

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

As this day draws to a close, and before briefly concluding our work, I would like to thank you all most sincerely for agreeing to participate in the fifth edition of the Monaco Blue Initiative.

Indeed, the Monaco Blue Initiative owes its existence to those who support it, those who, like you, nurture it with their beliefs, their experience and their expertise. All that this unique think-tank has achieved in the past five years, we owe to the commitment and talent of its participants – we owe it to you, to your talent and your commitment. Each one of them, each one of you, has nurtured this work and brought it to the level of quality we see here today and I want to thank you warmly for it.

Before I move on, I also want to express my gratitude to the moderators who have done a fantastic job throughout today's proceedings. And not forgetting, of course, the teams working for the co-organisers of the event: my Foundation, of course, but also the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco, founded by my great-grandfather more than a century ago.

Our discussions today have been particularly constructive and were perfectly summed up by the moderators. So I shall not go into detail here about the various conclusions we reached.

But taking a step back, I want to go a little further and think about what comes next, in other words, when tomorrow comes, how are we going to pursue the objectives that brought us together today? How will we address these matters, educate our contemporaries, aid decision-making and encourage progress?

Beyond their specificities, the topics we have talked about today – aquaculture, marine protected areas and governance of the high sea – all raise the same question. This question, which I believe is one of the great challenges of our century, is the ability of humans to coexist with the sea, and with nature more broadly.

This coexistence reveals a major contradiction that has come up repeatedly during our discussions.

However, what has also become clear to me today, is that behind this contradiction lie opportunities that are too often ignored.

For although the preservation of our seas is a vital necessity for the future of humanity, it is also, right now, a unique opportunity to build a better world. I think this is what our discussions have shown today.

I'm thinking first and foremost of the issue of sustainable aquaculture.

In describing the opportunities offered by liable aquaculture, at a time when the question of the livelihoods of millions of our contemporaries is at stake, you have addressed the environmental and health issues. But you have also mapped out paths toward progress for all humanity, especially those who already face serious problems of subsistence.

With its vast resources, sadly too rarely exploited sustainably, and the richness of its ecosystems, the sea offers myriad opportunities to feed and care for humanity better.

I'm also thinking about the issue of social and economic development related to marine protected areas.

In proposing new ways to tap the benefits of nature, finding new sources of growth as we develop greater respect for nature, calculating profitability based on sustainable economic development and not on immediate predation, it is not just about allowing certain fish stocks to regenerate. It is also, more broadly, about proposing new development models for entire regions, and offering them tangible ways to permanently improve their lot.

The same argument applies to the financing of marine protected areas, which we mentioned at the beginning of the afternoon.

In the mechanisms we are proposing to develop, we can of course see technical responses to a specific lack of resources. But we can also see – and it is this aspect that I would like to focus on here – a new attempt to mobilize resources and foster growth in innovative ways, and reconcile finance and sustainable development more largely.

Finally, and this is the last topic we tackled, the issue of governance of the high sea seems to me emblematic of a sound approach to the collective management of a shared resource.

While globalization challenges most of the categories we used to reason by, how can we fail to see here the outline of a broader reflection on the governance of many other sectors formerly not covered by law, but which are now at the heart of our collective future?

Whether we are talking about access to natural resources, the conquest of space, or even just the virtual infinity of the Web, our world is increasingly confronted with areas such as these, hitherto untouched by restrictive legislation and within which we must devise new ways to work together for the benefit of all.

Beyond the issues related specifically to the high sea, all the topics we have addressed today lead us to imagine a new world. A world in which the Earth – of course – is no longer treated as an adjustment variable in economic development. But above all a world in which people can collectively gain better control over their lives and forge a more harmonious relationship with nature.

It is up to us, in this century, to create this world. This is what we are all doing here, through our research, our actions and our initiatives. This is what many of our contemporaries around the world are doing, working every day to develop green growth, ushering in a new approach to economic and social development built on sustainable foundations.

Despite these extremely positive and encouraging prospects, our generation nonetheless has difficulty seeing the potential for prosperity and progress that environmental issues represent. Too often, we see the call to protect nature as yet another constraint imposed upon us, hampering our development.

That is why I think it is useful to trust the approach that is at the heart of the Monaco Blue Initiative: focusing on clearly defined issues, however modest, setting precise objectives, and bringing together experts and practitioners from different fields to find a new, tangible equilibrium.

The conclusions you have reached today are indeed the perfect illustration of the huge potential that exists and that should enable us to finally make the planet the new frontier of action in this age when the future looks so bleak. And the examples you referred to prove that these are realistic and necessary perspectives.

By disseminating these conclusions and examples, we can, hopefully, prove to our sceptical contemporaries that sustainable development is a reality, ushering in a renewed relationship between human progress and respect for nature.

This is how we shall respond to the issues that are always posed in the debate surrounding the high sea. From the first mythological stories to the modern debate on blue growth, these issues are always, fundamentally the same: our place on Earth and our ability to control our destiny.

It is said that the Greek philosopher Aristotle distinguished between three kinds of men: the living, the dead and those who go to sea. He was referring to the great dangers that sailors came across. More than two thousand years later, I see also their ability to question the world, to reject inevitability and make life on Earth a perpetual quest.

Like those who once sailed the seas, those today who are debating the future of the ocean have a long-term goal for humanity. I hope that we share this goal, so that we can continue to move forward, together.

Thank you.