

***Ocean leadership forum : the ocean in 2050
Washington, May 2015***

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

It is extremely difficult to predict, thirty five years ahead, the situation of such a vast, complex and diverse entity as the one formed by the oceans. We need only look back a few decades to appreciate the magnitude of the changes that have affected the world.

Focusing solely on the topic that concerns us today, who could have predicted thirty five years ago that the environmental issue would become a key challenge of our world? Who could have imagined that the oceans which we had always believed to be powerful and immutable, would appear as fragile entities which need to be protected?

For this reason and instead of announcing facts about what our oceans will be in 2050, I would like to talk about trends.

Serious and indisputable trends which we are aware and that will mark the next decades, but without yet knowing exactly what consequences will follow.

The essence of the short term future is to draw a crossroads, between a deteriorated world and the awakening of humanity, between the decline of the oceans and their restoration.

We need to decide, among all the paths, which one we will take. Consequently I would like to explore some of the solutions offered to us by the trends crossing our world.

The first trend is climate degradation which impacts our oceans.

We now know with certainty that our planet faces a vast global warming movement which does not spare the oceans.

Despite their inertia, these huge masses of water are also suffering the effects of climate change.

As the latest IPCC report showed, which for the first time dedicated a specific chapter to the oceans, the consequences of global warming on the ocean environment are extremely serious:

- the rising water levels,
- the threats on vulnerable ecosystems which climate change is weakening, for example coral reefs,
- the damage to biodiversity which it is adversely affecting,
- the other consequence of greenhouse gas emissions: ocean acidification, which has already affected many species, shellfish in particular.

In 2009, scientists from twenty-nine countries signed a common declaration in Monaco alerting on this issue. Thanks to this initial awareness, research on ocean acidification has greatly developed since, in particular under the impetus of the facility which the IAEA set up in Monaco with the support of the US State Department and my Foundation.

However, the knowledge acquired needs to materialize into concrete action for the sake of the oceans and more over of our Planet.

With regard to the climate and the anthropogenic origin of its changes, these are the stakes of the Conference being held in Paris at the end of the year: to promote the implementation of a coordinated and binding global action policy to combat climate change, in particular by reducing greenhouse gas emissions resulting from our frenzied use of fossil energies.

This objective brings me to the second trend which we can anticipate for the upcoming decades : human growth, industrial and technological development, and its potentially harmful consequences on the ocean environment.

This is the case as far as fisheries are concerned where we have seen fish stocks deplete until they have vanished from some seas, in which they once were found in abundance.

It is also the case with mineral resources, especially hydrocarbons, which we are looking for further and further afield, in conditions presenting increasingly greater risk, particularly in the Arctic.

These threats can only worsen because human needs are increasing, both with regard to energy and food.

With a standard of living that is rising in all parts of the world for which we should be delighted about – with a world population which will certainly reach ten billion by 2050, how could the situation be otherwise?

Faced with these needs, we can safely predict that the oceans will be placed under greater demand and pressure in the future. Therefore it is more urgent than ever to take action to protect them.

The third trend that I would like to mention is the development of a more efficient and more comprehensive arsenal for ocean protection.

Since 1982, on an international level, the Montego Bay Convention has defined the majority of rules applicable to the seas and high seas, which everyone knows represents over 60% of all maritime waters. Monaco, which was one of the first States to sign this Convention, has measured the progress it has generated.

This text, which incidentally has still not been ratified by the United States, contains a number of positive measures through it can certainly be improved.

We must support the multilateral work conducted today on the oceans at UN level around the Montego Bay Convention. This concerns in particular what we know as the BBNJ, namely the establishment of a minimum

number of rules to protect biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction, in the 60% of waters that I just mentioned.

We need to take this even further, to support and pool all efforts, such as the one implemented by the SDSN in which I am involved and which has led to the inclusion of a sustainable development objective specific to the oceans, which should be adopted by the United Nations in September.

The multilateral framework must remain our outlook in the face of these global challenges. It is via the UN and with the UN that we will be able to save the oceans.

Finally, sea conservation areas and their ecosystems need to be increased. It means extending and developing more marine protected areas, to which I have been committed for many years. As such, I am delighted by the decisions made some time ago here in the United States, and very recently in the United Kingdom, for the creation of vast marine protected areas.

I hope that this trend will develop, including on the high seas and in extremely fragile regions such as the Antarctic. We need to move closer to the target, although still too modest, set by the international community of 10% of marine protected areas.

Monaco, which created forty years ago this year one of the first marine protected areas in the Mediterranean, has been able to appreciate the effectiveness of such measures, which replenish fish stocks and the ecosystems, and thus indirectly benefit aquaculture activities in the surrounding areas.

With marine protected areas, not only will we be able to save the oceans, but also the activities of all those who are dependent on them – billions of our fellow citizens, an increasing number of whom are living in the coastal regions. They need to understand that their future depends on ocean conservation.

This is the fourth trend I wish to highlight: growing global environmental awareness.

This is undoubtedly under way – we have a very good example here today.

I mentioned at the beginning the changes that have occurred over the last thirty five years : this environmental awareness is one of them.

However, faced with the need to re-invent our development model and our relationship with nature, such mobilization has to be continued and intensified. Because this is the primary condition for the future of our seas.

At the crossroads where we find ourselves at the moment, the main and perhaps only uncertainty is our capacity to truly understand these challenges. The main danger we face is lack of determination and will.

Therefore, it is crucial to mobilize multilateral institutions and governments of course, but also public opinion, NGOs and companies, which need to understand that here lie the seeds of a new blue growth.

Together, we need to invent a new model, more sustainable, more responsible and, as I believe, more beneficial for all! From this point of view, I will simply mention the significant opportunities offered to us

sustainably by the oceans, whether in terms of energy harnessed from the power of the sea, or the use of bio marine resources.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

Our future and the future of the oceans is in our hands. It is up to us all, individually or collectively, to be able to make the right choices.

Will we be capable of curbing global warming? Will we be capable of recreating our development model in order to make it less voracious in terms of natural resources? Will we be capable of creating the international conditions necessary to protect our oceans? Finally will we be capable of mobilizing people around these issues?

It is together that we will be able to answer these questions.

Meetings such as the one today are important and that is why voices like yours, my dear Sylvia Earle, my dear Enric Sala, are crucial. The world needs your ability to increase its knowledge of the seas, provide information and create emotion!

The world needs your energy, the energy of us all. It is the destiny of our century, its responsibility and its greatness. *"There is a mysterious cycle in human events"*, said President Franklin Roosevelt. *"To some generations much is given. Of other generations much is expected."* I hope that we will meet these expectations.

Thank you.