



Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/CONF.74/L.61
23 August 1982

ENGLISH ONLY

Fourth United Nations Conference on the
Standardization of Geographical Names
Geneva, 24 August to 14 September 1982
Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

REPORTS BY DIVISIONS AND GOVERNMENTS ON THE SITUATION IN THEIR
REGIONS AND COUNTRIES AND ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE
STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES SINCE THE THIRD UNITED
CONFERENCE ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Report by Japan on the state of the
Standardization of Geographical Names

Paper presented by Japan

* E/CONF.74/L.

1. Introduction

Since the Third United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, Japan has made much effort to be active in programmes for standardizing geographical names. In Japan, there is supposed to be more than 10 million geographical names used in daily lives and social activities of the people, and Japan has no prospect to collect and standardize all of them. Since the Third United Nations Conference, however, Japan has continued to standardize about 200 thousand names to meet social requirements for map compilation, residence addressing and others.

2. Domestic Name Organization

The Japanese Government has no centralized agency which is entrusted with all matters referring to geographical names. But, the following agencies and organization have dealt with decision, collection and standardization of names in connection with their own official business.

(1) Geographical Survey Institute, Ministry of Construction

The Geographical Survey Institute has collected many kinds of geographical names chiefly on the lands to indicate them on each series of the national base maps in Japan.

(2) Hydrographic Department, Maritime Safety Agency.

Ministry of Transport

The Hydrographic Department has collected the geographical names on sea coasts and territorial waters of Japan as well as their surrounding waters for the requirement of indicating them on each series of nautical and bathymetric charts. The hydrographic Department has also newly named undersea features after seeking counsel for the Assembly of Geographical Names of Ocean and Bottom features.

(3) National Polar Research Institute, Ministry of Education

The National Polar Research Institute has prepared the geographical names for new places in the Antarctic to indicate them on

Antarctic maps and to apply to Antarctic research activities. In the Institute, the Antarctic geographical names have been decided after seeking counsel from the Antarctic Place Names Committee.

(4) Japan Geographical Association (Affiliated Association of Ministry of Home Affairs)

The Japan Geographical Association has collected all names of the territorial administrative units and of settlements, which are stipulated by laws and regulations.

(5) Joint Committee on the Standardization of Geographical Names

The Joint Committee was established by the Geographical Survey Institute and the Hydrographic Department to carry out the work of standardizing the Geographical names. In the Committee, the Primary and Secondary Education Bureau, Ministry of Education, the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK), the Japan Map Center and the Japan Hydrographic Association also take part as the observers.

3. Standardization of Geographical Names

Of Japan's geographical names, about 140 thousand are the names of territorial administrative units and of settlements stipulated by laws and regulations. Therefore, there happens to be no confusion at their spellings, pronunciations and territorial areas. But, as to other names which indicate the natural features and conventional names on the lands, there sometimes happens to be an uncoincide at their spellings and pronunciations as well as dimensions and locations, because their names have been freely applied among people for a long time. Therefore, the effort of standardization has been made for these kinds of geographical names.

The standardization of geographical names in Japan have been carried out since 1962 by the above Joint Committee on the Standardization of Geographical Names. The objected geographical names are prospected to be 60,000 relating to the natural features and conventional areas, and about 15,000 names have been already standardized so far. Above all, 11,000 names of them have been dealt with since the Third United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names.

4. Names of Undersea Features

As for the names of undersea features, those adopted by the GEBCO Sub-Committee on Geographical Names of Ocean Bottom Features as a result of international cooperative work and approved by IAPD are being used unconditionally. Names of other undersea features have been adopted by the Hydrographic Department, Maritime Safety Agency after seeking counsel from the Assembly on Geographical Names of Ocean and Bottom Features. Since the Third United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, 512 names have been adopted and total of them has amounted to 558 so far.

5. Antarctic Geographical Names

The National Polar Research Institute has dealt with the new geographical names of the Antarctic situated south of latitude 60°s where the Japan has been engaged in the Antarctic observation and research. Decision of the names has been done after seeking counsel from the Antarctic Place Names Committee of Japan. The total geographical names adopted in this Committee has amounted to 267, and 79 of them has been decided since the Third United Nations Conference on Standardization of Geographical Names.

6. National Gazetteer and Toponomic Guideline

In Japan, the national gazetteer which includes all the standard geographical names has not yet been compiled. For domestic use, however, the List of National Administrative Areas (Kokudo Gyōsei Kukaku Sōran) has been issued by Japan Geographical Association. This gazetteer has been revised every year and inclosed all names of the territorial administrative units and settlements. As for the names of natural features, those standardized up to now by the Joint Committee on the Standardization of Geographical Names have been listed up in the Gazetteer of Standard Geographical Names (Hyōzun Tameisyū) which was issued by the Japan Map Center in 1981. Another one is the Gazetteer of Japan Coast (Nippon Engan Tameisyū) compiled by the Hydrographic Department, in which all names of coasts, seas, and undersea features are inclosed.

In the near future, the Joint Committee on the Standardization of Geographical names will compile the national and international Gazetteer including the main geographical names of Japan with the attached Toponomic Guideline.