



UNITED NATIONS
**GROUP OF EXPERTS ON
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES**

Strengthening relationships, links and connections in geographical names
standardization and for sustainable development and pandemic recovery

2023/3rd session UNGEGN | 1-5 May 2023 | @unsd_gegn



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| <i>Agenda Item Number: item 4 (d)</i> | |
| <i>Agenda Item Title: National and international meetings and conferences</i> | |
| <i>Title of paper/report: International Seminar on Sea Names, 2021-2022</i> | |
| <i>Statement/intervention provided by:</i> Japan | |
| <i>Statement/intervention:</i> 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. 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.2/2023/CRP.131 submitted by the Republic of Korea, it should be pointed 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 “ <i>Mer du Japon</i> ”, has, since the 17 th 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 19 th 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. Allowing 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 a political 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 been organizing 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. | |
| Submitted on: | 5/1/2023 |



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STATEMENT/INTERVENTION