

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

First of all, I would like to thank you for taking part in these discussions and to tell you how positive I believe they can be

I believe they can be positive and the high level of this meeting is a testament to the growing awareness about the oceans, which is so desperately needed.

Positive because this awareness is increasingly shared at international forums, as it is by public opinion.

Positive because the need for tangible results, within reasonable time frames, is increasingly necessary.

And above and beyond positive because I am convinced that this is the only way of saving the primary balance of this Planet, and that this is a matter of urgency!

I will not reiterate here the details of this urgency, the damaged marine ecosystems, the depleted biodiversity, the

multiple pollutions. This has already been clearly pointed out.

But I would nonetheless like to come back to the utterly unprecedented nature of the threats we are faced with, the full extent of which we are finally beginning to appreciate.

Behind these changes in ocean pH, behind the disappearance of these species of algae and crustaceans and even fish and behind the plastic which is accumulating, lies the prospect of the widespread disruption of our Planet. Of a major crisis.

There is the prospect of the irreparable destruction of the majority of fundamental balances on which our economy is founded, our political balances and even our civilisation.

This we know. And moreover, we have the resources to address the situation.

We have international resources, with negotiations currently under way at the UN regarding the Montego Bay

Convention and biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction.

We have economic resources with already established eloquent proof of the blue growth that is developing, and which now needs to be given resolute support.

We have practical resources with marine protected areas which have already proven their effectiveness.

Above all, we have political resources as our contemporaries are asking us more and more often to find and implement concrete, fast and efficient solutions to protect our common heritage.

These resources generate responsibilities: for our age, for our generation, for our individual destinies, for all of us carrying out important functions.

In practical terms, this means that we need to give the oceans their rightful place in economic terms, by supporting the emergence of blue growth.

To do this we need to stop funding destructive activities, overfishing and intensive aquaculture. To value

common goods and ecosystem services fairly. And to use marine resources sustainably.

We also need to regulate or ban the extraction of fossil energies in sensitive areas like the Arctic and to put an end to all activities whose disastrous impact on the ocean floor, biodiversity and the climate we know about.

Finally, we need to change our political approach regarding the oceans, by making their preservation an issue of mutual concern and by fighting the belief that certain activities or certain short-term interests warrant the degradation of our environment.

At an international level, we need to focus on reinforcing their legal framework, by appreciating the true value of the High Seas, which cover over half of this Planet.

We need to commit to a genuine ambitious and effective species conservation strategy, all species, which are currently disappearing in their hundreds against a background of indifference.

And we need to develop marine protected areas, whose beneficial effects we are aware of and for which it is vital that ambitious goals, reaching far beyond the 10% target agreed in Aichi ten years ago, be fixed by the CBD in 2020. At the same time, we should clearly define statutes and potentially wide-ranging rules for MPAs, based, for example, on the work of the IUCN.

Progress is being made. Solutions do exist.

The path is therefore mapped out. It is up to us to follow it.

The world is counting on us to have this courage and determination. I know that we can rise to this challenge. That is why we are here and that is the purpose of our discussions.

Thank you.