



## **Economic and Social Council**

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### **Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names**

New York, 21 - 30 August 2007

Item 7 of the provisional agenda\*

### **Measures taken and proposed to implement United Nations resolutions on the standardization of geographical names**

#### **Commemorative Naming of Geographical Features in Canada**

Submitted by Canada \*\*

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\* E/CONF.98/1.

\*\* Prepared by the Geographical Names Board of Canada, Canada

## **COMMEMORATIVE NAMING OF GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES IN CANADA**

The following commemorative naming guidelines for geographical features in Canada relate to UN Resolution VIII/2.

At the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of UNGEGN in 2004, Canada presented a paper about the history of commemorative naming practices in Canada since the establishment of the national naming authority in 1897. (See W.P. 14 (a) Commemorative naming practices for geographical features in Canada on the UNGEGN Web site at (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/22ndsessiontechnicalpapers.htm>.)

The guidelines below were adopted by the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC) in June 2006. The guidelines continue to be developed, and some suggested amendments will be discussed at the annual meeting of the GNBC in August 2007.

### **COMMEMORATIVE NAMING GUIDELINES**

#### **I – Introduction / Background**

In the fall of 2004, the Commemorative Naming Policy Working Group of the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC) was formed to draft national guidelines on commemorative naming.

Existing documentation on commemorative naming from federal, provincial, and territorial naming authorities was reviewed.

It was apparent that formal guidelines on commemorative naming, as well as a related set of procedures, would promote and achieve consistency across Canada.

#### **Definition: Commemorative Naming**

For the purposes of these guidelines, commemorative naming refers to the naming of natural or cultural features after persons or events, as a way to honour or memorialize the person or event in question.

#### **II – Objective**

To encourage the standardization of existing policies, principles, and procedures associated with commemorative naming throughout Canada.

### **III - Guiding Principles**

When proposing or considering a commemorative name, the following principles will be adhered to, unless they conflict with an existing policy of the naming authority in question:

1. A proposed name will only be considered for persons posthumously; a minimum of five years must elapse from the date of death before a commemorative name proposal will be considered. For events, at least twenty-five years must have elapsed since the occurrence of the event.
2. A commemorative name will only be considered for subjects with a strong association with the area or feature, or of outstanding significance to the cultural legacy or development of the area, the province, or the nation.
3. A proposed name will be supported by the local community and reach beyond a single or special interest group.
4. A commemorative name will not be used to commemorate victims or mark the location of accidents or tragedies.
5. A commemorative name will not be considered for adoption if a well-established and acceptable name already exists for the feature.
6. Ownership of land does not confer the right or entitlement to apply a commemorative name to a geographical feature. The use of unofficial commemorative names in publications, or in landscape dedications or markers, is no assurance that they will be adopted into official geographical names records.

### **IV - Procedures**

Before contemplating a proposal and undertaking the necessary research, proponents should contact the appropriate names authority in the province or territory where the feature is located, in order to obtain guidelines and procedures for establishing a commemorative name in that jurisdiction (see Appendix). Some jurisdictions have application forms, and most will require some or all of the following:

- (a) Map delineating the feature to be named;
- (b) Rationale for the proposal;
- (c) Evidence that the feature is unnamed and that the proposed name is acceptable and has broad community support;
- (d) Brief biography and photograph of the person to be commemorated, including a description of his/her association with the area where the feature is located and an explanation of the unique contribution that would single him/her out for commemoration in this fashion; for events, a description of the event and its association with the feature in question;
- (e) Statement of the proponent's relationship to the person or event to be commemorated;

(f) Proposals should be submitted directly to the appropriate names authority in the province or territory where the feature is located. The proposal should be signed and include a complete mailing address, and daytime telephone number and/or e-mail address.

#### **V – Other Means of Commemoration**

Besides the naming of natural and cultural features, other commemorative naming possibilities exist and should be considered. Please contact the provincial or territorial naming authority to determine its jurisdiction over constructed facilities. Or, contact the local municipality, school board, university or college, etc., to determine criteria and procedures for commemorative naming.

## APPENDIX

### NAMES AUTHORITY LIST

Historical Resources Management Branch  
Alberta Tourism, Parks, Recreation and Culture  
8820 112<sup>th</sup> Street  
Edmonton AB T6G 2P8

#### **Director**

Base Mapping and Geomatic Services Branch  
Integrated Land Management Bureau  
Ministry of Agriculture and Lands  
PO Box 9355 STN Prov Govt  
Victoria BC V8W 9M2

#### **Provincial Toponymist**

Manitoba Geographical Names Program  
Manitoba Conservation  
1007 Century Street  
Winnipeg MB R3H 0W4

#### **Provincial Toponymist**

Project Executive - Commemorations  
Historic Places  
Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport  
Place 2000  
P.O. Box 6000  
250 King Street  
Fredericton NB E3B 5H1

#### **Newfoundland and Labrador**

##### **Geographical Names Board**

Department of Environment and Conservation  
Howley Building, Higgins Line  
P.O. Box 8700  
St. John's NL A1B 4J6

#### **Territorial Archaeologist**

Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre  
NWT Cultural Places Program  
Government of the NWT  
P.O. Box 1320  
Yellowknife NT X1A 2L9

**Director**

Geographic Information Services  
Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations  
Registry and Information Management Services  
P.O. Box 1523  
Halifax NS B3J 2Y3

**Nunavut Toponymist**

Culture, Languages, Elders and Youth  
Nunavut Government  
Box 310  
Igloolik NU X0A 0L0

**Ontario Geographic Names Board**

300 Water Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, North Tower  
P.O. Box 7000  
Peterborough ON K9J 8M5

**Provincial Tax Commissioner**

Provincial Treasury  
95 Rochford Street  
P.O. Box 2000  
Charlottetown PE C1A 7N8

**President**

Commission de toponymie  
750 Boulevard Charest Est,  
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**Saskatchewan Geographical Names Board**

Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan  
10 Research Drive, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
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**Manager**

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**Director, Historical Services Branch**

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