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English only

**Eighth United Nations Conference on the
Standardization of Geographical Names**

Berlin, 27 August-5 September 2002

Item 5 of the provisional agenda*

**Reports by divisions of the Group of Experts on
Geographical Names on the situation in their divisions
and on the progress made in the standardization
of geographical names since the Seventh Conference**

**Report of the Asia, South-East, and Pacific,
South-West, Division**

Submitted by Australia**

* E/CONF.94/1.

** Prepared by Brian Goodchild, Chair, Committee for Geographical Names in Australia.

It is more than 4 years since the last Divisional meeting, but I am optimistic that a meeting will be held later this year, or early next in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Committee for Geographical Names for Australasia (CGNA).

The goals of UNGEGN have been promoted in the Division through the United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference held in Kuala Lumpur in April 2000. John Parker, past chair of the UNGEGN Division chaired a Geographic Names Workshop at the Conference. The Workshop discussed a range of matters including:

- the background to the formation of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names and the Conference on Standardization of Geographical names and some of its work;
- the principles of standardisation and consistency;
- the importance of toponymic guidelines;
- examples of what may be included in toponymic guidelines;
- identification of countries in the various UNGEGN divisions in the Asia Pacific region, and
- a draft resolution.

A number of documents from the United Nations and countries were passed around, including examples of how to achieve a standardized approach to naming, toponymic guidelines and field collection of names. A draft resolution was passed by the UNRCC Conference, and is listed below:

Promotion of national and regional geographical names standardization programmes

The Conference,

Noting that the consistent use of accurate place names is an essential element of effective communication worldwide, and supports socio-economic development, sustainable development and national infrastructure,

Considering the importance of geographic names as a fundamental data set of the Asia and the Pacific Spatial Data Infrastructure,

Recognizing the role of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names and the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names,

1. *Recommends* that the Permanent Committee on Geographic Information System (GIS) Infrastructure for the Asia and the Pacific support the work of the United Nations by encouraging nations in the region to develop and/or maintain a standardized and consistent approach to geographical naming;
2. *Also recommends* that countries be encouraged to attend meetings of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names and the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names.

Permanent Committee for GIS Infrastructure for Asia and the Pacific (PCGIAP) – CGNA following its recent annual conference approached PCGIAP seeking support for promoting the importance of geographical place names as a fundamental component of the Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI) of the Asia-Pacific Region, and to establish geographic place names on the work program of the PCGIAP. The executive of PCGIAP decided that names matters are best handled through UNGEGN, but PCGIAP WG2 on fundamental data will take account of relevant UNGEGN policies. It is hoped that the support of PCGIAP will enable CGNA and the UNGEGN Division to develop a new regional gazetteer, adding to the one produced earlier by the Division under Malaysia's leadership.

Asia Pacific Institute for Toponymy – this Institute is reported on under Item 17 in the UNCSGN agenda. This new initiative from Australia is commended, and it is anticipated the Institute, with support from Divisional members, will play a key role in promoting the goals of UNGEGN in the region. It has been set up at Macquarie University, Sydney, to provide support and training for toponymic work in Australasia and South-East Asia. In particular, the Institute will assist UNGEGN in its mission to provide the toponymic training essential to regional development.
