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Features beyond a single sovereignty and international cooperation

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**The Issue of Standardizing the Sea Name Between The Korean Peninsula and
The Japanese Archipelago in the North-East Asian Continent**

Submitted by Democratic People's Republic of Korea**

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**THE ISSUE OF STANDARDIZING THE SEA NAME
BETWEEN THE KOREAN PENINSULA AND THE JAPANESE
ARCHIPELAGO IN THE NORTH-EAST ASIAN CONTINENT**

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

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The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as a full fledged member of the United Nations has, since the 6th Conference of the UN Standardization of Geographical Names held in 1992, formally proposed the issue of restoration and standardization of the sea name between the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago in the North-East Asia Continent and made sincere efforts for its proper resolution. This notwithstanding, it still remains unsettled regretfully.

In order to help understand the truthfulness of the issue, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea presents to the 10th United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names the following views and position from the perspective of both the history and geographical name standardization.

1. The legitimacy of the “East Sea of Korea”/“East Sea”, the sea name between the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago in view of its history.

The Korean nation, who has been living in the Korean peninsula and its surroundings from the early days of human civilization, explored the sea in the east of Korea and named it as the “East Sea”.

The “History of the Three Kingdoms”, the oldest history book of the country, says that the sea name “East Sea” began to be used before B.C 59 and other old documents such as the “Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms”, the “History of Koryo” and Lijosilok (the true records of the Li Dynasty) indicated the sea in the east of the country as the “East Sea”.

The fact that the name “East Sea” was originated from the Korean nation 2200 years ago was also proved by the Chinese archives.

The “Classic of Mountains and Rivers”, the oldest Chinese geographical literature states that “Tonghae(East Sea)” in Korean language means the sea name fixed 2200 years ago.” The papers published by other Chinese scholars, too, described that the “East Sea” had been used continuously from B.C 480 till the last stage of Qing Dynasty.

The sea name between the Korean peninsula and the Japanese Archipelago in North-East Asian Continent was called “East Sea of Korea” or “East Sea” by

neighboring states for a long time. It was called “East Sea” in Europe in the beginning, and then “Oriental Sea” meaning that it is the sea in the east. It began to be called “Corea Sea”, after the country’s name which was “Corea”.

Even Japan itself, founded as a result of integration into one in A.D 670, called the sea “Sea of Corea” until the early 20th century, which is also indicated explicitly in the maps and history documents published in Japan.

In particular, Japanese themselves recognized the name “East Sea” in recent times. For example, the Japanese magazine “Survey” issued in November 2003 stated that “The east sea of Korea area was recorded as the ‘Korea Sea’ in the map drawn by Shogunate (the-then feudal government of Japan) on the basis of the knowledge of the 18th century and technology of 19th century.”

“Kankyō – Dainihon 4 shin Map” of the Japanese government published in 1807 also named the east sea as the “Sea of Korea” and marked the sea area near Japan as the West Sea of Japan. There is no mention that the “East Sea” was renamed as “Sea of Japan” till the end of 19th century in Japan.

The names of “East Sea of Korea”, “East Sea” and “Sea of Korea” originated from the Korean nation and were used broadly in the East and the West. (For more information, read the annex)

2. Historical background of description of “Japan Sea”

1) The origin of the name “Sea of Japan” and its waters.

In the middle of the 19th century, Japan then at the initial stage of capitalism, opened up several ports such as Nagasaki in order to induce the capital and technology from Europe and described the sea area facing the Pacific Ocean as the “Sea of Great Japan” or “Sea of Japan” or “East Sea of Japan”.

This is how the name “Sea of Japan” originated, whose waters meant only the eastern waters of Honshu, Japan.

This historical fact has been admitted by both Europe and Japan itself. Geographers including Netherlander Kemper in their map of 1727 and Bering in

his map of 1752 described the coastal waters of Pacific Ocean in the east of the Japanese archipelago as the “Sea of Japan”. The book “Sea of Great Japan” published in Japan in 1942 asserted that it was common, at the time of Tokugawa period, to mark the east sea of the Japanese archipelago as the “Sea of Great Japan”, “Sea of Japan” and “East Sea of Japan”, introducing fifteen maps that described the coastal waters of the Pacific Ocean as the “Sea of Japan”.

2) Description of “Sea of Japan” as a remnant of the Japanese colonial era

As the name “Sea of Great Japan” evoked criticism that it had a hidden intention for overseas expansion, and the Ocean waters began to be called as the “Pacific Ocean”, Japan changed the “Sea of Great Japan” into the “Sea of Japan” and moved the name to the west side of Japan.

It was in the early 20th century when Japan had been invading the Northeast Asia by waging wars on China and Russia and then occupying Korea that the name “Sea of Japan” appeared in the west waters of the Japanese archipelago as a geo-political means for advancing to the Korean peninsula and the Northeast Asia.

Seizing the International Hydrographical Conference convened in 1929 as a golden opportunity to fix the name of the “Sea of Japan”, Japan sent three delegates (among them two army officers) to the Conference and unilaterally changed the “East Sea of Korea” into “Sea of Japan” and had it recorded in S-23(Boundary between Ocean and Sea). At the time, delegates from Russia and China, neighboring countries, were not present at the Conference.

Thereafter, the “Sea of Japan” was renamed as the “Sea of Great Japan” and used as a geopolitical means to dominate the whole Pacific Ocean. Entering mid-1940s’, it was renamed again as the “New Sea of Japan” indicating the area covering the Pacific Ocean, the East Asia and the Indian Ocean, which Japan planned to occupy.(Read the annex)

As aforementioned, the description of the “Sea of Japan” reflects the Japan’s economic and territorial ambition and has nothing to do with the original

meaning of the area as it is a product of political conspiracy to obliterate and distort the time-honored historical name “East Sea”.

The fact itself that the “Sea of Japan”, the political and bogus name pursuing overseas expansion, has first been recorded in the IHO publications, is a typical example neglecting the agreed principles of international law and constitutes an act of usurping a geographical name.

This robbery act of Japan, that took place during the period when Korea was deprived of its sovereignty and the Korean people had been forced to use Japanese surnames, should have been already addressed properly together with the settlement of the post-World War II.

3. Justness of the description of “East Sea of Korea” in the light of the principles of geographical name standardization, international practices and current international trend

1) The name “East Sea of Korea” fully confirms with the general principles to be observed in the geographical naming.

(1) The name “East Sea of Korea” is in line with principles and international practices for the sea designation that require giving consideration to its legitimacy, continent-based and geographical direction-based.

◦ Most important in the international practices relating to the sea naming is to respect and give precedence to historical tradition.

According to this practice, the name “East Sea of Korea” or “East Sea” with more than 2200 year-long-history has already been widely recognized in the east and the west as the one with a long history uncommon in the world in view of its origin and historical legitimacy.

◦ Also important in the international practices is to name the sea by giving consideration to continent-based and geographical direction-based.

Most of the sea naming has been done in accordance with the geographical practices mentioned above.

The “East Sea of Korea” has a clear meaning, geographically indicating the sea area situated in the east side of the northeast Asia or the one in the east side of the Korean peninsula, which is easily understandable to everyone.

The Koreans named the sea area as the “East Sea of Korea” or “East Sea” meaning that the area is located in the east of Korean peninsula, and the Europeans took it as matter of course to term the area as the “Sea of Korea”, “Oriental Sea” or “East Sea of Korea” viewing it from the Korean peninsula on the basis of the continental and geographical direction basis. Even Japan also used the name “Sea of Korea” with the same view as the Europeans.

(2) The name “East Sea of Korea” / “East Sea” also conforms to the principle to follow the international practice of liquidating the remnants of the old era.

In the past, the colonialists unilaterally distorted and eliminated the geographical names originated and used by the natives in their colonized and temporarily occupied territories and designated them at will for their own interests.

Eliminating such geographical names is in full conformity with the current international trend as part of liquidating the remnants of the past.

The use of the name ‘Sea of Japan’ instead of the “East Sea of Korea”, whose name had lasted for over two thousand years, has been resulted from the Japan’s occupation of Korea.

At present, the only colonial remnant throughout the world in the field of geographical naming is the name “Sea of Japan”, though more than 6 decades have passed since the end of the colonial rule.

3) The sea name “Korea East Sea” or “East Sea” fully conforms also with the technical rules of the United Nations and other organizations on standardization of Geographical Names.

When more than two names on one place are presented, the rules of UN standardization of the geographical name require the selection of the name with the oldest historical and cultural traditions, in accordance with the principle of “one name for one location”.

The UN Standardization Rules on the Geographical Name states that “Either

single name or compound name is a proper noun to indicate always a place and its language origin should be always considered, i.e, it means that the language inscribed as a given name should be considered.”, “The original practice of the geographical name in the territory and the territorial water of any country is the regional practice of the geographical name, consisting of languages being used by the country’s people.”, “It defines that the traditional geographical names should be preserved into the historical traditional type”.

The International Geographical Union and the other organizations including IHO, have provisions in their respective technical rules that require defining the only name with the clear geographical background as technical name and should not reflect any political purpose i.e, economic and territorial interest in the sea name.

The name “East Sea of Korea” or “East Sea” is a pure technical name that has been given to only one place i.e to designate the east waters of the Korean peninsula since it had lasted for thousands of years since its designation and never vagabonded from this place to another like the “Sea of Japan”.

It has been recognized that the name “East Sea of Korea” or “East Sea” is the superior name with its long historical and cultural tradition that cannot be compared with “Sea of Japan”.

(4) The name “East Sea” reflects the physiographic features in the east waters of the Korean peninsula of northeast Asian continent.

All geographical names can be selected as the internationally recognized official name, only when they are in conformity to the landscape of the geographical object.

In the formation of the “East Sea of Korea”, the physiographic features in the coastal area of the northeast Asian continent with the Korean peninsula as the center are the main aspect, and therefore, the “East Sea of Korea” is the name that conforms to its physiographic features from technical viewpoint.

2) International trend related with the use of the sea name between the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago.

The International community is moving towards restoring the use of the name

“East Sea of Korea” or “East Sea”, with proper understanding of its origin, history and tradition of “East Sea of Korea”, and cognizant of Japan’s economic and territorial ambition reflected in the name “Sea of Japan”.

Publications, textbooks and mass media all over the world are increasingly using the names “East Sea of Korea or “East Sea” and “Sea of Japan” simultaneously.

Percentage of “East Sea / Japan Sea” investigated

No	Year	Number of countries	Number of maps	Number with simultaneous use
1	2000	60	392	11 (2.8 %)
2	2005	67	331	36 (10.8 %)
		61 of them	116	21 (18 %)
3	2007	75	353	84 (23.8 %)
4	2011	75	353	100 (28.2 %)

In particular, the rate of the use of “East Sea/ Sea of Japan” went up to 50.4 % in 2011 in the G-7 countries’ (except Japan) that are producing most of International maps.

In May 2009, the USA newspaper “New York Times” used the name “Sea of Japan” for the “East Sea” and later on, carried a notice of stating that the “East Sea of Korea” was expressed as the “Sea of Japan” by error.

In 2001, the UKHO used the name “East Sea” in the catalogue of its publications and data of UK Admiralty.

4. The mission of the UN conference for standardization of geographical name and the principled position of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea

The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea considers that the competent UN Conference for Standardization of Geographical Name mandated to standardize

equitably all of the geographical names in the world should formally discuss the problem of the sea naming of the east waters of the Korean peninsula according to the principles of objectivity and impartiality, the technical rules on the standardization of geographical names and the international practices, and exert all efforts needed to resolve the issue in the most aboveboard manner.

Though the previous Conferences recommended the concerned parties to seek a negotiated resolution of the issue, Japan has not yet responded to negotiations.

Worse still, it gives rise to serious concern that certain member states attempt to politicize this issue or use its resolution as a gift for political agenda.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea expects that all member states would positively respond to restoring the east sea name of the Korean peninsula in northeast Asian continent by eliminating the colonial remnants and standardizing it in accordance with the historical legitimacy, international practices and technical rules relating to the geographical naming.

Annex 1.

LOCAL AND EXTERNAL ARCHIVES ON THE ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE NAME “KOREA EAST SEA”/ “EAST SEA”

- 1) In our old historical books such as “History of the Three Kingdoms”, “Chronicles of the Three Kingdoms”, “History of Koryo” and the “Chronicles of King Sejong”, there are several hundreds of legends, myths, songs, stories and articles which demonstrate that the sea area had been named “East Sea” for a lengthy period of time, before the foundation of Koguryo state. (B.C 277)

Some of the records are as follows.

- “Dong Hae (East Sea) on the stele of King Gwanggaeto of the Koguryo Kingdom built in A.D 414
- “Dong Hae” (East Sea) in the “Paldo – Chaong do” (Maps of Eight Provinces of Korea) in the “Sinjeung Dongguk Yeojiseungnam”(1530)
- “Dong Hae”(East Sea) in “Ryong namchido” published in 1747.
- “Dong Hae”(East Sea) in “Seobuk gyedo”(Map of the north western frontier of Korea, 1712, 1776
- “Dong Hae”(East Sea) in “Yojido”

Here, the name “Dong Hae” is the Korean style name of the sea area.

- 2) Historical Evidences of the name “East Sea” in Chinese old Books.

The Chinese scholars stated in the “Eighth International Seminar on the Naming of Seas: Special Emphasis Concerning the North Pacific Ocean” that:

“The first and official name for the eastern sea of Korea in Chinese ancient work was ‘Donghae(East Sea)’ and it was the only name used until the later stage of Qing Dynasty (1616-1911).

“The original name of ‘East Sea’ must be restored for the sea area eastern to the Korean Peninsula. ” (Gu Renhe, Geographer, Yanbian University, China)

The oldest Chinese geographic literature, “The classic of Mountains and Rivers, related to the name of ‘East Sea of Korea’, that means the name for the sea area had been fixed down 2200 years ago”
(Jing Tian, Professor, Department of Geography, Yanbian University, China)

3) Inscriptions of the “East Sea” in the old European Maps.

- Mare Oceanum Orientale: Vinland (1440)

(Voyage de Carpini en Mongolie en 1245 – 1247)

(Giovani da Pian de Carpini)

“The name ‘East Sea’ started to be used in the old European Maps from the 13th century.

The copies of the maps are in the archives of Yale University.”

(Book “East Sea in the world maps” Lee Ki suk, Kim sin, Seo Chong Chol)

- Mr, Guillaume Delisle, the French cartographer named the sea as “Mer Orientale ou Mer de Coree” in the “Carte des Indes et de la Chine”(1705)

It is very important, because since then the names that he has designated were used widely by various cartographers on many maps.

Those are as follows.

- Joseph Nicolas Delisle (1750)
- Philippe Buache(1744, 1754)
- Jacques – Nicolas Bellin (1735, 1764, 1765)
- Didier et Gilles Robert de vaugoundy (1749, 1762, 1775)
- Jean – Denis Janvier(1754)
- Antide Janvier(1760)
- Hubert – Felix Jaillot (1792)

- les britanniques John Senex(1711)
- Emmanuel Bowen(1744, 1747, 1752)
- Robert Sayer(1749)
- John Arrowsmith (1794, 1798)
- Iatta(1785)

In old European maps, the name “Sea of Korea” was in fashion more than “East Sea”

(Philippe PELLETIER, Professor of Geography, university of Lyon, France, in the minute of “8th International Seminar on the Naming of Seas : Special Emphasis Concerning the North Pacific Ocean” 2002. 7.24)

4) The followings are the evidences recognized by Japan.

According to the book “Great Japan Sea” written by the historian and geographer Yayuzawa Sintaro in 1942, “the sea area with current name of the ‘Sea of Japan’ has been called as the “Sea of Korea” until the “Meiji Yusin” (1868) and he quoted a dozen of exemplary cases and 15 maps were presented on which the names of “Sea of Japan” and the “Sea of Great Japan” was used to indicate the eastern sea area of Honshu, Japan.

In the text of “Fishing Treaty” concluded between Korea and Japan in 1883, the sea area was named as “Sea of Korea”

In the “Japan – buynhaeyado” and “Sinjeong Manguk-Jeondo”, the old Japanese maps of Tokugawa period” where the “Sea of JOSEON”(Sea of Korea) was quoted were officially opened to the public. (Japanese news, dated 11 June, 1998)

“Kankyo – Dainihon 4 Shin Map, the Map of Government office (1870, Meiji 3) writes East Sea of Korea region as “Sea of Korea”, and the sea near Japan as “West Sea of Japan”.

Annex 2.

Data related to the origin of the “Sea of Japan”.

- “In the map produced by Adrian Reland in 1715... the Southern Sea area of Houshu – Sikokku (Pacific Ocean) was designated with the name “Maris Japonici Pars” (“Sea of Japan”)

Therefore, the use of the name ‘Sea of Korea’ was, without doubt, superior in European scholars during 1690 ~1750.

(Philippe PELLETIER, Professor of Geography, university Lumiere, Lyon, France, in the minute of ‘8th International Seminar on the naming of seas: Special Emphasis concerning the North pacific Ocean’ 2002. 7.24)

- In Japanese maps made by Kamper, Netherland(1727) and produced by Bering(1752), the pacific coast sea eastern to the Japanese Archipelago was named as “Sea of Japan” and the eastern sea of Korean peninsula as “Sea of Korea”

Introducing 15 maps located to the east of the Pacific Ocean in the Book “Great Sea of Japan” published in 1942 in Japan, designated the current Pacific Ocean as the ‘Great Sea of Japan’, ‘Sea of Japan’, ‘East Sea of Japan’ in ‘Tokugawa period’ and it has been written that the name of the eastern sea area of the Korean peninsula as the ‘Sea of Korea’ was common even in the early of ‘Meiji Era”

““ After the publication of the ‘Sinjeong Manguk-jeondo’ by a well-known Japanese astronomer, Takahasi, it appeared that the name of the ‘Sea of Japan’ was used for the Japanese eastern sea area towards the Pacific Ocean and the sea area for which the name ‘Sea of Japan’ is currently used was named as the ‘Sea of Korea’.

It becomes evident from the above-mentioned..., the name of the ‘Sea of Japan’ couldn’t be found in none of the Eastern and Western Maps”

(Japaneses scholar, Aoyama Haruo. “Map and ‘Sea of Japan’ 1995. 2)

Annex 3.

Background of the first appearance of the name “Sea of Japan” for the East Sea

The name used by Matteo Ricci, Italian missionary in the “Konyo mankuk chondo”(Map of World Atlas) was not used in the Western maps in the late of 16th century, those which were used as the source material.

Though the map “Konyo mankuk chondo” was delivered to Japan, the name “Sea of Japan” couldn’t be formally established.

(Japaneses scholar, Aoyama Haroo. “Map and ‘Sea of Japan’ 1995. 2)

Annex 4.

Evidences demonstrating the Japanese economic and territorial interest covered behind the “Sea of Japan”

The article, “now that the sea area was named ‘Sea of Japan’, Japan has the maritime sovereignty for the sea area”, was carried in the “Japanese Fishery Magazine” published in Japan in 1893.

And the article in which it was mentioned that “it is possible to name ‘New Sea of Japan’ for the Pacific Ocean and Indian Ocean, by getting maritime supremacy of the oceans” was open to the public. (The author of the article was Captain Hirade, the head of press section of Japanese Navy in the interview with NHK Broadcasting Agency and Tokyo Nizniz newspapers)

“Though the sea was named ‘Korea Sea’ in the map published by government based on the Knowledge of 18th century and technology of 19th century, it was changed into ‘Sea of Japan’ when publication was ordered in Europe.

And because the environment of national expansionism was created in the early of ‘Meiji’ Era and the pacific ocean was named ‘Great Japan Sea’, it

seems the sea area in question was forcibly named as the ‘Sea of Korea’” (“Survey” magazine, January 2003)

Annex 5.

International trend to insist the withdraw of “Sea of Japan”, old colonial remnant

“If the name ‘Sea of Japan’ was used by force in the periods of Japanese colonization to Korea and the name was recognized internationally in the same period, it is reasonable to request the revision of the name to international community” (Professor Yoshii Keiitsi, Niikada University, Japan, 2002. 9.15)

“The name of the ‘Sea of Japan’ seems to be the result of the logic of the might in the circumstance when the imperialists and colonialists were expanding”

(Gu Renhe, Geographer, 2009.9.15)

“Now that the name ‘Sea of Japan’ was not agreed by the neighboring states, the historical tradition should be respected and the original sea name must be restored.”

(Chinese scholar, Zhu Shiguang, article in the ‘Jung-Ang Newspaper’, 1997. 6.11)

“The Japanese argument is the camouflage to keep the past imperialist remnant”

(Seminar on the ‘East Sea’ in the World Maps’, July 2002)

Annex 6. Unlawfulness of the “Sea of Japan”

- “When the IHO determined the designation of the sea area, the governments of Korea, China and Russia could not exert any influence. Japan sent delegation consisted of 3 delegates including 2 army officers to the IHC in 1929”

(Jun Sagong’s presentation “Historical Circumstances of ‘Korea Sea’ and ‘East Sea’ and consideration on International custom” submitted to the “9th International Seminar on the Naming of Seas: Special Emphasis Concerning the sea Names in Far East Asia”)

-“Sea of Japan” was approved in the conference of IHO in 1929. The name “East Sea” disappeared under the Japanese colonial occupation of Korea in early of 20th century and the 1st IHO Conference played part of it. Japan did send a delegation but there was no participation of Koreans. (“Argument of South Korean government”)

-In 1994, “Japanese News” reported it as follows

“With the conception that the ‘Sea of Japan’ is the result of Japanese aggressive war in the past, it seems that it is normal for neighboring states to react on the use of the name ‘Sea of Japan’ in the dialogues.” (Japanese News, 1994)

-“Chinese scholars issued 12 papers through 7 international seminars on the geographical name of the “East Sea” and 11 of them were about the name of “East Sea” and stated that the renaming and standardization of the “Sea of Japan” should be seriously discussed as per international law. The area of the sea is not inner sea of Japan, thus the name of the “Sea of Japan” is against the interest of neighboring countries.”

(Jing Tian, Professor, Department of Geography, Yanbian University, China, 2002.7)