

Mr Chairman,

Queen Noor,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

In view of the extremely insightful elements that have been presented to us, the primary purpose of this Declaration is to affirm our shared responsibility, keeping the Third International Year in 2018 of the Reef in mind.

It of course echoes this responsibility outlined at the United Nations last June, and prior to that in 2015, when we adopted the Sustainable Development Goals, and more specifically the Sustainable Development Goal 14.

It is founded on a conviction of deep unity. Unity of maritime ecosystems, whose interdependence can no longer be ignored. Unity of underwater and terrestrial life. Unity, more generally, of our countries, our points of view, our interests, all of which converge when vital elements are at stake.

In order to preserve these vital elements, the Declaration presented today issues a triple challenge: scientific, political and economic.

The scientific challenge, which is the cornerstone of all effective and universal action, is to gain a better understanding of coral reefs, in particular in the context of global warming, and in the light of the coral bleaching that can presently be observed. An important international effort is needed in this regard, as well as a deep mobilization of the IPCC.

It is indeed important that the IPCC, which plays a central role in our understanding of global warming, addresses this issue. In this respect, the interim report on the oceans and cryosphere, a project I supported and which was launched last year in Monaco, represents a key opportunity.

The great strength of the IPCC, as we all know, is its ability to transform scientific knowledge into a program of political action.

From this point of view too, there are numerous tasks to accomplish, which is the reason why it is important that this Declaration brings them to the fore and establishes the specific goals that alone are able to lead to effective action for the protection of coral reefs.

These goals are primarily local strategies for environmental and ecosystem preservation, strategies that must help strengthen their resilience to the multiple stresses to which they are exposed.

Then we have the goals to combat climate change – which is, as we know, one of the main causes of the problems with which coral reefs are today confronted. In this respect, it is important to both reiterate the commitments made in Paris in 2015 and to affirm the responsibility of each State.

Last, the goals that we need to affirm are of an economic nature. This means identifying the strategies that would allow us to guarantee the survival of coral reefs, to get economic players involved, and together put into place the foundations for genuine blue growth.

Because coral preservation has, as we all know, positive economic repercussions, within the framework of a virtuous model that we need to make better known in order for it to become widely accepted.

In this respect, and by attracting the attention of the world's leaders, this Declaration directly contributes to these goals. I hope that many of us will endorse it.

The holding of this event, during the conference, constitutes the first step, which we must ensure is followed by others, each time that issues relating to the future of marine ecosystems are addressed.

This is how we can effectively fight the various illnesses that today affect coral reefs and create shared momentum around them, supported by scientists, politicians and economic players.

This dynamic is today within our reach. I am delighted that we can make this happen to help us end the spiral of destruction in which coral reefs are both sentinels and victims, a spiral of destruction that threatens all seas and oceans.

I now suggest that we proceed with a round table discussion.