Current Status of the Standardization of Geographical Names in Cambodia

His Excellency Ith Sotha, Under Secretary of States, MLMUPC

Mr Chharom Chin, Deputy Director, Geography Department, MLMUPC

Mr Narith Ro, Chief of the Geographic Information Systems Office, MLMUPC

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Historical Background

- The Gazetteer of the Cambodia was published by Geographic Names Division of the US Army Topographic Command in 1971 and 2002.

- The majority of the geographic names in this gazetteer represent local spelling Romanized from Khmer script in accordance with the BGN/PCGN 1962 system with modification to 1971.

- The 1971 edition was derived from 1:50,000 topographic maps, and the 2002 edition published by National Imagery and Mapping Agency which was derived from 1:250,000 JOG map.

- All of those have only names in Romanization with the approval of the United States Board on Geographic Names.

- **The Geography Department** (GD) was established in 1991 under the Council of Ministers, then in 1999, it had been transferred to newly established Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction (MLMUPC).

- One of its mandates is to produce, manage and publish topographic maps as well as geographic based data for the Kingdom of Cambodia.

- **In 1995**, GD published its first edition: The Gazetteer of Cambodian villages, in two volumes.

- The names presented in that Gazetteer are in Khmer and Romanized and have referenced to place names existing on December 31, 1994, that was extracted from the field sheets of the Cartographic Unit of the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) and local Authority.

- The names in Romanized have been provided based on BGN/PCGN 1962 system with minor modification.

- **In 1996**, GD released second edition of its Gazetteer. Generally, the Khmer system and its content were not many changes. However, the Romanized based on transcription system has been used instead of the transliteration.

The Current Status of Standardization of Geographical Names

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1. The Standard Geographic Code

- Geography Department has developed a geographical coding system which has been used within its published Gazetteer.

- The code system represents of all villages, communes, districts and provinces.

- Even though it is still not officially yet, but this Geographical Coding System was accepted as the standard for data producing and sharing among the geographical information systems (GIS) users.

- As of March 31, 2012, the Kingdom of Cambodia has 1 capital, 24 provinces, 198 cities/districts, 1646 communes and 14,096 villages.

Gazetteer Database Online

- Banteay Meanchey
- Battambang
- Kampong Cham
- Kampong Chhnang
- Kampong Speu
- Kampong Thom
- Kampot
- Kandal
- Koh Kong
- Kratie
- Mondul Kiri
- Phnom Penh
  - Chamkar Mon
  - Doun Penh
  - Prampir Meakkakra
  - Tuol Kouk
  - Dangkao
  - Mean Chey
  - Russey Keo
  - Saensokh
  - Pur SenChey
  - Chraoy Chongvar
  - Praek Pnov
  - Chbar Ampov
- Preah Vihear
- Prey Veng
- Pursat
- Ratanak Kiri
- Siemreap
- Preah Sihanouk

Province

Code	12
Khmer	រាជធានីភ្នំពេញ
Latin	Phnom Penh Capital
Reference	ប្រកាសលេខ ៨៩៣ ប្រ.ក
Issue date	30-Apr-2001
Note	

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Boundary

Boundary	
East	ស្រុកខ្សាច់កណ្ដាល និងស្រុកល្វាឯម
West	ស្រុកកណ្ដាលស្ទឹង និងស្រុកអង្គស្នួល
South	ស្រុកកៀនស្វាយ និងស្រុកតាខ្មៅ
North	ស្រុកពញាឮ និងស្រុកមុខកំពូល

List of district

	Code	Khmer	English	Number Of Commune		Number Of Village	Reference
				Commune	**Sangkat**		
1	1201	ខណ្ឌចំការមន	Chamkar Mon Khan	0	12	95	ប្រកាសលេខ៨៩៣ ប្រ.ក
2	1202	ខណ្ឌដូនពេញ	Doun Penh Khan	0	11	134	ប្រកាសលេខ ៨៩៣ ប្រ.ក
3	1203	ខណ្ឌ៧មករា	Prampir Meakkakra Khan	0	8	66	ប្រកាសលេខ ៨៩៣ ប្រ.ក
4	1204	ខណ្ឌទួលគោក	Tuol Kouk Khan	0	10	143	ប្រកាសលេខ ៨៩៣ ប្រ.ក
5	1205	ខណ្ឌដង្កោ	Dangkao Khan	0	13	87	ប្រកាសលេខ ៨៩៣ ប្រ.ក
6	1206	ខណ្ឌមានជ័យ	Mean Chey Khan	0	9	59	ប្រកាសលេខ ៨៩៣

2. Laws and Regulations Governing the Geographical Naming

- Government Decision No. 56 issued on 28th August 2000 established National Commission on Geographical names (13 ministries are membered). The main tasks of NCGN are:
  - To review all documentations and histories related to geographical names in Cambodia;
  - To conduct research and study on geographical names in meaning and writing in Khmer and translate to Romanized based on Khmer Grammar;
  - To review and approve those Romanized names in a unique system with the international standard; and
  - To distribute the approved geographical names and update as needed.
- Sub-decree No. 17 issued on 1st February 2016, administer and guides the topographic mapping activities, including the tasks for the unity of geographical naming as well as its Romanization.

On 17 November 2000, the NCGN approved the standardization/romanization of the 24 names of city/provinces in Cambodia using the old writing system.

List of Provinces and Municipalities
approved by National Committee for Geographical Names

កូដអក្ខរ	ជាភាសាខ្មែរ	ជាឡាតាំង
1	បន្ទាយមានជ័យ	Banteay Meanchey
2	បាត់ដំបង	Battambang
3	កំពង់ចាម	Kampong Cham
4	កំពង់ឆ្នាំង	Kampong Chhnang
5	កំពង់ស្ពឺ	Kampong Speu
6	កំពង់ធំ	Kampong Thom
7	កំពត	Kampot
8	កណ្ដាល	Kandal
9	កោះកុង	Koh Kong
10	ក្រចេះ	Kratié (KRATIE)
11	មណ្ឌលគិរី	Mondul Kiri
12	ភ្នំពេញ	Phnom Penh
13	ព្រះវិហារ	Preah Vihear
14	ព្រៃវែង	Prey Veng
15	ពោធិ៍សាត់	Pursat
16	រតនគិរី	Rattanak Kiri
17	សៀមរាប	Siemreap
18	ក្រុងព្រះសីហនុ	Sihanoukville
19	ស្ទឹងត្រែង	Stung Treng
20	ស្វាយរៀង	Svay Rieng
21	តាកែវ	Takeo
22	ឧត្ដរមានជ័យ	Oddar Meanchey
23	ក្រុងកែប	Kep
24	ក្រុងប៉ៃលិន	Pailin

3. The Romanization system

- There are two major Romanization systems have been used in Cambodia.

1. The system prepared by US Board on Geographic Names and British Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (called BGN/PCGN system) in 1962, based on Service Geographique Khmer system of 1959 using transliteration method.

    - This system was used in the topographic map at scale of 1:50,000 publish by US DMA in decade of 1960 and 1970. Those maps now are out of date, but still using in Cambodia, at the present.

    - This system has been recommended to be accepted as the Standard international system for the writing of Khmer geographic names in the Roman alphabet by the second UN conference on the standardization of Geographical Names, in its resolution of 1972.

    - This system used in the first edition published Gazetteer by Geography Department in 1994. This system based on BGN/PCGN 1962 system with few modifications.

Romanization

I. Consonant characters

1 ក kâ	6 ច châ	11 ដ dâ	16 ត tâ	21 ប bâ[B]	26 យ yô	30 ស sâ
2 ខ khâ	7 ឆ chhâ	12 ឋ thâ	17 ថ thâ	22 ផ phâ	27 រ rô	31 ហ hâ
3 គ kô	8 ជ chô	13 ឌ dô	18 ទ tô	23 ព pô	28 ល lô	32 ឡ lâ
4 ឃ khô	9 ឈ chhô	14 ឍ thô	19 ធ thô	24 ភ phô	29 វ vô	33 អ 'â[C]
5 ង ngô	10 ញ nhô[A]	15 ណ nâ	20 ន nô	25 ម mô		

Khmer Consonants

There are 33 consonants in Cambodian.

II. Subscript consonant characters (see also note 3)
Character numbers correspond to those in Table I.

1	k	6	ch	11	d	16	t	21	b	26	y	30	s
2	kh	7	chh	12	th	17	th	22	ph	27	r	31	h
3	k	8	ch	13	d	18	t	23	p	28	l	33	'
4	kh	9	chh	14	th	19	th	24	ph	29	v		
5	ng	10	nh[A]	15	n	20	n	25	m				

[A] With the same base character, ⸱ is used (ញ), in all other cases only the lower element is used as subscript, e.g. *khnhâ*.

Subscript consonant characters

III. Independent vowel characters

1 គ៌ ĕ		3 ឧ ŏ,ŭ[A]		5 ឫ rœ̆		7 ឭ lœ̆		9 ឯ ê		11 ឱ aô[B]	
2 ឦ ei		4 ឩ âu		6 ឬ rœ		8 ឮ lœ		10 ឰ ai		12 ឳ au	

[A] See note 10.

[B] Variation: ឱ.

The Khmer Vowels and Diphthong

Table 5 – "O" Series Consonant + Vowel (or Diphthong)

Capital and other major cities

Capital city

Lat: 11.56 | Long: 104.90   ភ្នំពេញ - Phnum Pénh

Endonym

Language	City name	Source
Khmer	ភ្នំពេញ *Phnum Pénh*	UNGEGN

United Nations Languages

Language	City name	Source
Arabic	بنوم بنه	UN terms
Chinese	金边	UN terms
English	Phnom Penh	UN terms
French	Phnom Penh	UN terms
Russian	Пномпень	UN terms
Spanish	Phnom Penh	UN terms
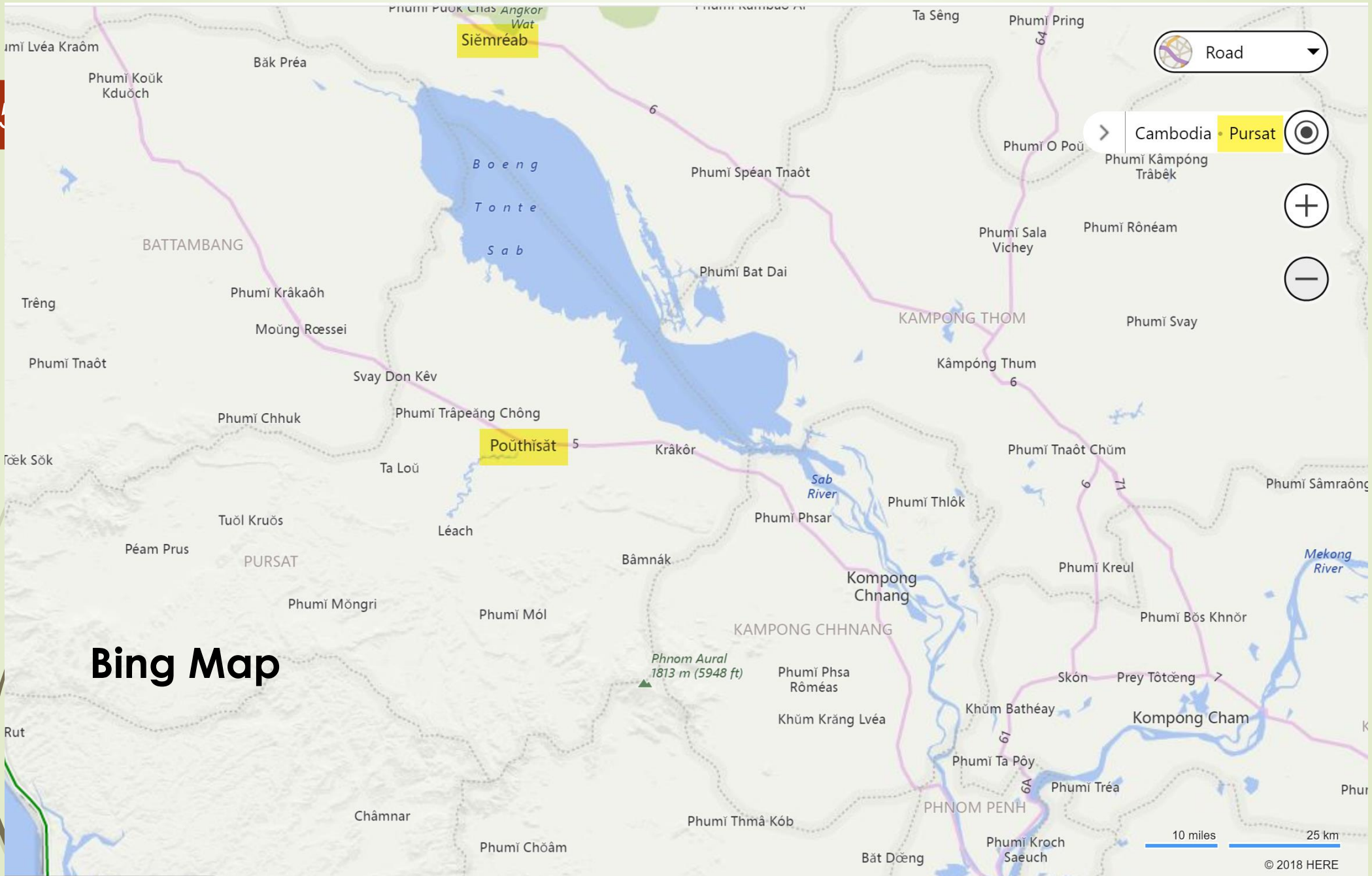
Bing Map

3. The Romanization system (Cont'n)

2. The system used in the second edition published Gazetteer by Geography Department in 1995-1997.

- This system is based on the system used by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service of the U.S. Government. The system refers to **the transcription method** rather than transliteration one.

- Widely use in Cambodia by all users including Census database, Google map and other GIS databases.

- For detail differences of both systems, please see **UNGEGN Technical reference manual for the standardization of geographical names, page 29-34**

TRANSCRIPTION SYSTEM FOR KHMER
(Prepared by Geographic Department, 1995. Last modification 1997)

VOWELS				CONSONANTS			
Independent	Dependent	A-series	O-series	ฅเษากะ	A-series	เษากะ	O-series
	ห	a	o	ก	k	ก	k
	เา	a	ea	ฆ	kh	ฃ	kh
ฅ e	ถ	e	i	ง	ch	ง	ng
ฎ ei	ฐ	ei	i	จ	chh	ฌ	ch
	ฒ	oe	ue	ฑ	d	ญ	chh
	ฏ	eu	ueu	ฒ	th	ฎ	nh
ฅ o	ฏุ.	o	u	ณ	n	ฏ	d
ฅ ou	ฐุ	ou	u	ด	t	ฐ	th
	ฐฺ	uo	uo	ต	th	ธ	t
	เฒ	aeu	eu	ถ	b	ธ	th
	เฒ	oea	oea	ท	ph	น	n
	เฒฺ	ie	ie	ธ	s	บ	p
	เฅ	e	e	ผ	h	ภ	ph
ฒ ae	เฒ	ae	eae	ฟ	l	ม	m
ฒ ai	เฒ	ai	ey	ห	a	ย	y
ฐ ao	เฅ	ao	ou			ร	r
ฐ au	เฒ	au	ov			ล	l
ฐ ov	ฏํ	om	um			ว	v

UN system Vs Provisional system by Geography Department.

No.	Char.	UN system	Provisional		No.	Char.	UN system	Provisional
III.3	ឧ	ŏ, ŭ	o		IV.10	េ឴	œă	oea
III.-	ឩ	(not given)	ou		IV.13	ែ	ê	ae—eae
III.5	ឫ	rœ̆	rue		IV.16	េ឴	au—ŏu	au—ov
III.6	ឬ	rœ	rueu		V.2	ឳ	ă—oă,eă	(not given)
III.7	ឭ	lœ̆	lue		V.(2)	ាក់	(ăk—eăk)	ak—eak
III.8	ឮ	lœ	lueu		V.3	ំ	ă—oă,eă	a—oa
III.9	ឯ	ê	ae		V.(3)	ៃ឴	(not given)	ai—ey
III.12	ឳ	au	ov		V.10	េ឴ះ	aôh—ŏăh	aoh—uoh
IV.4	ិ	œ̆	oe—ue		V.-	ៈ	(not given)	ak—eak
IV.5	ី	œ	eu—ueu		V.-	ៈ	(not given)	eh—is
IV.7	ុ	o—u	ou—u					

Google Map

4. Topographic Database

- Since 1995 with the support of international partners, Geography Department has developed the national topographic database at a scale of 1:100,000 (for whole country), 1:5,000; 1:10,000 and 1:25,000 (on specific area) with detailed mapping features showing hydrography, contours and spot elevations, vegetation, road network, building and administrative boundaries.

- The attribute information include feature properties such as geographical names (geographical-political units, streets, mountains, rivers, lakes, etc.), names of schools, hospitals and other prominent buildings, road width, type and surface, and other information.

- The mapping features are derived from aerial photographs and high resolution satellite imageries. The attribute information is field-validated in coordination with local authorities.

Summary

- The progress in administering of the geographical names by the National Commission on Geographical Names is slow, while some other government agencies have their own programs on geographical names.

- The Geographic Code system(GCS), that has been developed since 1994, but is still not been standardized, yet. However, GCS is updated constantly to account for changes in the geographical-political subdivisions.

- The Department of Geography, as the national mapping agency of the country over the past few years has collected, organized and made geospatial information more accessible to all types and levels of users.

- Currently, GD is working on a nationwide inventory of geographical features, build-up of a national topographic database and working toward updating the transcription Romanization system in UN.

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Thank you for your attention!