

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

First of all I would like to thank you for your presence today for the 7th edition of the Monaco Blue Initiative.

The quality of our discussions, the diversity of views expressed and the depth of the analyses put forward have made this day of great interest, which we owe first and foremost to you. Therefore, I would like to express my appreciation to all of you who have made the effort to be among us today, some of you traveling from afar, so that we could deliberate on these issues.

This is the key challenge of the Monaco Blue Initiative: to focus on the intelligence and motivation of various individuals and unite them so that together we can take more effective action.

Everything that this innovative *think tank* has achieved over the last seven years, we owe to the commitment and talent of its participants – in other words to your talent and commitment. Each one of you has provided valuable input to this work, enabling it to reach the quality it is today.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to the moderators who have done outstanding work throughout the day.

The teams involved in the joint organization of the event should not be forgotten: those from my Foundation of course but also from the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco.

Finally, I would like to thank very warmly all those who made the concept and organization of this day in Brazil possible, in this great country which I am particularly fond of. This great country that I am delighted to see is taking action today for the cause of the oceans. The Brazilian speakers who have done us the kindness of enriching our discussions have proved the importance of such efforts. I would like to thank them and say that we need them, as well as each and every force in Brazil.

It is hard to conclude so dense and exciting discussions. It is even more so that the main conclusions we have reached during the day were very clearly pointed out by the authors in their summaries.

Consequently, I would like to take advantage of these last moments to share with you a few thoughts that this event has provoked.

The first is the fact that things are moving forward. Aquaculture, which was a large part of our discussions, has, I believe largely proved it today: progress is being made.

Whatever difficulty we encounter, whatever improvements we wish to see, or developments we hope for, we need to realize that solutions do exist. They show us how efficient they are on a daily basis and are developing at a very significant speed almost everywhere in the world.

The principle of the Monaco Blue Initiative, which from year to year focuses frequently on recurring topics, is in this respect particularly enlightening. It enables us to see how certain solutions, which only a few years ago were still experimental, today have reached an extremely encouraging level of maturity.

The issues we discussed today are in this respect emblematic of a world that is changing and which, despite our legitimate impatience, is learning to turn finally to the sea in a responsible way.

Moreover we have had proof of this change in the world over the last few months since important progress has been made at an international level, which I am delighted to have supported in a number of cases.

The adoption by the UN last autumn of a development goal specific to the oceans was a significant milestone which highlights the

crucial role of the ocean not only in the preservation of a healthy planet but also in the development of a more sustainable lifestyle.

In the same way, the specific session on the oceans which was organized at COP21 showed us how many States, including the most reticent, were beginning to understand the issues and potential of the oceans.

This optimistic observation cannot however completely satisfy us. Because although we are delighted with the progress made in aquaculture and the greater consideration given to maritime issues in the face of climate change, we also know that the situation of the oceans is often worrying and sometimes tragic.

The question is therefore to know what we should do to speed up the change, and how to promote it.

From this point of view, today's debates have been particularly productive, placing economic issues and their local impact at the heart of our discussions.

By making a connection between global issues and consumer practices, by addressing environmental issues whilst offering solutions with regard to nutrition, energy and health, the economic level can now be at the heart of ocean protection.

It is thanks to responsible and ambitious aquaculture that tomorrow we will be able to offer an effective alternative to so many practices that are destroying our seas year after year.

It is by mobilizing producers around tangible and positive objectives that we will manage to do so. But above all it is by offering real benefits to both consumers and the local populations that we will make the change happen.

Because these various players are very often convinced today of the contradictions of our civilization. In the same way, many producers are today aware of the need to preserve their resources and to act in a more responsible manner.

Of course, educational action is always necessary, as it has been pointed out. Of course, reservations still need to be addressed.

However, whatever their personal circumstances, an increasing number of our contemporaries, like us, are becoming aware of the damage to the ecosystems, the increased pollution, and the consequences of the irrational exploitation of natural resources. All these dangers, all this damage, everyone can see them and deplors them. And many can already see - this also was pointed out - the beneficial effects of a more sustainable approach.

However there is often a gap between conviction and action. Most often this gap is due to the economic reality.

Yet this economic reality, despite the promises I mentioned, is still uncertain. The crisis is a reality, often harder where the environmental situation is the most difficult.

The energy, intelligence and solutions waiting to be deployed all too often still come up against the too hesitant reality of the market.

Today, it is essential that we implement the conditions that will enable us to overcome any obstacles and promote the development of sustainable growth.

Especially as far as aquaculture is concerned, but also marine protected areas, as we have discussed, and the energy transition, the role of the public authorities should be to foster models which will enable burgeoning initiatives to be fully deployed.

In brief, their role should be to introduce a sustainability challenge consistent with commercial trade so that producers and consumers alike benefit.

As the success stories presented to us have demonstrated, it is by introducing this notion of sustainability, through incentives or regulations, through the invention of innovative mechanisms, and by promoting this sustainability economically speaking, that we will be able to create the conditions for genuine change.

To achieve such change however, it is necessary to build on good practice, grass roots needs, in order to guarantee the longevity of the mechanisms concerned.

Our meeting today is for me an initial way of uniting these points of view. But we must go even further. This is the sense of the actions I implement as Head of State and through my Foundation, to promote the renewal of economic instruments to foster sustainable development.

The Trust Fund which we have set up with the French Government to promote marine protected areas in the Mediterranean is an example. It will enable us to foster, based on sustainable objectives, the right balance between economic activities and the preservation of the sea.

To conclude today's meeting, I would like to encourage you to continue the discussions between disciplines and approaches which have made the MBI successful.

It is from this mix of genres, from this capacity for dialogue beyond the usual registers, beyond the traditional areas of intervention, that the genuine renewal our oceans need so dramatically will come about.

This renewal is near. It merely requires us to have the courage, the openness and the freedom to let it come. As Bossuet wrote "*a defect that prevents men from acting is not sensing what they are capable of*".

Let us therefore trust our ability, that of scientists, environmental players, political and business leaders, and let us mobilize them through dialogue, experimentation and will!

Thank you, and I look forward to seeing you next year in Monaco for a new edition of the Monaco Blue Initiative so that we can continue this common endeavor.