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Activities relating to the Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage

The Cultural Heritage Protection of Chinese Geographical Names

Submitted by China *

*Prepared by Liu Lian'an, Zhang Wei and Ji Yuan

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Summary

Recent years, China has constantly strengthened the protection of geographical names as cultural heritage and launched a series of protection and promotion work, remarkable results are achieved.

As important part of the cultural heritage, geographical names carry the gene of history and culture and are closely linked with people's lives. In recent years, China has constantly strengthened the protection of geographical names as cultural heritage and launched a series of protection and promotion work.

To promote the work of geographical names culture , in the year 2012, the Ministry of Civil Affairs issued *The Opinion on Strengthening Culture Construction Concerning Geographical Names*, that defines the significance, guiding ideology, the goal, the basic principle and safeguard

measures to strengthen the culture construction of geographical names; the Ministry issued *National Protection Plan of Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage*, that defines the principle, key object, administrative mechanism and safeguard measures for the protection of geographical names as cultural heritage. The Ministry established industry standard titled *Identification of Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage*, defining the concrete technical standard for identification of geographical names as cultural heritage. Some provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities) added rules of geographical names culture protection, and established protection plans for geographical names as cultural heritage for the respective provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities).

Moving forward of the identification of geographical names as cultural heritage. The Ministry of Civil Affairs entrusted China Association for Cultural Heritage Protection of Geographical Names to identify the cultural heritage of Ancient Counties of Thousand Years' History. 71 counties are accredited as Ancient Counties of Thousand Years' History by now. Some provinces and cities carried out cultural heritage identification of local geographical names, such as Ancient Towns of Thousand Years' History and Ancient villages of Thousand Years' History. Lists of local cultural heritage of geographical names were announced publicly.

Strengthen the research of cultural theory of geographical names. China organized the national culture and theory writing activity about geographical names. Collected works of geographical names cultural theory essays were compiled and printed. Experts, scholars, media staff and local staff of geographical names were invited to a national seminar of geographical names culture. National training courses for geographical names culture were organized.

Books concerning geographical names culture were compiled. The Ministry of Civil Affairs edited *Chinese Geographical Names Stories Collection* and published *Local Records of the nations along the Belt and Road, A Hundred Questions and Answers about the Belt and Road, Imprint: WWII Major Geographical Names Gazetteer*. Books concerning geographical names culture were compiled in various regions , such as *Stories of Geographical Names in Shandong, Stories of Geographical Names in Sichuan, Geographical Names' Culture in Tianjin*. Moreover, China also produced a stamp book named *Beautiful China — Ancient Counties with Thousand Years' History*, publicity film *Chinese Geographical Names* and multimedia brochures *The Culture of Chinese Geographical Names* and other culture products.

Launch cultural activities of geographical names. From 2014 to 2015, the Ministry of Civil Affairs and Guangming Daily launched series of reports themed with *Story of Geographical Names - History and Homesickness*.

More than 20 feature articles were published. Together with Guangming Online, the Ministry of Civil Affairs launched activities of Searching the Most Beautiful Geographical Name to collect images, texts, videos and other forms recording ‘the most beautiful’ geographical names with historical and cultural significance. Nearly 2000 pieces of works were received. Together with China Photographers Association, the Ministry of Civil Affairs launched the activities of Soaring Hand in Hand — National Provincial Boundaries Geographical Names Cultural Pictures Collection, over one thousand pictures were received. Photographic exhibition of national geographical names culture along the Belt and Road was held, 26 thousand pieces of Photos were collected. China organized the national geographical names knowledge prize competition, so as to further enhance the social awareness about the work of geographical names. The Ministry of Civil Affairs entrusted China Association for Cultural Heritage Protection of Geographical Names to organize collection activity for video (or micro film) titled Geographical Names’ Love, Chinese Dream to collect stories about the culture of geographical names and stories happened during the survey work , and to record and show the love for geographical names in hometown, for red cultural heritage of geographical names, for geographical names along the Silk Road and for geographical names as cultural heritage.

In the next step, China will further strengthen the protection of

geographical names as cultural heritage. China will take the opportunity of the ongoing Second National Survey of Geographical Names to investigate the cultural resources of geographical names and to build a detailed geographical names culture resource library. China will further perfect the protection system of geographical names as cultural heritage and complete the standard of evaluation, identification and approval for geographical names as cultural heritage. The list of geographical names as cultural heritage at four levels (nation, province, municipality and county) will be established. A variety of media such as books, television and the internet will be used to widely publicize the culture of geographical names.