

**Thank you Facilitator**

**Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh and a Very Good Morning to all distinguished experts**

## **INTRODUCTION**

My sincere appreciation to the UNGEGN Secretariat for the successful arrangement of this year's session, and for this opportunity for me to share with everyone the impact of COVID-19 on the geographical names work in Brunei Darussalam.

A little bit of Brief background. The tasks and activities of geographical naming in Brunei Darussalam is spearheaded by the Brunei Darussalam National Geographical Names Committee (JKNG) chaired by the Survey Department. This National Committee comprises of government agencies including the Language and Literature Bureau, the Museums Department, History Center and the District Departments.

The process began with list of geographical names that need to be evaluated and approved by the Committee. The evaluation process involve the site visit to the area by the Committee with the attendees of resource people. The geographical name will be assessed by its history, pronunciation, and other criteria and taking into account the sensitivity of the name

## **FOCUS: REORGANISING, STRATEGISING, PROMOTING**

The first case of Covid 19 in Brunei Darussalam was announced in 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020. When the cases started to reduce in number, the second wave again occurred in August 2021. Not only we were not able to carry out site visits and field work, like the rest of the work, we were only able to meet online and focused on paperwork. This gave us the opportunity

to shift our focus from field activities to reorganising records and documentations as well as gearing towards preparing materials and avenues for public awareness.

For that, we have been able to :

- **1. Prepare Guidelines for Geographical Names and Road Naming of Brunei Darussalam** which is expected to be published by this year. The guidelines will serve as a working manual and reference for the committee to ensure that the naming procedures are standardized.
- **2. Revise JKNG's Official Website and Logo** In an effort to promote the activities and objectives of JKNG. the committee is revamping its official website that houses maps of approved names and gazetteer as well as sharing activities and photos of past events. The website provides the latest information for the public especially announcements of new road names and discovery of geographical features. It is the committee's objective to spread awareness to the public of the correct spelling and pronunciation of names and to share the history behind the names.
- **3. Reorganise the Gazetteer** into 23 feature types, documented and published in the JKNG's Official Website.

## **RECREATIONAL HILLS NAMING**

Since the COVID-19 pandemic started, Brunei Darussalam has seen an increase in the number of people participating in recreational activities. Hiking has become one of the Brunei favourites and there is a need to publish maps of hiking tracks for public use and for assisting search and rescue missions as well as for the safety and security.

JKNG's future plans will include investigations of the current hill names and then forwarded to the national authority for approval.

On 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022, Brunei Darussalam has entered endemic phase, and since then we have started back our physical meeting among the committee members as well as our site and field work which has been stopped for almost 3 years.

### **As a CONCLUSION**

The COVID-19 pandemic had given the opportunity for the committee to focus on reorganising records and documentations as well as compiling materials and preparing avenues for public awareness.

Brunei Darussalam through JKNG will continue to be pro-active in its activities and educating the public on the history and uniqueness of the names given to geographical entities.

**Thank you.**