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GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

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Item 6 of the Provisional Agenda

Reports of the liaison officers, regional meeting
And international organizations

Report of the International Geographical Union*

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Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished colleagues and delegates,

Thank you Mister Chairman for giving me the opportunity to say a few words at this opening session of the 23rd session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.

It is for me a pleasure and a honour to attend your meeting on behalf of address this assembly in name of Adalberto Vallega, the President of the International Geographical Union, who much to this regret, could not attend this conference.

The International Geographical Union views the UNGEGN topic with much interest although none of its 34 Commissions specifically deals with the place names.

It is my wish and will that we will this gap in the next future. In addition we hope that one of the forthcoming issues by the Home of Geography of the International Geographical Union, hosted by the Italian Geographical Society, at Villa Celimontana, will be possibly devoted to inquires and investigations on place names research.

In fact the theme of the place names shows many aspects which geography and geographers often stumble across. The place names problem is crucial for many researches on history of geography and history of cartography to reconstruct ancient landscapes, ancient cultures and ancient population movements. For this reason also culture geography is clearly interwoven with. Let me please to draw a comparison with the stars which we see on the even surface whilst their light comes from very different times and spaces. So place names tell us of different landscapes and times even if some of them are close on same area. The place names go through the different layers landscapes belong to from the most ancient times to today.

Well I do not want to get carried away and take advantage of your patience any longer. I'll leave you to your meeting which I am keen to attend and eventually write a report to the International Geographical Union for a possible future collaboration.

Thank you very much for your attention.