regions names of China. The number is more than 50000. It is the special topic atlas, which embodies the most number of geographical names and with the explanations about the changes of the administrative regions names in the past dynasties and some other explanation texts. The first and second volumes of the Great Gazetteer of the People's Republic of China have been published also.

4 The task of establishing the geographical names system database of China was taken by China Institute of Toponymy which authorized by Ministry of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of China. The China Institute of Toponymy and the Geographic Institute of Chinese Academy of Science are developing the software of the system. It will be convenient to link the attribute information with the space information when you use the software. Through using the system the technical criterion will be unified which make it possible share the information each other.

China State Bureau of Surveying and mapping has finished

the task of establishing the relief map database which scale is 1:250000.

5 Academe intercourse and training course in toponymy

Two proseminars on the Geographical Names management of coastal cities were held in the past two years. Sixty papers were collected in these two meetings. Two training courses in toponymy were held. Over 130 cadres who engage in the geographical names management were trained.

6 The founding of the National Committee for Standardization of Geographical Names

A lot of technical criterion are needed, especially on the transformation geographical names from foreign languages into Chinese, geographical names escutcheons, toponymy common terms, naming and renaming of geographical names, geographical names orthography, classifying and coding used in the geographical names information system, the code of the geographical names and so on. So authorized by China State Bureau of Quality and Technical Supervision, National Committee for Standardization of Geographical Names was

found in 1998. The committee, which has thirty experts and scholars who come from related fields, was taken charged by the Ministry of Civil Affairs. The office is at China Institute of Toponymy .

7 The geographical names management

The task setting geographical names scutcheons along the national highways have been finished. The new model geographical names scutcheons in tows and villages are being prepared to set.