

***High-level dialogue on ocean conservation - "Turning promises into action" -Hawaii, September 4, 2016  
Address by H.S.H. the Prince***

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear friends,

Allow me first of all to tell you how pleased I am to be joining you for this high-level session on ocean conservation.

I see so many familiar faces, many of whom are valuable partners in the work that I do, individuals who set high standards in the field of marine conservation, and even friends...

But above all, I am glad that we have been given this opportunity to reflect together on the future of the oceans, one of the keys to our future and to the future of this planet.

All of us here today share an awareness of the dangers which lie ahead, and this awareness is in itself a victory. Let us not forget that the very idea that the seas are vulnerable, and in particular the idea that it is the responsibility of human beings to protect them, are extraordinarily recent in nature. Those of you who have watched *The Silent World*, the remarkable first film by Commander Cousteau, have had the opportunity to gauge how much things have changed in a little more than 50 years.

From the Pacific Ocean, where we find ourselves today, to the shores of the Mediterranean, millions of people are now being mobilized by the same momentum. They are all calling for our seas and our planet to be saved. Perhaps never before in the history of humanity has an idea asserted itself so quickly and so universally.

And yet, as Victor Hugo wrote, "There comes an hour when protest no longer suffices; after philosophy there must be action." We have now arrived at a time for action. A time where action is necessary, pressing and – fortunately – still possible...

although it is also, we must recognize, fraught with problems.

For the oceans are areas which humans have only just begun to discover; they are still largely a mystery to scientists, and only a very small part of them has been explored. They are essentially unique in legal and political terms, and so the issues we face challenge our traditional ways of thinking and acting. The oceans involve complex and shifting economic realities, which defy traditional borders and criteria.

To illustrate this transformation of promises into action, I would like to discuss the following three aspects: science, politics and economics. The three are intertwined and together map out an intervention which I believe to be universal and coherent, capable of involving as many people as possible and resulting in concrete solutions, in both the short and medium terms.

The scientific aspect comes naturally first. Without knowledge, without a precise diagnosis of the state of our seas, their internal mechanisms and their contribution to the planet, without a clear vision of the prospects for their future, no intervention would be possible. And without the solutions being developed day in and day out by science and technology, there would be no viable alternative.

This is why Monaco long ago decided to be a host and partner for all those who dedicate their lives to studying the oceans and are helping us to better understand and support them. This tradition dates back to my great-great-grandfather, Prince Albert I. It has been continued over 100 years on multiple occasions, notably through the activities of the Monaco Oceanographic Museum, of which Jacques Cousteau was a prominent director. Today, the Museum continues to pursue its mission of saving certain species and raising awareness among as wide an audience as possible.

The Principality is therefore resolutely committed to supporting researchers, as demonstrated by the so-called “Monaco” declaration on ocean acidification, adopted in 2009. Through this declaration, co-signed by 150 scientists, the international community was alerted for the first time to the already real and dramatic effects of ocean acidification. This is the sadly little-known and underestimated consequence of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, currently upsetting the pH balance of our seas and threatening numerous ecosystems and numerous species, as well as the economies which depend on them.

This is one example among others – though it is a significant one – of the critical role science plays in striving to save the planet and its oceans, an indispensable role. It is part of an overall policy which has led Monaco to become the seat of international institutions such as ACCOBAMS, dedicated to protecting cetaceans, the Mediterranean Science Commission, and the Ramoge and Pelagos agreements.

It is the same path that my foundation has been pursuing for the last 10 years, working in close collaboration with many research centers across the world. The foundation also supports scientific missions, such as those carried out by the sailing ship *Tara* in different waters around the globe. *Tara* is currently operating here in the Pacific, in the area around Easter Island. Finally, my foundation supports this path by organizing meetings such as the Monaco Blue Initiative, an informal think tank which, once a year, brings together high-level figures to discuss the major challenges that will have a decisive impact on the future of the seas.

It is this same concern which has led the Principality and my foundation to kickstart a project, recently validated by the IPCC, to produce a specific report on the links between climate, the oceans and the cryosphere. This objective and exhaustive international piece of work, for which I have high expectations, will be an essential tool for developing effective public policies.

Because the second aspect of our action concerns politics and law, and stems from the all too evident weakness of the resources currently at our disposal to protect our seas. For the most part, the tools developed over the centuries to manage the problems affecting this planet relate to land masses, and are ineffective now that we are aware of the crucial impact the oceans will have on our shared future. Even now, too often the seas remain *res nullius* or *res communis*, in accordance with concepts dating back to the seventeenth century. To these have been added an

accumulation of conventions and institutions, which do not promote clarity, coherence or effectiveness of international action. The FAO deals with fisheries management, the UNEP is responsible for environmental issues, the IMO for navigation, UNESCO for scientific issues, and so on.

It is in order to improve this situation that Monaco, which was one of the first nations to sign the Montego Bay Convention, is actively participating in the negotiations currently under way at the United Nations regarding what is known as BBNJ – the establishment of minimum rules relating to the preservation of biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction. The objective, which I endorse, is to create an “international legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity” on the high seas.

With the same spirit, we must be alert and give more consideration to issues relating to the oceans in international climate negotiations. Such an approach led to the successful adoption a year ago of a Sustainable Development Goal specifically for the oceans: SDG 14.

But multilateral negotiations are not the only political tools that we need to mobilize, on the contrary. Within a framework which is, I would argue, essentially dominated by national jurisdictions, it is critical that we make use of the tools and resources that are already available, and particularly those belonging to states.

With this in mind, I am personally committed to implementing more effective national policies to preserve marine environments. Firstly, this means developing and improving waste water treatment systems and preventing all types of marine pollution. I’m thinking particularly of pollution caused by plastics. It also means taking a certain number of measures to limit destructive activities in marine environments, such as trawling in deep waters. And above all, it means increasing the number of areas with protected status – this is the only way to directly preserve the ecosystems facing the greatest threats while respecting the needs of coastal populations.

At the heart of the protected marine area philosophy is a set of three objectives: economic development – notably through sustainable fishing – ecosystem conservation, and cultural, scientific and educational development. This is why I believe it is essential that we expand the number of such areas, as the Principality of Monaco has been doing within its own territorial waters for some years, and as numerous countries, including the United States, are now doing.

These areas are an important contributor to the effective protection of the oceans and deserves efforts on the part of all of us. I believe, here, that it is imperative that we go beyond the targets set in Aichi, which call for 10% of marine areas to be covered by protected status by 2020. In spite of the difficulty of the task, we must, I believe, set an objective of at least 20%...

One of the key issues in achieving this is, naturally, that of funding. That is why I, in partnership with France, have helped to create a trust fund dedicated to financing the development of protected marine areas in the Mediterranean.

I promote this, of course, through efforts I persuade, on a personal level, but also as part of my role on the International Olympic Committee, as Chair of the recently formed Sustainability and Legacy Commission, which entails working directly with the IUCN within the framework of our partnership.

I promote this by participating in and organizing numerous awareness-raising activities throughout the world, together with my foundation.

We must also promote this through partnerships with some economic stakeholders, whom we must encourage and help to make the switch to blue growth, the only sustainable option which will allow humanity to continue to develop while preserving the seas on which it depends.

I am thinking particularly about the issues raised by fishing and aquaculture, which are naturally at the heart of all long-term prospects for a planet that will need to feed 9 or 10 billion people in the near future. For while the potential is enormous, so too are the risks...

We know about the dangers of overfishing, which is already emptying some of our seas, and against which I have undertaken a variety of initiatives, including to save blue fin tuna in the Mediterranean. As I noted on that occasion, economic stakeholders can be our allies, if they take into consideration their long-term interests, which clearly involve preserving the resources on which they depend. And states can act quickly, using regulatory and fiscal levers and through relevant multilateral bodies.

The same goes for everything related to aquaculture in all its forms. These are industries which are currently undergoing rapid and potentially beneficial development, but which could also have harmful, even dramatic consequences for marine environments if they are not managed in a genuinely sustainable manner. And that is before we begin to discuss the risks of epizootic diseases or the proliferation of invasive species.

Finally, the last economic challenge that we must address and which I want to talk about today is energy – at the heart, naturally, of the blue growth that we will need to design.

The sea, as we know, provides an infinite energy resource, and energy is the primary source of all development. Through the sea's winds, currents, tides, chemistry and biomass, it can offer humanity the power of development at last free from the constraints of hydrocarbons and their unfortunate consequences in terms of pollution and climate warming. This is why, in Monaco, we have installed marine heat pumps, which are producing highly satisfactory results.

For behind all of the harm, and all of the struggles we must undertake to counter it, lies the underlying cause of so many challenges: climate warming, which I referred to earlier.

Our oceans are at the heart of our climate system. They have a determining influence on it, but they are also directly dependent on it, whether in terms of sea level or ocean acidification, for example. So at this point, preserving the oceans also means preserving the climate, another cause to which I, along with my Foundation and my government, am fully committed... But I will not go into it in detail today!

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Nevertheless, I hope I have given you a better idea of the multiple ways in which action can be taken. Above all, I hope that I have convinced you that there are many paths available to all of us to preserve our shared heritage.

For the main thing is to act, by any and all means, while there is still time. The time for action has come, and it is up to all of us. A few years before Victor Hugo, Goethe wrote: "Whatever you think you can do or believe you can do, just do it. Action has magic, grace and power in it."

Thank you.