

**Proposed Opening Remarks of Chairman Peter N. Tiangco, Ph.D.
on the occasion of the
First Regional Training Program in Toponymy including Marine Toponymy**

**19-24 March 2018
Dusit Thani Hotel, Makati City**

(GREETINGS)

It is with great pride that i welcome you all here in the Philippines for the first regional training program in toponymy, including marine toponymy.

Allow me to extend my heartfelt congratulations to our colleagues in the United Nations group of experts on geographical names – Asia south-east division (UNGEGN ASED) for spearheading this timely event. My salutations also to the working group on training courses in toponymy for the assistance provided and knowledge to be shared.

This training program is significant since, as i understand, this will be the first time in the history of UNGEGN that marine toponymy will be included on the training in toponymy. Placing paramount importance on geographical names leads to uncovering an area’s cultural, ecological and socioeconomic identities – all of which are key strategies for member states to frame relevant and timely policies for its constituents.

The UNGEGN affirms this, and during its 30th session held in New York on 07 to 18 august 2017, it emphasized the significance of standardizing

geographical names and related areas of cartography and geospatial information management in achieving global communication and understanding.

As group of experts in our region, we share this same vision with the global community. Standardizing processes and procedures in naming terrestrial and marine areas will contribute to common understanding and enhanced security in the south East Asian region.

This six-day training course will provide a platform for senior officials and technical experts from member states to learn the international standards in toponymy. It will also serve as a venue for all the participants to share lessons and experiences in framing geographical names as it relates to a wide spectrum of focus and priority concerns in the region.

With pride, I say that the Philippines is home to lush, wild forests, saturated green rice fields, waterfalls and rivers, all in unspoiled beauty. Through the fieldwork activity in the municipalities of Mabini and Taal in the province of Batangas, you will see glimpse of our scenic countryside and rich marine sanctuaries while being treated with warm Filipino hospitality. Our local resource persons are great storytellers. They will share the history of their place which is a reflection of our complex heritage, a blend of cultures from different foreign influences.

Once again, it is my great honor to welcome everyone to the first regional training program in toponymy, including marine toponymy, here in the Philippines. Let us continuously harness the potentials of geographic information in achieving sustainable development for all.

Thank you very much and a pleasant day to everyone.