Ninth United Nations Conference on the
Standardization of Geographical Names
New York, 21-30 August 2007
Item 9 (d) of the provisional agenda*
National standardization: administrative structure of
national names authorities

Nationwide hearings

Submitted by South Africa**

The three-year term of the South African Geographical Names Council, a
national body, expired in March 2006. The Minister of Arts and Culture has
extended its term, which is to expire once he has appointed the new Council. The
Department is re-advertising the nomination process as it felt that the response to
the first advertisement had been poor in light of the massive public interest
generated by the process of name change in South Africa.

The format envisaged is a two-day summit in each province where the
provincial arts and culture leadership together with the Provincial Geographical
Names Council and its provincial committee will explain clearly the procedures that
need to be followed in changing names including the government mandate to bring
about transformation in the cultural and heritage sector.

All the municipalities in the province will be requested to provide a list of the
names that they suggest should be changed. This should be accompanied by a well-
researched basis for such recommendations.

Political entities, labour organizations, traditional leadership, and affected and
interested cultural entities will be allowed to air their views and make
recommendations on the second day of each provincial summit.

The national Geographical Names Council will collate the list of all suggested
names, and carry out more research on the origin of each name. The suggested
names will be then subjected to the rigorous process of consultation as spelled out in
the procedure manual of the South African Geographical Names Council. It is
envisioned that this exercise will be concluded within 18 months.

* E/CONF.98/1.
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