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**Reports by Governments on the situation in their countries
and on the progress made in the standardization of
geographical names since the Eighth Conference**

National report of Italy

Submitted by Italy**

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1. Summary.

This paper summarizes the main activities developed by the Republic of Italy for the standardization of geographical names. Such activities are carried out by the *Istituto Geografico Militare Italiano* (The Military Geographical Institute of Italy) — as the body in charge of compiling, updating and publishing the official national cartography — in cooperation with other national agencies as well as with experts from national academic institutions.

2. Goals and national programmes.

On the basis of: a) the general goals set by the United Nations; b) the most recent recommendations for the standardization of geographical names made at the 8th International Conference; and c) Italy's peculiar position in the field of toponymy, — the Republic of Italy has moved over the last few years towards achieving the following aims:

- to promote the diffusion of the principles of toponymic standardization within the national territory;
- to add new items to the “Multilingual Glossary of Geographical Features”;
- to start didactic activities focused on toponymic issues;
- to cooperate in the activities organized by the UNGEGN and by experts in toponymy;
- to contribute to the popularisation of toponymy.

3. Problems, solutions and achievements during the reporting period.

Within the framework of the programme outlined above, Italy has carried out the following activities:

- updating, reprinting and spreading the third edition of “Toponymic Guidelines for Map Editors and Other Editors”, issued in both English and Italian for the first time, and fully published on the Internet site: (www.igmi.org);
- enlarging the “Multilingual Glossary of Geographical Features” with valuable additions from other member countries of the Roman-Hellenic Division of UNGEGN;
- updating and extending a web site dedicated to the Standardization of geographical names within the official web site of the *Istituto Geografico Militare Italiano* for a wider distribution, at a national level, of the issues concerning official toponymy and the processing of geographical names for cartographic purposes;
- taking part in the 22nd and 23rd UNGEGN Sessions which were held in New York (2004) and Vienna (2006) respectively;
- attending the sessions of the Roman-Hellenic Division of the UNGEGN that were held in Madrid from June 5th to 8th, 2003, and at Lefkas, Greece, from May 29th to June 2nd, 2005;
- attending the 22nd International Congress of Onomastic Sciences which was held at the University of Pisa from August 29th to September 2nd, 2005;
- attending the National Convention under the title “Cartography, Toponyms, Research Items for Didactics and the Territory” that was held at the University of Salerno on 19th and 20th of September, 2006;
- signing special agreements on cooperation and exchange of geotopocartographic data by the *Istituto Geografico Militare Italiano* with Autonomous Provinces and nearly all Regions;
- starting the updating of the national toponymic database, dubbed “DBTopo”, which contains nearly 850,000 records;
- reviewing various issues of official toponymy by the “Standing Committee Responsible for Supervising the Toponymic Revision of the Map of Italy”. This Committee was established by law No. 605 of June 8th, 1949;
- disseminating the “UNGEGN Brochure”;

- printing and distributing the book “*I perché ed I nomi della Geografia*” (*The reasons for, and the actual naming of geographical locations*) by Sandro Toniolo as a supplement to the journal “*L’Universo*” (ISSN:0042-0409) issue No. 6, 2005.;
- providing a course of toponymy, in cooperation with the Association of Italian Geographers, within the framework of an internship for the “Training of new professionals” that was held at the Higher School of Geographic Sciences of the *Istituto Geografico Militare Italiano* from 19th to 21st of April, 2006;
- a nationwide surveying of activities under way at the administrative Regions and Autonomous Provinces to collect and process toponyms referring to minority linguistic groups. This is an Italian contribution to the building of the international database sponsored by the UNGEGN Indigenous Minority Group Place Names.

Now let me call your attention, in particular, on the problems associated with the non-existence of a single toponymic Authority having jurisdiction in all of Italy. This matter was reported on the occasion of the 8th U.N. International Conference for the Standardization of Geographical Names. I might point out that over the last few years the recently reactivated “Standing Committee Responsible for Supervising the Toponymic Revision of the Map of Italy” has substantially contributed to the solution of the various problems of a toponymic nature. Such problems were indicated by public institutions, cultural associations, scholars and citizens, and were submitted to the *Istituto Geografico Militare Italiano* in its capacity as national cartographic body (according to Law no. 68 of February 2, 1960). The above-mentioned Committee, whose membership has expanded by the addition of representatives from the Regions and Autonomous Provinces having jurisdiction over the territory, is operating constantly. It is committed to ensuring that toponymic issues are addressed uniformly in compliance with the provisions of the laws now in force and with all U.N. recommendations.

4. Conclusions.

The Republic of Italy confirms its support to the proceedings of the U.N. for the standardization of geographical names, because it is convinced of the absolute necessity for each country to arrive at the definition of an official toponymy for its own territory which should be unique and shared at an international level.