

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

First of all I would like to thank you for inviting me to this magnificent island in the heart of the Mediterranean to take the floor today on an issue which is particularly dear to my heart.

I would like to stress the importance of this venue for addressing maritime matters.

I myself, coming from a rock which is much smaller than this one, but which just like this one dominates the waters of the Mediterranean, know the significance of this context and how much we need to keep in mind the concrete reality of the sea, its importance and its life.

The sea and oceans are obviously complex subjects, the truth and wealth of which widely escape our eyes. They play an invisible and indirect role in climate regulation.

They harness biodiversity treasures which we are only just beginning to understand. They are subject to subtle physical and chemical mechanisms which we are gradually learning to decipher.

And in their depths, they conceal huge expanses which we have still not ever seen.

However these mysteries of the seas, the secrets they still hold, are also potential sources of wonder, which should prompt us into taking action in order to understand and protect our seas more efficiently. Above all they are the surest means of alerting our contemporaries and mobilizing them.

As Commander Cousteau said, who among other talents was a great Director of the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco, *"People protect and respect what they love. And to make them love the sea they should be filled with wonder as much as information."*

More than ever before we need to promote this movement in favor of our seas, because more than ever before they are in danger.

Shipping is becoming increasingly intense, reaching areas that used to be spared. Fishing is developing everywhere exponentially and often unreasonably. The exploitation of hydrocarbons is also spreading to increasingly fragile areas, in increasingly dangerous conditions. The prospects for new development are multiplying, whilst the planet with a population of soon nine billion is concerned about its resources.

Of course we should make optimum use of the ocean's resources.

But we need to do this in a sustainable and reasonable manner, otherwise we will be preparing our own loss.

It is not a question of setting ocean preservation against the exploitation of ocean resources.

On the contrary it is a question of reconciling them, by means of a renewed pact between humankind and the sea. We need to make this renewed pact not only with the sea: it needs to be made also with future generations to whom we have no right to leave an endangered environment.

This is the basis of my commitment, both as Head of State and with my Foundation.

In the maritime sector especially, I have increased our efforts and types of action as I know that the future of 70 per cent of our Planet cannot be unequivocally resolved. We need to explore every avenue, use all the levers available.

International negotiations first of all, such as those currently underway at the UN concerning the High Seas and what is known as the BBNJ. This is a crucial issue for the management of our seas, management which needs to be more transparent, more collective and more responsible. It needs to involve the various stakeholders more effectively, and take better account of the interests of future generations.

We need to get away from the idea that the seas belong to no one: they are our common property on which we all depend, for which we are all responsible!

I know that international negotiations, even if they are successful, will not be enough to address such extensive issues. We also need to take action at our own level, with our own means.

Take action by preserving what we can, thanks to the establishment, for instance, of marine protected areas which provide efficient ways today of reconciling human development and the conservation of the ecosystems.

That is why I campaign for these marine areas, for which I have set up a Trust Fund together with the French Government, whose assets will be used to develop and intensify marine areas in the Mediterranean.

Take action by coordinating goodwill, and all those who are concerned by the future of our seas, such as these small Island States, particularly exposed to the impact of climate change on the oceans.

Take action also by implementing control measures locally, in particular in regard to overfishing and pollution, two problems that have global effects but very local causes which are therefore possible to curb.

Take action quite simply through actions in the field, such as those implemented or supported for ten years now by my Foundation all over the world.

Take action by raising awareness, as we have done concerning the bluefin tuna, a species which I believe we have helped to save in the Mediterranean.

Take action finally by facilitating scientific research, which alone provides us with the tools necessary to understand and the solutions to innovate. That is why the Principality of Monaco, like my Foundation, supports various research projects focused on the seas, about which we still know so little.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear friends,

As I hand over the floor, I would like to say how important I believe it is to intensify these initiatives.

Although international negotiations and rules of governance are fundamental, they cannot in fact do everything. It is through action, it is through the efforts of each and everyone of us that we will be able to truly change things at all levels.

It is by involving as many people as possible, through exchange as we are doing today, that we will be able to move ahead.

I would therefore like to thank the organizers of this Conference, and in particular the directors of my Foundation's Italian branch, for their contribution!

Finally, I would like to thank you all for being present and for your support!