

*Speech by HSH the Sovereign Prince*

*Munich, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2008*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

Allow me first to say what a pleasure it is for me to be with you today in Germany to talk about a topic particularly dear to my heart, as you know.

Environmental protection is not just another challenge. It is the main challenge for the years to come; the one that determines all the others; the one that will decide whether or not our existence on Earth remains possible, at least in the conditions we know.

Long-term environmental protection is a matter of survival for the human species. It is already a development issue for all countries for which access

to essential resources is a little more difficult each year.

It is a health issue for millions of men and women subjected to ever more severe weather conditions and consequently forced to live in unhealthy conditions.

It is also a security issue, when climatic threats lead to the danger of global migratory movements.

It is finally a peace issue, with sustainable energy supplies becoming central to international stakes.

And this, Ladies and Gentlemen, is not an issue for a century in the distant future. It is for a century that has already begun, a century that sees the multiplication of natural catastrophes and alarming facts each year. We know the facts: deforestation, rising waters, extinction of species. The figures we

hear every day speak to our immediate realities. Temperatures are rising, with the same effects on our fragile planet as for a feverish body: one degree more can shake the entire organism. And the temperature is rising quickly.

I have crossed forests that no longer exist. I have walked on ice that remains only as a memory. I have seen living creatures of species our grandchildren will see only in books.

Even water, symbol of life, water, our common asset, is becoming scarcer every day, in addition to carrying disease and pollution.

Having been fortunate enough to be born into a family that was very much aware of these issues, I understood at a very young age that nothing I might undertake would be meaningful if I did not do my utmost to help save the planet, our planet.

This is why I wished to take action as soon as I acceded to the throne. Acting as a Head of State, a State that is distinctive in size and visibility. Acting, too, as an inhabitant of the Earth, a man faced with an emergency situation. This is the meaning of the Foundation I created over two years ago.

Through this Foundation, and through my international activities, I have met many world leaders, political and economic decision makers. And I have observed that many of us share this will to take action.

This is not the guarantee of success, but it offers the possibility of endeavouring and believing.

I have also measured how much certain countries have already shouldered their responsibilities. And here, I would like to pay special tribute to Germany which has had a pioneering role

for years and whose Chancellor, Angela Merkel, is a model in this area.

I also have in mind the ambitious Climate Package adopted this summer, which plans to invest 313 billion euros in renewable energy by 2020. This law is part of profound dynamics: in 2007, such renewable energy sources have helped Germany reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 115 million metric tons. This is the result of a concerted effort shared with all levels of society.

This effort is not limited to domestic stakes: I, who am concerned about the future of the Poles, would like to highlight your country's scientific efforts, at the origin of nearly 60% of the projects of the International Polar Year 2007-2009, through its universities, research institutions, museums and other federal structures.

For all these reasons, I am very pleased with the contacts and partnerships my Foundation has set up in

Germany, in particular with the Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt and the Regional Conservation Foundation of Saxony (*Sächsische Landesstiftung Natur und Umwelt*).

All these efforts, all these initiatives, Ladies and Gentlemen, are proof of the advances your country has made in addressing a challenge that also offers, as you know, a fabulous opportunity for development and progress.

We know it may seem costly to launch investments today with so remote an outcome. We know it may seem futile to commit ourselves for distant lands whose practices, alas, are far behind those of European leaders like Germany.

But one of the revolutions imposed by climate change is precisely to force us to think globally: this is true both geographically and chronologically.

We will undertake nothing if we think only now; we can achieve nothing if we take action only here.

Our main responsibility is to show solidarity with others, our children, our fellows, elsewhere and tomorrow. For them, if we are ambitious enough, the fight against climate change will also be an incomparable growth vector.

We must think of the fantastic investments we are currently engaging in research on these issues. We must think of the 800,000 jobs foreseeable by the year 2030 through the German climate programme alone I just mentioned.

In Angela Merkel's words: "It has been our experience that those who saw an irreconcilable conflict between economy and ecology were wrong.

No, the two must be combined intelligently. That would benefit humanity.”

That, Ladies and Gentlemen, is the nature of the challenge facing us: devising sustainable progress must not be a renunciation; inventing genuine universal growth must show solidarity in the service of humanity. Growth cannot be achieved at the expense of future generations or those who already suffer so much from this inequitable world.

This may sound unrealistic, but it is the only possible solution. For them, of course, but also for us. Indeed, if we are unable to provide the necessary impulse, if we are unable to make such efforts in the long term, if we are unable to build new forms of solidarity in time and space, we will be the first victims of our blindness.

This is the responsibility of all of us, for economic players, civil society and political leaders alike. Our challenge is to find an answer together, in a complementary, concerted way.

For economic players, it means adopting a sustainable global rationale with a vision that goes beyond immediate profits and inventing future growth. For large organizations, it means acting in the field and tireless striving for mobilization.

For political leaders, implementing consistent national and international rules, from the smallest States all the way to the United Nations. A daunting task for all, but an exalting one.

As Al Gore wrote: “The climate crisis offers us the chance to experience what few generations in history have had the privilege of experiencing: a

generational mission; a compelling moral purpose a shared cause (...); to embrace a genuine moral and spiritual challenge”

Thank you.