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Item 16 of the Provisional Agenda:
Activities relating to the Working Group on the
Promotion of Indigenous and Minority Group Names

<u>**Protection of Geographical Names Culture in China**</u>

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Protection of Geographical Names Culture in China

Resolution 6 of the fifth UN Conference on the Standardiza tion of Geographical Names says "Geographical names are the national historical-cultural heritage." Resolution 9 of the sixth UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names points out "Geographical names have the rich value of the culture and the history. The arbitrary change to the geographical names would damage the inheritance of the culture and the historical tradition." China has a large territory and a long history. Large numbers of geographical names in China can be traced back to the ancient days and contain rich cultural meanings. According to rough statistics, over 700 county names, thousands of town names and 100 thousand of village names have over 1000 years' history. More names of natural features are old-line. The Jiaguwen (oracle bone script) is the oldest Chinese characters with a history of 3600 years. Some geographical names used now can be found in the Jiaguwen. These geographical names are not only the valuable wealth of china but also the rare cultural heritage of the world. According to the spirit of UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, Protection Project of the Historical-Cultural Heritage of Geographical Names of China has been undertaken in 2005. The project would made positive contributions to the protection of the historical-cultural heritage of geographical names, the stabilization of geographical names, and the consolidation of the achievements of the standardization of geographical names.

There are seven research items in the project: 1.classification and amount evaluation; 2. standard system on identification; 3.value and register; 4.study and utilization; 5.the artistic form of communication 6. methods for protection 7.international exchange. The project is going on wheels.

Three tasks had been developed to publicize the culture of geographical names, boost and protect the excellent traditional culture of China:

1. A maxi-series documentary TV play named *An Ancient County of Thousand Years' History* is being produced. Each episode takes 40 minutes. The subject is the names of these counties. Local culture is characterized skillfully during the introduction of geographical names. We plan to select 100 counties with much historic sites and rich cultural meanings from over 700 counties, whose special names had been used continually over 1000 years. Now 10 episodes have been finished.

2. The shows of painting and calligraphy on the culture of geographical names had been held. The art of painting and calligraphy is one of the classical traditional Chinese arts, favored by the common people. The shows are helpful to improve the self-knowledge of the society to understand and protect the culture of geographical names. The shows were held in QinghuangdaoShi (Shi means city) and Baoding Shi. The shows were favored by the society. More than 60 thousands people enjoyed the shows.

3. The protection of the culture of Beijing's bystreets names started. Beijing is an old capital with a long history and splendid culture. The bystreets and

Siheyuans(quadrangle dwellings) are important carriers of the scene of old Beijing. Some names of the bystreets originate from person's names, some from markets' names, some from buildings' names and some from sceneries and terrains. The meanings of these names are rich. The realities of these names are wonderful. The Siheyuans are also excellent historical-cultural heritage. The culture of the names of Beijing's bystreets is the treasure of the historical-cultural heritage of geographical names. To urge the society value the culture of the bystreets names in the course of urban construction, we started the protection of the culture of Beijing's bystreets names. We are collecting the data these days.

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