

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to take the floor at the opening session of this symposium dedicated to the oceans.

The ocean issue is as far as I am concerned a major commitment.

It is part of a family tradition which dates back to my great great grandfather, Prince Albert I. Known as the Navigator Prince, one hundred years ago he was in fact one of the founders of modern oceanography and sailed the seas all his life in order to gain a better understanding of them and share his knowledge through the Oceanographic Museum and his own museum in Monaco, one known by many.

This issue is an important part of my national and international commitments, in particular through the work in which I participate in multilateral forums.

Finally, it is at the heart of the missions conducted by my Foundation, which for ten years has been working for the Planet, its climate, its biodiversity and its seas.

You will have understood therefore that this is an issue which I hold particularly close to my heart, all the more so in that the situation of the oceans is, as we are all aware today, of very great concern.

Pollution is building up and gradually destroying the ecosystems. Oil slicks and dumping are causing hydrocarbons to spread. Chemicals, through our waste water, are pervading the seas. Plastic micro particles now constitute a "seventh continent" and are contaminating the entire food chain...

There is also the exploitation of marine resources which is taking place in an increasingly destructive manner. We are extracting hydrocarbons farther and farther away, at deeper and deeper depths, increasing not only the damage inflicted on the environment, but also the risks of an oil slick. Across the globe we are harvesting fish in an increasingly industrial and devastating manner – and in this respect I am delighted about the recent decision taken by the European Union to limit deep-sea fishing in EU waters.

And there are aquaculture operations which often do not respect the basic principles of sustainability, because sometimes five kilos of fishmeal is needed to produce one kilo of fish...

There is also ever-mounting pressure on the coasts with the explosion of the world population. This explosion is chiefly concentrated in coastal areas where a high proportion of our contemporaries already live, since 40% of the global population lives less than 60 kilometres from the coast, and by the end of this century 80% of humanity will be living on a coastal strip of 100 kilometres...

Finally there is global warming, which is disrupting the natural balance of the seas. It is increasing their acidity in an extremely alarming manner. It is weakening the ecosystems, in particular the most vulnerable. It is modifying migration flows and encouraging the proliferation of invasive species...

Behind this bleak but realistic picture, we need to acknowledge the irresponsibility of human-beings – our irresponsibility. Because it is Humanity which alone is responsible for all this disruption. It alone has acquired such power today that it is now threatening the elements we believed were the most powerful, the most timeless and the most indestructible...

And it is virtually the whole of humanity which is responsible for this. It is our entire world civilisation which for decades has imposed this unreasonable relationship with the seas. It has flourished on the predation of marine resources. It prospers today by depending chiefly on the sea, on the goods it provides and on the commercial trade which to a large extent takes place on its surface.

And more importantly it is the whole of Humanity that more than ever before needs the seas – seas abounding in life and in good health – in order to face the future.

Because at a time when this entire Planet is affected by our activities, at a time when the population is growing at an extremely rapid rate, at a time when Planet Earth itself does not seem enough to satisfy our appetite, the ocean more than ever before appears as a new frontier, a horizon towards which we can turn to create our future.

But on the condition that we protect it. And above all provided that we invent a future which respects this ocean, its natural balance and its species...

This task is both crucial and immense, and for which we need the mobilisation of everyone.

That of politicians of course, and today they are finally showing concern over marine issues and giving them the importance they deserve.

These issues were given special attention at COP 21 in Paris in 2015. One year later, in Marrakech, COP 22 devoted an entire day to them. The IPCC's latest report in turn included a chapter focused on the oceans. An interim report will shortly be dedicated to this issue and the cryosphere, largely on Monaco's initiative. In 2015 the UN affirmed a Sustainable Development Goal specific to the oceans. And major discussions are currently under way regarding the protection of biodiversity beyond national jurisdictions – what is known as BBNJ.

I have been personally involved in all these efforts and I would like to say to what extent they represent significant progress. Only ten or twenty years ago it would have been impossible to mobilise the international community in such a way around these issues, as we are doing today.

Especially as many countries are adopting at the same time specific measures to protect the oceans. A key agreement has just been found for the preservation of the Ross Sea, around Antarctica, for which I have taken action for years. Several States with large maritime areas, such as France, the United States and Columbia, recently announced the creation of very large marine protected areas. In the Mediterranean, as in many of the world's fragile seas, we are witness to the reinforcement and development of protection measures, in particular for the most vulnerable ecosystems.

And these political measures have been approved and extended by civil society, which more than ever before is aware of the need to implement action for the seas.

Because however determined they are, States and politicians will not be able to resolve alone all the problems faced by the oceans today.

Faced with issues of such magnitude, the active involvement of everyone is essential. And in particular that of maritime professionals, many of whom are here at this Symposium, and who undoubtedly more than anyone else are aware of the urgency, and know that the mobilisation of as many people as possible is required.

Within this global mobilisation that we see emerging, the role of economic players is a decisive factor. Because of their inventiveness, of course. Also because of their ability to address the needs of our contemporaries. But above all because what is needed is not merely making our seas a sanctuary – even if, as I said, making certain areas a sanctuary is necessary.

What is needed is a new development paradigm. A development paradigm based on a harmonious, responsible and sustainable relationship between humankind and the oceans. A paradigm which promotes human progress without jeopardising the future of the Planet, its oceans and of future generations that will be living on their shores.

At the heart of this new relationship between humankind and the sea, the shipping industry obviously has a key role to play: this is the very topic which brings us together today.

I will not go of course into the technical details of issues that you know better than I. However I would like to point out in front of you the three-fold approach which in my opinion is necessary when discussing these issues. First of all it is the construction of ships, secondly the use made of them and finally their recycling at the end of their lives.

Contrary to what we tend to believe, the pressure placed by ships on the environment does not begin the day they are launched.

Their structure is often built from iron ore which is extracted (sometimes with detrimental effects on the environment) in one part of the world, for example in Australia. It is then shipped to the location where it is converted into steel, for example in Brazil. This steel is finally transported to the shipyard, for example in Europe, where ships are assembled.

The plastic used for a substantial part of the interior fittings, but also for the hull of pleasure yachts, derives from petroleum. This is extracted perhaps in Russia or the Middle East, then transported to the place where it is converted into plastic, before also being shipped to the shipyard.

And the same applies to all materials: the lead in electric batteries, the rare metals in electronic systems, the leather for seats, etc. And I haven't even mentioned here the use, in some yachting industries, of precious wood which once again too often is produced unsustainably, an issue in which my Foundation is deeply involved....

Suffice to say that before even sailing its first nautical mile, a boat has already made several impacts on the Planet. We need to be aware of these impacts when discussing future marine technologies, because their reduction is crucial for ocean health.

Once the ship is built, other environmental effects appear in relation to its navigation. You are well aware of these: primarily the fuel used for its engines, the various discharges into the sea, as well as more indirect effects on the environment, related to port facilities, sonars which can disturb certain species, and the disruption caused by human presence in some marine ecosystems.

Finally, the third phase to take into consideration is the dismantling of ships at the end of their lives, which we are beginning to understand can have disastrous effects if not carried out in a responsible manner.

These three phases form a whole. They require the same attention, the same efforts – by public authorities and international authorities, as well as private players. And today they can all benefit from solutions which are increasingly proving their worth.

For shipbuilding, this means using raw materials produced by an environmentally friendly process. I am thinking for example of timber, for which my Foundation has developed the “Wood Forever” initiative in Monaco, whereby yacht builders commit to using wood harvested from sustainably managed forests based on a strict certification process.

It also involves the implementation, wherever possible, of short circuits, alone capable of preventing the proliferation of transport, in particular maritime, which inevitably affect the oceans.

For navigational purposes, it is of course a question of developing alternative energies, for which increasingly efficient solutions are currently being developed. I am thinking naturally of wind energy, but also of solar energy for which the expeditions carried out by the vessel Planet Solar have demonstrated that this could represent a real solution, at least for leisure yachting; both these energies optimise the use of fuel cells which seem to offer a promising solution in terms of fuel, including for merchant ships.

Finally, as far as demolition operations are concerned, I believe that clean technologies generally exist and are today widely used. But it is still important that builders keep this

dimension in mind, that they incorporate it into their design work and that they understand that this is, even indirectly, a responsibility which is also theirs.

Because the most important thing in all the above is the implementation of a global and shared system of responsibility.

We are all sea users. Whatever our activity, wherever we live, whatever our level of awareness, we all consume goods that at some point have travelled across the oceans. And we are all members of the same civilisation, a civilisation that is fundamentally maritime-based, even if we do not always realise it.

A civilisation that therefore needs to finally assume its responsibilities, and make the oceans, the knowledge of them, their preservation and their responsible use, a priority. Our future, that of our children and quite simply the future of our Planet, depends on this.

That is why I was eager to join you today, to share with you this needed awareness. To remind you that solutions exist and that they can be extremely worthwhile sources of progress, development and growth for your industry.

To tell you, finally, that without these efforts, it is the very future of your activities which will be jeopardised; because devitalised and destroyed seas undoubtedly will never have the magnificent yachts we can admire at this boat show glide over their waters.

The fact that this Symposium has been organised proves that such awareness is shared. Therefore I want to believe that you will assume the responsibilities that are yours. Important responsibilities commensurate with the importance of the yachting industry. Commensurate above all with the importance of the oceans which cover our Blue Planet.

"The sea is everything"* wrote Jules Verne: now the time has come to do everything in our power, together, to save it!

Thank you.

* Das Meer ist alles