

Your Royal Highness,

Minister,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

I would like to welcome you to Monaco and tell you of the importance I attach to this event that brings us together here today, as well as the partnership that we are launching.

The question of the oceans, their future and their conservation, is for me a key issue and one that is sadly too often neglected.

This is clearly a central issue, due to the history and geography of the Principality. You can see the natural relationship between Monaco and the sea and to what an extent the sea shapes life here.

However, it is above all a central issue, because the seas are at the heart of our common future.

As you know, the seas cover 70% of the surface of the globe, they embrace 97% of its biosphere, produce 50% of the oxygen that we breathe. They contribute directly to the Earth's climate balance, and, although the exact percentage remains unknown, they contain a significant amount of the world's biodiversity.

However, and this is the third reason why today the seas represent a key issue, the richness contained in the oceans, the services they provide, are currently more necessary and more threatened than ever before.

More necessary, because at a time when the world population is about to rise to nine or ten billion people, we need new resources. The resources that the sea contains. The resources that we must learn to exploit responsibly.

They are becoming more threatened, because sadly technological progress is advancing faster than our knowledge and even our awareness. In this respect, progress allows us to exploit many of the sea's resources excessively, and in an unsustainable manner.

It is imperative to reconcile these two requirements – that of obtaining new resources and that of exploiting them better – adopting a new approach to the oceans.

How? First of all by working together, with States, institutions, and committed, like-minded people, as this initiative allows us to do.

In the face of global issues, which transcend borders, no one can act in isolation.

Above all, maritime issues are intertwined. There are similarities between the seas, of course, but also links and interactions. That is why the problems in the Baltic and the Mediterranean benefit from being tackled jointly.

Beyond the seas, it is also a matter of connecting people, just as the title of this conference invites us to do.

Since ancient times, the sea has brought people together, has promoted exchanges and has allowed the development of the civilizations. Today, we must allow the benefits of such exchanges to serve the seas. Together we must achieve this through sharing, warning and inventing.

Only a collective approach can allow us to progress. Like Sweden and Monaco, we can have different sizes and histories, but still share common values, and know how to make the most of the differences in their resources, in order to attain a shared goal.

Multilateral organizations have a similar responsibility.

This is why I supported the United Nations' creation of a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) specific to the oceans: SDG 14.

This is why, together with my Foundation, I developed the project for an IPCC interim report on the oceans and the cryosphere, which was launched here in Monaco less than a year ago.

And this is why Monaco participates in the work on the biodiversity of the high seas currently underway at the United Nations.

These different projects carried out by a connected world, these projects to which Sweden makes a valuable contribution, show us the benefit of dialogue: dialogue that allows us to make real progress.

However, apart from the aforementioned international forums, the objective of connecting that we all share, must surely encourage us to make the most of digital technologies. These technologies continue to allow us to invent new protection tools.

They allow us to understand the seas better, as shown by the innovations we are testing on board the Yersin, within the framework of the Monaco Explorations Campaign.

They allow us to control the seas better, particularly within the context of the marine protected areas that are increasing in number, and which it would be unrealistic to monitor with the human eye alone.

And, above all, they allow us to create a less destructive growth, which is more sustainable and which uses the wealth of the seas without degrading them. This is what we call blue growth.

In this respect, they represent a unique opportunity, not only technological but also in terms of the global economy. An opportunity to invent a new, more intelligent model, which consumes less energy and is more sustainable.

This is our key objective, because it is one that will allow us to reconcile humanity and the sea.

In order to achieve it, I think we have no choice but to connect more, as we are doing today, and as we shall continue to do with a focus on sustainability, through this initiative between Sweden and Monaco.

Thank you.