

Mr Deputy Secretary General,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear friends,

Please allow me to express my satisfaction in being here with you today for this moment of dialogue dedicated to the Mediterranean. I have been fortunate enough to live by this Sea since my childhood. This is why I am so pleased for this chance to discuss the problems relating to it here, several thousand kilometres from its shores.

But this is not my only reason of satisfaction.

The reason I wanted to be part of this event held by the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development, whose organisers I would like to thank, is because I profoundly believe that the future of the Mediterranean Sea is a global issue and therefore must be discussed in Rio and New York as much as in Monaco or elsewhere around the Mediterranean.

For its history and geography, but even more for its wealth and fragility, the Mediterranean is truly at the heart of most environmental themes. It is also a symbol of both our failures and our hopes.

All of us here know the hazards threatening the Mediterranean, just as we know their main cause: 150 million inhabitants and 300 million tourists concentrated along the coast. They represent a fabulous source of wealth, but some behaviours represent a threat. and overall population pressures.

Obviously, this population needs to eat, live and exchange, which means they must produce, trade and consume. And these essential activities today are often conducted unreasonably, ignoring all sustainable prospects.

Whether in wastewater management, telluric or maritime pollution, intensive commercial maritime exchanges, overfishing or fragile ecosystems, many warnings are proof of the human thoughtlessness which will cause much imbalance.

This sea, with all its beauty and wealth - nearly 8% of the world's marine species in 0.8% of the surface of the Planet and barely 0.3% of the volume of ocean water - is suffering today.

This is all the more true that the current environmental planetary context also has an impact. Climate change, desertification closer and closer to our own coast, acidification of the marine environment, whose progression in the Mediterranean is the same as in the oceans, and the proliferation of invasive species, are all additional factors menacing our marine and coastal ecosystems.

This is why it is necessary today to mobilise all our energies and resources to preserve this unique sea.

To this end, we know that the Mediterranean can count on the genius and inventiveness of the populations living around it, crossroads of culture, trade, civilisation and progress for millennia.

Even today, I want to believe that these people will be able to devise a form of development that can preserve their greatest wealth: the sea that is the cradle of their civilisation.

On its own modest level, the Principality of Monaco intends to contribute fully to this historic challenge.

We are already doing so, through my Government's resolute action in favour of the environment and my Foundation's projects, but also through all the initiatives emanating from our enterprises in favour of green growth in the Mediterranean.

This is the reason why I wanted to bring you my full support today and share all my hopes with you.

I believe our coming together here in Rio will be constructive, fruitful and inspires us to keep finding better solutions for the Mediterranean's future. In the words of Albert Camus, it has the capacity to "carry us both so far and so close to ourselves."

Thank you.