

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

I am delighted to be with you today and, to see the success of this particularly important day.

The quality of the speeches and the level of the participants alone are excellent news for the cause that brings us together here – that of the oceans, their future and their conservation, in a world confronted with climate change.

Speaking after so many eminent specialists, I will not pretend teaching you anything about the climatic, physical or chemical changes that are taking place. We have understood the extent to which the ocean play a major role in the evolution of the climate and how its health, biodiversity and balance are essential aspects of maintaining the equilibrium of the biosphere.

Instead, I would like to talk to you about my own experience:

- experience that is essentially human, that of someone who is involved with the environment, the sea and the effects of climate change;

- the experience of a man whose activities, as Head of State and through my Foundation, leads to meet on every continent people living by and for the sea, who are aware of its problems, and people who offer solutions and prospects for the future;

- the experience of someone who lives by the Mediterranean – knowing that our future largely depends on it. It is of this sea that I wish to talk to you today.

We are all familiar with the famous maxim attributed to Aristotle, "There are three sorts of men – the living, the dead, and those who go to sea."

Well, I believe that, today, we are suffering the effects of this age-old separation between the world of the sea and the so-called normal human activities. By continuing to keep the issue of the oceans on the margin of negotiations, COP21, in its own way, is perpetuating this situation.

Even though progress has been made over the past few years, even though the issue of the oceans is increasingly being taken into account, this persistent misunderstanding is the main enemy of the oceans, our main enemy.

One of the challenges of today's meeting, which could make a decisive contribution to the COP21, and beyond that to the effectiveness of negotiations on the climate, is precisely to dispel this illusion.

Our first duty is to recall that the sea is at the heart of our life, at the heart of our civilization and affirm that all of us are connected to it.

We should remind all those who might be tempted to consider the oceans as distant, unchanging realities with no direct impact on human life, that we are living in one of the most maritime eras in history.

Of course, the great civilizations that preceded us were mostly built around the seas.

The Phoenicians developed their trade around the Mediterranean thanks to the sea. It was by sea that the Greeks disseminated their culture in the only known world of that time.

The great discoveries of the modern world, which unified the planet, took place because of the sea and, even in the 19th century, modern civilization was built because of the sea. However, our era is undoubtedly even more closely linked to the sea than all of these. Today, almost 80% of transcontinental trade is achieved by sea – and that figure is increasing.

With its giant container ships that are so emblematic of our civilization, it is possible to transport 20 tons of merchandise from Asia to Europe for less than the price of an economy-class ticket for the same route!

Furthermore, if our economy is based on the sea, our habitat is even more so: 40% of the world's population lives less than 60 kilometers (37 miles) from the coast, and this phenomenon of coastal development is likely to increase in the coming decades, due to tourism and migration. According to some estimates, by the end of the century, 80% of the world's population will be living within a coastal strip of 100 kilometers (62 miles) wide. Eight of the largest cities on the planet are already in such configuration, cities that are developing on a fast pace, as their dynamism is fuelled by the growth in maritime trade.

Within Europe, over a five-year period, cities have taken over 34% of the coastal area in Portugal, 27% in Ireland and 18% in Spain. This fact, Ladies and Gentlemen, highlights an essential aspect of the issue of the oceans and their susceptibility to climate change, by linking them directly to human activities.

Such trend leads to a new awareness of the challenge of the oceans in the face of climate change.

The ocean is Man; Man is the ocean. This is a very tangible reality, one that can mobilize our contemporaries as the threat of climate change takes on a different meaning.

Firstly, it is demonstrated by the dramatic rise in water levels, that can already be observed in certain areas, such as Bangladesh, which, sadly, is symbolic of this phenomenon.

As more than a billion tons of ice are melting on the world's surface every day, the dramatic situation of Bangladesh might not be the only one – especially if we are unable to make decisions that will limit global warming to 1.5 or 2°C.

Entire countries, such as the Republics of Kiribati and Palau – to whose representatives I extend my greetings - are already trying to combat the prospect of the total or partial submersion of their lands. I have visited these States and meet regularly with their Presidents, so I am aware of their justified concerns.

If we do nothing to combat global warming, we are condemning these countries, and many others, to dramatic consequences.

This reality should encourage us to work even harder to fight climate change and focus even more on ocean-related issues.

Of course, the effects of climate change on the oceans and the people who depend on them are not limited to a rise in sea level. They also encompass maritime resources, which are also threatened by climate change.

Ecosystems and biodiversity are at risk in many areas. In some regions, entire species are gradually disappearing.

While the oceans are the main source of food for more than 3.5 billion people, and sea fishing employs more than 200 million people, directly or indirectly, there is also a reality that our contemporaries must be aware of.

In addition to these direct effects, some are less obvious but still very real, such as ocean acidification, already putting in danger many species of shellfish and crustaceans, but also impacting shellfish farming. These are also ways in which climate change is affecting the oceans, and ultimately the people who depend on the oceans.

Our message to the world should emphasize on the dependence between Man and the sea, which helped us to progress, but tomorrow could be the cause of many tragedies.

However, in regards to the oceans, there are solutions to climate change.

Physical and chemical solutions, first of all, which have been mentioned, linked to the ocean's ability to store and dissolve carbon, requiring healthy oceans and restored ecosystems.

For this, we need more marine protected areas, which have already proven to be effective.

Whether it is a matter of regenerating fish stocks, preserving biodiversity or developing a sustainable local economy, marine protected areas offer a development model that is more respectful of the seas and of people for today's populations and future generations.

They preserve the health of some of the key areas of our oceans, which is the basis for the oceans' ability to interact with the climate.

In this regard, they should encourage us to act in their favor, as I have been doing for many years, either as Head of State in numerous international fora or through my Foundation.

More generally, the oceans can play a central role in energy transition, which is the only sustainable solution in the context of climate change.

This transition cannot be successful without drawing on the considerable potential the oceans represent, from marine heat pumps, such as the ones we have installed in Monaco, to hydrokinetic energy, offshore wind turbine systems, tidal energy, biomass, etc...

However, huge efforts are necessary to develop marine protected areas and renewable marine energy.

Scientific efforts, which we should constantly encourage, because nothing will ever be possible in environmental matters without the support of scientists.

More than ever before, we need to better understand our oceans. They are still relatively unknown areas of our planet.

That is the reason why the Principality of Monaco and my Foundation put forward a request to the IPCC for the preparation of a special interim report on the oceans.

The Pacific region is exposed to climate change and in particular to ocean acidification. I am pleased to announce the signature, on December 8th, of a partnership between my Government and

the Pacific Regional Environment Program which goals are to establish strategies designed to reinforce resilience and adaptation to the phenomenon of acidification.

Financial efforts will also be required, and we need to anticipate these now. These should include innovative means, such as the Mediterranean Trust Fund that France, Tunisia and the Principality of Monaco launched last year to support marine protected areas in the Mediterranean.

Finally, political efforts will be needed, placing the oceans at the heart of international negotiations, whether on climate, as today, or other issues that are currently being debated in multilateral fora, such the law of the sea or biodiversity.

For these efforts to be successful and for the oceans to finally be granted the political importance they deserve, we tirelessly need to remind, and demonstrate, their importance for our civilization, its future and its survival.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

I should like to finish by quoting a great French author, whom many of you will remember from childhood and who helped us discover the sea. This author is Jules Verne, who wrote *"The sea is everything (...). It's a huge desert where Man is never alone, because he can feel life quivering all about him."* Today, the sea is under threat. Today, when Man is both the cause and the victim, we should ensure that as many people as possible feel this quivering.

The quivering of life that brings the ocean alive and makes it an essential place for everyone.

The quivering that makes the ocean the prospect of all life on our Planet.

Thank you.