

*Address by HSH the Prince
Monaco Blue Initiative 2011 - Welcome session
13th February 2011*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

I would firstly like to welcome you to Monaco for this second Monaco Blue Initiative which promises to be as exciting as ever.

I would also like to thank you for agreeing to come to the Principality and dedicate some of your time, your energy and your intelligence to a subject which is too often neglected, the protection of the marine world.

As I'm sure some of you will recall, the idea of the Monaco Blue Initiative originated in 2009 during the Copenhagen summit on climate change. Confronted with the difficulty of making progress globally and in view of the need to take the initiative to protect the seas, it seemed to me urgent action was required.

However, for an action to be fair and effective, it must be based on a broad and informed discussion. This is why I wanted to create this space for dialogue involving distinguished personalities from a wide range of backgrounds but united by the same commitment.

The first event, in which some of you were involved, enabled us to pave the way for an effective process.

In addressing the issues of large predators and the deep sea, we managed to identify practical proposals, the implementation and repercussions of which will feature on the agenda for tomorrow afternoon's sessions.

But, it seems to me that these discussions led to a wider debate: that of protecting biodiversity globally.

In a situation where information is often fragmented, our duty is to take greater account of the systemic nature of the problems that we are facing. Since the troubles that affect the seas and oceans are closely related, and we cannot deal with them in isolation.

How can we tackle them together without the risk of spreading ourselves too thin... and very quickly coming up against a feeling of helplessness?

I believe that here, the issue of marine protected areas, which I want to include on the agenda for this second Monaco Blue Initiative, offers some particularly useful strategies.

Through their targeted and comprehensive approach, marine protected areas highlight the relationships between the different issues, while demonstrating the possibility of a truly effective local action.

Existing protected areas have already proven their worth. But with less than 1% of marine areas being protected, compared with 10% of land areas, we are still far from a significant action on a global scale. And even the objectives established in Nagoya, which consist in achieving 10% of marine areas by 2020, seem to me only a first step in light of the urgency and magnitude of the task.

We must therefore do more and do it better.

How? That is exactly the question I thought it useful to ask and why I have invited you to compare your knowledge and your experiences. That is the reason for tomorrow's event.

Right now, I'll leave you to enjoy the world premiere of the fantastic film that Mr John Fahey, President of the National Geographic Society who I warmly welcome, has just presented to us. My Foundation has established a successful partnership with this great institution, and I am delighted to say that this evening is one of its examples.

By putting the damage suffered by the Mediterranean over several decades into perspective, I really do believe that *Secrets of the Mediterranean: Cousteau's lost world* will help lay the foundations for our discussions.

Thank you.