

ANTARCTICA2020

His Excellency President Vladimir Putin
President of the Russian Federation
Presidential Executive Office
23, Ulitsa Ilyinka,
103132, Moscow,
Russia

23rd April, 2020

Dear Mr. President,

We are writing to congratulate Russia on the 200th anniversary of the discovery of Antarctica by Fabian von Bellingshausen and Mikhail Lazarev in 1820.

The sighting was an exciting moment in the discovery of the world, and a testament to Russia's history of polar exploration. It initiated two centuries of further scientific discovery and exploration of this amazing continent. As members of the Cousteau family, we know well the thrill of exploration and discovering the amazing wonders of the ocean world, a passion shared by many in Russia as well as others around the world.

It was a deep honor for my grandfather Jacques-Yves Cousteau and father Philippe Cousteau to be awarded the Order of the October Revolution by Russia when they visited the Soviet Antarctic base in 1972. Undoubtedly the Antarctica my grandfather and father encountered then, is a very different place to the one that recently hit record-breaking temperatures. These warming temperatures threaten the region and its precious marine life, and in turn threaten the health of our planet.

Just as two hundred years ago, Russia led the discovery of this area; now it can lead in its protection by supporting the designation of marine protected areas in the East Antarctic, the Weddell Sea and the Antarctic Peninsula this year. This action would be one of the largest acts of environmental protection in history, building resilience in the region to the inevitable changes and be a fitting way to mark the legacy of Bellingshausen and Lazarev.

We are dedicated to ensuring the protection of our blue planet, including the icy waters of Antarctica and are keen to work alongside Russia and the rest of the international community to ensure greater protection of Antarctica's waters in 2020.

Yours sincerely,



Philippe Cousteau



Ashlan Gorse Cousteau