

High-level meeting on the designation of Marine Protected Areas in the Southern Ocean

28 April 2021

Ministerial Joint Declaration

The Ministers and High-Level Representatives of Australia, France, Germany, Sweden, Spain, Belgium, Poland, Italy, United States of America, United Kingdom, Norway, Uruguay, New Zealand, Chile and Argentina, and the European Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, participating in a virtual meeting on the designation of Marine Protected Areas in the Southern Ocean, on 28 April 2021, hosted by the European Union:

Celebrating 60 years since the entry into force of the Antarctic Treaty and in anticipation of the forthcoming 40th meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) and highlighting the role of CCAMLR within the Antarctic Treaty System,

Recalling CCAMLR's commitment to create a representative system of Marine Protected Areas in its Convention Area by 2012 and the general framework adopted by CCAMLR for designating Marine Protected Areas,

Mindful of their particular responsibility as CCAMLR Members to cooperate to achieve this long overdue commitment,

Mindful that the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services notes that current policy responses and actions to conserve nature, including those related to Marine Protected Areas, are insufficient to achieve current international biodiversity targets,

Recalling that CCAMLR Marine Protected Areas aim to encompass the full range of biodiversity present in the Convention Area, which covers the Southern Ocean, contribute to conserving ecosystem structure and function, including in areas outside the Marine Protected Areas, and reduce the potential for invasion by alien species, as a result of human activity,

Concerned about the profound and potentially irreversible impacts of global climate change and other anthropogenic activities on the Southern Ocean,

Aiming to improve and develop effective management mechanisms to take into account the effects of climate change on the Southern Ocean,

Recalling the findings of the Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and *committing* to build ocean resilience with large-scale Marine Protected Areas,

Welcoming the designation of the South Orkney Islands Southern Shelf and the Ross Sea region Marine Protected Areas in the CCAMLR Convention Area as major steps towards the conservation of the Southern Ocean and a representative system of Marine Protected Areas,

Noting the importance of the proper implementation of Marine Protected Areas to ensure they achieve their objectives,

Recalling the proposals from the European Union and its Members States, Australia, Norway, the United Kingdom and Uruguay to establish Marine Protected Areas in East Antarctica and the Weddell Sea,

Recognising the importance of science as the basis for designating Marine Protected Areas and recalling that these proposals are based on the best available science,

Noting discussions in CCAMLR on the East Antarctica Marine Protected Area proposal since 2012 and the Weddell Sea Marine Protected Area proposal since 2016, and the Antarctic Peninsula region Marine Protected Area proposal since 2018,

Desiring to support CCAMLR in its efforts to protect the marine living resources of the Southern Ocean and to accelerate work towards completing a representative system of Marine Protected Areas, including the submission of further MPA proposals,

Jointly issue the following Declaration on the designation of Marine Protected Areas in the Southern Ocean, in pursuit in the spirit of partnership and mutual respect, whereby they:

Stress the need to take urgent and decisive action to protect the Convention Area from climate change and other anthropogenic impacts.

Reaffirm their commitment, as CCAMLR Members, to CCAMLR establishing a representative system of Marine Protected Areas in the Southern Ocean.

Welcome the proposals to establish additional Marine Protected Areas in the Southern Ocean, notably in East Antarctica and the Weddell Sea,

Welcome efforts by CCAMLR Members to develop Marine Protected Area proposals in other regions of the Convention Area, notably the work of Argentina and Chile in the Antarctic Peninsula region,

Reaffirm that Marine Protected Area proposals are based on the best available science, as determined by the CCAMLR Scientific Committee.

Welcome the broad support expressed for Marine Protected Area proposals at the 39th annual meeting of CCAMLR in 2020, in particular the increase in the number of formal co-sponsors for the East Antarctic and Weddell Sea proposals.

Join efforts to continue to build consensus on the East Antarctica and Weddell Sea Marine Protected Areas proposals by all CCAMLR Members.

Encourage other CCAMLR Members to join these efforts formally.

Further encourage all Members to continue to engage constructively on all Marine Protected Area proposals currently under consideration by CCAMLR, notably the proposals to establish Marine Protected Areas in East Antarctica, the Weddell Sea, and the Antarctic Peninsula region, with a view to their swift adoption by CCAMLR.

Call on all CCAMLR Members to act as soon as possible to conserve the Southern Ocean's unique biodiversity and ecosystems for present and future generations.
