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REPORTS BY DIVISIONS AND GOVERNMENTS ON THE SITUATION IN THEIR
REGIONS AND COUNTRIES AND ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE
STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES SINCE THE THIRD UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Country Report of the Philippines

Paper presented by the Philippines

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This report of the Philippines to the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names International Conference covers the period from the last meeting held in Athens in 1977 up to the present. It includes all activities performed and participated in by the country in connection with geographical names and related matters.

I. THE PHILIPPINE COMMITTEE ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

A decade ago, a major reorganization of the government set-up took place. Some offices were merged together, others were abolished, while new offices were created. One of those offices whose functions were deemed unnecessary was that of the Office of the Executive Secretary - hence its abolition.

The abolition of the Office of the Executive Secretary was a severe blow to the surveying and mapping community and to the general public as well. With the position of Executive Secretary as non-existent in the new government and which former incumbents used to be the Chairman of the Geographical Names Committee, the committee ceased to function since then. A national committee on coordination and standardization of surveying and mapping activities was later on created. Seeing the urgent need to have a national names authority, it recommended to the Office of the President the reactivation of the former committee. Follow-ups have been made but up to the present, no action has ever been made.

II. FIELD COLLECTION OF NAMES, OFFICE TREATMENT AND INCORPORATION TO MAPS AND CHARTS

The Bureau of Coast and Geodetic Survey, as the national mapping authority of the government has embarked on the production of a new map series covering the river basins and coastal areas on scale 1:25,000. Field edit teams have been sent out and as a result, voluminous listing of names have been collected. Evaluation and office treatment followed. As of now, six new map sheets covering a portion of western coast of Luzon have been published with new and updated names. The same has been done in the northern part of the country where seventy two map sheets will soon be available with updated geographical names.

Other agencies of the government have had their share in names collection and correction. The Armed Forces of the Philippines Mapping Center have corrected names on fifty map sheets, scale 1:50,000. Likewise, the Bureau of Soils field teams have recently completed correcting

names on twenty six map sheets of the same scale covering a certain area in Mindanao. The Bureau of Lands has also an enormous collection of names that have been reflected on their cadastral maps. Another agency directly involved in geographical names is the National Census and Statistics Office. Aside from names acquisition being performed by its field offices scattered all over the country, it is also tasked with the responsibility of maintaining and updating the Municipality and the Barangay Code Books - a listing of all geographical place names in thirteen volumes.

III. CONFERENCES/TRAINING

After the Athens conference in 1977, regional meetings and a training course were held within the region. The first of these meetings was held in Indonesia in 1980. The Philippines sent a delegate to that gathering. The following year, that was in November 1981, the regional meeting was held in the Philippines. Again, last June, representatives of member countries of the region convened in Indonesia for two weeks. They attended the Pilot Training Course in Toponymy - the first of its kind ever conducted in any part of the world. Our representative, noting the importance of geographical names standardization, in his official report made upon his return strongly recommended the following:

- a. The reactivation of the Philippine Committee on Geographical Names. The Committee shall have an office with permanent staff who have the requisite training and skills to perform the job.
- b. Holding of a similar training course in the country under the auspices of the UN Cartography Section and UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names.
- c. Participation of the country in the forthcoming UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names Conference to be held in Geneva on August 24 - September 14, 1982.

These recommendations, all considered worthy of attention were elevated to the authorities concerned. With their approval which we expect and hope to come out soon, then standardization of geographical names which had been temporarily suspended for some years will be continued.