



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General

2 July 2007

Original: English

Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names

New York, 21 - 30 August 2007

Item 17(f) of the provisional agenda*

Toponymic education and practice and international cooperation: Cooperation with national organizations

Toponymic cooperation: Canada And Brazil

Submitted by Canada**

* E/CONF.98/1

** Prepared by Dave Carney, WaterMark Industries Inc., Canada, and Helen Kerfoot, Natural Resources Canada, Canada

TOPONYMIC COOPERATION: CANADA AND BRAZIL

To assist the Brazilian *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística* (IBGE) with its work on the standardization of geographical names, some particular activities were cooperatively undertaken with Canada in early 2007 to address the translation, design and publication of toponymy-related documents in the Portuguese language. These materials were produced in time for use in a five-day in-house training course at IBGE in Rio de Janeiro in March 2007 – training particularly designed for those surveyors and other fieldworkers who would be involved in the collection of locally used geographical names during the forthcoming field season.

The documents were produced as part of the National Geospatial Framework Project (*Projeto da Infra-estrutura Geoespacial Nacional*), an international cooperation project coordinated by IBGE and the University of New Brunswick in Canada. It is sponsored by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) through an international agreement with the Brazilian Cooperation Agency, *Agência Brasileira de Cooperação* (ABC).

National Geospatial Framework Project

The Project goal is to contribute to greater equity in Brazil through the development of a modern national geospatial framework that will be the foundation for future progress in land reform, environmental management, and natural resource development. Impacts caused by the adoption of a new national geospatial framework are many and include technical issues affecting government agencies and private companies, and social impacts dealing with individual rights to land and related information, improvement in environmental management, gender equity and native rights, equal access to information for all citizens, improved services, and good governance.

The Project's main technical goal is to support Brazilian efforts to realize the national adoption of a geocentric coordinate system (SIRGAS2000) compatible with modern satellite technologies such as the Global Positioning System (GPS). Equally as important as the technical aspects of this Project are the significant impact this change will have on maps and geographical databases at all scales impacting on efforts at land reform, indigenous people, the environment, and utilities such as water, gas, electricity, and telecommunications. Maps depicting environmental issues need to be consistent in order to avoid disputes over issues based on different sets of information that are described in part by geographical information that is sometimes inconsistent. In all, this project aims to assist the resolution of all these types of disputes between various agencies with accurate, consistent, and easily available systematic geographical information, including geographical names.

Impact on the Environment

The overall Project has a smaller demonstration project in an environmental conservation unit in the Mata Atlantica, a plant and animal rich ecosystem that once covered 800,000 square miles of Brazil's coastline. Now, only about seven percent of the original Mata remains, 171 species are threatened with extinction, and conservationists say that the survival of the ecosystem is unlikely. The demonstration project will involve new mapping of an area with special emphasis on species and vegetation at risk and the collection of geographical names.

IBGE is eager to develop and promote appropriate standards for the collection, recording and authorization of geographical names, to follow internationally promoted guidelines and philosophies as expressed through resolutions and documents of the United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names, and to modify and apply best practices already used in other countries. New map specifications are being developed to ensure that vegetation depiction on the new mapping meets both cartographic and environmental standards, and initial plans are in place to begin the first field surveys of both vegetation classification and geographical names collection.

Geographical Names

IBGE offered a short course in geographical names for their staff in March of 2007. Over 25 people attended from all areas of Brazil. Since the National Geospatial Project involved the collection of indigenous names, it was agreed to support the production (translation, design, and printing) in Portuguese of the following documents to assist in the training.

- The UNGEGN brochure *Consistent use of place names* (2001) as *Grupo de Peritos das Nações Unidas em Nomes Geográficos* – 500 copies
- The Canadian *Principles and procedures for geographical naming* (2001) as *Princípios e procedimentos para a nomeação geográfica* – 200 copies
- The Canadian *Guide to the field collection of native geographical names* (1992) as *Guia de coleta de campo de nomes natives* – 50 copies

In addition, the UNGEGN *Manual for the National Standardization of Geographical Names*, translated by IBGE in Brazil as *Manual de padronização nacional de nomes geográficos*, was photocopied for training use – 50 copies. After permissions are received from the United Nations, formal publication will be completed.

It must be noted that this work could not have been done without the tireless and thorough work of translators Ana Maria Goulart Bustamante at IBGE, Mauro Villar at the *Instituto Antônio Houaiss* in Rio de Janeiro, and the imaginative designs of Marguerite Trindade in Ottawa.

Looking ahead

It is anticipated that in the future, IBGE will be using these materials to assist in the creation of their own manuals, addressing their specific national needs. Although these documents are initially being used in Brazil for names standardization purposes, it is anticipated that in the months ahead they will also be available (either through the web or in hard copy) to encourage similar geographical names activities in other Portuguese-speaking countries of the world. In addition, the CIDA/ABC sponsored National Geospatial Framework Project is continuing to work with IBGE in order to further cooperate in development of a sustainable national geographical names program.

June 2007