

Madam Director-General,
Presidents, Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear friends,

I am delighted to have the opportunity to take part in this Conference today, which I believe is highly strategic.

Therefore, I would like to begin by thanking the organisers, in particular the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, as well as the Organisation's leadership, especially its Director General, for their commitment.

And I would also like to thank our hosts, the Spanish authorities, for their welcome.

On the way towards the UN Conference on Ocean in Nice next year, and in the wake of the key progress made in 2023, this phase is critical, as is the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

I will not dwell on the state of the global ocean of which I think we are all aware. Nor will not dwell on the threats to it. We are also aware of them and know that they are closely related to our development model, in other words, to the choices we make as a human beings.

I would therefore like to address these choices and the nature of the question before us today, through the key topics on the agenda of this Conference.

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Because these topics span the entire era and crystallize the major shortcomings of our world. Those that determine our future.

I know that some of us think that our century is going through crises that are more serious, more urgent, and more profound than those affecting the ocean ecosystems.

We see it every day when reading the newspapers or surfing on social media: the headlines and spectacular news stories rarely have anything to do with the deep-sea, marine protected areas, disruption of ocean currents, or the coral reefs. Even the temperature records broken by the seas every year are merely in the news for a few hours, a few days at the most...

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However, I believe that the issues bringing us here today are key to everyone's future.

What brings us together is first and foremost the state of our Planet and the bodies of water that cover more than two-thirds of it.

What brings us together is our desire to address these issues together in a peaceful multilateral setting.

It is our determination to anticipate, understand and progress responsibly.

What brings us together, and what should do so, is science, which is at the heart of this Decade led by UNESCO.

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Let us make no mistake : truth is a struggle more than ever before.

And this struggle for the truth, Ladies and Gentlemen, is at the center of all the crises affecting our Planet.

It determines our ability to take collective action, to anticipate challenges, to find responsible solutions to them and to commit to addressing the most critical issues for our future.

Through science, which this Decade has brought to the fore, it is indeed this struggle for truth that must mobilise us and bring us together.

Because only science will enable us to understand what our future holds.

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Science alone is capable to deciphering signals as tiny as a few tenths of a degree of warming, or a few microscopic species that proliferate or vanish.

Science alone offers us a common intellectual framework in a world that is so often witness to conflicting beliefs. In the face of excessive superstition and disingenuous lies – or what is euphemistically known as alternative truths or fake news – science alone offers a room for rational dialogue, accessible to all and, more importantly, similar for all.

It reminds us that global warming does not stop at the borders of certain countries or certain regions. Above all, it proves to us that the causes are the same for everyone and that mitigating them requires common solutions.

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Only through science can we act together and effectively, by making informed choices, by anticipating the consequences of our actions, and measuring them effectively.

That is why, by making scientific research the principle of any action undertaken for the ocean, this Decade represents a unique opportunity to improve the way in which we manage the world and its key challenges, all of which require truth, sincerity, collegiality and responsibility.

And that is why I am delighted to be here for the opening of this Conference whose principles and goals are in line with my own commitment and that of my Country, the Principality of Monaco.

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My Country is proud to always stand alongside science, research, and scientists.

We listen to them and support them as much as we can, we do so in many different ways, and we welcome them with the main institutions present in the Principality.

This has led to important outcomes such as the Monaco Declaration on ocean acidification, signed in 2009 by more than one hundred and fifty scientists from twenty-six countries. The Declaration alerted the world for the first time on this serious and overlooked reality. Above all, it led to the implementation of the first international tools for observing and managing this threat.

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It is also how we hosted the launch and subsequent publication of the IPCC special report on the ocean and cryosphere, which today enables us to assess all the interactions between the ocean and climate.

And this is how two days ago we hosted the IPBES one of the scoping meetings for the second global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

My Foundation is also proud of the many partnerships it has entered into, in particular on issues related to marine ecosystems.

The Oceanographic Institute of Monaco also supports various initiatives and fosters their dissemination among the widest audience possible.

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The "Explorations de Monaco", launched in 2017, carry on the great tradition of scientific missions to observe the ocean. They are in keeping with the expeditions conducted by my great-great-grandfather, Prince Albert I, one hundred and fifty years ago, and which laid the foundations of modern oceanography. Moreover, we have just disclosed yesterday, here in Barcelona, their next mission around the Mediterranean which has been labeled by the UN decade of ocean science for sustainable development.

The Monaco Scientific Centre also carries out important research within its department of marine biology.

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And we host the headquarters of several major international institutions, such as the IAEA's Marine Environment Laboratory, the International Hydrographic Organisation and the Mediterranean Science Commission.

Through all of these commitments and all the means we deployed, in addition to the projects we support, including at UNESCO, to promote peace and development, we carry the same values and same hopes: those of a world that builds its future on dialogue, intelligence and peace; And hence on science.

This is this world that we are here to prepare today, also in view of the upcoming United Nations Ocean Conference on the eve of which Monaco is delighted to be hosting a forum on the blue economy and finance.

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In order for this Conference to be successful, in order for it to follow on from the key events of the last few months and years, such as the adoption of the BBNJ Agreement and the Kunming/Montreal global diversity framework with its “30x30” target, I sincerely hope that our discussions today will be productive.

Thank you in advance.