

Excellences,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear friends,

In bringing these discussions to a close, I would first like to congratulate all the speakers for the remarkable quality of their contributions.

I would also like to thank all those who made this event possible, particularly those within the International Coral Reef Initiative, the presidency of which Monaco has had the honor of sharing with our Australian and Indonesian partners and friends.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Indonesian organizers of this Our Ocean Conference, who made it possible to give corals an important place on the agenda, after our meeting in Malta last year where many of you were present, together with HRH the Prince of Wales.

I am delighted to see that the issue of corals is at last receiving the attention it deserves, as shown by the quality of the debates we have just heard. The high level of the participation is in itself excellent news, because it opens up real prospects for improvement.

Prospects for political improvement first of all, because what we have heard is the need to establish frameworks that will permit the sustainable preservation of coral reefs.

In the first instance, this means local frameworks. I would like to stress once again the importance and the relevance of marine protected areas. They alone enable us to assure the protection of the most sensitive ecosystems, provided they can be underpinned by defined standards and adequate resources.

I want to stress the importance, for each country involved, of a specific commitment in favor of corals, whose significance extends far beyond the regions in which they are located.

Therefore, I can only encourage all the States who may not yet have done so to sign the Coral Reef Life Declaration, which sums up the commitments to be taken to assure the future of our corals.

But the necessary frameworks must also be international. At their forefront is the Convention on Biological Diversity, which requires improvements both in terms of objectives and in terms of implementation. We are now approaching the 2020 horizon, and with it, the need to sharpen our strategies for dealing with certain specific issues, including corals.

The ICRI General Meeting, which I will have the pleasure of hosting in Monaco this December, will be an important step in preparing for this deadline. My wish is that it will lead to adopting a practical, effective, ambitious and realistic action program.

We will do our utmost to achieve this goal and I would like here to assure you of the full mobilization of the Principality, the Monaco Scientific Centre and our various institutions actively involved in ocean preservation, in particular my Foundation.

We know that the global objectives we must pursue would be of little account unless we take action against the primary cause of coral reef degradation: global warming with its corollaries including ocean acidification in particular, is one of the primary causes of damage to corals.

Tackling global warming and engaging in a transition of the carbon economy is, and here I am speaking to some of our partners too, more than ever a priority that must always be kept in mind.

Finally, the role of policy-makers should be to support the mobilization of resources, especially financial, which are needed today to implement a real strategy for corals.

This has been said today: there is a lack of resources, even though corals play a key role in the preservation of our planet's equilibriums, and even though the ecosystemic services they deliver are worth billions of dollars.

This economic equation is something we must develop, in order to demonstrate to everyone the collective benefits that we can expect from a real coral preservation strategy - and also, the consequences in the event of their disappearance.

This, I believe, is how we will succeed in bringing onboard private stakeholders, who must also mobilize themselves.

Our discussions have once again shown the need for private initiatives, which should be combined with public actions in a collective strategy constructed around various tools and at various levels, from the most local to the most global.

On this subject I would like to acknowledge the remarkable initiative of the Vulcan Group and its founder Mr Paul Allen, who sadly passed away a few weeks ago, in regards of the creation of a global funding mechanism for corals.

My Foundation, which in September hosted a workshop of experts in Monaco to set this mechanism up, is supporting this initiative, including on the financial level, and will match Vulcan's contribution to the initial funding, with the objective being to raise two million dollars for corals between now and 2020.

Ladies and gentlemen,

My dear friends,

I cannot close these proceedings without stressing again the support that we all owe to our scientists, without whom our action would be not only ineffective, but quite simply impossible.

Without them, their capacity for understanding, deciphering and anticipating the phenomena we have spoken of, we would not be able to respond.

Without them, we would not be able to grasp the complexity, the adaptability and the variety of corals, which call for special strategies.

In this regard, let us always bear in mind the assumptions of the last IPCC report that, if the average climatic increase reaches 1.5 degrees, damage will reach 70 to 90% of the coral zones, and if the increase exceeds 2 degrees, this damage may affect up to 99% of these areas.

Finally, I hope that this meeting will have given every one of you additional reasons to mobilize yourselves, and to engage in practical avenues for action.

Thank you.