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REPORTS OF THE DIVISION

Report of the China Division*

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Submitted by China

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Since the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in September 2002, China has tried to push forward the work on standardization of geographical names. Progresses have been made in following aspects:

Promoting Administration of Geographical Names by rule

The present Administration of Geographical Names Ordinance of China came into operation in 1986. Since then great changes have taken place, and there are many new problems to be dealt with. It is clear that the old ordinance has been behind the times and should be amended. The Ministry of Civil Affairs took charge of the work in 2003. We have finished the phase of collecting Suggestions from society. Text editing is in the processing. By the end of 2004 we will have finished the amendment work. The new ordinance will come into operation after the State Council of China approves it. At the same time, most provinces make their own administration of geographical names rules based on the national ordinance and their local characters, to guide their work.

Standardization of characters and pronunciations of geographical names.

China started to study names of all the administrative districts in 2000 to standardize their characters and pronunciations. There are about 5,000 names, mainly names of countries and towns, have been emphasized to study. Projects of naming and renaming of administrative districts should be demonstrated by experts in order to avoid new irregularity. On the other hand, China emphasizes on preserving traditional cultural of geographical names. We encourage using the traditional geographical names. Renaming at random is limited.

Setting standard geographical name signs

More and more standard geographical name signs are required to guide the way on going of the traffic/urban and economy development. China started to set standard geographical name signs in cities in 2000. Great number of signs, including street signs/ building signs and doorplates, will have been set by the end of 2004. People can take full advantage of these signs to guide the way.

Establishing Geographical names database

Geographical names on 1:50000 map of China, including 5,190,000 items, have been updated. Local geographical names database of each province/city and county is being established to guarantee the integrating and updating of the national database. At the same time, local governments should develop geographical names information service actively to take full advantage of the database.

New Gazetteers and maps

We have completed “*Gazetteer of Ancient and Modern China*”. It will be published by Shanghai Dictionary Publishing House soon. ‘*Map of Administrative Districts of PRC*’ has been updated and published in 2003. New edition of “*Atlas of Administrative Districts of PRC*”/ Pinyin edition of “*Atlas of Standard Administrative Districts of PRC*” and new edition map of administrative districts of each province are being edited.

Geographical names courses

We opened 3-time technical training courses on geographical names information in 2003. More than 400 various ranks clerks have taken part in these trainings.

Here, we would like to inform that the chairman of the China division has been changed. Mr. Wang Jitong, the former chairman of China division, has retired. Mr. Liu Baoquan has won the election as the new chairman of the China division. He is now the director of China Institute of toponymy.

