

29th Meeting of the IHO-IOC GEBCO Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names, Boulder, Colorado, USA, 19-23 September

The 29th meeting of the IHO-IOC GEBCO Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names (SCUFN) was hosted at the National Center for Environmental Information (NCEI) of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), in Boulder, Colorado, USA, from 19 to 23 September.

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 25 participants, including 10 of the 12 SCUFN members (five IOC and five IHO representatives), together with 14 observers including Mr Shin Tani (Chair of the GEBCO Guiding Committee) and Mr Osamu Miyaki (IOC Secretariat). Assistant Director Yves Guillam (SCUFN Secretary) represented the IHO Secretariat.

The meeting was opened by the Chair of SCUFN who welcomed all the participants and introduced the two new SCUFN Members: Ms Roberta Ivaldi (Italy, IHO representative) and Ms Ksenia Dobrolyubova (Russian Federation, IOC representative). He also paid tribute to Mr Norman Cherkis who informed the members in August that he wished to step down from his position in SCUFN. In accordance with the SCUFN Terms of Reference, the Secretary informed the meeting of several further anticipated changes to the membership due to occur in 2018 and presented the timeline for the IHO and IOC Secretariats to prepare calls for nominations to fill vacancies.



Participants of the SCUFN-29 meeting

The Sub Committee considered proposals for 133 undersea feature names, submitted by various bodies and supporting organizations from the following countries: Brazil (7), China (50), Denmark (1), Dominican Republic (2), France (1), Japan (23), Republic of Korea (2), Malaysia (4), New Zealand (31), Russian Federation (1), UK (3) and USA (8). The Sub Committee decided to follow the experimental fast-track procedure in its review of the proposals made by Canada (12) and New Zealand (84) related to names that already appear on nautical charts. It was agreed that for the time being SCUFN could not consider in a systematic manner the other 139 names that had been proposed by Canada for international recognition by SCUFN because they relate to features located in its territorial sea. This outstanding task will be addressed later, subject to the establishment by the IHO Hydrographic Services and Standards

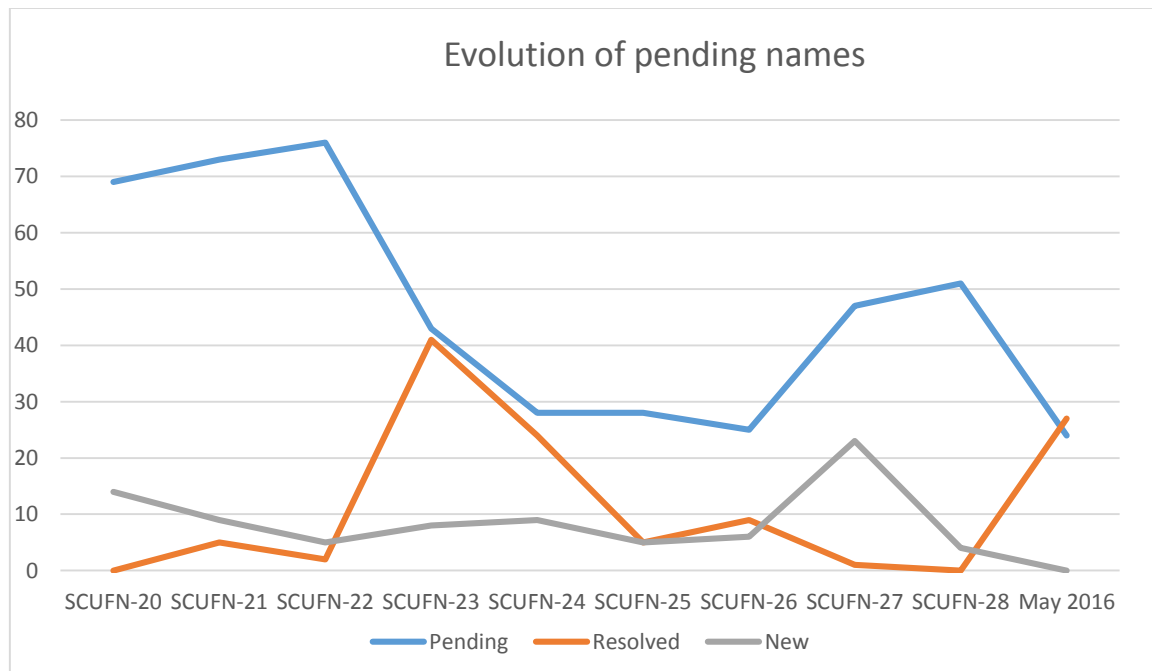
Committee (HSSC) of an S-100 Undersea Feature Names Project Team for which draft Terms of Reference were endorsed at the meeting, thanks to input provided by Canada.

While a large number of the names proposed to the Sub Committee were accepted, decisions on some others were postponed for further consideration for various reasons, including the increasing number of submissions now being received and the lack of time available during the meeting.

In addition to consideration of the naming proposals, the Sub Committee considered several “corporate” issues, including:

- The maintenance and improvement of the GEBCO Gazetteer interface,
- The ways and means to improve the efficiency and quality of SCUFN activities (inter connexion of the web services that already exist: the IHO SCUFN webpage, the internal SCUFN submission and review web services developed by the Republic of Korea, and the GEBCO Gazetteer itself maintained by NOAA),
- The future of SCUFN (membership, scope, new Edition of B-6 – *Standardization of Undersea Feature Names (Guidelines, Proposal Form Terminology)* – including the integration of a fast-track procedure for existing names which are already charted, the capitalization of best practices, the relations between naming authorities in common areas of interest, etc.),
- The increasing resources needed to incorporate SCUFN naming decisions into the GEBCO Gazetteer and the fact that this can only be achieved by contracting out some work during the inter-sessional period.

As a consequence of a contract awarded in 2015, the SCUFN Members were pleased to note a decrease in the total number of *pending* names (proposals and related actions) between 2015 and 2016.



The next meeting of the Sub Committee (SCUFN-30) is scheduled to take place in Genoa, Italy from 2 to 6 October 2017.