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Standardization of Geographical Names**

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National standardization: Field collection of names

Collecting Names of Islands

Submitted by Indonesia **

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Collecting Names of Islands¹

(Resolution 4 /1967 Recommendation B on Collection of Geographical Names)

Being an Archipelagic State, Indonesia counted the number of islands on maps around 17,504 islands, while the names as reported by all provincial and kabupaten/kota² governments amount to around 9,336 names³. However these names have not been standardized yet, before we have enactment of the national names authority. Names as appeared in a number of maps of government mapping agencies sometimes were conflicting as well as in positions since there was no standard procedure for collecting, standardizing and validating names collected by the respective mapping agencies. Since 2004, the Government has established priority to naming the unnamed islands. To proceed with Recommendation B of Resolution 4/1987, the Ministry of the Marine Affairs and Fisheries has embarked on intensive field surveys, visiting each of the islands, however remote they are, in order to get the names from local people, its geographic coordinates by GPS surveys and other ancillary data, such as biophysical data. We adopt the definition of island according to UNCLOS 1982, Article 121, that is “land, naturally formed, surrounded by water and which is always above water at high tides”. However there is explanation what “land” means. Surrounded by water is to mean that islands formed in rivers or formed by deltas are considered islands and hence, they should have names. Within the definition it should also be considered those solid rocks, however small they are, which stake out above high tide should be considered as islands and they should have names and geographic position, even though they may not have significant value at present. Other cases we found, among others, one island has three names (named by local ethnic people who settled on the island in the past) or three distinct islands have only one name, that is the name of the group of three islands, such as “Pulau Tiga” in the Sunda Strait, which literary means “Island Three”. “Pulau” is the generic name of island and “Tiga” is the number, as specific number “3” in wording. An important aspect of naming of islands in Indonesia is that we adopt the generic names of “island” in the various local/ethnic languages, which according to the Language Institute, there are around 700 ethnic or local languages, which enrich the national language “Bahasa Indonesia”. Behind the generic names, there is a long history of human settlement in Indonesia.

¹ Prepared by the Secretariat of The National Team for Standardization of Topographical Names

² *Kabupaten / Kota* are the second levels of governments within a province. Kabupaten is equivalent to “Regency”, whilst Kota is a Municipality within a Province. A Province comprises Kabupaten dan Kota. Province, Kabupaten and Kota are autonomous regions

³ Department of Home Affairs, Directorate General of Public Administration, Sub-directorate of Toponymy Publication, 2006

Steps toward verification and validation of names of islands

During field collections, the survey team should consult the local authorities and communities at village level, and discuss with them the purpose of the survey and to get feedback from the local authorities on existing islands in the region, the name as well as the unnamed islands (Fig. 1). Plan and the route of surveys well then be set. The route of surveys will be tracked through GPS as important document that prove the surveyor's team indeed visited the islands. (Fig. 2). In addition to GPS positioning for the exact location of the island, other ancillary data were collected such as biophysical data, which include population data, since it will be too expensive to collect just the name and position of the islands, once you visited the remote islands. These data will be an important information for the local government to make a plan for potential development as a means for local revenue. The unnamed islands are obtained by interviewing local people especially the fishermen, who use the names of the islands for their navigation references, and if it is agreed by all parties, the standard forms of field surveys containing names, co-ordinates, administrative location, the meaning of names or the history of naming will finally be signed by the chief of the village and countersign by the local authorities and the surveyors.

The second step is the verification by the National Team of Standardization. The group of experts on topographical names of the National Standardization Team visits the provinces and organizes meeting with related authorities from provincial government with participation of local representatives to validate the collected names from language point of view, including the generic name in local language, the spelling, writing system and the meaning of the names.. This is workshop attended by central government officials from the Department of Home Affairs, the Provincial and Kabupaten Governments, the Provincial and Kabupaten People Representatives (Parliament) central government institutions, such as the National Mapping and the Naval Hydro-Oceanographic Surveys organizations, the survey teams who provide the collected names by showing its respective locations on maps and satellite images and its photographic pictures of the islands, so that the participants can be convinced on the “where-about” or “how-it-looks like” of the islands, since most of the participants from the chief local government recognize the islands. Also variant names are provided.

The attachment below shows the activities of the field surveys shows and pictures of varieties of types of small and micro islands.

Remarks and Proposal for UNGEGN Resolution

The UNCLOS 1982 Article 121 on the definition of “Island” has been adopted without any clarification what “land” means. We interpret “land” as a substance that you stand on or walk on. A mangrove forest at sea may be misinterpreted as an island on a satellite images, but in fact there is no land at high tide nor at low tide. What about massive rocks that expose at high tide and even never submerge at low tide/ Any limit of the smallest size of an island or should we define what is micro island?

UNCLOS 1982 Art 121 Section 3 mentions that “Rocks which cannot sustain human habitation or economic life of their own shall have no exclusive economic zone or continental shelf. What happens if these rocks are the outermost points of an archipelagic state. Can it be used as a base point to draw the territorial sea and at the same these base point can not be used to draw the continental shelf. The definition of the boundary of an archipelagic state is defined by drawing straight baseline joining outermost point of the outermost islands and drying reefs, provided..... So does the boundary of the EEZ and Continental shelf are drawn some the same base point. It seems contradicting with Article 121, section. 2. We highly appreciate the UNGEGN make study of this case and if possible to draft a resolution

Attachments



Fig.1 Consultation and Discussions with local government at village level and

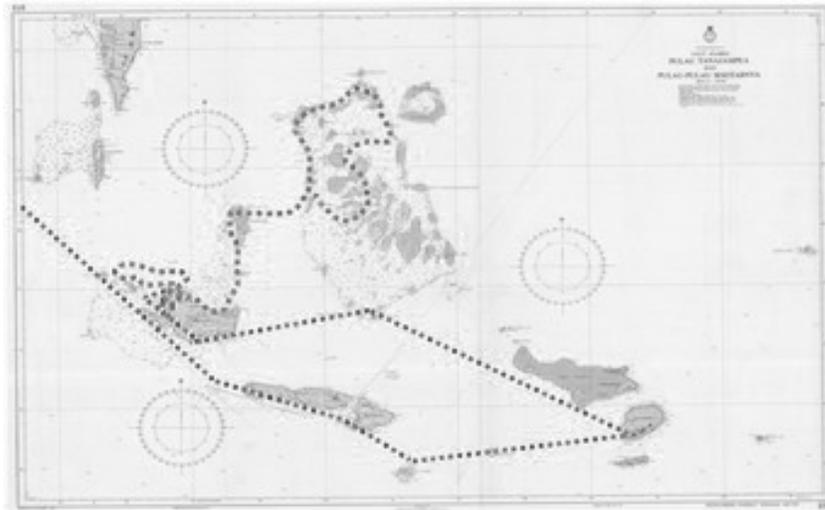


Fig. 2. A Map showing the GPS track during the survey to cover all the islands within the track (An example)



Fig. 3. An island of solid rock at the Sulawesi Sea



Fig.4. An island of solid rock in Tomini Bay, Gorontalo Province, Sulawesi



Fig. 5. An island of solid rock in the Nusa Tenggara Timur Province with some vegetation on the top

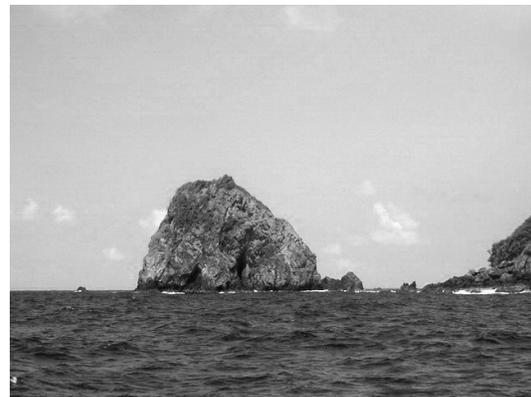


Fig.6. An island of solid rock in the Tomini Bay, Sulawesi



Fig. 7. Two micro-islands in Togian Marine Park. Should they have names? This is fracture of the nearby main island



Fig. 8.. A very unique shape of an island in the Northern Sulawesi



Fig. 9. We consider this not an island since there is no “land” observed at high tide as well as at low tide nor at low tide, just roots.

