

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

I am particularly pleased to see you again today to focus on an issue that I believe is crucial. Firstly, I would like to extend my warmest thanks to all of you for having devoted some of your time, energy and talent to these brainstorming sessions which, I know, have been both lucid and productive.

For us in Monaco, ocean acidification is a major concern and an ongoing commitment. It is here that almost five years ago the “Monaco declaration” was adopted, which was among the first to alert public opinion and world leaders about this phenomenon. It is also here that the International Atomic Energy Agency set up, within its marine environment laboratory, the International Coordination Centre on Ocean Acidification. And we are proud, together with my Foundation and a certain number of you, to have created a few months ago the Monegasque Association on Ocean Acidification, whose purpose is to disseminate, promote and facilitate information on this phenomenon, as well as to raise the resources necessary in order to study it more effectively.

Through my direct involvement, in addition to that of my Government and the efforts of my Foundation, we take action in this field whenever we can, whether it be local action, multilateral negotiations or by taking part in the majority of meetings dedicated to the issue.

Because today the facts are there. Already the first signs of damage caused by acidification are appearing, adding a further threat to those hanging over the seas. We have reached a critical point, a rare moment where the phenomena are known and where action is still possible. We have ignored ocean acidification for many years and soon it may be irremediable: it is now that we can, that we *must* act!

Combating acidification is naturally not an easy thing. Therefore, I will confine myself to four areas that I believe are priorities.

The first is of course the priority given to research. In the face of a phenomenon with a slow and indirect time frame, it is essential to have a sound knowledge, which alone will provide the base for action. Yet despite the progress made over the last few years, we

are faced with a complex and poorly understood reality. Our primary duty is therefore to improve our knowledge and, in order to achieve this, to support research.

And it is also essential to explore all the solutions possible, however complex and remote they may be today, but which tomorrow will enable us to mitigate acidification by capturing or removing part of atmospheric CO₂. Some of them, I am aware, were discussed during your working sessions. I believe that these are avenues that need to be explored in greater depth. If there is a chance of implementing technical solutions which will enable us to decrease the CO₂ present in the atmosphere, it would be a mistake not to act on them.

The second way of taking action is to combat the main cause of acidification: anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions. This is a global and complex issue, as the difficult negotiations we have carried out for years at the United Nations have proved. The recent conference in Warsaw once again showed a lack of consensus regarding the adoption of strong commitments. However, this does not mean that it is an impossible dream. Despite the difficulty, I continue to show my strong commitment, as I know that there is no other way of resolving the environmental crisis except by coordinated action on a global scale vis-à-vis one of its main causes.

In this respect, I continue my efforts even more because by reducing greenhouse gases, we will limit global warming, one of the effects of which is to dissolve methane hydrates which also contribute to ocean acidification...

The third avenue to be pursued is to combat the pollution of coastal waters, also responsible for a substantial proportion of ocean acidification. In the Mediterranean in particular, this is a large-scale problem for which the efforts of everyone are needed. Solutions are currently being developed, by means of a regional management scheme in which I believe. Resources also exist. Sadly, as often is the case, the only element missing is will.

This leads me on to the fourth aspect that I wanted to mention: raising the awareness of public opinion and leaders concerning a phenomenon that is too often poorly understood. While our contemporaries have learnt to pay heed to global warming and the loss of biodiversity over the last few decades and years, generally speaking the ocean issue still remains far-removed, complex or abstract, even though we know the evocative power of the seas on the human mind.

Yet this is an immediate and concrete issue, because acidification, in addition to weakening the ecosystems, is now a direct threat to key economic sectors. That is why this phenomenon needs to be understood by everyone.

It needs to be understood by the millions of men and women who work in the fishing industry, aquaculture and shellfish farming, and whose activity would be adversely affected by an ocean acidification level that is too high.

This needs to be understood by the 80% of our contemporaries who live close to the ocean and who know what they owe to these vast expanses of salt water.

And this needs to be even better understood by those concerned by problems related to nutrition. Because it is the oceans' ability to feed us that will be jeopardised tomorrow, if we do nothing.

Finally, I would like to add a fifth element to these four priority areas for action: adaptation.

I feel it is crucial to start thinking about adaptation measures which, sooner or later, will be essential. When we see the current effects of acidification on certain industries, such as oyster farming, which in some regions is already severely affected, when scientific forecasts anticipate an average decrease in the pH levels of the ocean surface of between 0.14 and 0.35 units by 2100, and when we are witness to the difficulties encountered in making any progress in all international negotiations, it is obvious, I think, that we will struggle to truly reverse the trend by the end of the century. At best, we will be able to curb it, which would already be a positive step.

That is why honesty and responsibility must spur us into working as fast as possible on adaptation mechanisms, while of course at the same time continuing to look for efficient global solutions.

Awareness, action and anticipation: these are the obligations of our century. Difficult obligations, for which everyone's efforts will be necessary, and yours in particular.

As Seneca said twenty centuries ago on the shores of our Mediterranean Sea: "It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare; it is because we do not dare that they are difficult."

Thank you.