

Mr. Secretary-General,

Mr. Managing Director,

President TONG,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Two years ago, upon embarking on the path to Rio, I met with the Secretary-General of the Conference and the Director-General of the Department for the Environment and Special Affairs of Brazil to ensure that oceans be given the political recognition they deserve in the outcome of this historical global event that is the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

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With their support, I decided to convene in Monaco a workshop of renowned experts from different regions of the world, representatives of non-governmental organizations and the private sector. This workshop was aimed to promote the sustainable use of oceans in the context of the green economy and the eradication of poverty as a contribution to the preparatory process.

Underlining key recommendations in the areas of food security, energy and tourism, the Monaco Message has demonstrated that the consideration of the three pillars of sustainable development can translate into opportunities, for communities whose livelihoods depend on oceans and beyond. That is, all of us.

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Sustainable development of the oceans begins with the effective implementation of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the sea and all the other international instruments consistent with its framework.

It also requires that we, the global community, act together. Mindful that we all have our own respective different relationships to oceans, we must accept the responsibilities and duties associated with their uses and never let ourselves forget that oceans are vital to life on our Planet.

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Fish account for one fifth of all animal protein in the human diet and 1 billion people rely on fish as their primary protein source. However, over-fishing and poor harvesting decisions have caused fish stocks to decrease as the world population grows. Small-scale fishermen who fish for local markets or for their subsistence are threatened by commercial fleets whose capacity have come in some cases to jeopardize the survival of some species themselves.

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Exacerbated by pollution -be it land-based or marine- and the harmful consequences of climate change -sea-level rise and ocean acidification- oceans and their marine resources are under siege and the damage can be irreversible. Yet, where arguments for conservation and protection of our marine biodiversity based on their role in the maintenance of healthy ecosystems have failed, the rise of eco-tourism has shown that marine biodiversity can contribute important sources of revenues for Governments and local communities alike.

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In Yeosu early this month, I personally launched the third Edition of the Monaco Blue Initiative, a think tank that brings together stakeholders committed to a new vision for sustainable oceans. The discussions highlighted the role and the potential of marine protected areas for socio-economic development and some innovative initiatives from the Asia-Pacific region.

It is with conviction that Monaco is supporting the Global Partnership for Oceans and has endorsed the Declaration for healthy and productive oceans. It shares its objectives to increase global food production from both sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, to help protect and conserve marine biodiversity and to reduce pollution.

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I commend the Initiative of the World Bank for taking the resolve to seriously and effectively help implement the numerous global, regional and national commitments. But also improve the capacity of States or local communities so that they can, ultimately, take ownership of their own sustainable development policies on oceans.

Building capacity is key to ensure that sensible policies are carried out and rewarded by positive results, to further enhance the incentive to pursue and replicate them throughout regions. Monaco stands ready to contribute its expertise and to engage with the entities that work actively in Monaco in the fields related to oceans protection and their sustainable management.

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We firmly believe that sharing information and promoting research and development, in particular on ocean acidification can contribute to a better understanding and therefore a better management of our marine environment that we keep discovering and exploiting.

The acidity of oceans, at this current unprecedented rate, and the increase in the sea temperature have dire consequences, on coral reefs that harbor 25 % of marine life, algae, plankton and krill. In turn, those changes affect the food chain and the higher predators, like whales, and the fragile equilibrium of our entire ecosystems.

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Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is time we achieve a true Blue economy, respectful of our populations and our environment, respectful of our present and our future.

Thank you.