

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

First of all I would like to say how pleased I am to be among you today for this important moment of reflection. I would like to thank and express my gratitude to the organizers of this event and the directors of National Geographic.

It is important that the program of a gathering such as the Davos Forum allows to deal with ocean matters.

As Head of a State bordered by the sea, I have made "ocean conservation" a priority not only for my Government's political action but also for my Foundation's activities. It is a key issue because a crucial concern for the future of humankind.

The ocean maintains a balance on our fragile planet, in particular with regard to the climate. Oceans are vital for our communication and travel, for our leisure activities and lifestyle.

More important, the ocean is essential to ensure our livelihood, which requires ever-increasing resources, some of them can be provided by it, if managed sustainably.

We are in growing need of energy for which oceans hold so much potential: not only hydrocarbons, but diverse and inexhaustible renewable energies whose virtues we have been able to measure in Monaco!

Such a vision of the ocean, a vital complement to human development, calls for responsible policies. I will focus here on what the priorities of such policies should be.

First of all, we simply need to make the oceans a real political issue. The high seas, fragile ecosystems such as the North and South Poles, and more generally all ocean environments, suffer primarily from a dangerous "laissez-faire".

Urgent action is therefore required within the United Nations, the only forum capable of dealing with such a global issue.

We need to support and continue the work currently being conducted on the Montego Bay Convention. As should other initiatives, such as the adoption of a sustainable development objective for the global ocean, an objective which I hope will be approved this autumn at the United Nations.

Our political approach concerning the sea can already be facilitated by marine protected areas which we need to develop. This is the best way of ensuring both the conservation and the regeneration of our seas.

Wherever they have been created, their results are clearly evident, both in terms of renewing the ecosystems and developing human activities, such as revitalized fisheries in the surrounding regions thanks to reconstituted stocks, and the significant development of tourism.

In Monaco itself, where we have implemented conservation measures for many years, we have been able to assess their contribution. That is why these marine areas need to be increased, including in the high seas and the most vulnerable regions, such as the Arctic.

The second priority for our oceans is to combat the overexploitation of the seas, and especially overfishing, an issue for which the Global Ocean Commission has put forward specific and highly relevant recommendations, with particular focus on the subsidizing of fishing.

This is a key issue if we do not want to deplete our seas and above all if we want to implement sustainable practices. In the same way, we need to work in a coordinated manner and with the proper means to combat all types of illegal fishing, the effects of which are disastrous.

The same degree of attention must prevail with regard to mineral resources and hydrocarbons, the exploitation of which will become increasingly easy over the next few years due to technological progress, but also due to global warming in the Polar Regions. Here again, we need to favour a stringent and binding multilateral approach, based on independent scientific studies. In particular, this approach should impose a prior scientific opinion to any exploitation activities.

The third way of ensuring the future of our oceans is to take better care of our Planet! I am thinking of pollution, the effects of which on the oceans are devastating. Whether a result of offshore activities, none responsible industrial practices or the lack of resources of the coastal regions, pollution must be curbed.

Again to achieve this goal, we need to make brave and binding decisions at multilateral level.

Most important, in order to protect our planet and the oceans, we need to combat climate change, responsible for the weakening of many ecosystems, the loss of biodiversity and indirectly, also ocean acidification. This phenomenon is already extremely serious and is still given insufficient consideration by our contemporaries.

Mobilizing our contemporaries is also an efficient lever! Whatever their situation, they care for the sea. As demonstrated increasingly often by their individual or collective efforts across the globe, they want to pass on a sea abound with life to their children.

Their energy should be our ally. It should allow us to progress and to help move forward all the players concerned: political of course, but also economic players, as we see here in Davos, In addition to the media, which the National Geographic has been proving for many years. Promoting tirelessly awareness is, I believe one of the merits of our meeting today.

Jacques-Yves Cousteau, who was the director of the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco said that "*people protect and respect what they love. And to make them love the sea, they should be filled with wonder as much as information*".

We therefore know the route we need to take. A route which has been followed by the National Geographic for several decades!

Thank you.