

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

I am pleased to see you here again today for two reasons.

First of all, it is very satisfying for me to see the increasing importance given to the issue of ocean acidification on the international agenda.

And I am also particularly proud to be hosting your meeting here in Monaco.

The destiny of our Principality – of which this museum is testimony – is closely linked to the sea: this sea which is our heritage, our future and our responsibility. That is why Monaco, for many years, has initiated and supported various efforts aimed at protecting the marine environment.

Close to two years after the Monaco Declaration, in which over one hundred and fifty scientists from twenty-six countries drew global attention to the dangers of this complex and little-known phenomenon, today's meeting, which is now reaching the end, will enable us to continue to make concrete progress.

Making concrete progress means first and foremost reaffirming our trust and support for the scientific community, without whom it would be impossible to understand the dangers hanging over us. The work conducted for the past two years has confirmed our concerns and enabled us to improve our understanding of the phenomena at issue. Today more than ever, this research, a decisive factor for the future of our planet, needs to be encouraged and shared as widely as possible.

Making concrete progress also means instigating true international discussions about an issue that concerns everyone. Due to its magnitude, its consequences and its mechanisms, ocean acidification is a problem which calls for innovative solutions on an extremely wide scale. This involves placing it at the heart of the international agenda.

After global warming, which, for the past ten years has dominated the concerns of world public opinion, after biodiversity, whose importance was shown at the summit in Nagoya which I attended last week, now is the time for the world to realise the key contribution of the marine environment to the life and stability of our planet. It is above all, time for the world to take the necessary steps.

But making concrete progress also means that we should not expect a global and still distant solution to solve everything, but encourage everybody to take action now at their own level.

That is what I am doing, by frequently addressing this issue at various international forums where I take the floor. I did this last week in Nagoya, where I spoke to the COP 10 participants, as well as at the side event organised by my Foundation. It is also what I am doing through the support given by my Foundation to various studies and projects devoted to the fight against ocean acidification.

This is also what you are doing through this paper “Ocean acidification: questions answered”, giving all of us an accurate overview of the ins and outs of an issue, too often overlooked. And, last but not least, this is what you are doing by preparing a platform summarising - on a global level – of all the issues at stake and the necessary measures to be taken.

These are all opportune initiatives. Faced with such a protean issue, governed by extremely long-term dynamics, we have to do our utmost to combat the temptation of fatalism and powerlessness.

The fight will be long. We may not be there for the outcome; it is unlikely that we will see the day where the future of our environment is no longer a matter of concern. But we must be there, wherever an important battle is under way.

That is why I was eager to be among you today and to thank you for your dedication to a cause that concerns us all.