

**Twenty-third session
Vienna, 28 March – 4 April 2006**

Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda

Reports of the division

Country Report - Malaysia *



COUNTRY REPORT – MALAYSIA

1. INTRODUCTION

This report covers the period since the last meeting which was held in New York in 2004 and includes all activities relating to geographical names, national gazetteer and other related matters.

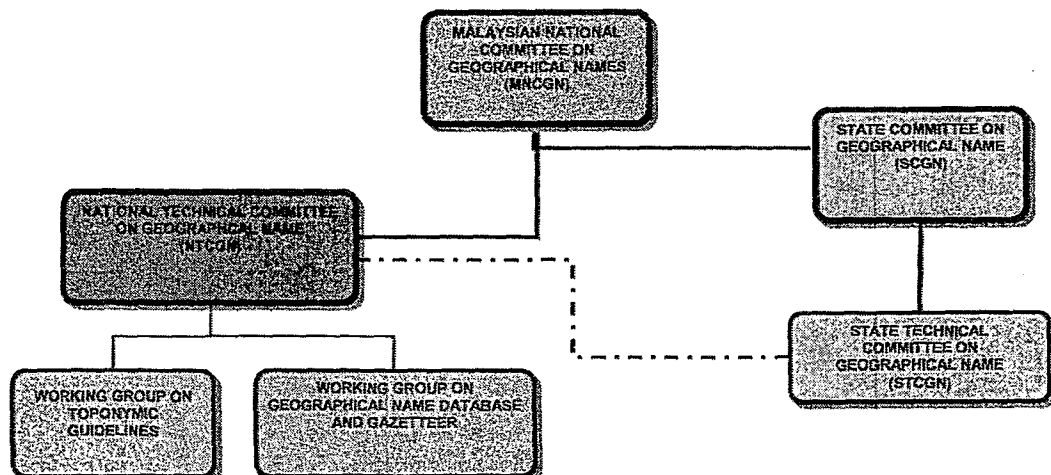
2. BACKGROUND

The Malaysian National Committee for Geographical Names (MNCGN), established on 11 September 2002 by the Malaysian Cabinet, is responsible for coordinating geographical naming activities in Malaysia. This committee is chaired by the Director General of the Department of Survey and Mapping Malaysia with members consisting of representatives from the Central and Federal Agencies as well as all the State Governments.

The responsibility of this Committee includes:-

- Developing a national guideline for nomenclature matters
- Developing a National Geographical Names Database and the National Gazetteer
- Coordinating the methodology of researching, recording and applying place names, including those of indigenous origin
- Coordinating Malaysian input into international nomenclature activities, including liaison with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, particularly the Regional Grouping.

The organizational structure of the MNCGN is as follow:



At the State level, the State Committee for Geographical Names (SCGN) is established to coordinate and implement the guidelines and procedures formulated. The State Secretary chair the SCGN with members consisting of representatives from the State agencies. Apart from that, a State Technical Committee on Geographical Names is established to assist the SCGN.

Beside these coordinating committees, a technical committee and two working groups under the said technical committee were also formed to assist the MNCGN. They are:

- 1) National Technical Committee on Geographical Names
- 2) Working Group on Toponymic Guidelines
- 3) Working Group on Geographical Names Database and Gazetteer

3. ACTIVITIES

The MNCGN holds their meeting at least once a year. The last meeting was held on 14th June 2005 in Sabah, Malaysia. Below are the related activities on geographical naming that were conducted in the period under review.

3.1 Guidelines for Determination of Geographical Names

Seven drafts of the guidelines were prepared before the committee finally agreed to endorse the final version of the Guidelines for the Determination of Geographical Names in the third meeting of MNCGN. This guideline was formulated with the assistance of the Working Group on Toponymic Guidelines, led by the Department of Survey and Mapping Malaysia. The guidelines have been distributed to all of the committee members for their use. Notwithstanding that, the Working Group on Toponymic Guidelines is in the process of reformatting the guidelines to suit the Malaysian Standard.

The afore-mentioned Guideline for Determination of Geographical Names consists of:

- 21 Guiding Principles
- Glossary
- Information about NCGN (members of committee)
- Standardization of Geographical Names determination process in the States
- Guidelines for names outside of Malaysia for official use in Malaysia

3.2 Geographical Names Database and Production of Web Gazetteer

The Malaysian Geographical Names Database is the data bank storing local names, location, historical background and gazette notification that have authoritative records available for government and public use.

Working Group on Geographical Names Database and Gazetteer has been given the responsibility to develop the Malaysian Geographical Names Database and Web Gazetteer. This Working Group is led by the Malaysian Centre for Geospatial Data Infrastructure (MaCGDI). The development of this database and gazeteer has been divided into four phases as follows:-

- i. 1st phase - Based on State Map at the scale of 1 : 100 000
- ii. 2nd phase - Based on Topographic Map at the scale of 1 : 25 000
- iii. 3rd phase - Based on Town Map at the scale of 1 : 3 000 to 1 : 12 500
- iv. 4th phase - Based on map at the scale of 1: 1 000

Work on the development of the above data base for the 1st and 2nd phase is in progress and is expected to be completed by the end of 2006. Although the 3rd and 4th phase have not taken off ground they are targetted to be completed by the end of 2010.

The National Web gazetteer allow users to access gazetteer data on the web and this is expected to enourage greater use of the Gazetteer by the public. It is so designed to provide opportunities for users to send their feedback relating to incorrect data, missing place names and their history.

3.3 Workshops and Courses

Workshops on Geographical Names Database and Gazetteer were held on July 2004 and June 2005. The objective of those workshops were to disseminate information on the Geographical Names Determination Guidelines and to gether inputs for the Geographical Names Database design. Both workshops are also intended to help the participants understand the importance of coordinated geographical nameing through out the nation and provide their input for the proposed Geographical Names Database. The effort is expected to support the implementation of the Malaysian Geospatial Data Infrastructure (MyGDI) initiatives which is undertaken by the Malaysian Centre for Geospatial Data Infrastructure (MaCGDI).

Malaysia also took the opportunity to participate in the UNGEGN Training Course on Toponymy held in Kota Batu Malang, East Java, Indonesia from 11 to 23 September 2005 by sending its officer to the said course.