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CC: Mr. Kris Van Nijen  
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March 17, 2021

Dear Mr. Vandenbulcke,

I am writing to you regarding the deep seabed mining tests with the Patania II that DEME's subsidiary Global Sea Mineral Resources (GSR) announced during the MiningImpact stakeholders dialogue on 21 January, and which are scheduled to take place in April, according to the presentations given at that meeting.<sup>1</sup> With these tests, DEME-GSR is taking further steps towards the commercial exploitation of the deep seabed.

However, consistent with the precautionary principle and the ecosystem approach, and in order to protect the ocean from overexploitation, Greenpeace does not see any place for deep seabed mining in a transition towards a sustainable future. We are convinced that it will take us further from a solution to the global environmental crisis. Our concerns are set out further in the reports *In Deep Water* and *Deep Trouble*.<sup>2</sup>

The importance of eliminating unsustainable uses of the ocean and its resources and working collaboratively to develop a coherent global approach to protect the ocean and sustainably use its resources have also been recognised in the Leaders' Pledge for Nature, signed by 80 heads of state and government in September 2020, including Belgium's Prime Minister Sophie Wilmès.<sup>3</sup> As CEO of a company committed to sustainability,<sup>4</sup> I hope that you share our point of view.

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<sup>1</sup> JPI Oceans. 2021.02.03. MiningImpact plans presented at stakeholder info day. <http://jpi-oceans.eu/news-events/news/miningimpact-plans-presented-stakeholder-info-day>

<sup>2</sup> Greenpeace International (2019) *In Deep Water*. The emerging threat of deep sea mining. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1m-bCz8YDOhBHPwOvtMeUjh702xqVb1I/view> and Greenpeace International (2020) *Deep Trouble: the murky world of the deep sea mining industry*. <https://www.greenpeace.org/static/planet4-international-stateless/c86ff110-pto-deep-trouble-report-final-1.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Leaders' Pledge for Nature. United to reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 for sustainable development. [https://www.leaderspledgefornature.org/Leaders\\_Pledge\\_for\\_Nature\\_27.09.20.pdf](https://www.leaderspledgefornature.org/Leaders_Pledge_for_Nature_27.09.20.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> DEME Group website. About us. Consulted 26 February 2021. <https://www.deme-group.com/about-us>

Scientific research is increasingly demonstrating that deep seabed mining risks causing irreversible loss and irreparable damage to the vulnerable ecosystems of the deep ocean.<sup>5</sup> Based on these scientific warnings and in order to prevent further biodiversity loss and to avoid potentially damaging a critical carbon sink, the deep ocean must remain off limits for deep seabed mining. Our concerns about the destructive and irreversible impacts of deep seabed mining are shared by a group of 30 deep-sea scientists, who also point out that research to understand how deep-sea ecosystems function and support vital processes is distinct from activities carried out under exploration contracts granted by the International Seabed Authority.<sup>6</sup>

For these reasons, I urgently call on you to refrain from taking any further steps in the direction of commercial deep seabed mining, including the planned tests with the Patania II.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



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<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Van Dover C.L., Ardron J.A., Escobar E., Gianni M., Gjerde K.M., Jaeckel A., Jones D., Levin L.A., Niner H., Pendleton L., Smith C.R., Thiele T., Turner P.J., Watling L. and Waver P.P.E. (2017). Biodiversity Loss from Deep-sea Mining. *Nature Geoscience*, 26 June 2017. DOI: 10.1038/ngeo2983. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318093120 Biodiversity loss from deep-sea mining](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318093120_Biodiversity_loss_from_deep-sea_mining) ; Levin L.A., Mengerink K., Gjerde K.M., Rowden A.A., Vandover C.L., Clark M.R., Ramirez-Llodra E., Currie B., Smith C.R., Sato K.N., Gallo N., Sweetman A.K., Lily H., Armstrong C.W. and Brider J. (2016). Defining “serious harm” to the marine environment in the context of deep-seabed mining. *Marine Policy*. 74, pp. 245-259. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0308597X1630495X> ; Miller K.A., Thompson K.F., Johnston P. and Santillo, D. (2018) An Overview of Seabed Mining Including the Current State of Development, Environmental Impacts, and Knowledge Gaps. *Frontiers in Marine Science*. 4 DOI: [10.3389/fmars.2017.00418](https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2017.00418)

<sup>6</sup> Statement of concern from the international scientific community. 22 July 2019. <https://www.greenpeace.org/static/planet4-international-stateless/2019/07/23dc9f03-isa-scientists-letter-2019.pdf>