

27th Meeting of the GEBCO Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names IHB, Monaco, 16-20 June 2014

The 27th meeting of the GEBCO Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names (SCUFN) was hosted at the International Hydrographic Bureau (IHB) in Monaco, from 16 to 20 June 2014. SCUFN is tasked with selecting the names to appear in the products of the IHO-IOC General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO) project and on international nautical charts. The meeting, chaired by Dr Hans Werner Schenke (IOC representative) from the Alfred Wegener Institute for Polar and Marine Research (AWI – Germany), was attended by 27 participants, including nine (four IOC and five IHO representatives) of the 12 SCUFN members, and 15 observers including Mr Shin Tani, Chair of the GEBCO Guiding Committee.

The meeting was opened by IHO President Robert Ward. He stressed the increasing importance of the tasks undertaken by SCUFN and its key role in progressively unveiling the mysteries of oceans and seas. He also took the opportunity in his welcoming address to thank the SCUFN members' and observers' supporting organizations.



Attendees at SCUFN-27, IHB, Monaco

SCUFN considered 74 new undersea feature names submitted by various bodies and supporting organizations: Brazil (3), China (19), Denmark (1), France (1), United Kingdom (3), Georgia (2), Japan (23), Republic of Korea (2), Malaysia (4), New Zealand (12) and Russian Federation (4). Thanks to the new on-line GEBCO Gazetteer of Undersea Feature Names, developed by the IHO Data Centre for Digital Bathymetry (co-located at the US National Geophysical Data Center) and maintained by the IHB, and the provision of GIS files in advance, it was easier to review the proposals this year.

The new on-line Gazetteer (www.gebco.net → Data and products → Undersea feature names → view and download) is now fully operational and was used as part of evaluating the various proposals.



Most of the proposed names were accepted and will be included in the Gazetteer in the near future. Some others names remain undecided, awaiting additional information.

The meeting agreed to consider ways to more efficiently address the increasing list of pending names for which information, required in accordance with SCUFN standards, is generally missing. New interfaces for reviewing and submitting proposals were presented by Dr Hyun-Chul Han, SCUFN Member. The Sub Committee also decided to seek further information and guidance from the IHB and the GEBCO Guiding Committee before pursuing the possible development of a future product specification for undersea feature names based on the IHO S-100 geospatial data transfer standard.

Harmonization issues between procedures and definitions used by SCUFN and national/international organizations such as the NZGB¹ Undersea Names Committee, the ACUF² and the Marine Regions project managed by the Flanders Marine Institute were discussed, in order to avoid duplication, and improve efficiency and interoperability in the future.

The meeting was closed with a vibrant tribute from the Chair of SCUFN and from the Members to Mr Michel Huet, IHB Assistant Director and SCUFN Secretary, who would be retiring shortly after the meeting, and who has been a cornerstone of SCUFN for some 24 years. Assistant Director Yves Guillam has now assumed the duties of Mr Huet.

The next SCUFN meeting is scheduled to take place in late 2015 and will be hosted by the DHN³ in Niteroi, Brazil.

¹ New Zealand Geographical Board.

² US Board on Geographical Names, Advisory Committee on Undersea Features.

³ Diretoria de Hidrografia e Navegação.