

**Twenty-second Session  
New York, 20-29 April 2004**

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**Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda**

**REPORTS OF THE DIVISIONS**

**The Establishment of the Korean Committee on Marine  
Geographical Names (KCMGN) and other Developments\***

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**\* Submitted by the Republic of Korea**

## **Summary**

The aim of this working paper is to communicate recent developments related to marine geographical names in the Republic of Korea. This paper contains detailed information on the Korean Committee on Marine Geographical Names which was established in 2002 on the recommendation of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO). It also covers major progress in the efforts by the Republic of Korea for the concurrent use of both names, "East Sea" and "Sea of Japan," and the results of the Ninth "International Seminar on the Naming of Seas" held in Shanghai in October 2003.

### **1. Korean Committee on Marine Geographical Names(KCMGN)**

#### **A. Establishment of KCMGN**

##### ? Background

The Central Committee on Geographical Names has so far been in charge of the designation of all geographical features in Korea. However, with the formation of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, the ROK government decided to establish a separate body to govern the management of marine geographical names, as originally recommended by the International Hydrographic Organization(IHO).

##### ? Composition

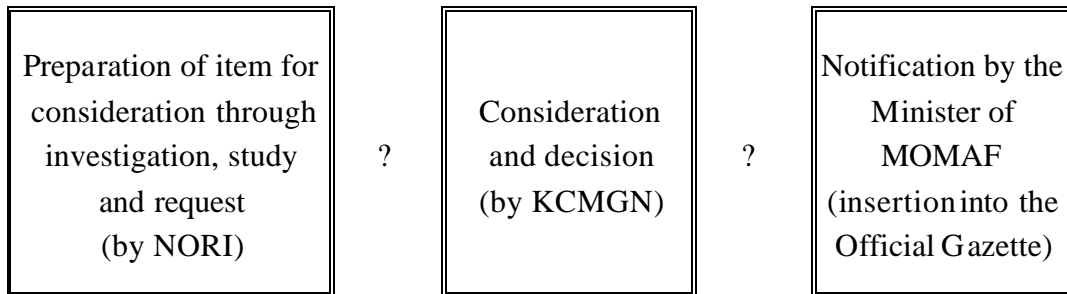
- Chairperson : Director General of National Oceanographic Research Institute(NORI)
- Members from government agencies(seven) : Government officials above fourth grade level from seven related ministries: Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade; Ministry of National Defense; Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs; Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ministry of Construction and Transportation; Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. (on the recommendation of the Ministers of related ministries,)

- Members from academic circles (seven) : Experts in fields related to marine geographical names (on request of Chairperson)

? Function

- Designation and adjustment of marine geographical names
- Investigation, study and maintenance of marine geographical names
- International cooperation and technical exchanges for the investigation, study and recognition of marine geographical names
- Deliberations and decisions on the development of studies related to the designation of names.

? Procedure for naming of geographical features



**B. Activities of Korean Committee on Marine Geographical Names**

- Starting with the first meeting on July 12, 2002, a total of five meetings have been held so far. At those five meetings, the KCMGN established rules of procedure of its own and reached decisions on twenty marine geographical names such as “Wangdolcho”.
- At the third meeting on February 20, 2003, the KCMGN proposed the drawing up of guidelines to establish a definition of terms and standards for consideration of marine geographical names.
  - The KCMGN entrusted the Korea Maritime Institute(KMI) with a research project from July to December 2003;
  - The KCMGN prepared the guidelines for the standardization of marine geographical names;

- The KCMGN completed the guidelines through a process of thorough examination of the IHO/IOC criterion of standardization of marine geographical names as well as various related materials, and through the reclassification of marine geographical names and the definition of terms and standards for their consideration,

### **C. Future Plan**

#### ? Standardization of domestic marine geographical names

The KCMGN will do the following to standardize domestic marine geographical names:

- continue to proceed with standardization of domestic marine geographical names under the guidelines for the standardization of marine geographical names;
- establish new undersea feature names through the study of related materials about nameless undersea features such as reefs and rocks;
- create a database through the establishment of a system for the management of marine geographical names and offer users data on marine geographical names via the Internet;
- set up public relations to encourage everyone in the country to use standardized marine geographical names.

#### ? Standardization of international marine geographical names

The KCMGN will do the following to standardize international marine geographical names:

- provide standardized domestic marine geographical names to organizations concerned with marine geographical names, including the United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSGN), International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), and Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC);
- strengthen overseas publicity activities about the current status of misuse of marine geographical names on the maps and charts published in some countries and correct those errors;

- try to give standardized names, based on the principles of the international standards for geographical names, to marine features identified differently by neighboring countries.

? The promotion of international cooperation

The KCMGN will do the following to strengthen international cooperation in the field of marine geographical names:

- participate in international conferences related to marine geographical names such as the UN, IHO and IOC, grasp world trends and work for the interchange of personnel.;
- support activities in the academic field on marine geographical names domestically and internationally.

## **2. Geographical Names of “East Sea” (Sea of Japan)**

With regard to the question of the name of the sea area lying between the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago which has been raised in meetings of the Group of Experts on Geographical Names, it has been consistently recommended that the countries concerned continue their efforts to find a solution acceptable to all, taking into account relevant resolutions.

Following these recommendations, the ROK government has made utmost efforts to hold meetings with Japan in the hope of resolving this problem bilaterally. As a result of the Korean government’s continuous proposals for bilateral consultations, the first meeting was held in Tokyo in September 2003. Even though the consultations did not lead to any productive results, only confirming both sides’ different positions on the issue in question, the Korean government will strengthen its efforts to make the holding of subsequent meetings possible. In line with this, the Korean government suggested holding the second meeting in Seoul preferably in March 2004. The Japanese government, however, has not responded to this proposal yet. The Korean government sincerely hopes to receive positive response from Japan at an early date.

Together with its efforts to resolve this issue on a bilateral basis, the Korean government has made parallel efforts to bring this issue to the attention of the

international community. As a result, an increasing number of renowned map publishers, broadcasting companies, newspaper companies and magazine publishers throughout the world have begun to use both names, “East Sea” and “Sea of Japan,” simultaneously.

Notable examples in this regard are the recent decisions by USA Today, CNN, Le Monde and The Economist to use both names, “East Sea” and “Sea of Japan,” simultaneously. Barnes & Noble also used both names “East Sea” and “Sea of Japan” in “World Atlas” (2002). Most recently, American geography text book, “Human Geography” by H.J. de Blij and A. Murphy, adopted the use of both names in the edition of 2003.

The Republic of Korea is of the view that, given the historical background to this sea area and the international standardization rules for designating geographical names, it is most reasonable to use both names, “East Sea” and “Sea of Japan,” simultaneously pending a mutually acceptable agreement among the countries concerned. It should be noted that the Korean position is in compliance with Resolution III/20 adopted by the UNCSCGN as well as IHO Technical Resolution A 4.2.6.

### **3. The Ninth International Seminar on the Naming of Seas**

The Society for the East Sea, a Seoul-based incorporated body, held the Ninth International Seminar in October 2003 in Shanghai to promote academic discussions about various issues related to geographical names. The Seminar, which was held with co-sponsorship of the Centre for Korean Studies of Shanghai’s Fudan University, mainly discussed the principia for the naming of seas and historical processes for the formation of sea names, with particular emphasis on the sea names in Far East Asia.

The Society invited world-renowned scholars and experts in this field from China, France, Japan, North Korea, the Netherlands and the USA. In particular, the papers presented by Mr. Brahim Atoui, Vice-Chair of UNGEGN, and by Mr. Xiangmin Du, a distinguished Chinese expert, provided the participants with a valuable opportunity to understand the general aims and roles of the UNGEGN.

The Tenth Meeting is scheduled to be held in Paris in November 2004.