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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 FIFTH CONFERENCE

Report Presented by China

(Submitted by China) *

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August, 1992

Since the Fifth UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in 1987, further progress and greater achievements have been obtained in this field in China.

1. The supplementary investigation and update of place names have been basically completed in China.

China Committee on Geographical Names decided to carry out the supplementary investigation and update of place names all over the country in 1988, in order to obtain new and changed names in recent years and those place names and information that had not been investigated in the past national general investigation of place names. So far most of the provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government have basically fulfilled this task and obtained an abundance of valuable information.

2. Doing a good job in management of place names with that of cities and towns as the key point .

The National Meeting of the Administrative Work of Place Names was held in Xingtai, Hebei province, from 4 to 6 June, 1991. It is required that the names of village and important physiographical object must be standardized; The names of minority languages and important foreign languages in transcribing into Chinese characters must be normalized by the end of the 20th century in China.

At present, the management of place names in cities and towns must be taken as the key point in our work. The meeting put forward a demand that giving names of cities and towns must be serialized, stratified and standardized.

3. Compilation of reference books and dictionaries on place names

Since the Fifth UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in 1987, many provincial committees on geographical names have compiled different kinds of gazetteers, local records and geographical names maps.

The volumes on Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Hebei, Taiwan provinces and Shanghai, Beijing municipalities directly under the central government as a part of the Dictionary of Geographical Names of China were published in 1991. The volumes on Hunan, Henan provinces and Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region are being printed. The other volumes will be published in the coming years. 《Dictionary of China Geographical Names 》 containing 21240 entries was published by Shanghai Lexicographical Publishing House in 1990.

At present, 《 Geographical Names of the People's Republic of China 》 containing 100000 entries is being compiled. All the names in this gazetteer have been already officially approved by the China Committee on Geographical Names. It is estimated that 《 Geographical Names of the People's Republic of China 》 will be published in the near future.

In respect of transcription from foreign place names into Chinese characters, we have already published 《Transcriptive Gazetteer of the United States of America 》, 《Transcriptive Gazetteer of the Federal Republic of Germany 》, 《Transcriptive Gazetteer of the United Kingdom 》, 《Transcriptive Gazetteer of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics 》.

The regulations for transcribing place names from English, French, German, Russian, Spanish and

Arabic into Chinese have been compiled and are being printed.

《Regulation of Chinese Transcription of Li Language Place Names》 has been also formulated by National Bureau of Surveying and Mapping in 1992.

4. Drawing up the Standardization of the Information System of Chinese Place Names

The Standardization of the Information System of Chinese Place Names worked out by China Committee on Geographical Names includes the following contents: general principles, place names classification and code, data files, establishment of information system procedure of place names, system disposition and information transmission, keeping and control of the information system of place names, etc. The standardization is up to the criterion stipulated by the People's Republic of China. According to the standardization, China has accomplished the experimental work to set up a data base of place names at the county level and it has gone through the criterion.

5. Study of toponymy

China Society of Toponymy was established in 1988, so far it has 500 members and five groups. There are five special committees under the society: theoretical toponymy, applied toponymy, place names textual research, place names management, foreign place names. Six meetings of academic discussion have been held since the establishment of China Society of Toponymy. Sifting out the papers, "Collected Works on Study of Toponymy" and "Collected Works on Toponymy in City" have been published, and "Collected Works on Place Names Management" will be published. The theoretical level of study of toponymy has been developed and the work of place names has been pushed forward through the academic discussion of toponymy. In addition, two kinds of publications issued home and abroad, "Chinese Toponymy" and "Place Names Knowledge", not only spread and popularized the knowledge of place names, but also promoted the development of toponymy.

6. Personnel training

China Committee on Geographical Names has always been considering personnel training as important matter. In 1989 some university students who mainly studied geography or history, from their third year began to study toponymy. Through two years study of toponymy, the graduates began to work with place names. China also pays more attention to the training of cadres engaging in the work of place names. Since 1988, three training sessions have been held, about 100 persons took part in each session. Every province and autonomous region has held training courses time and again to train qualified persons as many as possible. "An Outline on Toponymy" and "Practical Toponymy" are being compiled and published.

To sum up, the Chinese government has attached great importance to the geographical names work. The organization of managing place names has been brought into the functional department of government. Every provincial, regional, prefectural and county's organization or department of managing place names has been established for this reason. The work of place names in China has been developed quickly in recent years. However, China is a big country with many nationalities. The problem in the work of place names is very miscellaneous. It is difficult to realize the standardization of place names to a certain degree and the task still remains very arduous. Chinese experts and staff engaging in place names will continue to work hard and make greater achievements.