

Your Royal Highness,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

What you have just said perfectly explains the challenges we are facing.

And I should like to express my gratitude and admiration for what you are doing.

My gratitude because, like everyone here, I am absolutely convinced of the importance of these issues and the need to make the greatest possible number of people aware of them. The ocean issue is today, as you have just demonstrated, one of the silent and invisible tragedies threatening our world, its balance and its future. And your mobilisation is in this respect precious.

I also want to express my gratitude to you because you have created, through the words you have just spoken, what I believe is an essential connection between knowledge, awareness and action.

At the heart of everything we undertake, first of all there is a need for knowledge. Therefore also, a need to take into account what the scientific community is telling us.

It can sometimes seem difficult to understand the complex work of scientists. It can appear difficult to implement their recommendations and take them into account when we make our choices. It can be tempting to view them as distant targets only theoretically related to the reality of the world in which we live.

My own belief, however, is that science is an essential tool to provide us with practical help every day when we make important decisions – and especially decisions about the environment.

For that reason, as you do, I support scientific research, especially in Monaco, where we are proud of our tradition of welcoming, respecting, encouraging and taking note of research, particularly in matters concerning the oceans and their preservation.

On that point, I should like to say a few words about the Monaco Explorations, a project I initiated last year which was launched this summer, aimed at collecting new data about the seas, to assist their conservation.

The project represents a return to the tradition of the great scientific investigations initiated particularly by my great-great-grandfather, Prince Albert I, but for me it also means once again arousing public awareness, the sense of adventure and the dreams which should also accompany science. This approach enables our contemporaries to take an interest in it, understand its conclusions and share its recommendations.

For, while science shows us what is, it also shows us what could be different and, to that end, what must be done while there is still time.

In that respect, I believe that the actions to be implemented to protect the oceans are numerous. They call upon us all, for they are the responsibility of every one of us.

The responsibility of the states which must impose coherent policies to limit pollution and fight against

climate change – and against its corollary – the acidification of the oceans.

The responsibility of international organizations, which must regulate maritime activities more efficiently, including in the High Seas, and pay more attention to these issues – in this respect, I wish to commend the progress currently being made at the UN with regard to all issues relating to the sea.

The responsibility, too, of economic players, who need to stop considering our natural heritage as an insignificant piece of data. On the contrary, understand its fragility at the same time as its value. This is the key to this blue economy about which you have just spoken to us: an economy capable of protecting nature at the same time as creating growth.

As well as the responsibility of the well-informed and responsible people we are, like our contemporaries, we must all understand the importance of the seas, the dangers they face and the need to protect them more effectively.

From that point of view, you are setting an example through your determined and innovatory action. This is proof of deep-rooted responsibility. And that is why I wish to express my gratitude to you today.

The action you are taking is indeed a model of awareness and effectiveness whose pertinence and necessity have been stressed in your address. It spurs us into taking action alongside you, into realizing the urgency and into doing everything in our power to prevent irreparable harm.

In that respect, I think your words here will be listened to, because, as La Rochefoucauld wrote “nothing is more contagious than example”. I am convinced that, again today, you will have contaminated us with much good will.

Thank you.