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ASIA EAST Group (on the work done
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Mr. Chairman,

Since this is the first time I take part in the discussion at this Ad Hoc Committee, I wish to take the opportunity to congratulate you and other members of the Bureau for your election to the high posts of Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur.

Ever since the establishment of this Ad Hoc Committee, my Government has taken greater interest in the work of standardization of geographical names both at national and international levels. Effort was made to solve problems in this field.

For the benefit of exchange of experience and information, I wish to take this opportunity to report to you what my Government has been doing in unifying and rationalizing the geographical names in my country.

In 1969, my Government has established a Committee on the standardization of geographical names in the province of Taiwan to work for the unification and standardization of the geographical names. Functioning under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior, the Committee is entrusted with the work of collecting relevant information and data and to come up with proposals for the rationalization of the geographical names and to implement the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Conference on the standardization of geographical names.

There are altogether six thousand geographical name entities in the Taiwan area. After a careful study, more than 1,000 entities are found to require unification or modifications. Consequently, a programme to tackle the problem was undertaken by the government. As a result of the programme using the topographic map of 1 to 50,000 scale, the government was able to re-name or revise all the names previously found to be unsatisfactory.

The method adopted in the programme contains two major parts, namely:

- 1) Collection and compilation of relevant data and
- 2) Technique employed in making the unification and modification of the geographical names.

The collection and compilation side of the programme can be illustrated as follows:

First, as a step for pre-decisional preparation, a classification card system was utilized to facilitate the collection and compilation of existing place names. All information and data concerning the following four categories of geographical name entities: 1) places with customary names 2) mountains 3) rivers and 4) lakes, were separately and item-wisely registered on the cards. Information and data included items such as current names of the geographical entities, its alternate names, its history and places with identical names.

Besides, additional information such as longitude, latitude, land area occupied, main peak and branch range of the mountains, origin and land coverage of the streams, essential distributaries of the rivers and receptacle of water-flow of the lakes were also entered on the cards. After that, the cards with the comprehensive information and data were compiled in accordance with its categories and administrative area to facilitate the analysis and make it easier to proceed with the comparative studies.

During the course of registration and compilation, which were done mainly by the Standardization Committee, it was found that there were some 1066 geographical entities carrying either identical or similar or unsatisfactory names.

Consequently, tabulations containing all the so-called problem entities together with its information cards were compiled for comparative study. However, before making final correction or revision of the problematic original names, the tabulations together with proposals were sent to the relevant local governments at the city and country levels for their comments. After that the tabulations together with the local government comments were returned to the Standardization Committee for final decision and selection of optimum geographical names.

Through this sort of exhaustive approach, the Standardization Committee was able to accomplish the unification, rationalization and revision of all the 1066 problematic geographical names which had been causing confusion and difficulties.

I turn now to the technique side of the method adopted in the standardization programme. Highlights of the revision technique used by the Standardization Committee can be described as follows:

A. Cases of Identical Names

1) In case of repetitious use of identical names, the name for the place which has been using the name for a longer period of time or which is bigger in terms of population or more advanced in socio-economic development than the others was preserved, while the others were revised or given new names.

2) In giving new name to a place, consideration was given to the factors such as the name of its administrative area, its topographical features and its cultural background in order to arrive at a best result of nomenclature.

If no suitable new name can be found for a place in question, revision was achieved through adding prefixes such as "UP" "DOWN" "EAST" "WEST" "SOUTH" "NORTH" "NEW" or "OLD" to the original names so as to differentiate among the various places bearing the identical names.

B. Cases of Unsatisfactory Connotation and Differences in Writing

1) In case of unsatisfactory connotation or differences in writing, selection was made of better and proper words with similar pronunciation to replace the original names found to be unsatisfactory.

2) In case of a situation where no substitution can be found for the original names from among the words with the same pronunciation, revision or correction was achieved by replacing them with synonymous words with different pronunciation.

3) If satisfactory result can yet be obtained by exhausting the two approaches mentioned above, selection was made of either giving it a new name or preserving the original one.

4) In case of geographical names containing more than three Chinese characters, effort was made to reduce it to no more than three characters so as to facilitate its reading with caution being taken to preserve as far as possible its original meaning.

5) While giving a new name to a place under discussion, attention was paid to reduce the strokes of the Chinese character as far as possible so as to make it easier to write.

Finally, permit me to make a brief reference to the problem encountered by my country in the utilization of romanization system. In the Republic of China, there are several systems of romanization being used by the public and the different organizations of the government. All the systems have been in use for quite a number of years. However, only one system is used on the maps published by the government and that is the Wade-Giles system.

There are four ways of pronunciation for each Chinese character, and sometimes we have to depart from the customary pronunciation of the character in order to make it meet some sorts of special requirement. It is often not easy for some of us to adapt ourselves successfully to the Wade-Giles system. Consequently, effort was made several times to revise the said system in order to make it meet the special requirement of the Chinese characters. Particularly worth mentioning was the comprehensive revision undertaken by the Government in 1966. However, much remains to be accomplished in this field.

For this reason, my government intends to establish a Committee with a view to revising the system further so as to make it as readily adaptable as possible to the Chinese characters. The Committee will be composed of officials, experts and professors interested in this special field. And comparative study will also be made of other existing systems in order to work out a most rational system of romanization for Chinese geographical names. However, I wish to point out at this juncture that no matter

how perfect a new or revised system can be developed, it remains the guiding principle in practice that the geographical names of major cities, harbors, mountains, ranges, rivers, lakes and historical sites which are well-known and have been in use for a long time will be preserved as far and as many as possible to avoid unnecessary confusion, misunderstanding and inconvenience.