

**Group of Experts on
Geographical names**

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Agenda Item 5

Report of UNEGN Liaison Officer to the International
Hydrographic Bureau

United Nations Group of Experts on
Geographical Names

29 September 1986

12th Session

Geneva, Switzerland, 29 September - 7 October 1986

Agenda Item No.5, Reports of divisions, liaison officers, and experts.

REPORT OF UNEGN LIAISON OFFICER TO THE
INTERNATIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC BUREAU

Since the last session of the Group of Experts, as UNEGN Liaison Officer to the International Hydrographic Bureau (IHB) I carried out the following actions.

1. In April of 1985, I attended a meeting at the IHB headquarters in Monaco to participate in work of a committee concerned with naming ocean bottom features for application to the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO). The details of that meeting were summarized in a report I circulated to members of the former UNEGN Working Group on Undersea and Maritime Features. The report, a copy of which is enclosed, also mentioned decisions made by the Advisory Committee on Undersea Features of the US Board on Geographic Names concerning names proposed by Turkey for features in the Aegean Sea. The report also asked that members submit names proposals to the UNEGN Secretary for distribution to other countries.

At the meeting in Monaco, I had the opportunity to work with marine scientists from several countries, including Robert Fisher of the United States, Galina Agapova of the USSR, Andre Robertou of France, Gerald Ewing of Canada, Felix Mouzu of Argentina, Admiral Orlando Affonso of Brazil (a director of IHO), Robin Falconer of New Zealand, and Desmond Scott and William Watson from the United Kingdom. Dr. Fisher served as chairman of the committee responsible for reviewing names. I was impressed with the ability of committee members to work together to select the best names for the GEBCO series. Antoine Ferrero-Regis of the IHB staff provided quick and thorough records to meet the demands of a fast-paced work schedule.

2. Early in 1986, I sent information to IHB for inclusion in the IHB publication, "List of Geographical Names of Undersea Features of the GEBCO 5th Edition and on the Small Scale IHO International Chart Series." The remarks were designed as an introduction to the publication and described the contents and explained some characteristics of names in general. In addition, I recommended that the IHB list of names, or gazetteer, be joined with another IHB publication, "Standardization of Undersea Feature Names," which contains guidelines for naming, proposal forms, and terms and definitions. Combining the publications as a single item would be a convenience to users.

3. I have received no comments from members of the former Working Group since the 11th UNGEGN. This seems to indicate that they are satisfied with the decision to permit the IHB to assume major responsibility for coordinating undersea naming activity, within the scope of its operations. While IHB is thus capably working on undersea names, I recommend that nations continue to carry out national naming programs in accordance with UNGEGN guidelines. This includes communicating with the UNGEGN Secretary as suggested in paragraph 3 of the enclosed report. With regard to maritime features, there is no evidence that any nation wants to initiate a program to standardize names of these features. In this connection, the IHB item, "Limits of Oceans and Seas" (Special Publication No. 23), is being revised and will be published soon. This document is a valuable source for names of water bodies of the world. I will ask IHB, however, whether that organization wishes to undertake a formal program to standardize maritime names.

Richard R. Randall

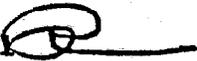
UNEGN Liaison Officer to IHB

Defense Mapping Agency
US Naval Observatory, Building 56
Washington, D. C. 20016
USA

Enclosure: Report on Activities, May 16, 1985

16 May 1985

TO: Members of Former Working Group on Undersea and Maritime Feature
Names of United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

FROM: Richard R. Randall 
UNEGN Liaison to International Hydrographic Bureau

SUBJECT: Report on Activities

1. Names of Undersea Features.

At the 11th Session of the UNEG N in Geneva in 1984, Turkey circulated proposals for names of 18 undersea features. During meetings of the Working Group it was decided that the UNEG N as a body could make no decisions about the names; this conclusion was cited in the report of the session (paragraphs 20-22, pages 6 and 7). According to Annex V (Definitions of the Undersea and Maritime Features) of the report of the 9th UNEG N, individual nations can accept (or reject) names proposed or approved by nations for features in international waters.

With these factors in mind, the Advisory Committee on Undersea Features of the United States Board on Geographic Names reviewed the names submitted by Turkey and accepted one of them: ANTALYA CANYON, a feature at 36-40N and 30-40E, near another feature, the ANTALYA BASIN. The other names could not be endorsed either because they were applied to features already named or because they were in areas where the status of sovereignty was believed to be uncertain.

2. Meeting with International Hydrographic Bureau.

At the last session of the UNEG N, I agreed to serve as liaison with the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO). It should be stated that the liaison is properly with the International Hydrographic Bureau (IHB), which is the technical body that provides staff support to IHO programs and is headquartered in Monaco. IHB invited me to attend a meeting of the IHO/IOC GEBCO Guiding Committee's Subcommittee on Geographic Names and Nomenclature of Ocean Bottom Features held in Monaco on April 22, 1985. (IOC is the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Committee; it is a UN body that works with IHO on GEBCO. GEBCO is the acronym for General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans, a series now in its fifth edition.)

During the meeting, the subcommittee reviewed some 140 names submitted by representatives of various countries for application to the next revision of the GEBCO charts; many were proposed by the USSR and the USA, and most of them were accepted. In addition to assisting the subcommittee in this work, I suggested that the introduction to a list of undersea names to be published by the IHB should be expanded to provide a fuller description of names data and should combine the specific and generic elements of all names in the list. I also suggested that the list include variant names of features where such names were found in the literature or in other gazetteers. Finally, during a meeting of the GEBCO Guiding Committee, I asked whether IHB could develop a program to standardize names of maritime features. Vice Admiral

Affonso, one of the IHB directors, stated that IHB generally avoided such efforts, owing to the complexities of establishing standard names for water bodies. I will write to him on this as a matter of record. In any case, I was pleased to participate in the sessions and I believe the interests of the Group of Experts were well served by my presence. In my view, the IHB has the advantage of working with effective and knowledgeable individuals involved with oceanographic studies, such as those carried out by the IOC. I believe that, as far as undersea names are concerned, they are pursuing the goals of the UNGEGN Working Group on Undersea and Maritime Features very adequately.

3. Exchange of Names Information.

Finally, in accordance with paragraph 25.c. of the report of the 11th UNGEGN, I recommend that you submit any proposals for undersea names to the UNGEGN Secretary for subsequent distribution to other countries.

If you have any questions or comments about undersea or maritime feature names, please send them to me at the address below:

RICHARD R. RANDALL
UNGEGN Liaison to IHB
Defense Mapping Agency
US Naval Observatory, Bldg. 56
Washington, D.C. 20305
USA