



Agenda Item Number: item 4 (d)

Agenda Item Title: National and international meetings and conferences

Title of paper/report: International Seminar on Sea Names, 2019-2020

Statement/intervention provided by:

Japan

Statement/intervention:

Japan has been actively supporting UNGEGN's work and reiterates its respect towards the technical and academic nature of UNGEGN. UNGEGN is the venue for the technical discussion and not for the political issue, thus we should avoid the latter. Japan supports its aim to promote discussion on the standardization of geographical names through technical contributions such as the provision of geographical name information using vector tile data. Having said that, concerning the paper GEGN.2/2021/CRP.123 submitted by the Republic of Korea, we would like to point out that the paper includes some unacceptable elements that do not reflect the facts at all.

First of all, "Sea of Japan" is the only internationally established name for the sea area bordered mainly by Japan, Russia and the eastern coast of the Korean Peninsula. From the viewpoint of toponymy, it should be noted that "Sea of Japan", or "*Mer du Japon*", has, since the 17th century, been used as the precedent toponym, pre-dating any internationally established name, by the United States, the United Kingdom, France, China and Russia, and it became the internationally established name in the early 19th century. Furthermore, the United Nations, as well as other international organizations, have consistently used the name "Sea of Japan".

Secondly, some expressions used in the paper, such as "the disagreement on the naming of the sea between the Korean Peninsula and the Japanese Archipelago", are incompatible with the fact that "Sea of Japan" is the only name which is internationally established for this sea area, and demonstrate a political intention to go against the on-going standardization of geographical names, which is the main purpose of the UNGEGN. All owing the Republic of Korea to continue to claim the dual naming of an internationally established name and a domestically used name in international fora could inspire other countries to claim another dual naming, while factually and academically unfounded claims, thereby multiplying potential dispute on geographical names and slowing down the standardization.

Finally, please let us point out that the international seminar that the Republic of Korea referred to in its paper is of apolitical nature related to the name of this particular sea area and it is not appropriate to spread propaganda through the seminar in the framework of the UNGEGN. It is extremely regrettable that the Republic of Korea has organized a seminar to serve an inappropriate unilateral political propaganda campaign. Presenting material from such a politically motivated seminar at the UNGEGN totally goes against the technical nature of this body.

Japan absolutely cannot accept the incorrect expressions made by the Republic of Korea in its report, and so would like to request the Republic of Korea refrain from presenting any such a paper about the seminar in the current and future sessions of the UNGEGN.



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**GROUP OF EXPERTS ON
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Submitted on: Geographical Names Supporting Sustainable Development and
Management of the Pandemic

STATEMENT/INTERVENTION

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