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INTERNATIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC ORGANISATION

*Report to the 22nd Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names
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As regards geographical names, the IHO is involved in the following two activities:

1. Undersea Feature Naming

The IHO cooperates with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (of UNESCO) on an ocean mapping programme known as GEBCO¹ and aiming at synthesizing global ocean-floor bathymetry. GEBCO is directed by an IHO-IOC Guiding Committee and supported by Sub-Committees on Digital Bathymetry and Undersea Feature Names. The Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names (SCUFN) selects those undersea feature names to be shown on the digital and paper products resulting from GEBCO and all IOC regional ocean mapping projects (known as International Bathymetric Charts²), and on nautical charts at small scales for international marine navigation. The scope of SCUFN is limited to international waters.

SCUFN works in close collaboration with the Advisory Committee on Undersea Features (ACUF) of the U.S. Board on Geographical Names (BGN). Cooperation is also being maintained with the SCAR³ W.G. on Geodesy and Geographic Information, which has produced a composite gazetteer of all Antarctic place names. Finally, in accordance with SCUFN mandate, cooperation with UNGEGN is ensured via the IHO liaison to UNGEGN, at present Mr Randall E. Flynn (USA-NGA).

SCUFN members are nominated by IHO and IOC Member States, as recognized experts in the field of bathymetry, geomorphology and/or marine geology. They meet annually and copies of all meeting reports are provided to the UNGEGN Secretariat.

All names selected by GEBCO-SCUFN are contained in a Gazetteer database which is maintained at the International Hydrographic Bureau, as Secretariat of SCUFN. The current version of the GEBCO Gazetteer is available from the GEBCO website (www.ngdc.noaa.gov/mgg/gebco/).

SCUFN is also responsible for undersea feature nomenclature. Results are contained in IHO-IOC Publication B-6 "Standardization of Undersea Feature Names". The current, 3^d edition of B-6 (English/French and English/Spanish), published in 2001, is available on the GEBCO website.

Meetings

The 16th SCUFN meeting was held on 10-12 April 2003 at the International Hydrographic Bureau, Monaco. On this occasion, 164 names were examined by the panel, including 62 names in the

¹ General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans

² Currently there are seven IBCs, covering the Mediterranean (IBCM), the central eastern Atlantic (IBCEA), the Caribbean area (IBCCA), the western Indian Ocean (IBCWIO), the western Pacific (IBCWP), the Arctic Ocean (IBCAO) and the south eastern Pacific (IBCSEP). A new project for Antarctica / Southern Ocean (IBCSO) should be launched in July 2004.

³ Scientific Committee for Antarctic Research

Arctic Ocean, 24 names in the Caribbean area and 11 names in the western Indian Ocean. SCUFN eventually selected 100 new names for inclusion in the GEBCO Gazetteer. A new Chairman, Dr Hans Werner Schenke (Germany) was elected.

The 17th SCUFN meeting will take place in St Petersburg, Russian Federation, on 8-11 June 2004.

2. Limits of Oceans and Seas

The IHO publishes "Limits of Oceans and Seas", as IHO publication S-23, which describes all oceans and seas, with their limits and names. The intention is to assist nautical cartographers in depicting such features on marine charts, so as to avoid any ambiguities in naming them.

The edition in force is the 3rd edition (1953), which is on the IHO website (www.iho.shom.fr). A draft text of a fourth edition has been prepared and will be made available when finalized and approved by the IHO Member States.

(original signed)

Vice-Admiral Alexandros MARATOS,
President of the IHB Directing Committee.