

*From President José-María Figueres, the Right Honourable David Miliband and
Minister Trevor Manuel, Co-chairs of the Global Ocean Commission*

To President Obama

By email

11 July 2013

Dear President Obama,

We are writing to you on a matter of urgency, which is of great interest to the Global Ocean Commission and of international importance to your country and to our common environmental heritage.

As you may know, the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) is meeting on the 15th and 16th of July, in Bremerhaven, Germany to consider two proposals for large scale marine protected areas in the Southern Ocean. One is for the East Antarctic coastal zone (proposed by Australia, the European Union and France) and one for the Ross Sea (proposed by New Zealand and the United States). Together, the two areas cover an area of 3.8 million square kilometres.

The meeting in Bremerhaven in July 2013 was convened in order to continue the discussions on these two proposals after negotiations failed to reach agreement in October last year. It should be noted that all 25 Members of CCAMLR (including the European Union) have already agreed to establish a system of marine protected areas in the Southern Ocean. A decision this July would begin to fulfil that commitment.

Whilst the Global Ocean Commission has only recently been convened and has some way to go to conclude our work, we believe that these proposals have enormous merit. If the proposals are successful, Member countries will create a significant and historic foundation for global ocean ecosystems protection and help to further the international community's stated goals on this issue.

We are writing to ask for your leadership in this critical matter. Your support, as a Member nation, could make all the difference this July. We would urge that you communicate your support for these proposals to your Foreign Ministry and make every effort to work with the Heads of State of other CCAMLR countries to secure a positive outcome in Bremerhaven.

We stand ready to assist you with further information at any time.

Yours sincerely,



José María Figueres
Co-chair



Trevor Manuel
Co-chair



David Miliband
Co-chair

cc: Mr Bloom