

Opening Speech

by Major General Suppalert Chaichana

Deputy Director of Royal Thai Survey Department

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates and Observers,

Ladies and Gentleman

It's my honor to be a part of the 29th Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names. And, as a representative of Thailand, I'm delighted that United Nations holds the session in Thailand again. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and hope you enjoy your stay in Thailand, the land of smile.

Nowadays, it's undeniable that information on location, which is known as Geographical names,

has played significant roles in many national activities, such as economic and social development, environmental improvement, as well as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. Besides, this issue is even more important, when the advent of Web GIS has caused the huge influx of information, which is supplied by various providers. Sometimes, information diversity causes some confusion among the users ;therefore, the fundamental dataset, which must include standardized information, is required. In the age of Internet of Things, where devices and geographical names becomes closely correlated, the standardization of geographical names is necessary to assure the accuracy of information, which will lead to the exchange of reliable information and further utilization.

In the past, Thailand's public and private sectors had used different geographical names, which resulted in confusion, when they were referred or utilized for some purposes. Besides, the United Nations urged its members to establish the national agency responsible for the standardization of geographical names. Therefore, the government of Thailand established the Thai National Committee on Geographical Names in 1992. The committee is comprised of the experts and delegates of 12 agencies, and chaired by the Director of the Royal Thai Survey Department. The missions are to consider and set the standards of international and national geographical names, and to collaborate with the United Nations and many countries to encourage the wide use of standardized geographical names.

The Thai National Committee on Geographical Names has been working on the standard of geographical names, according to the recommendation of the United Nations. The conference is held annually to keep track of the progress, to consider and to approve the Subcommittee's production of national geographical gazetteer. From 2003 to 2013, the committee proposed 1,524 standardized geographical names to the cabinet and those names were approved and published in the three government gazettes. Furthermore, the committee has planned to gather those names and put them in the geographical information database to facilitate the use and exchange of information with other member countries.

Distinguished Delegates,

The operation of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names is the driving force behind the process of geographical names standardization, and is the model for many countries, including Thailand. Moreover, it has led to the exchange of information in the international level, which is going to be developed soon, particularly in the aspects of information exchange, the evaluations of the information's quality, and the improvement of geospatial web services. Above all, the international collaboration is required to accomplish the mission.

I, as a representative of Thailand, would like to affirm that my country will fully support every operation of the United Nations to achieve the goals. Finally, I wish you a pleasant journey and enjoyable experience in Thailand.

Thank you.
