



## CEO Letter calling for an ambitious “Paris Agreement for the Ocean”

CEO letter to world governments calling for an ambitious conclusion to the high seas treaty<sup>1</sup> in 2022:

We, the CEOs and leaders in global conservation organizations, join together in urging countries to conclude an ambitious, equitable and robust new international treaty in 2022 that can be implemented to advance conservation of our last great global common: the high seas, including the seafloor outside national jurisdictions of any single nation.

This vast ocean expanse makes up nearly two-thirds of the global ocean and supports the largest reservoir of biodiversity on Earth. But the devastating impacts of illegal fishing and overfishing, habitat degradation, plastic, noise and chemical pollution, among others — combined with the accelerating effects of climate change — are threatening the health of the marine environment and the people who depend on it. Less than 1 percent of the high seas and seafloor are effectively protected, and the patchwork of regimes governing industrial activities like fishing, shipping and seabed mining are not equipped to address the cumulative impact of these activities on marine life.

A healthy, vibrant, functioning ocean is vital to everyone on Earth. As countries embark on the final stages of negotiations for a UN High Seas Treaty, we call on governments to seize this once-in-a-generation opportunity to secure the health and resilience of our global ocean — and to maintain the high ambition needed to conserve the largest and most threatened part of our ocean for future generations.

We recognize that retaining high ambition for conservation is equally important to concluding the negotiations for a High Seas Treaty in 2022. A high ambition treaty must:

- Provide a legal mechanism for the creation and effective management of a network of marine protected areas, where ocean life is protected from environmentally damaging activities, as soon as the treaty enters into force;
- Ensure sufficient, equitable and easily accessible financing for the implementation of the treaty through a strong financial mechanism;
- Strengthen the environmental assessment and management of human activity outside protected areas to prevent significant adverse effects on the marine environment; and
- Establish effective decision-making procedures for the Conference of the Parties to the treaty, enabling the international community to act swiftly and decisively to conserve marine life in the high seas and the sea floor.

A strong treaty will finally set humanity on a new, sustainable path and secure a healthy future for our planet.

The treaty needs to be aligned with global biodiversity goals. There is tremendous support to protect at least 30 percent of the global ocean from damaging human activities by 2030. We cannot reach this goal without a strong and future-proofed High Seas treaty that challenges the status quo and lifts the capacity of all States and stakeholders. Only by joining forces can we reverse the decline of our ocean and safeguard

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<sup>1</sup> In its [resolution 72/249](#) of 24 December 2017, the General Assembly decided to convene an Intergovernmental Conference, under the auspices of the United Nations, to consider the recommendations of the [Preparatory Committee](#) established by [resolution 69/292](#) of 19 June 2015 on the elements and to elaborate the text of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, with a view to developing the instrument as soon as possible.

the future of our planet and people. We congratulate States that have committed their efforts for nearly 20 years to advance these treaty negotiations. We, CEOs and leaders from organizations with millions of members, supporters and partners worldwide, look forward to working with the international community to finalize an ambitious, equitable, robust and implementable high seas treaty in 2022 — for the ocean, for future generations and for all humanity.

## Signatories



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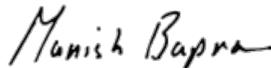
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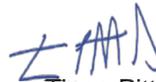
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