To
UN 2023 Water Conference Assembly
Stakeholders
Right-holders

CHILEAN PATAGONIA, Natural World Heritage
"Chilean Patagonia. Patagonian Archipelagos and Icefields”.

Since 2003, local communities, and local and national NGOs have been promoting of CHILEAN PATAGONIA as UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site. However, its progress has been slowed down by a lack of political will from all Chilean governments and part some members of the industrial community, from 2009 to date.

The proposal covers the whole territory of the Torres del Paine, Bernardo O'Higgins and Laguna San Rafael National Parks, plus the Katalalixar National Reserve, and part of Las Guaitecas and Alacalufes National Reserves. All located in Aysén and Magallanes Chilean regions, involving together about 7.2 million hectares of land.

The area involved in the proposal includes, among its outstanding elements, the Northern Patagonian Ice Field and most of the Southern Patagonian Ice Field (a smaller area of this ice field is located in Argentina, in the Los Glaciares National Park, declared Natural World Heritage Site in 1981). The first icefield is completely contained in the Laguna San Rafael National Park and covers an area of 440,000 hectares. The second is included in the Bernardo O'Higgins National Park with an area of around 1.04 million hectares.

The entirety of this ice field, without considering Antarctica, is the largest glacier area in the Southern Hemisphere and the seventh in the world, after Tibet. In addition, it should be noted that both ice fields represent 75% of the surface of glaciers present in the entire country. Plus, this is the third reservoir of solid water in the World, after Antarctica and Greenland, in addition to giving birth, in the case of the Northern Ice Field, to the second largest lake in South America, the binational General Carrera/Buenos Aires lake.

This proposal meets at least four of the criteria of the Operational Guidelines on the application of the World Heritage Convention:

• Contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;
• Be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;

• Be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;

• Contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of Outstanding Universal Value from the point of view of science or conservation.

For all of the above, we make this declaration to be considered by all stakeholders and rights-holders, to count on their support for this important and fundamental task for Chile and Humanity.

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