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**Agenda item 6 (a) of the provisional agenda \***

**Cooperation and liaison with other organizations: International Organizations**

## **Report by the International Hydrographic Organization**

Submitted by the Liaison Officer, IHO \*\*

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**1st Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)**  
UN Headquarters, New York, USA, 29 April - 3 May 2019

Report by the International Hydrographic Organization (**Item 6a**)

This is a brief report on the activities of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) in relation to undersea feature names.

**I. Undersea Features**

The IHO and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO jointly oversee the work of the Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names (SCUFN) of GEBCO<sup>1</sup>. Reports of SCUFN meetings, as well as any new editions of the outcome products issued under SCUFN responsibility, are provided to the UNGEGN Chair/Secretary on a regular basis, in accordance with the relevant provision of the SCUFN Terms of Reference (ToRs): “*Maintain close liaison with the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names, the focal point of which shall be invitations to attend meetings of the Sub-Committee, and with international or national authorities concerned with the naming of undersea features.*” The IHO-IOC Publication B-6, Edition 4.1.0, September 2013, English/French version<sup>2</sup>, provides the international standards (Guidelines, Proposal Form and Terminology) for the naming of undersea feature names.

SCUFN is tasked with selecting the names to be used in the products of the IHO-IOC General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO) project and on international nautical charts. These names, widely used in scientific publications also, are made available in the on-line GEBCO Gazetteer of Undersea Features Names ([www.gebco.net](http://www.gebco.net) → Data and products → Undersea feature names → view and download). SCUFN-related documents are available from the dedicated GEBCO website ([www.gebco.net](http://www.gebco.net)) and the IHO website ([www.iho.int](http://www.iho.int)). The SCUFN is chaired by Dr Hyun-Chul HAN, Korea Institute of Geoscience & Mineral Resources (KIGAM), Republic of Korea, and comprises 12 members nominated by the IHO (six) and the IOC (six). The Sub-Committee’s secretariat is provided by the Secretariat of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) in Monaco. The Sub-Committee meets once a year. Since the 31st session of UNGEGN in August 2017 in New York, SCUFN has undertaken the following activities.

**1. The 30<sup>th</sup> meeting of SCUFN** was convened at the Istituto Idrografico della Marina (IIM) in Genoa, Italy, from 2 to 6 October 2017. It was attended by 26 participants, including nine of the 12 SCUFN members, together with 11 observers and the SCUFN Secretary.

The Sub Committee considered new proposals for 113 undersea feature names, submitted by various bodies and supporting organizations from the following countries: Brazil (9), China (41), Japan (36), New Zealand (2), Palau (17), the Republic of Korea (4) and the United States of America (4).

In addition to the consideration of the naming proposals, the Sub Committee considered several administrative issues, including:

- Benefits of participating on a more regular basis in the sessions of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN),
- Cooperation between Marine Regions, SCUFN and the SCUFN Undersea Feature Names Project Team (UFNPT) to de-conflict naming and positions between different sources and contribute to undersea feature name (UFN) data modelling,

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<sup>1</sup> General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans, a joint IHO-IOC project.

<sup>2</sup> B-6 is also available in English/Spanish, English/Russian, English/Japanese, English/Korean, English/Chinese ([www.iho.int/iho\\_pubs/IHO\\_Download.htm](http://www.iho.int/iho_pubs/IHO_Download.htm) then B-6).

- Development of a preliminary test case of the current IHO Geospatial Information Registry using the UFN Data Motel (S-57) taking into account the current concept definitions in force in Ed. 4.1.0 of Publication B-6 - *Standardization of Undersea Feature Names (Guidelines, Proposal Form, Terminology)*,
- Preparation of Ed. 4.2.0 of Publication B-6, which will include the integration of the fast-track procedure for existing names which are already charted and improvements of the proposals submission in digital format (geometry, additional maps, etc.),
- The increasing resources needed to incorporate SCUFN naming decisions into the GEBCO Gazetteer and the fact that this can only be achieved by contracting out some work during the inter-sessional period.

**2. The 31st meeting SCUFN** was hosted by the New Zealand Geographic Board, the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA), GNS Science and Land Information New Zealand (LINZ), in Wellington, New Zealand, from 23 to 27 October 2018. It was attended by 28 participants, including eight of the 12 SCUFN members, together with 12 observers and the SCUFN Secretary.

The Sub Committee considered a significant number of proposals in five days - 281 undersea feature names, submitted by various bodies and supporting organizations from the following countries: Ascension Island (UK) (1), Brazil (5), China (79), Costa Rica (1), Japan (76), New Zealand (15), Palau (40), the Philippines (16), the Republic of Korea (3) and the United States of America (45).

In addition to the consideration of the naming proposals, the Sub Committee considered several administrative issues, including:

- The endorsement of an amendment to the SCUFN Rules of Procedure and the Ed. 4.2.0 of Publication B-6 that was submitted for endorsement by the GEBCO Guiding Committee (GGC) at its 35<sup>th</sup> meeting<sup>3</sup>,
- The development of a repository of typical cases in a “cook book” aiming to help for the consistency of the decision making process within SCUFN,
- The importance of multilateral consultations between proposers prior to SCUFN meetings when the feature may be located in areas of mutual interests, which are now facilitated by the availability on the SCUFN webpage of a List of Naming Authorities by country,
- The current and future status of the maintenance and improvement of the GEBCO Gazetteer interface by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the United States, in parallel with the development of a prototype on integrated SCUFN web services and database by the Republic of Korea,



<sup>3</sup> The amendments to the RoP and Publication B-6 were both endorsed by GGC 35 and will be now submitted for endorsement of the Inter-Regional Coordination Committee, and then to the approval of IHO Member States.

**3. The SCUFN Undersea Feature Names Project Team (UFNPT)** continues its work, now under the chairmanship of Ms Anna HENDI, Canadian Hydrographic Service. The scope of work of the UFNPT is:

- to harmonize definitions of generic terms that exist in various publications and standards and in the Feature Concept Dictionary of the S-100 Geospatial Information Registry (see <http://registry.iho.int/>);
- to consider a possible new/updated model that would describe undersea feature names better;
- to consider standardized symbology for the portrayal of undersea features.

**4. The 32<sup>nd</sup> meeting of SCUFN** is scheduled to be held from 5-9 August 2019 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

**II. The IHO will continue cooperating with the UNGEGN and the UNGGIM** in order to support any actions that may be required to further enhance safety at sea and the protection of the marine environment with geospatial maritime information. It is worth noting that the IHO is working closely with UN DOALOS for the development of a new standard S-121<sup>4</sup> - *Maritime Limits and Boundaries*.

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<sup>4</sup> For more information, <http://www.s-121.com>