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

Berlin, 27 August-5 September 2002

Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

**Reports by Governments on the situation in their countries
and on the progress made in the standardization of
geographical names since the Seventh Conference**

Country report of Namibia

Submitted by Namibia

* E/CONF.94/1.

Summary

Namibia currently does not have a functional place names authority. Such an authority never existed during the colonial period. At independence, therefore, Namibia had to start from nothing. Before independence, the National Monument Council was responsible for place names. The responsibility for the establishment of a place name authority now lies with the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (MBESC). The Directorate of Survey and Mapping is expected to be a major actor in the standardization of place names. Assistance expected to come from UNESCO.

On its own, Namibia attempted, with very limited success, to set up a functional geographical names authority. As a prelude to that, a workshop on place names was held in April 1998. Professors Raper and Möller from the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names facilitated the workshop and relevant institutions were represented. The workshop focused on the rationale for geographical names, the operations of a typical geographical names authority, and the methodologies and media for communication and dissemination of information on geographical names.

The Government has concluded a consultancy on the structure of the proposed Namibian Geographical Names Commission. This Commission is envisaged as a semi-autonomous statutory body supervised by MBESC. It will advise the Minister on issues related to geographical names.
