

Your Excellences,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear friends,

I would like to tell you how pleased I am to welcome you to Monaco for this important occasion.

You know the Principality's commitment to the issue of the oceans. This commitment is particularly noticeable in the Oceanographic Museum where we are gathered today.

It was built more than a century ago by my great-great grandfather Prince Albert I, and ever since then has been dedicated to renewing, strengthening and increasing the links between humankind and the sea - which is exactly what we are trying to do here.

My satisfaction goes beyond the pleasure of welcoming you.

It also stems from the fact of seeing the fruition of a project that we launched together a few months ago, in Davos - a project that I strongly believe in. Through this unique coalition, we can actually see tangible growth in the involvement of economies and businesses centering on the oceans.

At last, we can see the will to preserve the oceans becoming aligned with the prerequisites for economic growth.

This alignment is essential.

Whether we wished for it or not, whether we are aware of it or not, the oceans lie at the heart of our economic system. Our trade routes cross them, our food supplies partially depend on them, we build our settlements on their shores.

Whether or not we anticipate it, the oceans will play an even more important role in the decades and centuries to come.

Whether in terms of energy, health, transport or urban planning, our future will be connected with the sea.

For these reasons, we can no longer content ourselves with deploring the damage we inflict on the marine environment. We know it is essential for us to exploit this environment, and it will be even more so for a planet whose population will soon reach eight or nine billion human beings.

Therefore we have no choice other than to develop Blue Growth, and give ourselves the resources to make it a success.

The necessary investments, will need to be at the same high level as the issues involved.

It implicates efforts to innovate, which clearly are at the heart of the new model we must create, and also the implementation of appropriate regulations, at both national and international level.

In this respect I would like to commend the growing commitment of the international community and the United Nations on these issues. The presence among us of Mr Peter Thomson, the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, is evidence of that. I am glad that we were able to house his offices in the Maison des Océans, in Paris, which is the sister branch of this Museum.

Beyond financiers, beyond entrepreneurs and beyond policy-makers, it is also the consumers whom we must convince to engage with us in this new challenge.

To achieve that, we will again need your energy and your ideas from you who know these consumers, who speak to them and who can guide them.

This is another responsibility for you, and I am confident that you will be able to meet it.

Let me wish you fruitful discussions.

Thank you.