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

Report by the Working Group on Maritime and Undersea
Features at the United Nations Group of Experts
on Geographical Names**

Paper presented by the Working Group on Maritime
and Undersea Features of the United Nations
Group of Experts on Geographical Names

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Executive Secretary, United States Board on Geographic Names.

The Working Group has been active and productive since the Third Conference. As a result of several meetings of the Working Group, of individual members of the Working Group, and of consultations with the International Hydrographic Organization, a major accomplishment was effected: agreement on principles for naming undersea features, on terms and definitions of undersea features, and on a proposal form for use in proposing new names of undersea features.

Starting with discussions held during the Third Conference, and based on Resolution 22 of that Conference, interested parties undertook a series of meetings to resolve the question of developing standards for naming undersea topographical features. The topic was discussed at the 8th and 9th sessions of the UNGEGN, and by representatives of the Advisory Committee on Undersea Features of Canada and the United States in British Columbia in April of 1978, by various members of the Working Group attending the 9th International Conference on Cartography in Maryland, USA, 1978, and by the Convenor of the Working Group and representatives of the International Hydrographic Organization in Monaco in October, 1980. Through these meetings, agreement was reached in principle on all aspects of naming undersea features, and the findings were presented to the 9th UNGEGN in New York in February, 1981. As reported in the summary of that meeting, the UNGEGN approved the recommended standards. Attached to this report is Annex V of the report of the 9th UNGEGN which contains Guidelines for Naming Features, List of Undersea Terms and Definitions, and the Names Proposal Form.

While reaching agreement on the terms and definitions, the UNGEGN also understood that nations using differing terminology or terminology not included could continue to apply them. It was agreed, in any case, that maximum adherence to the accepted terms and definitions was to be encouraged.

These elements should be recommended to the Fourth Conference for endorsement for international use.

In the area of maritime features, however, little has been done by the Working Group. In conformance with Resolution 21 of the Athens Conference, it was agreed to coordinate activity with the International Hydrographic Organization, since the IHO was proceeding with plans to revise Special Publication No. 23, Limits of Oceans and Seas. The Convenor of the Working Group sent letters to members concerning possible agreements between two or more nations on names of shared bodies of water, but no definite responses were received, indicating that this element of work may need further attention. Meantime, when a draft of the IHO publication is received, it will be circulated to the Working Group for comment. The professional and thorough work that the national experts have dedicated to the revision suggests the publication will reflect an international consensus.

The Convenor of the Working Group disseminated Circular Letters to members at periodic intervals to inform them of the progress and to seek from them information on the status of work in their respective countries. Letters were sent out on February 7, 1978, July 30, 1979, November 5, 1980, and March 30, 1982.

As to future work, the Convenor recommends the following:

1. The Working Group should be renamed the Working Group on Maritime Features, inasmuch as work on undersea features has essentially been completed.

2. The present Convenor will continue to serve as Convenor of the newly named Working Group, subject to general principles governing the activities and tenure of UNGEGN Working Groups.

3. Nations naming undersea features should employ the accepted proposal forms and send them to the Convenor for further dissemination to other members.

4. The newly named Working Group should review the IHO Special Publication No. 23 and make comments as appropriate. It is understood that the IHO will consider the comments and incorporate suggested changes or additions as mutually acceptable by IHO and the Working Group.

Summary

The Working Group has been active since the Third Conference in pursuing its programs. With respect to undersea features, agreement was reached on all elements: guidelines for naming undersea features, terms and definitions of features, and a proposal form for naming new features. With the endorsement of these items at the 9th Session of the UNGEGN in New York in 1981, individual nations can proceed along common grounds to work toward standardization of undersea feature names. The endorsement of the International Hydrographic Organization was also secured, and also will strengthen international standardization efforts. Further work, however, is needed in regard to maritime features. Here, the activity of the IHO will be important since that organization is revising Special Publication No. 23, Limits of Oceans and Seas, that deals with maritime names.

Annex

DEFINITIONS OF UNDERSEA AND MARITIME FEATURES a/

Contents

Guide-lines for naming features

List of undersea terms and definitions approved provisionally
by the Working Group on Undersea and Maritime Feature Names

Names proposal form

Guide-lines for the standarization of undersea feature
names for national use b/

I. GENERAL

A. International concern for naming undersea features is limited to those features entirely or mainly (more than 50 per cent) outside waters under the jurisdiction of States.

B. "Undersea feature" is a part of the ocean floor or seabed that has measurable relief or is delimited by relief.

C. Names used for many years may be accepted even though they do not conform to normal principles of nomenclature.

D. Names approved by national names authorities in waters beyond national limits (i.e., international waters) should be accepted by other States if the names have been applied in conformance with internationally accepted principles. Names applied within the territorial limits of a State should be recognized by other States.

E. In the event of a conflict, the persons and agencies most directly involved should resolve the matter. Where two names have been applied to the same feature, the older name generally should be accepted. Where a single name has been applied to two different features, the feature named first generally should retain the name.

a/ See para. 29 above.

b/ These guide-lines and the list of terms and definitions attached to them have been worked out through collaboration between the International Hydrographic Organization and the Working Group on Maritime and Undersea Features of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names in accordance with provisions of appropriate resolutions of United Nations Conferences on Geographical Names. It is understood that the guide-lines, terms, and definitions are intended for the naming of undersea features. The definitions are based almost exclusively on physiographic descriptions of the features themselves and must not be construed as having any legal or political connotations whatsoever. Nor do they necessarily conform to their hydrographic/navigational usage as appearing in the Hydrographic Dictionary issued by IHO as Special Publication No. 32.

F. Names not in the writing system of the country applying the names on maps or other documents should be transliterated according to the system adopted by the national authority applying the names.

G. In international programmes, it should be the policy to use forms of names applied by national authorities having responsibility for the pertinent area.

H. States may utilize their preferred versions of exonyms.

II. PRINCIPLES FOR NAMING FEATURES

A. Specific terms

1. Short and simple terms (or names) are preferable.

2. The principal concern in naming is to provide effective, conveniently usable, and appropriate reference; commemoration of persons or ships is a secondary consideration.

3. The first choice of a specific term, where feasible, should be one associated with a geographical feature - for example, Aleutian Ridge, Aleutian Trench, Peru-Chile Trench, Barrow Canyon.

4. Specific terms for other features can be used to commemorate ships or other vehicles, expeditions or scientific institutes involved in the discovery of the feature, or to honour the memory of famous persons. Where a ship name is used, it should be that of the discovering ship, or if that has been previously used for a similar feature, it should be the name of the ship verifying the feature - for example, San Pablo Seamount, Atlantis II Seamounts.

5. If names of living persons are used (surnames are preferable) they should be limited to those who have made an outstanding or fundamental contribution to ocean sciences.

6. Groups of like features may be named collectively for specific categories of historical persons, mythical features, stars, constellations, fish, birds, animals and the like. Examples are as follows:

Musicians Seamounts	Bach Seamount, Brahms Seamount, Schubert Seamount
Electricians Seamounts	Volta Seamount, Ampere Seamount, Galvani Seamount
Ursa Minor Ridge and Trough Province	Suhail Ridge, Kochab Ridge, Polaris Trough

7. Descriptive names are acceptable, particularly when they refer to distinguishing characteristics (e.g., Hook Ridge, Horseshoe Seamounts).

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8. Names of well-known or large features that are applied to other features should have the same spelling.
9. Specific elements of names should not be translated from the language of the nation providing the accepted name.

B. Generic terms

1. Generic terms should be selected from the attached list of definitions to reflect physiographic descriptions of features.
2. Generic terms applied to features appearing on charts or other products should be in the language of the nation issuing the products. In those cases where terms have achieved international currency in a national form, that form should be retained.
3. It should be recognized that as ocean mapping continues, features will be discovered for which existing terminology is not adequate. New terms required to describe those features should conform to these guide-lines.

III. PROCEDURES FOR NAMING FEATURES

- A. Individuals and agencies applying names to unnamed features in international waters should adhere to internationally accepted principles and procedures.
- B. The attached form is recommended as a model for new proposals.
- C. Prior to the naming of a feature, its character, extent and position shall have been established sufficiently for identification. Positions should be given in terms of geographic co-ordinates. If it is necessary to refer to a feature before such full identifiability has been established, it is suggested that the reference be by co-ordinates and generic term with the addition of (PA) - Position Approximate - after the co-ordinates if the position is not adequately established and (?) after the generic term if the nature of the feature is in some doubt.
- D. New names should be approved by the appropriate national authorities before being published.
- E. If a national authority has reason to change the name of a feature it named originally, information explaining the change should be circulated to other concerned authorities. If there is opposition to a name change, the involved authorities should communicate with each other to resolve the question.
- F. National authorities approving names of features should regularly publicize their names decisions.

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G. National authorities naming features within their territorial jurisdiction should conform to the principles and procedures stated above.

List of undersea terms and definitions approved provisionally by the
Working Group on Undersea and Maritime Feature Names

<u>Term c/</u>	<u>Definition</u>
ABYSSAL HILLS	A tract of small elevations on the sea floor.
ABYSSAL PLAIN	(Plain) A flat, gently sloping or nearly level region at abyssal depths.
APRON	(Archipelagic apron) A gentle slope with a generally smooth surface of the sea floor, particularly found around groups of islands and seamounts.
BANK	An elevation over which the depth of water is relatively shallow, but normally sufficient for safe surface navigation.
BASIN	A depression more or less equidimensional in plan and of variable extent.
BORDERLAND	(Continental borderland) A region adjacent to a continent, normally occupied by or bordering a shelf, that is highly irregular with depths well in excess of those typical of a shelf.
CANYON	(Submarine canyon) A relatively narrow, deep depression with steep sides, the bottom of which generally has a continuous slope.
CONTINENTAL MARGIN	The zone, generally consisting of the shelf, slope and rise, separating the continent from the abyssal plain or deep sea bottom.
CONTINENTAL RISE	A gentle slope rising from the oceanic depths towards the foot of a continental slope.
ESCARPMENT	(Scarp) An elongated and comparatively steep slope separating flat or gently sloping areas.
FAN	(Cone; deep-sea fan; deep-sea cone; Submarine fan; Submarine cone) A relatively smooth feature normally sloping away from the lower termination of a canyon or canyon system.

c/ Terms in parentheses may also be found in the literature. The terms guyot (see tablemount) and scarp (see escarpment) may also be used for naming.

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FRACTURE ZONE	An extensive linear zone of irregular topography of the sea floor, characterized by steep-sided or asymmetrical ridges, troughs or escarpments.
GAP	(Abyssal gap) A narrow break in a ridge or a rise.
HILL	A small isolated elevation, not as high as a knoll (see Abyssal hills).
HOLE	A small depression of the sea floor.
KNOLL	A relatively small isolated elevation of a rounded shape.
LEVEE	An embankment bordering a canyon, valley or deep-sea channel.
MEDIAN VALLEY	(Rift, rift valley) The axial depression of the mid-oceanic ridge system.
MOAT	(Sea moat) An annular depression that may not be continuous, located at the base of many seamounts, islands and other isolated elevations.
MOUNTAIN	A large and complex grouping of ridges and seamounts.
PEAK	A prominent elevation either pointed or of a very limited extent across the summit.
PINNACLE	Any high tower or spire-shaped pillar of rock, or coral, alone or cresting a summit.
PLATEAU	A flat or nearly flat area of considerable extent, dropping off abruptly on one or more sides.
PROVINCE	A region identifiable by a group of similar physiographic features whose characteristics are markedly in contrast with surrounding areas.
REEF	Rocks lying at or near the sea surface that may constitute a hazard to surface navigation.
RIDGE	The word RIDGE has several meanings: (a) A long, narrow elevation with steep sides; (b) A long, narrow elevation often separating ocean basins; (c) The major oceanic mountain system of global extent.

RISE	A broad elevation that rises gently and generally smoothly from the sea floor.
SADDLE	A low part resembling in shape a saddle in a ridge or between contiguous seamounts.
SEACHANNEL	(Channel) A continuously sloping, elongated depression commonly found in fans or abyssal plains and customarily bordered by levees on one or both sides.
SEAMOUNT	A large isolated elevation characteristically of conical form.
SEAMOUNT CHAIN	Several seamounts in a line.
SHELF	(Continental shelf) A zone adjacent to a continent (or around an island) that extends from the low water line to a depth at which there is usually a marked increase of slope towards oceanic depths.
SHELF-EDGE	(Shelf break) A narrow zone at the outer margin of a shelf along which there is a marked increase of slope.
SHOAL	An offshore hazard to surface navigation composed of unconsolidated material.
SILL	The low part of a gap or saddle separating basins.
SLOPE	(Continental slope; island slope) The slope seaward from the shelf edge to the beginning of a continental rise or the point where there is a general reduction in slope.
SPUR	A subordinate elevation, ridge, or rise projecting outward from a larger feature.
TABLEMOUNT	(Guyot) A seamount having a comparatively smooth, flat top.
TERRACE	(Bench; deep sea terrace) A relatively flat horizontal or gently inclined surface, sometimes long and narrow, which is bounded by a steeper ascending slope on one side and by a steeper descending slope on the opposite side.
TRENCH	A long, narrow, characteristically very deep and asymmetrical depression of the sea floor, with relatively steep sides.

TROUGH

A long depression of the sea floor characteristically flat bottomed, and steep sided and normally shallower than a trench.

VALLEY

(Submarine valley) A relatively shallow, wide depression, the bottom of which usually has a continuous gradient. This term is generally not used for features that have canyon-like characteristics for a significant portion of their extent.

Names proposal form

UNDERSEA FEATURE NAME PROPOSAL

Ocean or Sea _____ Name proposed _____

Location of midpoint: Lat. _____ (N) (S), Long. _____ (E) (W);
_____ kilometers in _____ direction from _____

Description: Kind of feature: _____
Identifying or categorizing characteristics (size, shape, dimensions, least depth, steepness, etc. - use additional
co-ordinates for extremities of lineal features): _____

Associated features: _____

Chart reference:
Shown and named on chart (map) _____
Shown but not named on chart (map) _____
Not shown but within area covered by _____

Reason for choice of name:
If for a person, state how associated with the feature to be named _____

Discovery facts: Date _____; by (individuals or ship) _____

By means of (equipment): _____
Navigation used: _____
Estimated positional accuracy in nautical miles: _____
Description of survey (track spacing, line crossings, grid network, etc.): _____

Nature and repository of other survey activities (dredge samples, cores, magnetics, gravity, photographs, etc.) _____

Supporting material: Enclose, if possible, a sketch map of the survey area, profiles of the feature, etc. Reference to prior publication, if any: _____

SUBMITTED BY: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

CONCURRED IN BY (if applicable): _____

Address: _____

