

Paper for Reporting Updates by SCUFN-37

Follow-up SCUFN36/04.6/01: Status Updates on Joint Proposals on the Way Forward In the South China Sea

Submitted by:	Malaysia (via Najhan SAID – SCUFN Vice Chair)
Supported by	: China, Philippines and Viet Nam
Objective	: To update the SCUFN Members on the progress achieved by all interested parties on the way forward for SCUFN to deal with proposals for naming undersea features in the South China Sea

Background

At SCUFN-36, several statements were made by the Member States (Observer Status) arguing the impossibility for SCUFN Members to review all proposals for naming features located in the South China Sea based on the “politically sensitive” issue. A few interested parties (Coastal States of the South China Sea) requested to temporarily “freeze” the undersea feature naming proposals in the South China Sea.

During the meeting, SCUFN Members noted the request from the Observers and agreed to go for a vote (secret ballot) on the following question: “In application of ROP 2.10, do SCUFN Members consider that all proposals located in the South China Sea should be frozen until a joint proposal on the way forward is made to SCUFN by the interested parties?”. With the outcome of the voting procedure, SCUFN agreed “to freeze” the South China Sea for the naming proposals until a Joint Proposal on the way forward is submitted by all interested parties (Decision SCUFN36/04.6/01 refers).

Discussion

This paper is a brief update on the progress made by all interested parties in developing the Joint Proposal on the way forward of the undersea feature naming in the South China Sea region. The engagement session between Malaysia, China, Philippines and Viet Nam will be held on the 24th May 2024 in Genting Highlands, Malaysia. The potential deliverables anticipated from the engagement session are as follows:

- All interested parties to explore the mechanism and possible options for the submissions of proposals of undersea feature names in the South China Sea, and their review process by SCUFN in accordance with SCUFN ROPs and Publication B-6 in force.
- Exploratory discussion on the way forward.
- Submission of a proposal for SCUFN approval on the mechanism proposed by the interested parties.
- Draft timelines for submitting this proposal for decision to be made at SCUFN-38.

Conclusion

All interested parties must continue their commitment to engage and explore the Joint Proposal on the way forward for undersea feature naming in the South China Sea.

Action required of SCUFN

SCUFN is invited:

- To take note of this brief.
- To consider waving¹ the 2 months notice Rule of Procedure in the case a consolidated proposal can be presented at SCUFN-37 for decision, after the meeting planned on 24 May and no later than 17 June 2024.

¹ Vote to be planned.