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Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

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

Toponymy in languages of native peoples in Brazil

Submitted by Brazil**

Summary***

To strengthen toponymic standardization in Brazil, the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE) of Brazil is modelling and compiling a database that will concentrate all the information regarding geographical names. The database is designed to show many attributes, among them, the ethnolinguistics of names of the administrative divisions, many of which are of native origin. However, it is important that the personnel involved in database insertions be aware that, when related to administrative divisions, the toponyms may have been imposed through toponymic changes promoted by governors and/or lawmakers without consultation with local or native communities, as happened during the late 1930s and 1940s in Brazil. It is suggested that the sources of the names be compiled in geographical names databases, as well as the levels of local participation in the naming process and/or collection of names. This action may prevent the following of false links to traditional and/or native names, especially when decisions on standardized spelling are necessary, as is currently the case in Brazil.

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*** The full text of the paper is being issued in English only as document E/CONF.98/98/Add.1.

