

**Twenty-second Session
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Item 18 of the Provisional Agenda

STANDARDIZATION IN MULTILINGUAL AREAS

Names of Local Authorities*

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NAMES OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The country is divided into 284 local authorities, each of which adopted a name. In accordance with the legislation on local government, these names fall under the jurisdiction of the Provincial governments. They are made official when they are published in a notice in a Provincial Gazette. As these are the names of administrative bodies (municipalities) they have not replaced the names of towns and other residential areas. Most of the local authorities in fact incorporate a number of residential areas within their boundaries, and all of them have preserved their own unique names. Tshwane, for example, covers many places such as Akasia, Atteridgeville, Centurion, Mamelodi, Pretoria and Soshanguve.

The South African Geographical Names Council decided that the names of the local authorities should be included in its database as well, since they are of immense social and historical interest. In order to do this, certain information on each name is required: the manner of writing the name in upper and lower case letters, the language of origin, and the origin and meaning. This information was collected, while the memories of those responsible for selecting the names can still be tapped. It is also desirable that over a period of time some degree of standardisation of the names should be achieved, since there are duplicates and also inconsistencies in the spelling.

The Department of Provincial and Local Government has enthusiastically given its support to this project. A researcher in the Geographical Names Unit was appointed to undertake the task, and very good progress has been made.