

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Lord Lieutenant of Devon,

Mr Vice Chancellor,

Mr Executive Dean,

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Dear friends,

I would like to say how pleased I am to be with you today for the opening of this marine station. Let me extend my sincere thanks to the directors of this prestigious university for their invitation, and above all their loyalty.

Two years ago, when I was awarded the honorary doctorate degree it offered me the opportunity to become acquainted with this outstanding institution. I was able to visit some of your facilities and learn about several of the various projects you run.

Today, I have the pleasure to be able to actually see the successful outcome of this marine station and meet some of you again to follow the progress of your work.

The challenges we face together – you as scientists and researchers, I as a political leader and head of my Foundation – are ones that require much time and perseverance.

We all know that neither the conservation nor knowledge of the marine environment can be acquired in just a few years, or even in a few decades. As we resolve certain issues, we see new ones emerge. Our motivation, deep down, is often less that of reaching a goal than of maintaining the hope that animates us.

This hope feeds on progress and victory – albeit partial. It should also enable us to overcome times of doubt or discouragement. The announced outlook is bleak if nothing is done to reverse the current trends.

Political progress can be complicated to achieve, while the COP21, despite a few positive perspectives, has not made the ocean the issue it should be for the climate.

However I believe that nothing is yet lost, that nothing is impossible. Because we are at a rare juncture where three components merge: science, awareness and will.

Science is the starting point for any coordinated and efficient action. It is the concern to work on solid, universal and indisputable foundations.

It is the conviction that intelligence is the most powerful unifying element of human beings and the most wonderful way of moving forward together. It is the determination of never giving in to facility and one's illusions.

Awareness is this new perception that our contemporaries now have with regard to the reality of environmental issues. It is the concern I see across the globe, at the various meetings I attend and in the projects my Foundation supports. It is the reality of a biotope that we now know is fragile and which we have finally understood we need to protect for the sake of our future.

Will is a new energy which extends beyond continents, disciplines, fields of action, and which unites people from everywhere in the world around common goals. It is the idea that every effort must be made to save our environment, while there is still time. It is our concern to do everything possible, from our small everyday actions to our major projects, in order not to allow our Planet to be destroyed for our children.

All of this, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends, maps out the contours of the situation in which we find ourselves today: a pivotal period where we now have the resources to take action, provided that we are able to assemble our contemporaries, unite wills and combine efforts.

Scientific research is therefore more than ever the most powerful springboard we have. This was already the conviction of my great great grandfather, Prince Albert I, who led many scientific expeditions across the world's seas, as far as the Arctic.

That is why he created the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco, whose goal was to enable as many people as possible to gain greater insight into the sea, to understand it and thus learn to appreciate it.

This deep belief that research plays a key role is more than ever my own conviction.

At a time when we have no choice but to advance in a universal way, science is the most concrete, most solid foundation of this universality.

It is through your work that we will be able to make our contemporaries understand ocean-related issues. It is thanks to you that we will be able to offer them effective solutions and it is with you that we will make them want to apply them.

For all these reasons, I am particularly pleased to be among you today, for the opening of this station in which we place the highest expectations.

Thank you.