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**National and international standardization of
geographical names: names collection, office treatment,
national authorities, features beyond a single sovereignty
and international cooperation**

**Geographical names within the exclusive economic zone and
continental shelf: the role of the coastal State**

Submitted by Indonesia &&

Summary:

Indonesia is the world's largest archipelagic country, comprising more than 17,000 islands and stretching more than 5,000 km from east to west. It encompasses 1.9 million km² of land and more than 6 million km² of waters (including archipelagic waters, territorial sea, contiguous zone, continental shelf and exclusive economic zone). Consequently, it has a vast maritime zone and a large seabed area that are rich in natural resources.

The Government of Indonesia has a clear policy to protect its sovereignty and sovereign rights over its maritime zones. This is reflected in several government regulations and laws that provide the legal framework for the management and protection of maritime zones and seabed areas in the country, including regarding the use, conservation and management of natural resources.

Indonesia has been a member of the International Hydrographic Organization since 1951 and a party to the United Convention on the Law of the Sea. The Convention gives sovereign rights to Indonesia, and all coastal States, to manage resources and impose relevant regulations with regard to its exclusive economic zone and the continental shelf.

In order to manage the exclusive economic zone and the continental shelf, Indonesia has been conducting numerous field surveys, which have led to the

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** Prepared by Rahmah Atikah Khansa, Sora Lokita, and Sultrawan Mangiri of the Coordinating Ministry for Maritime Affairs and Investment; Dyah Pangastuti and Ratna Sari Dewi of the Geospatial Information Agency

discovery of undocumented underwater features. Thus, Indonesia believes that it is a matter of urgency to have national or even international guidelines on how a coastal State names the features that lie between its exclusive economic zone and the continental shelf. Indonesia closely observes international best practices.

In terms of geographical names, the Government of Indonesia has a policy of standardizing and submitting geographical names to international organizations. Government regulation No. 2 of 2021 regulates the standardization of geographical names.

Indonesia has identified 92 undersea features. Eight of those features were standardized by the Subcommittee on Undersea Features Names in 2022. Four additional features were also submitted to the Subcommittee, but they have not been reviewed.

Indonesia has therefore been actively participating in international organizations to standardize geographical names and gain recognition for the names used for underwater features in its waters. Nonetheless, Indonesia proposes that further discussions be held among international agencies on the naming process of underwater features, including with regard to developing relevant guidelines.

Names within Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf: The Role of Coastal State

Introduction

Indonesia is the world's largest archipelagic country, comprising more than 17,000 islands and stretching more than 5,000 kilometers from east to west and over 3,000 kilometers from north to south, and it is located between the Indian and Pacific oceans in Southeast Asia. It encompasses 1.9 million square kilometers of land and more than 6 million square kilometers of waters (including archipelagic waters, territorial sea, contiguous zone, continental shelf, and exclusive economic zone). Consequently, it has a vast maritime zone and a large seabed area that is rich in natural resources.

The importance of geographical names for coastal states

Geographical Names, also called Toponym, is important for any countries, including Indonesia as the largest archipelagic state. Geographical naming can promote national identity and unity. The geographical names reflect the country's history, culture, and heritage, and help to establish a sense of ownership and pride among its citizens.

Furthermore, geographical naming plays a crucial role in providing certainty and clarity for various purposes, mainly for safety of navigation purpose. By mapping and standardizing the names of the undersea features within its exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and continental shelf (CS), coastal states can provide a clear reference to the said features. This is particularly important where there are various names given to the same feature.

Geographical naming also can support marine biodiversity conservation efforts by helping to identify and protect unique and important undersea habitats. By giving names to those features, coastal states can raise awareness and promote conservation efforts among the public, scientists, and policymakers.

Overall, geographical naming is an important tool for coastal states to promote their national identity and support marine biodiversity conservation efforts. It is a technical and complex process that requires standardization through international organizations and expert knowledge, but it plays a crucial role in ensuring the sustainable management of the ocean's resources.

Indonesia's EEZ and continental shelf

The Indonesian government has a clear policy to protect its sovereignty and sovereign rights over its maritime zones. This is reflected in several government regulations and laws which provide the legal framework for the management and protection of maritime zones and seabed areas in Indonesia, including the exploitation, conservation, and management of natural resources.

Indonesian waters are delineated and delimited based on international law, including agreements with neighboring countries. The country has a land area of approximately 1.9 million square kilometers and a maritime zone that covers more than 6 million square kilometers. The maritime zone includes the territorial sea, archipelagic waters, contiguous zone, EEZ, and continental shelf.

The territorial sea extends up to 12 nautical miles from the baseline, which is the low-water line along the coast. The contiguous zone extends up to 24 nautical miles from the baseline and allows Indonesia to exercise limited control over activities that may threaten its security, including the smuggling of goods and illegal immigration.

The EEZ and the continental shelf (CS) extends up to 200 nautical miles from the baseline and gives Indonesia special rights to explore, exploit, and manage the natural resources within the zone. This includes fisheries, oil and gas reserves, and minerals on and under the seabed. Indonesia also has an

extended continental shelf, which extends beyond 200 nautical miles to a maximum of 350 nautical miles from the baseline.

Indonesia exercises its sovereign rights over these areas through its government and law enforcement agencies, and it is responsible for protecting and managing the natural resources. The Indonesian government has also established policies and regulations to ensure that activities within its maritime zones are conducted in a sustainable and responsible manner, to protect the environment and the interests of future generations.

In order to manage its EEZ and CS, Indonesia has been conducting numerous field surveys. Indonesia found a lot of undocumented underwater features. In that regard, Indonesia believes there is an urgency to have a national, or even, an international standard on how a coastal state should give a name to features that lie within their EEZ and CS. Indonesia closely observes international best practices.

The legal framework of geographical features name within coastal states EEZ and CS

The legal framework governing the naming of geographical features within a coastal state's EEZ and CS is primarily based on international conventions and guidelines, as well as national laws and regulations.

At the international level, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) provides the framework for the delimitation of maritime boundaries and the jurisdiction of coastal states over their EEZ and CS. UNCLOS recognizes the sovereign rights of coastal states over the natural resources in their EEZ and CS.

The International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) have also developed guidelines and recommendations for the naming of geographical features in order to ensure consistency and accuracy. These guidelines include the need for consultation and collaboration among all relevant stakeholders, including neighboring countries and local communities, to ensure that everyone's interests are taken into account. They also emphasize the importance of using objective criteria, such as historical, cultural, and linguistic significance, to name features in a non-political and non-partisan manner.

In addition, IHO and UNGEGN provide technical assistance and capacity-building programs to help countries develop their naming policies and procedures that comply with international standards. They also facilitate international cooperation and collaboration to resolve any disputes that may arise during the naming process.

Specific to the undersea features name, IHO has issued guidelines including the Standards for Hydrographic Surveys (S-44), the Standardization of Undersea Feature Names (B-6), and the Standardization by the Sub-committee on Undersea Feature Names (SCUFN) scheme. These guidelines provide rules and procedures for the selection, spelling, and use of undersea feature names, as well as guidance on how to resolve naming disputes.

The IHO also provides a framework for resolving disputes over undersea feature names, which involves consultation with the countries concerned and the use of established principles and procedures for naming geographical features. This process is intended to promote cooperation and mutual respect between countries, while also ensuring that undersea feature names are selected in a fair and transparent manner.

Since 1950, Indonesia has been a member of the United Nations, and since then it has actively participated in the work of various UN bodies, including the UNGEGN. It has also been a member of the IHO since 1951, this organization has established guidelines and recommendations for the standardization of geographical names.

Furthermore, Indonesia is also a party to the United Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS 1982). This specific convention gives sovereign rights to Indonesia, and all coastal states, to manage resources and impose relevant regulations at its EEZ and CS.

Process of geographical undersea features name standardization in Indonesia

In terms of geographical names, the Indonesian government has a policy of standardizing and submitting geographical names to international organizations. The Indonesian Government Regulation Number 2 of 2021, regulates the standardization of geographic names, to ensure that the names used for underwater features in Indonesian waters are accurate, standardized, and widely acknowledged by the international community.

As of January 2023, Indonesia remains an active member of the UNGEGN and the IHO. Indonesia is also a member of the SCUFN under the IHO.

As a member of UNGEGN, Indonesia participates in meetings and conferences to promote the standardization of geographical names, including those of undersea features, and to exchange information and experiences with other member countries.

As a member of SCUFN, Indonesia is responsible for officially registering undersea feature names within its maritime boundaries, and for proposing and reviewing names for undersea features in other regions. Indonesia also participates in the review of proposals from other member countries and provides feedback and recommendations based on its expertise in geographical naming and marine sciences.

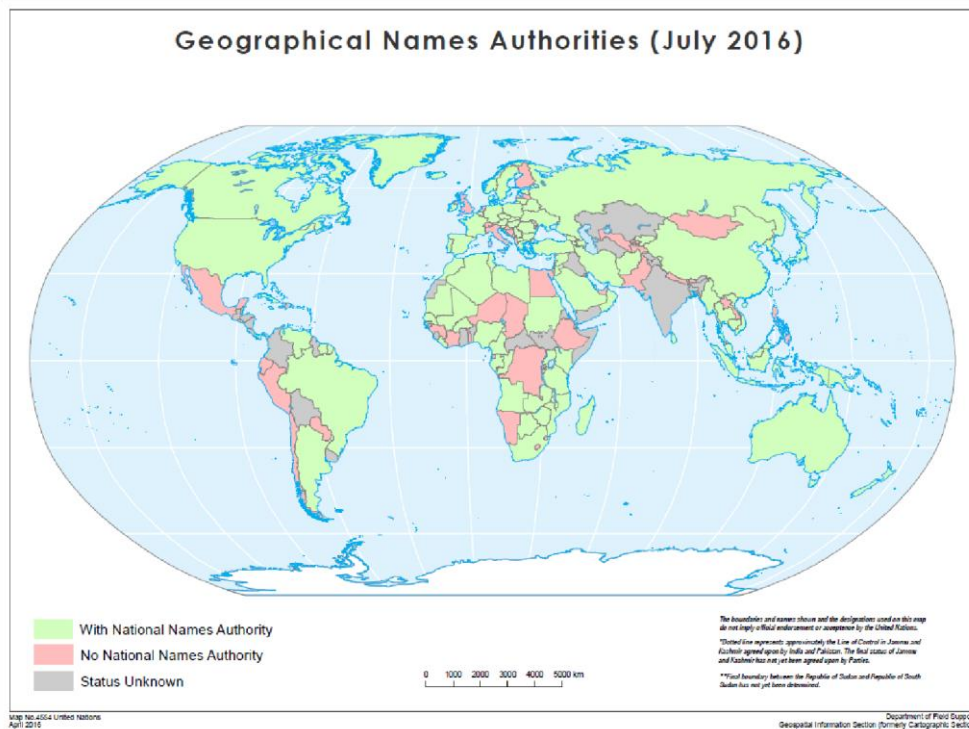


Figure 1. Geographical Names Authorities
(source: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/na/>)

Figure 1 illustrates that since 2016 several countries in the world have had the National Names Authorities (NNA). The NNA is an official body or organization designated by a country's government to manage the naming of geographical features, both on land and at sea, within the country's jurisdiction. The NNA is responsible for reviewing proposed names and ensuring they meet certain criteria, such as avoiding political or offensive connotations and being culturally appropriate. The NNA also has the authority to approve and assign names to geographical features, which can be used on official maps, charts, and other documents. In many countries, the NNA is part of the national mapping agency or another government agency responsible for geographic information management.

Since 2020, the Geospatial Information Agency (*Badan Informasi Geospasial* - BIG) as the NNA for Indonesia, has coordinated and cooperated with other ministries/agencies in standardizing the name of undersea features. BIG and other related ministries/agencies are actively collecting and standardizing the undersea features names. The ministries/agencies have conducted bathymetric surveys, and from its surveys, Indonesia succeeded in identifying several undersea features, such as:

Table 1. The name of undersea features of the Marine Geology Research and Development Center of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources bathymetric survey results

No	Geographical Name	Location
1	Abang Komba, Seamount	NTT
2	Baruna Komba, Seamount	NTT
3	Ibu Komba, Seamount	NTT

Table 2. The name of undersea features of the BIG bathymetric survey results

No	Geographical Name	Location
1	Seamount (unnamed)	South of Java Island
2	Seamount (unnamed)	Papua

Table 3. The name of undersea features of the Agency for the Assessment and Application of Technology bathymetric survey results

No	Geographical Name	Location
1	Palu, Plateau	Central of Sulawesi
2	Palu-Kor, Channel	Central of Sulawesi
3	Palu-Koro, Fracture Zone	Central of Sulawesi
4	Pantoloan, Fan	Central of Sulawesi
5	Manimbaya, Terrace	Central of Sulawesi
6	Pagai, Seamount	West of Sumatra Island

Table 4. The name of undersea features of the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries bathymetric survey results

No	Geographical Name	Location
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1	Naung, Seamount	North of Sulawesi
2	Kawio Barat, Seamount	North of Sulawesi
3	Maselihe, Seamount	North of Sulawesi
4	Roa, Seamount	North of Sulawesi

Table 5. The name of the undersea features of the Indonesian Navy's Hydrographic and Oceanographic Center bathymetric survey results

No	Geographical Name	Location
1	Aurora, Bank	Maluku
2	Moro Gada, Hill	Maluku
3	Rigel, Hill	Maluku
4	Spica, Hill	Maluku

BIG and other related ministries/agencies not solely just collect underwater names through primary data. BIG and other ministries/agencies also collect undersea features names through secondary data, namely geographical names that have been widely used in national and international journals. The names of the underwater items collected through primary data are mostly unnamed. One example is a seamount discovered by the Indonesian inter-ministries team in the south of Java, when it was assigned to identify relevant elements of seafloor for Indonesian submission for its extended continental shelf. The survey successfully got primary data of an unnamed seamount, which previously identified only through secondary data. Thus, it is necessary to carry out a naming procedure for the element. In accordance with Government Regulation Number 2 of 2021, the naming of geographical features must involve the community, and not only be determined by one party or by officials unilaterally. Therefore, BIG as National Names Authority (NNA) engaged other relevant ministries and the local government to name the underwater mountain in the south of Java Island.

All data collected by each of these ministries/agencies were input into the *Sistem Informasi Nama Rupabumi* (SINAR) managed by BIG. As an NNA, BIG has an obligation to study all underwater names both in terms of spatial aspects and toponymic aspects. In conducting studies, BIG always involves earth experts and related ministries/agencies so that the spatial and toponym aspects of each undersea features name can be studied properly.

For the spatial aspect, each of the undersea feature elements must have accurate coordinates and meet the logical aspect. In addition, bathymetric survey data will be analyzed to determine the right type of element. Meanwhile, from the toponymic aspect, the name of the feature must meet the naming rules stipulated in Government Regulation Number 2 of 2021.

The result of the study is the acceptance or rejection of a geographical name to be nominated as a standard geographical name. The geographical name received in the study, will be announced and then designated as the standard geographical name. The name of the undersea features that have been standardized by BIG has permission to be submitted internationally through submission to SCUFN GEBCO. In accordance with Government Regulation Number 2 of 2021, all implementation of geographical names in an international manner must go through coordination with the National Names Authority (in this case, BIG for Indonesia), meaning that geographical names that have not been standardized by BIG must not be submitted to the International Forum.

Overall, Indonesia's participation in UNGEGN, IHO, and SCUFN highlights its commitment to promoting standardized and transparent naming practices for undersea features, and to contributing to the global effort to protect and conserve the marine environment.

State practices

There have been cases where countries changed the name of an undersea feature located in their EEZ and Continental Shelf. One of the examples is when the Philippines renaming Benham Rise to Philippine Rise on 16 May 2017.

Benham Rise is a large undersea plateau located east of Luzon Island in the Philippines. The feature was first discovered by American Surveyor Andrew Ellicott Kennedy Benham in 1933 while he was conducting a survey for the US Navy. He initially named the feature as "Benham Plateau" after himself.

In 2009, the Philippines surveyed the area and claimed it as part of its extended continental shelf under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The name "Benham Rise" became popularized in the Philippines after the country's claim to the feature was approved by the Commission on the Limits of Continental Shelf (CLCS) on 12 April 2012.

In the other case, since 2019, Indonesia has named several undersea features in its extended continental shelf. Indonesia is still trying to name a lot of undocumented underwater features officially and document them to the National Gazetteer and announce them to the international forum, including to the SCUFN-IHO and UNGEGN.

In that regard, it is not uncommon for countries to rename undersea features within their jurisdictional waters for various reasons, such as honoring historical or cultural significance. However, renaming undersea features can sometimes lead to disputes if there are various interests and options for renaming involved.

Conclusions

There are several challenges and opportunities related to the naming of geographical features within a coastal state's EEZ and CS. The challenges are as follows:

1. Vast area of waters: Coastal State with large area of waters will need to conduct numerous field survey to identify all maritime features;
2. Lack of adoption of the international standard: Without adopting the international standard in undersea features naming practices, different countries may use different names for the same features; and
3. Limited knowledge: There is still much to learn about the seafloor and its features. The lack of knowledge and data about the seafloor can pose a challenge to accurate and standardized naming practices. In 2022, the Seabed 2030 project by IOC-UNESCO announced its efforts in the ocean data enhancement mission. They have successfully mapped 23.4 percent of all global seafloor, but to reach 100%, there is still a lot of work to be done.

However, by naming undersea features in the EEZ and continental shelf, there are some opportunities that we can develop, including:

1. Promoting marine biodiversity conservation;
2. Enhancing national identity;
3. Reducing the confusion and promote understanding among different countries and stakeholders by standardized naming practices; and

4. Facilitate scientific research by providing a consistent framework for identifying and studying these features.

Overall, the naming of geographical features within a coastal state's EEZ and CS is a complex and challenging issue that requires careful consideration of legal, political, cultural, and environmental factors, but it also presents important opportunities for promoting marine conservation and enhancing national identity.

Coastal states should consider international guidelines and standards when naming geographical features within their EEZ and CS. They should consider the scientific significance of the feature and the potential impact of naming on marine ecosystems.

Coastal states also should promote transparency and accountability in their naming practices by making information on the process and criteria for naming publicly available, and by ensuring that disputes related to naming are resolved fairly. Coastal states should strive to balance competing interests, including those related to national identity and environmental conservation, when naming geographical features within their EEZ and CS, by taking a holistic and inclusive approach to the naming process.

Points for discussion

The Group of Experts is invited to:

1. Express its view on the urgency to have a national, or even, international standard on how a coastal state should give a name to features that lie between their EEZ and CS.