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

Standardization of Geographical Names in Japan

Submitted by Japan **

Summary:

In Japan, geographical names are collected, arranged, and standardized by relevant governmental agencies as they promote their administrative activities. Consequently, the standardization of geographical names is a well -coordinated effort involving various related organizations that have clearly defined tasks. Efforts towards standardization include the following:

- Standardization of geographical names of administrative districts
- Consolidation of geographical names of natural features
- Standardization of geographical names of undersea features
- Adoption of Antarctic geographical names
- National geographical names gazetteer

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** Prepared by Geospatial Information Authority of Japan (GSI).

The Standardization of Geographical Names in Japan

In Japan, geographical names are collected, arranged, and standardized by relevant governmental agencies to promote their administrative activities. As a consequent, the standardization of geographical names is a well-coordinated effort involving various related organizations which all have clearly defined tasks.

A. The efforts made by these organizations for standardization

1. Standardization of geographical names of administrative districts

Municipalities are composed of small administrative districts called cho or aza. The names of small administrative districts are regulated by law, and new names and their areas are published in official gazettes of the national and prefectural governments. Therefore, the areas, notations, and pronunciations of residential geographical names, as well as their names on maps, are standardized. The names are used in the Japanese address system.

2. Unification of geographical names of natural features

In the natural feature names, the name conventionally called by the local are shown on maps and chart. In 1960 the Joint Committee on the Standardization of Geographical Names was established to standardize geographical names by the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan (GSI) which compiles maps of land areas, and the Hydrographic and Oceanographic Department of the Japan Coast Guard which compiles maps of mostly marine areas. Since then, the Committee meets once or twice a year and about 25,000 geographical names had been determined to be used unified on maps and charts.

3. Standardization of geographical names of undersea features

The names of undersea features discovered or surveyed by Japan's maritime survey organizations, and the names has been used historically are given standardized names based on the deliberations of the Japanese Committee on Undersea Feature Names, which consists of academic experts and members of maritime survey institutes and operated by the Hydrographic and Oceanographic Department of the Japan Coast Guard. In its deliberations, the Committee refers to "The standardization of undersea features", which was prepared jointly by the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO) Sub-committee on Undersea Features Names (SCUFN) and the Working Group on Names of Maritime and Undersea Features of the United

Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names. As of March 2019, about 1,600 undersea landforms had been given standardized names.

4. Adoption of Antarctic geographical names

With the exception of geographical features found in the region south of 60 degrees S that have either been named by other countries or used internationally, the topographical features discovered by the Japanese Antarctic Research Expeditions (JARE) and points of major geodetic or observational interest are tentatively named based on the “Code of Antarctic Geographical Naming (enacted by Headquarters of JARE)”. These tentative names are submitted by the Antarctic Place-Names Committee of Japan to Headquarters of JARE, which decides on the official names. As of March 2019, about 350 names had been officially approved and registered.

B. National Geographical Names Gazetteer

In August 2007, the Japanese Government revised the previous edition of “Gazetteer of Japan” in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names. Since then, new information has been updated and published from web site.

This gazetteer contains about 4,000 geographical names, which appear in 1:1,000,000-scale maps prepared by the GSI, as well as 1:1,000,000-scale bathymetric charts and 1:3,500,000-scale international charts prepared by the Hydrographic and Oceanographic Department of the Japan Coast Guard.