

Brazil, 2017

# Preserving cultural heritage through geographical names

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# Geographical names pivotal role



Reference points

Geographical names

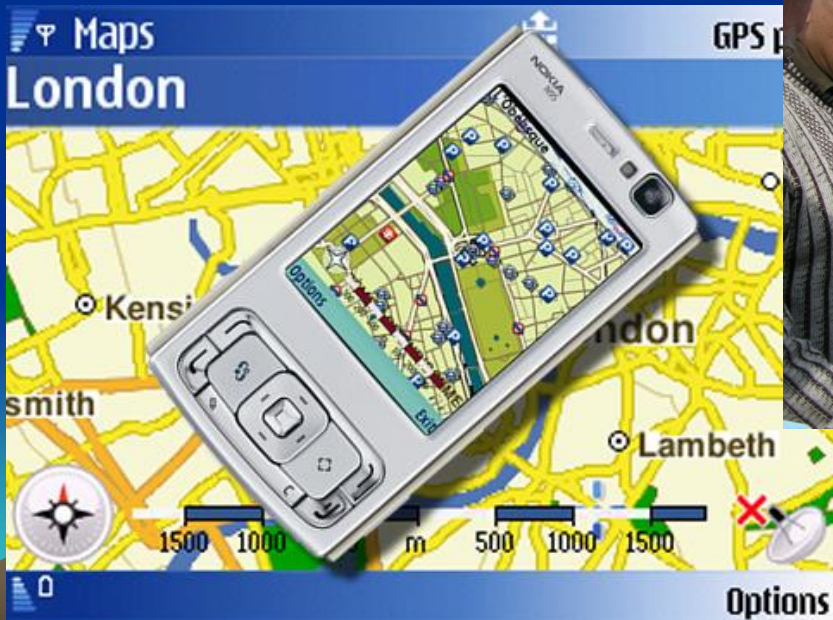
Cultural links

Database queries

Key media points



# Geographical names for daily use





# Toponyms describe our activities





# Languages, scripts - georeferencing, communication

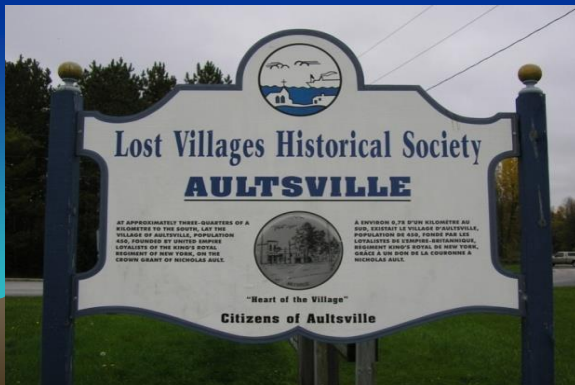


# Connection between Man and Earth

- Toponyms
  - Carry cultural significance (sometimes well hidden)
  - May become modified
  - May be created for new places
  - May change their application
  - May not exist for ever



Urban dwellers (UN data)  
over 80% 2030

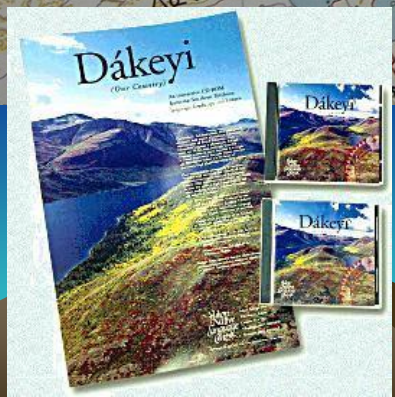






# ᐃᐅᑦᑎᐃᑦ ᓄᓇᐃᑦ ᐃᑎᑎᑦᑕᑕ ᑲᑎᑦᑕᐃᐅᓂᑦᑦᑕ ᓄᓇᐃᑦᑕ (ᐃᑕᐃᑦᑕ, ᑲᓇᑕᑕ)

Inuttitut Nunait Atingitta Katirsutauningit Nunavimi  
(Kupaimmi, Kanatami)  
*Gazetteer of Inuit Place Names in Nunavik (Quebec, Canada)*  
Répertoire toponymique inuit du Nunavik (Québec, Canada)



Names tie the landscape to traditional knowledge and are entry points for oral narratives of Inuit culture and natural history

“Our children must learn ... these stories must never die.”

# Significance of names

- *Place Names of Hawaii* (Pukui, Elbert & Mookini)
- Of 4000 names in the book (3334 Hawaiian origin)
  - 83% Hawaiian names have discernible meanings
    - Most tied to type of feature, plants, animals, birds, sea life, material culture ...
    - Wai (water) - 240 ... *Wai-anu* (cold water); *Wai-nēnē* (goose water)
    - Pā (fence, enclosure) - 34 ... *Pā-moa* (chicken enclosure)
    - Streets: Palapala (learning) / Kapalama (the 'lama' wood enclosure)
  - Some important names – so ancient that no translation
    - e.g. names of islands (Hawai'i, Kua'i, O'ahu)  
... although some meanings provided to tourists



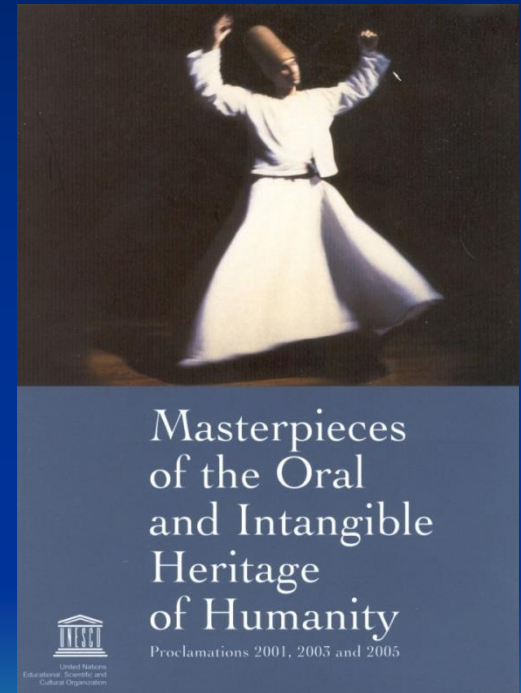




United Nations Educational,  
Scientific and Cultural Organization

# UNESCO

- 2003 UNESCO - Convention for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage
  - including oral traditions, languages, (toponyms), performing arts ...
- Countries may proclaim “Masterpieces” to be preserved
  - 429 proclaimed up to end of 2016
    - reference to cultural space, music, language, oral heritage, dance
      - 55 in S & C America: Peru, Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, Bolivia, Venezuela, Chile, Argentina



None just for toponyms yet – France, Croatia, Norway looking into possibilities



United Nations Educational,  
Scientific and Cultural Organization

## Understanding the natural environment of Zápara of Amazon on Ecuador/Peru border



Bedu in Petra and Wadi Rum, Jordan  
environmental knowledge, central to  
camel husbandry

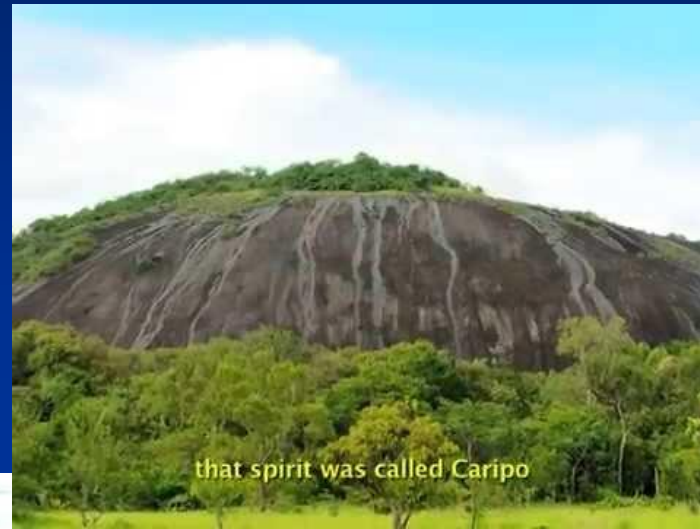
Yaaral and Degal of Mali – festival of twice  
yearly crossing of Niger – transhumance  
routes and pastureland management





# Mapoyo oral tradition and its symbol reference points within ancestral territory

Narratives of collective memory linked to places along the Orinoco River  
- connect the Mapoyo to their past and their territory



Venezuela



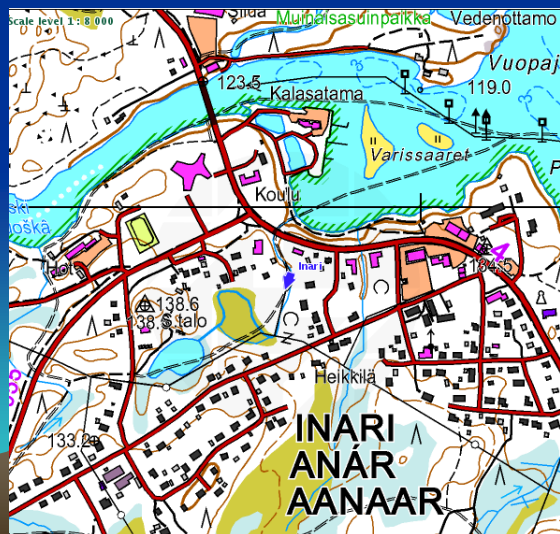
# Single names or multiple names?

Norway



Slovenia

Finland



Spain

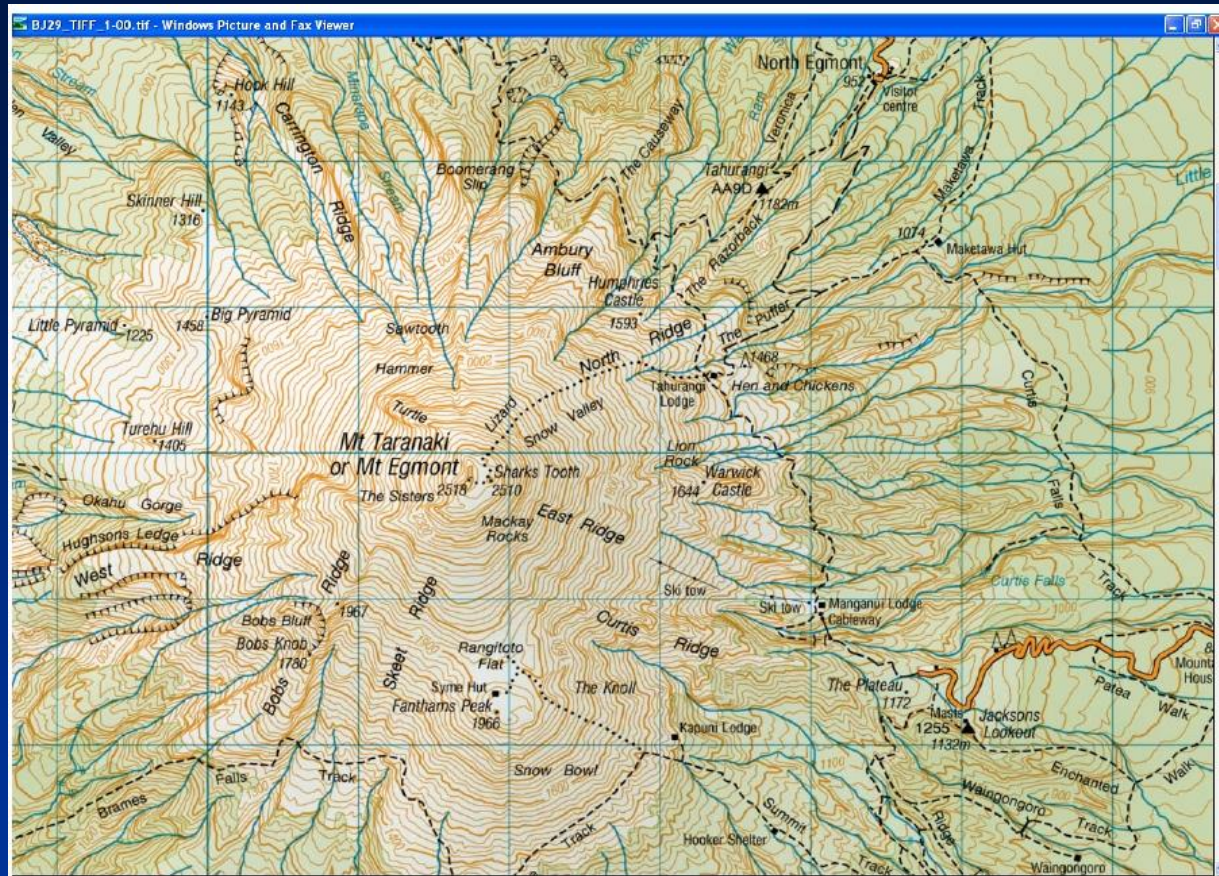


Falkland Islands /  
Islas Malvinas





# New Zealand dual naming



Mount Taranaki or  
Mount Egmont

Aoraki / Mount Cook

Only some features have dual names  
in Maori and in English

# Cultural heritage – name laws



- Some countries have place name acts to preserve heritage through toponyms
  - e.g. Estonia and Norway
    - **Norwegian Parliament** – revised place names law 2005 – to take care of toponyms as cultural monuments – place names are historical “documents” containing information on the name-givers and how they viewed the “place” at the time.
      - References to protecting traditional names; following spelling rules of language; recognizing minority language names (Sámi, Kven) as official; possibility of more than one form of a name





# Active programmes promoting heritage

- Finland

- *Placenames dictionary of Finland* 2007

- For general public; about 4700 names
    - Researched old spellings and dates, etymology, dialects, map use



- 2010, European Heritage Days “Your own environment” celebrating built heritage

- Exhibition: *Story of a Place Name*

- Birth of placenames; name layers representing different languages and time periods; collection of names; checking map names; planning of names in town plans; unofficial names

# Recognition of heritage names: China

- Books and television programmes to celebrate the heritage value of geographical names
- Developed standards for preservation of names
  - of ancient cities, counties, towns, villages ... where name has remained in use for over 1000 years and place has rich historical and cultural tradition; surrounding landscape has special character
  - names in national minority languages – oral tradition of many generations
  - famous mountains and rivers of historical/cultural significance
  - more recent names of places of modern significance





# Falkland Islands / Islas Malvinas

Toponyms recall:

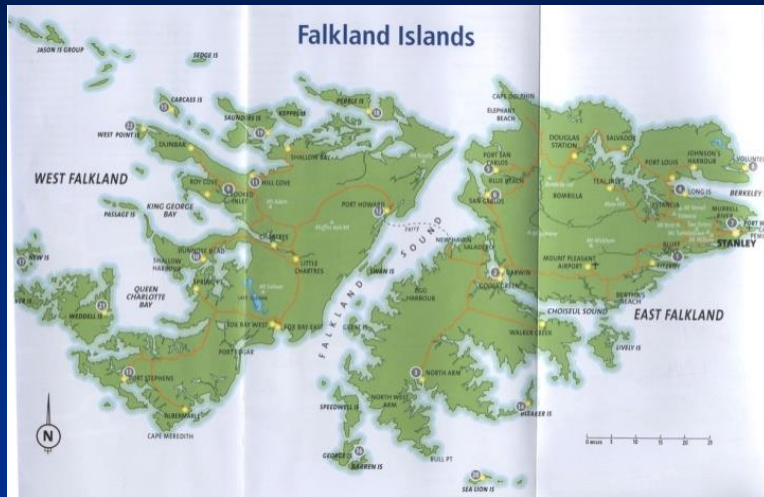
British officials,  
sea captains, settlers,  
French officials

Size, shape, direction ...

Naval, wrecks ...

Local stories

Local farm animals,  
wildlife, local birds,  
plants, bushes ...

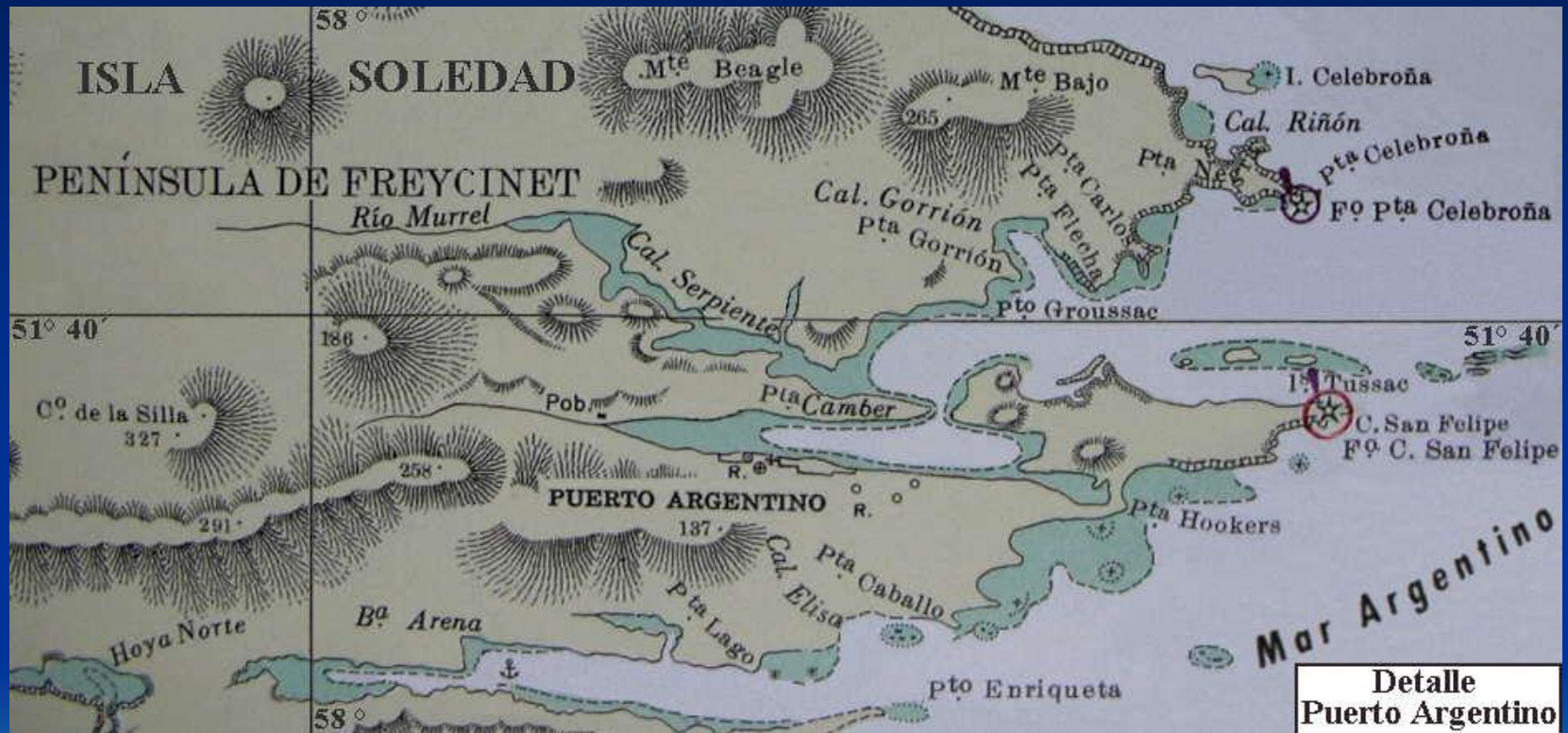


British claim continuous  
"occupation" since 1833



# Islas Malvinas as viewed by Argentina

1766 French sold out to Spain; 1806 Spanish withdrew; 1820 S. America claim



Names on current Argentine maps ... from Navy sources  
many are different names (parallel toponymy)

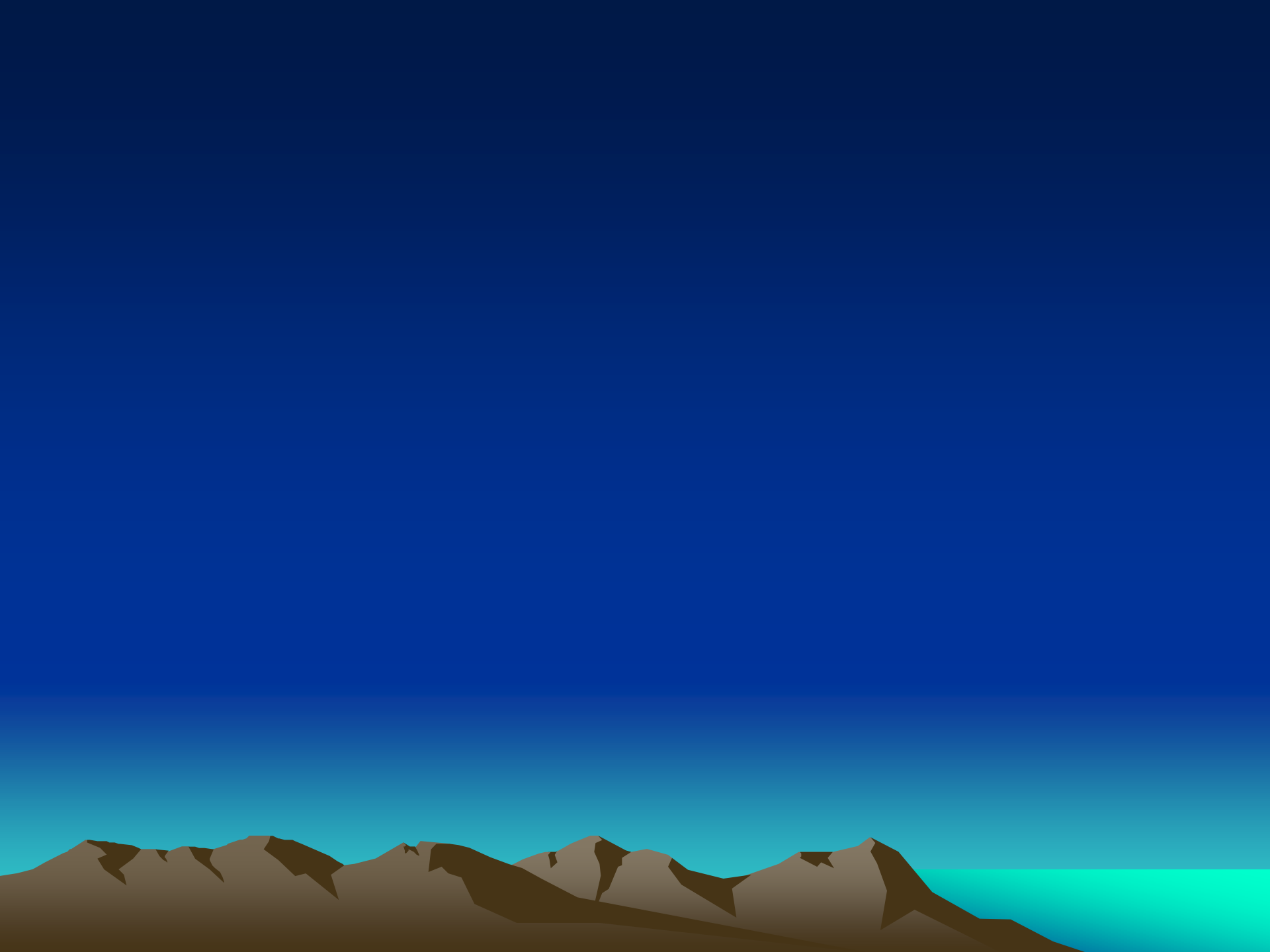




# Support from the United Nations

- UN resolution I/4a 1967 underlines need to establish national agencies ... again V/15 1987
  - Importance of toponyms in spatial data infrastructure ... UN Regional Cartographic Conferences, 2000, 2001 and UN res. VIII/6, 2002
  - Preservation of toponyms as elements of identity and cultural heritage ... VIII/9 and IX/4 + link with UNESCO







# Names may change

- War and conquest
- Boundary changes
- Post-colonial period
- Use of indigenous names
- Changes in romanization systems

.....



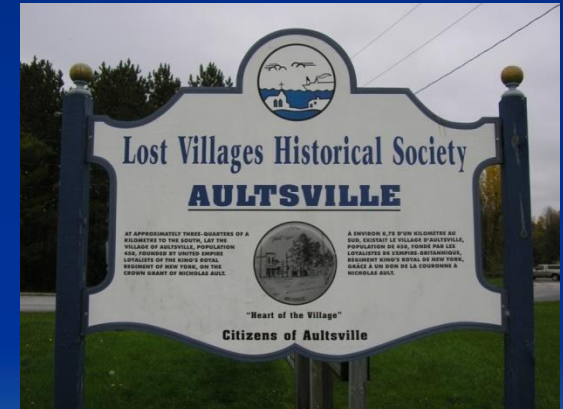
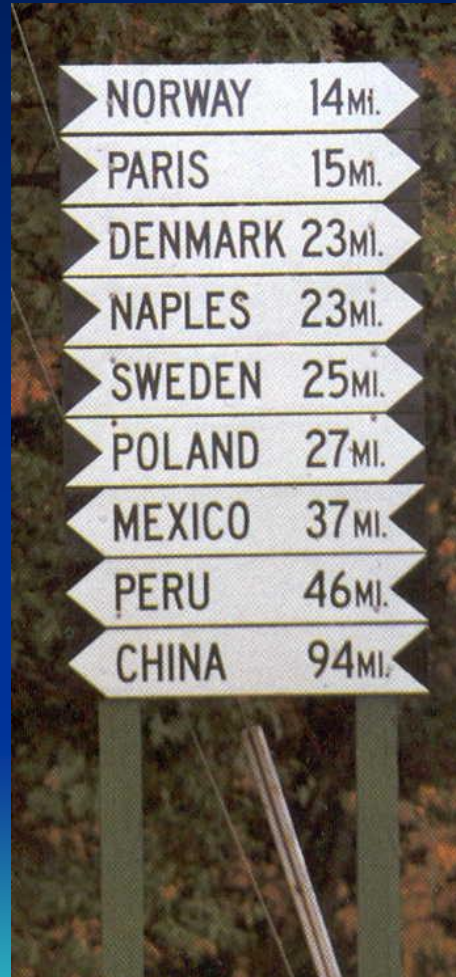
# Names appear, re-appear and disappear

Names needed!



New urban names  
in China

New man-made  
islands in Dubai,  
UAE







**Marracuene**

**Record: in the field**

**Process: in the office**



**Training course: Mozambique**



**Municipal office at Marracuene**



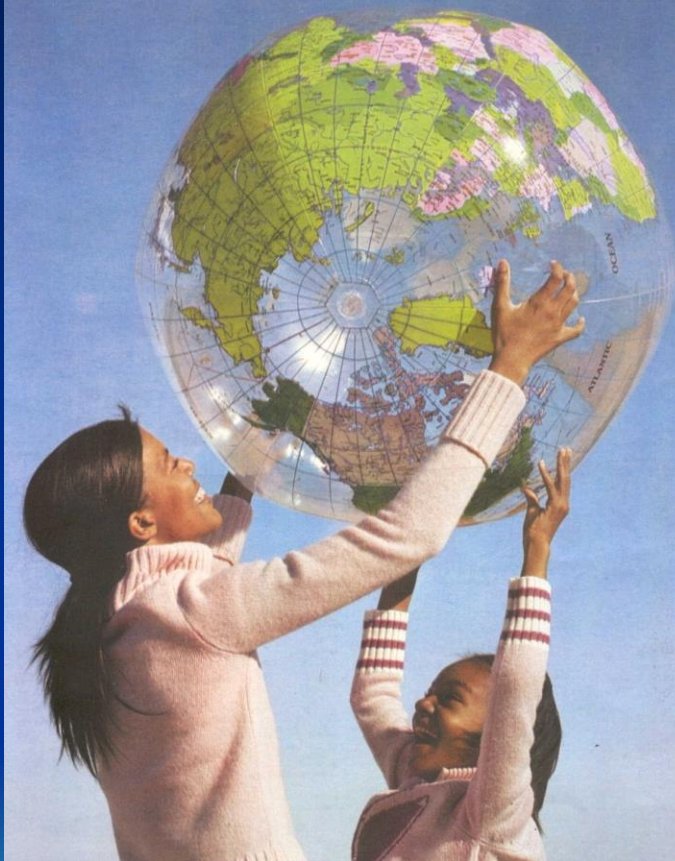
# What is important

# ?





Olhe para o mundo  
com outros olhos



Looking to the  
future ...  
for improved  
communication  
and a world  
at peace