

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

First of all I would like to welcome you to Monaco and to this Oceanographic Museum which I feel is particularly suited to our work.

It was built over a hundred years ago by my great great grandfather Prince Albert I who throughout his life helped to forge special ties between Monaco and the Oceans thanks to his activities. The father of modern oceanography and founder of the Oceanographic Institute, he was known as the Navigator Prince and was a strong advocate for the oceans and conducted many scientific expeditions across the world's seas.

He founded this Museum in order to share his passion and knowledge and commissioned the construction of this Palace of the Sea, which he said "dominates Monaco and centuries of ignorance" because for him, as for us, the fight for the preservation of the seas is, first and foremost, a fight against ignorance.

It is by gaining a better understanding of our seas and by enabling our contemporaries to do likewise that we will be able to protect them more effectively against the dangers threatening them. Moreover this is how the Global Ocean Commission operates, since scientific rigour and scientific truth lie at the core of its action and are the only foundation on which our commitment is based.

This scientific knowledge has led us today to an undeniable conclusion, that your report, published this summer, summed up perfectly.

The conclusion is the erosion of biodiversity, fuelled by the destruction of habitats, overfishing and pollution.

It is the general deterioration of the sea environment, due once again to the effects of pollution, climate change and acidification, a consequence of increasing greenhouse gas emissions, but also technological progress which pushes human activities increasingly further, increasingly deeper

Finally it is the great difficulty to take concrete action, due to a lack of a legal and institutional frameworks adapted to the reality of the oceans and to the challenges of today's world.

One of the great merits of the Global Ocean Commission's work is highlighting this reality: the greatest threat to the oceans today is the lack of tools to protect them.

When the dangers have significantly increased over the last decades, when our knowledge of the ocean environment has also greatly improved, above all when the rate of ocean deterioration is speeding up and fast, resolute action is more necessary than ever and yet the resources we have available seem to be increasingly inadequate.

The task set by the Global Ocean Commission - to propose efficient and realistic solutions - solutions that President FIGUERES will be presenting to us in a few minutes - is all the more important. More than ever, our world needs simple and tailored tools to ensure the future of our seas on which we all depend.

In this respect I would like to take this opportunity to touch upon two issues which I feel are currently of particular importance.

The first is overfishing, a scourge that your report clearly identified and against which it put forward proposals that I feel are relevant, especially in terms of rationalisation and the transparency of subsidising policies.

Due to its multi-party composition and measured, objective approach to this issue, I believe that the Global Ocean Commission has a key role to play here, in particular among economic players who need to understand that it would not be in their interest to empty the seas.

The recent negotiations on the Bluefin tuna brought this to the fore: nothing can be achieved without the participation and agreement of economic players. It is therefore with them that we need to move forward, not by giving in to exorbitant demands, but by convincing them and helping them to develop new, responsible and sustainable profits. This work will of course be very long and complicated, but it is essential.

The second point I would like to talk about is the upcoming meetings. The Paris Summit next year will be decisive, because this is a pivotal moment.

Although the dangers have never been so serious, there is still time to act. This is a privileged time when we are aware, when the urgency of the situation prompts us and when a willingness to act is gradually emerging. All over the world, new forces are rising which are demanding responsible action. An increasing number of states, as we saw recently at the G20 meeting, are becoming seriously concerned about the planet. However, in order to be efficient, they need tools quickly.

We should therefore take advantage of this unique moment to make progress in international negotiations at last, in particular with regard to the status of the high seas.

More than ever before, we need to make special efforts regarding this over the next few months. This is the purpose of today's meeting: to define ways of achieving this. But it is also the responsibility of all of us to give ourselves the means, individually and collectively, to contribute to this key task.

I would therefore like to assure you of my full support in this respect with the Principality of Monaco as well as that of my Foundation. We will assume our responsibilities at this crucial time and advocate for our seas at all the international forums we attend.

Because this is, in substance, the goal of our meeting today, as it is of the various meetings ahead: to do everything in our power so that the oceans are finally fully integrated into our collective reasoning, to enable these resources which are vital for all humanity to be finally recognized and respected as such.

As I mentioned my great great grandfather a few moments ago, I would like to conclude by invoking his memory and by once again quoting his words: "The time has come, he wrote, for global consideration of the key issues faced by the Ocean and which Humanity needs to embrace using the best means available because they will provide us with the progress that will enable us to vanquish our barbarism more quickly."»

This was a century ago and sadly things have not changed as much as he had hoped... It is my wish that in one hundred years' time when our great great grandchildren turn their attention to the oceans, it will at last be to commend themselves for having saved them.

I hope that our work today and that of the Global Ocean Commission will help towards this goal.

Thank you.