

28th Meeting of the IHO-IOC GEBCO Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names, Niteroi, Brazil, 12-16 October 2015

The 28th meeting of the IHO-IOC GEBCO Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names (SCUFN) was hosted at the *Diretoria de Hidrografia e Navegação* (DHN), in Niteroi, Brazil, from 12 to 16 October. SCUFN is tasked with selecting the names of undersea features to appear 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 GEBCO Gazetteer of Undersea Features Names (www.gebco.net → Data and products → Undersea feature names → view and download). 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 20 participants, including nine of the 12 SCUFN members (four IOC and five IHO representatives), together with 10 observers. Assistant Director Yves Guillam (SCUFN Secretary) represented the IHB.

The meeting was opened by Vice-Admiral Antonio Pontes Lima, Director of DHN, and Admiral (Ret.) Luiz Fernando Palmer, ex-Director of DHN. Admiral Pontes Lima stressed the importance of the role fulfilled by SCUFN in harmonizing undersea feature names and making these names available to a large community of users. Aware of the magnitude of the task ahead, the Chair thanked the DHN for hosting this important meeting and invited the participants to address the very busy agenda straight away.



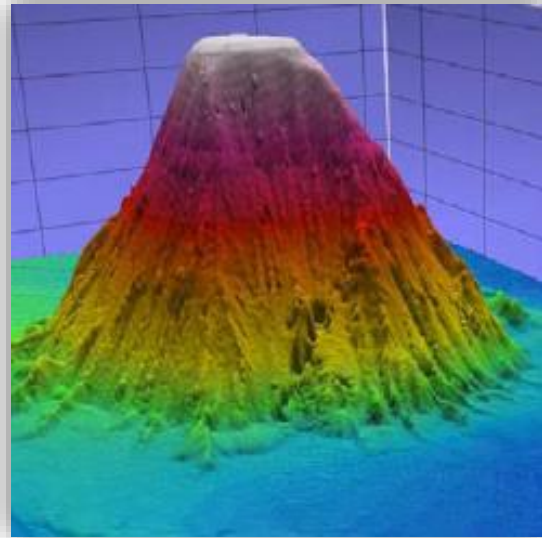
Attendees, the Director DHN and his staff

After the election of Dr Yasuhiko Ohara (IHO representative, Japan,) as Vice-Chair, the Sub Committee considered proposals for 72 undersea feature names, submitted by various bodies and supporting organizations: Brazil (12), China (20), Japan (28), Republic of Korea (3), Malaysia (6), Russian Federation (1), Sweden (1) and USA (1). The Sub Committee decided also to trial a fast-track procedure when reviewing the proposals made by New Zealand related to 56 names that already appear on nautical charts.

Most of the names proposed to the Sub Committee were accepted and will be included in the Gazetteer in the near future. A small number were not accepted for various technical reasons.

The success of the meeting was assisted by the work contracted out by the IHB during the inter-sessional period, when it was possible to address a number of issues identified in 2014:

- the improvement of the consistency of the GEBCO Gazetteer database and the effective implementation of SCUFN decisions;
- the monitoring of the number of PENDING names;
- the evaluation of the on-line tools;
- the preparation of an experimental fast-track evaluation procedure to review the proposals made by New Zealand related to 56 names that already appear on nautical charts;
- the preparation of the collection of amendments / clarifications that will need to be included in the IHO-IOC Publication B-6 – *Standardization of Undersea Feature Names* when a new Edition is deemed necessary.



An illustration that supported the proposal for the name *Maximiano Guyot*, which was ACCEPTED

In addition, several other factors were very helpful in making the evaluation process more efficient during the meeting, including:

- most of the proposals were submitted in accordance with the relevant standards and submission procedures;
- the terminology provided in Publication B-6 was applied more consistently;
- associated GIS files were provided in advance, which enabled the IHB to pre-load the data in the GEBCO Gazetteer database and perform some initial quality control and screening;
- the SCUFN members were able to use collaborative on-line reviewing tools developed by the Republic of Korea, prior to the meeting.

The Sub Committee also decided to include in its programme of work liaison with the IHO S-100 Working Group and the Nautical Cartography Working Group to provide expertise on undersea feature names. The creation of a small project team, led by Canada, is being discussed and will be reported to the Hydrographic Services and Standards Committee (HSSC) for its consideration.

Further harmonization between the procedures and definitions used by SCUFN and by other national and international naming organizations still needs to be addressed as a matter of high priority. As an example, it was reported to the Sub Committee that the National Geographical Names Board of Canada may wish to submit about 950 existing names for approval by SCUFN.

In order to assist national geographic boards and promote further harmonization in the naming of features, SCUFN agreed to make its reserved-list of specific terms publicly available. The Sub

Committee will also publish articles promoting SCUFN responsibilities and achievements for the benefit of national hydrographic offices and scientific and research institutes.

The next meeting of the Sub Committee is scheduled to take place in September 2016. The venue has not yet been decided.