

Ocean Elders Dinner – New York, 21 September 2014
Address by H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

I am very pleased to be here with you this evening at this convivial but nonetheless important event.

At a time when representatives from all the nations and lands of the world are gathering together in this city to discuss our joint future, I believe the Ocean Elders have never been more vital.

Because although the five continents have many representatives here, the same cannot be said for the five oceans, even though they cover more than 70 per cent of the Earth's surface and play an essential role in terrestrial ecosystems.

Whether it is for the global climate, biodiversity or specific ecosystems, all of us here are aware of the crucial importance of the sea. And we also know to what extent it is all too often neglected, especially in political areas where, logically, the immediate interests of the population take precedence.

It is not a question of challenging the legitimacy of these areas. On the contrary, it is a question of contributing to their legitimacy by making the voice of the oceans heard here in New York during this UN Week.

Because, as we all know, it is within the framework of the United Nations that we will advance the cause of the oceans. I am doing so myself by taking part in the discussions being held on the subject. I am also pleased to welcome among us Cathy Novelli, the US Under Secretary of State, who will help convey our message of concern, but also of hope

Our message of concern is the one expressed in the Global Ocean Commission's recent findings about the main factors contributing to the decline of the global ocean, which include the over exploitation of marine resources, pollution, overfishing, illegal fishing, the impact of climate change on the sea, particularly acidification, and inadequate high seas governance.

However I also want to spread a message of hope.

About the people of the world, who are more and more aware of the environmental challenges.

About the people who are working in the Mediterranean with my foundation and the governments of several countries to set up a trust fund aimed at developing Marine Protected Areas.

About the United Nations, which has at last taken up these issues, and the anticipated negotiations thanks to the work of the Open Working Group on protecting high seas biodiversity.

And, lastly, about your presence here and the commitment of all those within various organisations working, like us, to raise awareness of these concerns.

I hope that as a team and individually, through the exchanges we have and meetings we take part in this week, we will spread these messages loud and clear, and at last make the voice of the sea heard in negotiations about the future of the planet. This voice is the voice of life, the life that has sprung from the ocean depths and which now, more than ever, needs the ocean in order to continue developing.

Thank you.