



**Economic and Social Council**

Distr.  
LIMITED

E/CONF.74/L.38  
14 July 1982

ENGLISH ONLY

---

FOURTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE  
STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES  
Geneva, 24 August to 14 September 1982  
Item 12 (c) of the provisional agenda\*

POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND CO-OPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS  
FOR THE NAMING OF FEATURES BEYOND A SINGLE  
SOVEREIGNTY: UNDERSEA FEATURES

Developments in the treatment of undersea  
feature names in Canada, 1977-1982

Paper presented by Canada

---

\* E/CONF.74/1.

\*\* Prepared by Mr. Stephen B. MacPhee, Dominion-Hydrographer of Canada and Director General of the Canadian-Hydrographic Service, Ocean Sciences and Surveys Sector, Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Canada's Advisory Committee on Undersea Feature Names is chaired by the Dominion Hydrographer. Its members include representation from the Department of National Defence, the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, the Geological Survey, the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Secretariat of the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (CPCGN). The advisory committee meets at least twice a year, usually in Ottawa. In 1981 a meeting was held in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia to permit participation by marine scientists from the Bedford Institute of Oceanography and members of the CPCGN residing in the Atlantic Provinces. Similarly, one of the advisory committee's meetings was held this year in Sidney, British Columbia, to allow participation by marine scientists at the Pacific Institute of Ocean Sciences and by the British Columbia member of the CPCGN.

The advisory committee has played an active role since the Third United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in 1977 in attaining an internationally acceptable single list of undersea generic terms and definitions. The respective undersea name working groups of the United Nations and of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) reached agreement on the guidelines, the name proposal form and the list of terms and definitions in 1979.

The advisory committee deals with approximately 50 new names for undersea features a year, with 379 new names having been submitted to the chairman of the CPCGN for approval between 1977 and 1982.

It is anticipated that there will be increased scientific and economic activity on the ocean floor adjacent to Canada, with the advisory committee being more frequently called upon to endorse new names and consider the appropriateness of new terminology for ocean floor features for which present terminology is inadequate. The advisory committee avoids changing established terminology, but discourages the extension of inappropriate terms to newly named features. It has been cautious about approving new names until it is authenticated that the proposed terminology is appropriate. The whole philosophy of undersea feature naming and feature identification is being critically examined by the advisory committee.

An important development since 1979 has been the production of the Gazetteer of Undersea Feature Names. The gazetteer has approximately 3,500 names for features submerged at low water, and also includes names outside territorial waters but considered to be in Canada's areas of interest. Each name is accompanied by detail on the type of feature, geographical coordinates and the relevant map or marine chart. For subsequent editions, it is anticipated that detail on the origin and use of each name and on additional descriptive notes on the size and relative location of each feature will be included.

-----