

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

First of all I would like to thank you all for being here today.

The success and quality of our discussions are first and foremost down to you because once again this year it is you that have brought a true sense to the Monaco Blue Initiative. Therefore I would like to express my sincere appreciation and satisfaction.

I would also like to thank the moderators for their involvement. They have guided, oriented, clarified and sometimes spiced up our debates with their questions, vivacity and insight.

And I would like to commend the work of all those who have prepared this event, in particular the teams working for my Foundation and the Oceanographic Institute.

Their determination, like that of each one of us, responds to a deep-seated feeling to take effective action to promote sea protection. And I believe that our discussions today have once again proved them right. Because the various issues we have addressed give us reason for hope and above all outline potential solutions for concrete action.

I am thinking of blue carbon for example. We are dealing with a key issue here, one that although fraught with risks also offers a wealth of solutions for our global climate. And as it became clear during our exchanges, when looking into this aspect, we are opening up promising prospects for the preservation of our seas.

Coastal maritime flora, as we all know, captures one hundred times more carbon than other plants, and stores it longer. Therein undoubtedly lies a significant part of the solution to mitigate climate change, since it is estimated that these ecosystems sequester the equivalent of half the annual emissions of carbon generated by the global transport industry.

Yet far from maintaining and enhancing these natural carbon sinks, which most often are precious and fragile ecosystems, humanity is degrading them at an accelerating rate. It is therefore vital that we do everything in our power to preserve them efficiently, by implementing localised and rigorous sustainable management measures. This is one of the often still neglected aspects of marine protected areas that we spoke of today.

Because marine protected areas, which are regularly at the heart of the Monaco Blue Initiative's concerns, offer an environment which is particularly suited to the sustainable

management of fragile ecosystems, capable of reconciling the interests of the local populations and the imperatives of the preservation of species. That is why it is crucial to develop them and that is why I make every effort to promote this issue, with my Foundation, in all the fora in which I am involved. In my view, the international community needs to make a greater commitment to promote these conservation systems, even more than it did at Nagoya where the target of 10% by 2020 was announced.

At a time when the whole world is preparing for the key event, COP 21, and looking for ways of combating global warming, I feel it is particularly important to inform political leaders and the international community of this potential.

We need to do this for the climate as much as for the seas. Because one of the key aspects of blue carbon is basically to establish a direct link between the care we take of our seas and the manner in which we assure the future of the entire Planet. We know that one is not possible without the other, but we need to convince our contemporaries of the fact that the oceans currently offer a number of solutions. By protecting our seas, we are protecting the entire globe.

Aquaculture, the other key issue to which we have given thought today, is particularly emblematic of this link between sea conservation and our world's future.

On a Planet concerned about its subsistence, this represents one of the food sectors with the highest growth, as mentioned earlier. Its volume has increased two-fold in the last fifteen years and it now produces over half of the fish sold worldwide, i.e. a volume equivalent to beef. However, it also poses serious threats, which were highlighted today.

Methane omissions, pollution, the transmission of animal disease, the proliferation of micro-algae, the migration of domestic species to natural environments and the weakening of wild species are all problems caused by irresponsible aquaculture. These are in addition to another regrettable consequence of such practices: the catchment of a significant portion – and sometimes almost the entirety – of certain fish, used to produce fishmeal and feed farmed fish.

Urgent action is therefore required. And this does not mean condemning outright all aquaculture activities which have become increasingly necessary for humankind – and which will be even more so with a global population soon reaching nine to ten billion. But by developing a different type of aquaculture. Because as you pointed out, it already exists. It has demonstrated its efficiency on a daily basis, from all points of view.

What we need to do is to generalise a few simple principles which were broached in various ways today.

The first is to respect the ecosystems. This involves, among other things, minimising interactions between aquaculture operations and their environment, not setting them up in vulnerable areas or in areas with a high concentration of wild fish.

However this concern to preserve the ecosystems also means making the right choices in how these operations work, in particular with regard to observing regeneration times, promoting the circulation of natural water, and above all avoiding the use of chemicals as well as preventive antibiotics, which are toxic for wildlife.

The second principle I would like to emphasise is greater respect for the species concerned. In the case of fish farming for example, it is absolutely essential that priority is given as far as possible to certain fish which are more suitable, especially herbivores.

Even in the inevitable case of piscivorous and carnivorous fish farming, the concern for consistency should push us to secure supplies of sustainable foodstuffs, wherever possible by using the waste from fisheries for human consumption and which are properly managed – in brief, do everything possible to prevent the unnecessary waste of resources.

And this should also prompt us to promote polyculture and adopt lower farming densities which will enable us to limit the accumulation of organic waste and the transmission of disease.

Finally, and this is the third principle on which I wish to focus, such development will only be beneficial if it is properly tailored to the practices, needs and constraints of the human population.

It is not acceptable that a consequence of setting up aquaculture farms is that entire regions are deprived of the resources they need and have always relied on. And it is not acceptable either that growth of such activities leads to no job creation in the coastal regions directly concerned.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends,

Respect for the ecosystems, respect for species and respect for the human population: these are, I believe, the principles for a development capable of reconciling the global issues of the Planet, such as the climate, those of endangered marine ecosystems, and those of the coastal populations.

This was one of the key points of our dialogue, between various players and decision makers from different backgrounds, united however by a common objective: to secure the future of the oceans. Because the best way of protecting the oceans is to make optimum use of them whilst respecting the laws of nature and integrating them into a more extensive development approach. And above all to do this quickly.

I think that today's event will have helped. And I think that it will have given us all arguments, ideas and the determination to continue these efforts.

Above all it will have reminded us that no real progress is possible in ignorance of the laws of nature. As Francis Bacon wrote in the 17th century: "Nature to be commanded must be obeyed. This should be the credo of aquaculture, as it should for many of our activities!"

Thank you.