

## **Albert I Grand Medal Award Ceremony – November, 7<sup>th</sup> 2019**

### **Speech of H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco**

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A vital step has been taken. There is now a widely shared awareness of the threats posed by the current global development model to our environment, to the ocean, to the planet, to our habitat as our species, the human species.

All over the world this issue is on the table. In particular, the role played by the ocean, by the global ocean, in the balance of our planet that is now rightfully acknowledged. I am pleased to see how far we have come on this path during the past few years. And now have a growing number of fellow walkers along this path.

We owe this advance, first and foremost, to the scientific community, who for decades have been voicing a diagnosis as specific as it is preoccupying. And it is becoming increasingly more specific and increasingly more preoccupying. Once again, I'd like to thank the IPCC as you did just a few minutes ago, Mister Ban Ki-Moon, who unveiled their special report on the Ocean and the Cryosphere in a changing climate in this very room last September 25th. This report, which is strongly supported by Monaco, is a vital foundation, consensual and indisputable, on which to plan for the evolution of our planet, and to choose its evolution with full knowledge of the facts.

We also owe this advance to the fact that this diagnosis has been taken to heart by civil society throughout the world, as well as by the world's political leaders. Well, by almost all of them. From that viewpoint the Paris agreement struck in 2017 was a success on which we must now build.

It is my wish that the next Conference of the Parties on the UNFCCC which will be hosted by Chile in Madrid next December. We will continue in this dynamic way by placing even more emphasis on the ocean. It is also my wish that the important events of the next twelve months leading up to the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in China in October of next year, will foster a convergence between climate issues, biodiversity and the protection of habitats as well as of species. These are all different facets of one single topic: life on planet Earth.

I am confident that we have left behind the time of uncertainty, despite the last smokescreens still being created by the defenders of an obsolete model.

For all that, this success now confronts us with a challenge which to me is even greater: the challenge to provide solutions and not leave populations in anxiety and uncertainty.

All those who claim to have any influence on present society and its future must face up to this challenge, and the political leaders are in the front line. For anxiety fosters expectancy, and disappointed expectancy fosters the mistrust which nowadays is finding vigorous expression.

Science once again has a vital role to play in the providing of solutions. Science has been instrumental in revealing the deterioration of the ecosystems that make up our planet. But today decision makers must stop hiding behind their demands to know more and more as a way to postpone taking action. This is the exact opposite of the precautionary approach which in my view is needed more than ever before.

Consequently, science itself must enter a new stage by generating and assisting the solutions. By enabling us to find the right road, not that of the conquest and unrestrained exploitation of nature, but that of the preservation of our natural capital, our habitat. The field of sustainability science is now growing fast, Thank God for that.

I hope that, as far as the ocean is concerned, the UN decade of ocean science for sustainable development will speed up this momentum.

To find solutions, ambition is needed, as well as political leadership at all levels. The global pressure exerted on our planet affects everyone and hits the weakest, the hardest. In this context international solidarity and multilateral dialogue are more vital than ever before.

The ocean and the climate invite us to do that. They unite species, peoples, individuals from all backgrounds and from all walks of life, wherever they may be, with a bond as unshakeable as it is vital, for better and for worse.

The discussions currently taking place regarding the high seas accentuate the fact that the ocean is a treasure that we share and we need to protect collectively. It is my hope that these discussions will lead to an ambitious and effective regulatory framework, one which will meet the challenges which have emerged since the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 30 years ago.

Today I wish to pay tribute to the vital contributions made by the two laureates of the Great Medal Albert I. They show us the way to this renewed alliance between science and politics in order to shape and build the future that we

want. (Thank you, SG Ban Ki-Moon, for allow me to borrow from you this meaningful expression).

Pr. Lisa Ann Levin has brought her expertise on deep sea organisms to bear on the global assessment of the effects of climate change, as well as on the formulation of a regulatory framework which will prevent man from rashly exploding this Eldorado of the deep sea. And I thank her for her contribution to the safeguarding of this commons.

I remember my conversations with you, Mister Ban Ki-Moon about the Sustainable Development Goals and what has become SDG 14, “life under the sea”. I value the place that is now occupied by the Sustainable Development Goals in political and economic debates, on the initiative of you, Mister Secretary General. The setting-up of an SDG focused on the ocean, without isolating it from the other major objectives, has been vital to the recognition of the cross-cutting role of the ocean, as well as a driving force for action. From it stems the UN decade of ocean science for sustainable development and this again leads us into the field of solutions.

Last but not least, I underestimate the fact that nothing can be done without the full involvement of the younger generations. Today, these generations are vigorously demanding action, as we have seen particularly in these past few months. I have no doubt that the new generations of scientists will be careful to place their knowledge at the service even more harmonious relationship with our environment.

We cannot leave mankind in a dead end, in a state of helplessness and guilt. We cannot leave the future of those who are in despair or who are frustrated by inaction.

Neither can we be content to patch up the past anymore. Today the word adaptation is in everyone’s lips, but I think that few gauge is true extent. In my view, adaptation implies redefining and revitalising progress, progress which must be social and environmental; progress which, if it is really to benefit man, must embrace all species of our planet.

This is a major responsibility faced by all decision makers and a joint challenge for science and for politics.

Such was the vision of my great-great- grandfather Prince Albert I and such is the ambition that we celebrate, here, today with these medals. And, Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, such is the greatest demand we face in our time to secure our future.