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

Divisional Report

Paper submitted by Asia South-East and Pacific South-West
Division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names **

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** Prepared by Abdul Majid Mohamed, Chairman of the Division

1. SCOPE OF REPORT

This report covers the activities undertaken by the Division in the intervening period since the 10th United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific, January 1983 to July 1987.

2. DIVISIONAL MEETINGS

2.1 For the period under review, two Divisional Meetings were held, as follows:

- (a) 2-4 October 1984 at Kuching, Malaysia.
Experts from Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand attended the meeting.
- (b) 2-3 September 1986 at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Experts from Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand attended the meeting.

2.2 It is quite disappointing to note that only 4-5 member countries participate in the activities of the Division which consist of the following member countries: Brunei Darussalam, Democratic Kampuchea, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

2.3 Recognizing the importance of the work of the UNGEGN, it is hoped that member countries will make a special effort to participate in the activities of the Division. In lieu of actual participation in Meetings of the Division, contribution by correspondence to the Divisional Chairman are also most welcomed.

3. PROJECT UNDERTAKEN BY THE DIVISION

Whilst each member country has its own program in the standardization of geographical names, several projects are undertaken by the region as a whole. The regional projects take the form of regional maps, gazetteers, training course and a proposed newsletter. These regional projects not only allow for the exchange of technical information in the realm of geographical names, but also foster regional cooperation.

3.1 Map of Asia, South-East and Pacific, South-West

- 3.1.1 Based on the information supplied by member countries of the Division, the Department of Survey and Mapping, Malaysia is entrusted with the publishing of (a) a Physical Map and (b) a Political Map of the Asia, South-East and Pacific, South-West region.
- 3.1.2 A full colour 5th Edition of the Political Map at a scale of 1:7 million was published and distributed at the September 1986 Meeting held in Kuala Lumpur. This map depicts the geographical names as supplied by Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Areas covering the map faces of Burma, Democratic Kampuchea, Laos, Vietnam and Papua New Guinea had to be left blank since no information was received from these member countries.
- 3.1.3 The member countries also approved, at the Kuala Lumpur meeting, that map information from the Political Map can be used by each member country to produce its own miscellaneous map series.
- 3.1.4 As for the Physical Map of Asia, South-East and Pacific, South-West, the Department of Survey and Mapping, Malaysia has just completed the printing of this map in mid-July 1987 and 20 copies were sent to each member of the Division.

3.2 Gazetteers

- 3.2.1 Two gazetteers were produced and periodically updated for the region: the Concise Gazetteer and the Regional Gazetteer. The Concise Gazetteer contains 3193 entries comprising of names as supplied by member countries and depicted on the Political Map of the Division. The Regional Gazetteer contains names of areas within a distance of 30 Km from the international boundary and currently has about 7383 entries.
- 3.2.2 The 2nd Edition of the Concise Gazetteer was distributed at the September 1986 Meeting held in Kuala Lumpur.

3.2.3 Both the gazetteers mentioned above lacked information from member countries of Democratic Kampuchea, Laos, Papua New Guinea, Singapore and Vietnam as lists of geographical names from these countries are yet to be received for inclusion.

3.2.4 Apart from the above, each member country maintain its own National Gazetteer. Both Indonesia and Malaysia report of the usage of computers in the compilation and updating of their National Gazetteers.

3.3 Training Courses

3.3.1 The last training course on toponymy was held in Indonesia in 1982. As this course was generally accepted to be an unqualified success, it was felt that further training courses should be held. The Divisional Chairman was asked to liaise with the United Nations Secretariat for possible financial support.

3.4 Regional Atlas

3.4.1 It was also proposed that a Regional Atlas, at a scale of 1:4 million, be published by Thailand.

This proposal will be forwarded to member countries for their comments and approval before implementation.

3.5 Newsletter

3.5.1 The idea of a regional newsletter, to be called GEONAMES, was mooted sometime in 1982. This newsletter should contain articles or news pertaining to names standardization, toponymy, etc. that are of interest to the member countries regarding the work of the UNGEGN. Even though the idea is acceptable, this project has not taken off the ground due to the difficulty of finding a member country who is willing to assume the role of Publisher to the newsletter.

4. ELECTION OF DIVISIONAL CHAIRMAN

The opportunity was taken on 8 January 1987 during the Eleventh United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, 5-16 Januari 1987, to convene a mini-meeting of the Division. Amongst the items discussed were:

- (1) Status of Projects
- (2) Draft Resolution
- (3) Election of Divisional Chairman.

As regards item (3), the meeting unanimously decided that Malaysia should continue as the Divisional Chairman.

5. NEXT MEETING

The next Meeting of the Division is proposed to be held tentatively in Bangkok, Thailand sometime in 1988.

Department of Survey and Mapping
Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia

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