

The Riviera Ball, Cascais – 27th September 2015
H.S.H Prince Albert's closing speech

Your Highness,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

I am pleased to be here today around a theme which is particularly dear to me: the oceans.

I am delighted to be in the presence of people that I hold in high esteem, and whose remarks have perfectly reiterated the current realities and challenges.

I am especially pleased that we have the opportunity to discuss these topics in this country, which has always had a fruitful history with mine, and even more so with the sea.

The Principality of Monaco and Portugal have maintained close ties for a very long time. This is evidenced by the friendship between Prince Albert I and King Charles I.

However, Portugal has been playing an essential role on the international maritime arena for much longer, which has made this country a leader in this field. A leader that is more than ever aware of the challenges linked to the seas, as you have just reminded us, Dear Tiago Pitta e Cunha. Above all, Portugal is a leader that we need, especially at a time when the worrying situation of our oceans must encourage us all to take action, and to do so swiftly.

Our oceans, it has been said, are indeed faced with very grave perils that directly threaten their natural balance and survival, and which are a key

challenge for our entire planet: for its biodiversity and for its climate, of course, but also for the world's economy and safety – in other words for its stability.

The Principality of Monaco has also always kept a watchful eye on the sea. Our close attention on the world's oceans carries a global ambition and responsibility that I endeavour to highlight here, as I do wherever I am given the opportunity to speak and take action.

I do this with the Monegasque government and diplomatic corps, by taking part, during international meetings, in work dedicated to environmental and maritime issues, and by engaging in many initiatives in this field.

I also do this with the Foundation I created in 2006 whose main objectives are to fight against climate change, to protect biodiversity and to preserve the planet's water resources – three areas for which the situation of the oceans is of paramount importance.

I will break it down into three main ills, which I believe summarise the many topics that you have mentioned.

The first is humankind's appetite, satisfied by increasingly powerful technical resources. The appetite for fishing resources, of course, with many fish stocks being depleted until they disappear from certain oceans, in which they were once abundant. And the appetite for mineral resources, particularly hydrocarbons that we go always further to obtain, under increasingly dangerous conditions.

And things could become worse, because we know that humankind's needs are increasing, both in terms of energy and food. How could it be otherwise with standards of living that are increasing around the world –

something that we can only be proud of – and a global population that will rapidly reach ten billion people?

Faced with these needs, we can safely predict that the oceans will be placed under greater demand over the next few years. Therefore it is more urgent than ever to take action to protect them and develop a more sustainable economy.

In order to achieve this goal, we must move forward with implementing the sustainable use of oceans' resources, regardless of whether they are plant, animal or energy resources. The world's oceans, if responsibly managed, indeed offer huge potential in terms of reserves, which would enable us to meet many of the needs of our planet and its inhabitants.

The second ill affecting our oceans, which you spoke of dear Patricia Ricard, is that of climate change.

As indicated in the most recent IPCC report, which for the first time dedicated an entire chapter to oceans, climate change has extremely severe consequences on the world's oceans: consequences on the vulnerable ecosystems such as the Polar Regions, which it contributes to weakening; consequences on biodiversity, which it is adversely affecting; consequences linked to rising sea levels that result in the melting of polar ice, with more than a billion tons of ice melting on the earth's surface.

In addition to devastating ecosystems, this worrying rise in sea level is destroying and will continue to destroy many human habitats, leading to the creation of a new category of refugees, that is to say climate refugees.

Finally, global warming has consequences on the oceans that are more difficult to observe, due to ocean acidification, which is already affecting many species, particularly shellfish.

The third ill that our oceans are suffering from is the political and legal void that surrounds them. A void that is inversely proportional to the challenges that they harbour...

The main tool that we have to govern all of the world's oceans is, as you know, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Monaco, which was one of the first states to sign this Convention, has measured the advances that it has made possible since it was drafted in 1982.

In this way, the definition of the continental shelf and exclusive economic zones, as well as the establishment of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, were important milestones.

However, this text is still inadequate in a number of ways, such as the issue of the extended continental shelf, which is at the heart of many current concerns, since it determines states' ability to appropriate underwater resources. More broadly speaking, the status of the open sea and the deep ocean is insufficiently clarified in this Convention.

Additionally, there is an overlapping of conventions and institutions that does not improve the clarity, coherence or effectiveness of international actions.

The FAO deals with fisheries management, the UNEP with environment, the IMO with navigation, and UNESCO with scientific issues...

It is therefore with much urgency that multilateral work on oceans must be carried out, in the wake of the work that has just been carried out at the UN and which led to the adoption, to which I contributed, of a sustainable development goal dedicated to oceans.

But we must do more to preserve our shared resources. The principles to be implemented are well known and are subject to widespread consensus. They also offer, once more, prospects that I believe are particularly fruitful, which contribute much more broadly to improving the functioning of this world.

Thank you.