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Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names

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Item 5 of the provisional agenda*

Reports by divisions of the United Nations 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 Eighth Conference

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

Submitted by the Asia South-East and Pacific South-West Division**

Overview

Based on the minutes of the Divisional meeting held in Vienna, on 30 March 2006, it is noted that the important items were as follows:

(a) In future, the chairmanship of the Division should be held from one meeting of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names to the next, with the possibility of a renewed term at the invitation of the Division;

(b) In view of his distinguished service, Mr. Matusin (Brunei Darussalam) should be invited to continue his current chairmanship until the meeting of the Division in Jakarta in August 2006;

(c) The next period of chairmanship should extend from the Jakarta meeting in August 2006 to the meeting of the Group of Experts of 2009.

At the last Divisional meeting, held in Jakarta in August 2006, the current chairmanship of the Division was terminated and Indonesia was elected to chair the Division. Mr. Rudolf W. Matindas, Head of the National Coordination Agency for Surveys and Mapping (BAKOSURTANAL), was appointed Chair of the Division.

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Divisional activity

1. Meeting

Since the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, held in Berlin in 2002, meetings of the Division have included:

(a) The eleventh Divisional meeting held in Kuala Lumpur on 16 and 17 October 2003;

(b) The twelfth Divisional meeting held in Brunei Darussalam from 22 to 24 November 2005;

(c) The thirteenth Divisional meeting held in Jakarta on 24 August 2006. On 25 August 2006, a workshop was organized consisting of two sessions. The first session considered the topic "The role of geographical names in social and economic benefits"; and the second considered "The importance of toponymic data files in supporting good governance".

At the meeting in Jakarta an agreement was reached that the fourteenth Divisional meeting would be held in New York, concurrently with the Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names.

2. Activities

Toponymic activities in the region have been carried in the context of individual country objectives and needs. To date, no real cooperation between countries exists. However, the following should be noted:

- The efforts of Australia and New Zealand in compiling a regional map and gazetteer. These efforts must be followed up and member countries should be encouraged to express their appreciation and respond accordingly.
- The project of establishing generic terms across the languages of the region (action resolution 1), is being continued.
- The geographical names database of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names should also contribute towards the completeness of the database.
- A training course in toponymy was held by such countries as Australia, and Indonesia. Malaysia and Viet Nam are planning to organize such training in the current year.

3. Future activities

A new joint cooperation activity for the Divisional meeting to be held in New York on 20 August 2007 has been proposed by Indonesia including:

(a) A United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names Asia South-East and Pacific South-West Division database, as carried out by the Group of Experts;

(b) A training centre for toponymy in the Asia South-East and Pacific South-West Division.