

**Twenty-Sixth Session  
Vienna, 2 to 6 May 2011**

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**Item 4 of the provisional Agenda**

**Reports of the Division**

**Report of the Asia South East and the Pacific South West Division \***

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**Report of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names  
Asia South East and Pacific South West Division (UNGEGN ASEPSW)**

**1. Meetings**

- a. The 16<sup>th</sup> Divisional Meeting was held in Bali International Convention Center, the Westin Resort, Nusadua-Bali, 4 August 2009, and followed by the International Symposium on Toponymy, 5 August 2009. Theme of this symposium was “The Geographical Names as part of the Cultural Heritage in Asia – Pacific Region”. The Divisional Meeting was attended by Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and Vietnam.
- b. The 17<sup>th</sup> Divisional Meeting was held at NSW Land and Property Management Authority Australia, Sydney Australia, 4<sup>th</sup> April 2010. The country participants were Indonesia, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Philippines and Malaysia.
- c. The 18<sup>th</sup> Divisional Meeting was held at Crowne Plaza Mutiara Hotel, Kuala Lumpur Malaysia on 22<sup>th</sup> February 2011. The meeting was attended by the following member countries and number of delegates in brackets: Brunei Darussalam (5), Indonesia (3), Philippines (2), Singapore (2) and Malaysia (28 - including observers) for a total of 40 participants. In conjunction with this meeting, a seminar on geographical names was held for local participants.

**2. Chairmanship**

- a. Malaysia has been elected as a new Chairman of UNGEGN ASEPSW during the 17<sup>th</sup> Divisional Meeting in Sydney, Australia on 10 April 2010.
- b. The period of Chairmanship extend for five years from August 2010 to August 2015. The previous Chairmanship of Indonesia was for the period of August 2006 to August 2010.

**3. Resolutions of 18<sup>th</sup> Divisional Meeting on 22 February 2011**

The proposed resolutions adopted during the meeting were as follows:

- a. Malaysia will write to Australia to clarify on the actions outstanding from the previous 17<sup>th</sup> Divisional Meeting in Sydney, Australia.
- b. Malaysia will forward the regional map and gazetteer to member countries for verification.
- c. The Meeting proposed splitting the Division into 2: South East Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Bhutan, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Vientiane Lao and Myanmar) and Pacific South West (Australia, Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, New Zealand, Vanuatu, Tonga and Samoa).
- d. Member countries are encouraged to submit the generic terms to the Division.

#### **4. Summary of Country Reports**

The summary of the members' respective national report are as follows:

##### **4.1 New Zealand**

- a) The New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa (NZGB) is New Zealand's national geographical naming authority. It is an independent statutory body of Government, accountable to the Minister for Land Information, and is administered by a Government department, LINZ. Information on NZGB members is at <http://www.linz.govt.nz/placenames/about-geographic-NZGB/nzgb-members/index.aspx>
- b) The NZGB is responsible for official geographic naming in New Zealand, its territorial waters and offshore islands, the undersea features of its continental shelf, and the Ross Dependency, Antarctica. The NZGB also reviews and concurs with the naming for Crown protected areas (reserves, national parks, conservation areas, marines parks), which are administered by the Department of Conservation.
- c) The NZGB does not name roads/streets, the country name for New Zealand, local Council reserves and parks, or buildings and homesteads.
- d) 85 of the 784 undersea feature names identified for review and adoption under Section 26 of the NZGB Act 2008, were gazetted in December 2010.
- e) Completion of validation of 200 Crown Protected Area names and 1650 Antarctic names will occur before the 30 June 2011.
- f) The focus for the next few years is to continue to settle into the new processes under the NZGB Act 2008 and to complete a number of associated one-off tasks. A major goal is to complete the Gazetteer database of official geographic names in 2011.
- g) For the next decade, the NZGB will also be working towards achieving consistent suburb and locality naming practices (including defining their extents). This will provide certainty for the community, local government, New Zealand Post, emergency services and other users.

##### **4.2 Philippines**

- a) Technical Working Group on Geographic Classification (TWG-GC) was created in 1996 by National Statistical Board (NSCB), wherein National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA), the central mapping agency of government and an attached agency of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is a member.

- b) The TWG-GC members regularly update the committee on the latest national laws, court decisions, certifications and local ordinances to update the PSGC. These may include the following:
- i. Creation of new province, municipality or barangay;
  - ii. Transfer of barangay(s) to another municipality;
  - iii. Conversion of municipalities to cities;
  - iv. Transfer of province(s) from one region to another;
  - v. Renaming, merging, abolition or division of Local Government Units.
- c) The TWG agreed in the number of Local Government Units, as follows:
- |                |          |
|----------------|----------|
| Regions        | - 17     |
| Provinces      | - 80     |
| Cities         | - 138    |
| Municipalities | - 1,496  |
| Barangays      | - 42,025 |
- d) Since 2010, NAMRIA started the process of developing its topographic database in GIS environment. Compiled vector data during map compilation and gathered attribute data from the field form part of the database. Technical personnel involved use templates containing feature classes where data from compiled vector file are loaded. Each feature class corresponds to a layer created during map compilation. Geographic Names are included in the Feature Class – Administrative Boundary. Feature classes are further subdivided into subtypes. Metadata is automatically created inside the dataset. This process applies to the production of both the 1:10,000 and 1:50,000 topographic base maps.
- e) The latest Gazetteer of the Philippines was derived from the topographic base maps at scale at scale 1:250,000. It was published in May 1989 (second edition) by the Defense Mapping Agency of the United States upon approval of the United States Board on Geographic Names. The gazetteer contains attribute table on: NAME, DESIGNATION, LATITUDE, LONGITUDE, AREA, UTM, and JOG NUMBER of places and ground features.

### 4.3 Indonesia

- a) The Government of Indonesia established a national geographical names authority, enacted through a Presidential Regulation No.112/2006 on 29 December 2006. It is called the National Team for Standardization of Topographical Names. In the effort to introduce the existence of this institution some of the activities, implemented nationally, among others: a). socialization of national names authority, 2). Guidelines and procedures for standardization of geographical names, and 3). Integration of geographical names data into national and regional spatial data infrastructure. This effort in line with Resolution No. VIII/6 adopted at the 8<sup>th</sup> UNCSGN to integrate geographical names database into NSDI.

- b) Indonesia has recently published a map that shows distribution of population over the entire archipelago, and also publishes the principles, policies, and procedures to standardize topographical/geographical names in English version.
- c) The Principles, Policies and Procedures, the Indonesian document entitled “Prinsip. Kebijakan dan Prosedur Pembakuan Nama Rupabumi” was published. The English version of this document was ever distributed at the UNGEGN Session in New York.
- d) Naming Maritime and Islands has completed the work of naming of islands pertinent to the Recommendation B of the Resolution I/4 on the Collection of Geographical Names. The naming of islands is given the highest priority since conflicting figures of number of islands existed. With the adoption of the definition of islands as provided in the UNCLOS 1982 Article 121 on Regime of Islands, finally the National Team adopts the figure of 13,466 names of islands as the current national figures. The present work is to prepare a national gazetteer, and a government gazette to enforce the use of standardized names as published in the gazetteer for the use by all government institutions and public at large.
- e) Naming Undersea Features is an in-house activity of the Marine Geological Institute.
- f) Naming Natural Landscape Features is still continuing.
- g) Naming Civil/Administrative Divisions. For the standardization of names of Civil/administrative divisions, verification and validation of names are being conducted. Out of 33 provinces, 19 provinces have been verified and validated, out of 399 kabupaten/kota, 217 kabupatens and 98 kota/municipalities, 54 have been verified and validated.

#### **4.4 Brunei Darussalam**

- a) National geographical names authority was established on 5<sup>th</sup> June 1976, by the name of Jawatankuasa Nama-nama Ilmu Alam. Subsequently, on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2006 the name was changed to *Jawatankuasa Kebangsaan Nama Geografi (JKNG)* and chair by the Surveyor General of Survey Department.
- b) The authority and main function of JKNG are to approve geographical names nationwide. New names proposed must be endorsed by the committee before it is officially adopted and gazetted.
- c) A total of 25 meetings were organized. So far, 1211 geographical names were approved and kept in the database out of 2306 names collected. This covers 27 sheets of Brunei Muara District area.
- d) The JKNG website (<http://www.survey.gov.bn./jkng>) was launched by the Honourable Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2008.
- e) In November 2010, a new Committee responsible for road naming outside municipal boundary of Bandar Seri Begawan was established. For the roads inside municipal

boundary, this Committee is allowed to propose road naming. Since its inception, 20 street names were proposed.

#### **4.5 Sri Lanka**

- a) A Gazetteer was prepared by the office of Geography, Department of Interior, Washington, D.C in June 1960 containing official standard approved by the United States Board on Geographic Names, as well as unapproved variant names. This Gazetteer contains about 29,600 entries for places and features in the country based on 1 inch topographic map series prepared and completed in 1924 by the Survey Department of Sri Lanka being the National Mapping Organization. This map series contain all the geographical names that are in practical use at the time of preparation of the map series in respect of place/village names, natural and manmade topographical features, administrative areas etc. This Map series contains 72 sheets of map.
- b) After Sri Lanka converted itself into the metric system of measurements in 1982, a new topographic map series was prepared on the scale of 1: 50,000, and there are 92 maps in this series. The topographic data in this map series is also available in digital vector form as a topographic vector database for GIS applications and Digital Mapping.
- c) Another series of topographic maps and topographic vector database are being prepared at the scale of 1:10,000 of which 1834 map sheets are available as printed maps and 777 sheets are available in the form of topographic vector database.
- d) These databases are designed to contain many layers, of which 'PLACES', 'ADMIN' and 'HYDRO' layers contain the names as an attribute. Another development towards Geographic Names is the publication of 'Village List' available on Provincial basis and is used mainly for Cadastral Survey purposes.
- e) Significance progress in the field of Standardization on Geographical Names happened with the approval from the Cabinet of Ministers to establish a Committee for Standardization of Geographical Names in Sri Lanka under the Chairmanship of the Surveyor General and are now in the process of appointing permanent staff and the members to the committee.

#### **4.6 Singapore**

Singapore has no place naming activities. There is, however, a committee in Singapore that deals with road names and building names. These names are submitted for concurrence purposes.

#### **4.7 Thailand**

- a) Thai National Committee on Geographical Names (TNCG) was established on 4 August 1992, by the Thai Cabinet. This committee is chaired by the Director of

Royal Thai Survey Department, with 21 members from related government agencies.

- b) The responsibility of TNCG are as follows: a) to standardize geographical names to be used as national standard; b) naming the natural features which still remain unnamed or with discrepancy; c) determining policies, principles, and procedures for naming endonyms, exonyms, under water environmental or sea surface features; d) appointing sub-committee, working group and experts to assist the TNCG; e) planning and using the GIS to produce a gazetteer and related publications to meet the international standard, and f) cooperating and coordinating with UN related to geographical names and to implement UNCSGN resolutions.
- c) The TNCG has appointed two National Sub-Committees on Geographical Names Standardization, mainly: a). National Sub-Committees on Geographical Names Standardization comprised 20 members from relevant government agencies. The main responsibility is to standardize geographical names, and b). National Sub-Committees on Toponymic Guidelines for Map and Other Editors comprised 12 representatives from related government agencies.
- d) The effort to apply particular United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSGN) resolutions, TNCG conducted some activities, covers:
  - i. Standardization of feature/geographical names over the country which are approved by Thai Cabinet. This includes 525 standardised names of water fall which have been approved by the National Committee and another 296 names of water fall approved by the sub-committee. For the year 2010 149 standardised names comprising of 93 water fall names and 56 islands have approved by sub-committee.
  - ii. Toponymic guidelines for map editors and other editors were produced and submitted to the Eight UNCSGN.
  - iii. Gazetteer of Thailand was formulated by Royal Thai Survey Department, and is now available on website <http://www.royin.go.th> .

#### **4.8 Malaysia**

- a) Malaysian National Committee on Geographical Names (MNCGN) was established on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2002, with its members consisted of representatives from Federal and State agencies. To assist the MNCGN, a Technical Committee and three Working Groups were formed.
- b) Guidelines for determination of geographical names have been distributed to all members for their use since 2005, which in the Malaysian Standard format documented as MS2256: *Geographic Information – Guidelines for the Determination of Geographical Names*.

- c) MNCGN website called “My GeoName” was launched in July 2006. All information related to geographic naming activities can be accessed at <http://www.jupem.gov.my/geonames>. Another relevant website on geo-naming is at <http://www.mygeoportal.gov.my>, developed by Malaysian Center for Geospatial Data Infrastructure.
- d) Geographical names database which stores local names, location, historical background and gazette notification that have authoritative records are available for government and public use. The database which is based on 1:50 000 and 1:25 000 scale have almost been completed which then produces web gazetteer to be adopted officially. The next programme will involves geographical names database at the scale of 1: 3 000 to 1: 12 500 which mainly covers the towns and develop areas.
- e) Naming of islands and off-shore geographical entities for the state of Selangor, Perak, Melaka, Perlis and Negeri Sembilan Kedah, Johor, Kelantan, Pahang, Terengganu, Labuan and Penang except Sabah and Sarawak have been completed.
- f) In conjunction with the 18<sup>th</sup> UNGEGN ASEPSW meeting on 22 February 2011 in Kuala Lumpur, a Seminar on Geographical Names was held on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2011. During this seminar, papers related to activities of geographical names will be presented by local and international speakers. Geographical naming activities have been presented by speakers from Indonesia, Brunei, Philippines and Malaysia. The participants were from local government agencies.

## **5. Activities of UNGEGN ASEPSW**

### **a) Regional Gazetteer and Map Project**

- i. The members appreciate Australia in producing both the regional map and gazetteer. This product has been developed using ARCGIS and is available in pdf format. The gazetteer holds the respective placenames and attributes, generic terms and contacts. Names were compiled in 2006 and are grouped by countries in alphabetical order. There is a limited set of place names provided by each Country and differs from Country to Country.
- ii. A 1:250k relief base map is used for the background to the map product. Member Countries are invited to supply other mapping layers so as to improve the output of this product. At this stage, data has been sourced for approximately 80% of member countries.
- iii. The regional map should not be the authority on boundaries, and also this disclaimer should be inserted on the map.

### **b) Regional Generic Terms**



A technical paper on Toponym Typology is being developed by Dr. Jan Tent and Mr David Blair of the Australian National Placenames Survey. Committee for the Geographical Names of Australasia's will circulate the translation standards and feature catalogue which are used to compile a single National Gazetteer from a series of disparate jurisdictional databases to member countries.

**6. Issues of UNGEGN ASEPSW**

- a. The Division noted that the name of Asia South East and Pacific South West Division has never been formally adopted by UNGEGN as such this group needs to take steps to either formalise this name or adopt a new name and formalise this.
- b. Most of the Pacific South West countries (except Australia and New Zealand) and some Asia South East countries have been absent from divisional meeting since the establishment of this Division. Funding to attend the meeting seems to be one of the constraints.
- c. During the 18<sup>th</sup> Divisional Meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia the Meeting suggested that Division should be split into two (2) divisions, South East Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Bhutan, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Vientiane Lao and Myanmar) and Pacific South West (Australia, Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, New Zealand, Vanuatu, Tonga and Samoa). This decision will be conveyed during the UNGEGN meeting in Vienna on 2-6 May 2011.