

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear friends,

First, I would like to tell you how pleased and moved I am to be here with you today.

Pleased, because I know our exchanges will be friendly and fruitful. I appreciate at its just value the possibility we have to meet here around genuine issues.

Moved, because this is a very special trip for me, since it brings me close to the memory of my mother, Princess Grace, and returns me to this country with which I have such strong family ties.

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I am also moved to be here, today, in front of the National Press Club, ninety-six years after my great-great-grandfather, Prince Albert I, who spoke in this very place in October 1913.

Known as the “Scholar Prince”, Albert I was curious about his times, an indefatigable traveler who helped spread Monaco’s renown well beyond the shores of the Mediterranean, all the way to this continent.

Prince Albert I was also a model of openness and modernity, a man with a thirst for knowledge, ready to listen to avant-garde minds. With President Theodore Roosevelt, he was one of the first heads of State to understand the importance of conservation of the Planet. .../...

Of this planet no one imagined at the time it would one day be in danger, he was able to perceive its vulnerability along with its importance for each and every one of us.

Engaged with scientists, in whose company he conducted many maritime expeditions, including to the Arctic, Albert I was a man of progress whose message continues to inspire my action.

He was also a Prince with a deep concern for his people, who greatly contributed to reinforcing Monaco's prosperity and independence and making it a Constitutional State with modern institutions.

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It may be useful indeed to recall the often poorly known reality of my country.

Monaco is a stable State with a very long history, proud of its traditions, culture and shared values.

Although the resident population amounts to 35,000 inhabitants, the number of people employed exceeds 45,000. This makes Monaco a major labor market area, including for neighboring parts of France and Italy.

Its economy is sound, as are its public finances.

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State revenue is made up mainly of tax resources, over 50% from value-added tax, reflecting economic activity.

This economy is highly diversified, with tourism and real estate, as well as trading activities, services and the banking sector, Monaco being dedicated to wealth management.

At the same time, the gambling sector, while remaining important for tourism, no longer represents more than 3% of State revenue.

All this contributes to a balanced economy, rooted in modernity.

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Regularly audited by experts from the major international financial institutions, the Principality has always been able to prove its compliance with international standards.

Thus, when all European countries agreed to implement, in the fiscal area, cooperation in compliance with OECD standards, I asked my Government, by virtue of the principles of equity, whose importance I have emphasized since my accession to the throne, to implement negotiations for the signature of bilateral agreements, over a dozen of which have been signed, in particular with the United States, which enabled Monaco to be removed from the OECD's grey list. This recognition occurred in September. .../...

In compliance with the orientations I have set for my Government, Monaco is tending ever more towards compliance with international standards, not only regarding money laundering, but also in the prudential area and towards good governance.

Monaco is also pursuing its efforts to reinforce our traditional assets: safety for people and goods, quality of life, intense cultural activity, top-level medical establishments, friendly administration, a network of innovative, proactive professionals.

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The ethical concerns that inspire my action with respect to my country's financial and economic life also affect my commitment towards protection of the Planet.

Monaco has adopted a resolute policy in favor of sustainable development. In particular, this entails defining urban transport plans by promoting 'gentle' mobility based on public transport and respecting High-Quality Environmental construction standards. It is also embodied in the implementation of projects linked to improving the environment, both around Monaco and in other countries in the Mediterranean Basin.

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All these actions contribute to respecting my country's commitment to become carbon neutral in the long term.

But the action of States, in particular a small State like Monaco, must be reinforced to confront this great challenge of our time: the protection of our Planet. This is why, in 2006, I created a Foundation with a threefold mission: fighting global warming, striving to promote biodiversity and preserving water resources.

The creation of this Foundation resulted from an expedition I led to the Arctic in April 2006 on which I would like to share with you a few ideas.

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Those one hundred and twenty kilometers in a dog sleigh from the Russian base of Barneo to the North Pole were a decisive revelator. Not so much for the threats jeopardizing the future of our Planet, an issue that has been of concern to me from a very young age. What was revealed to me by this long journey through these white deserts was the urgency to take action, the need to explore all possible courses of action with this prospect.

Such an adventure requires exceeding oneself. Not only in the face of momentary difficulties, but in the face of the very meaning of existence, to make it fair and useful..

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This is a feeling I experienced once again three years later, when I went for a three-week expedition to Antarctica.

This second expedition was dedicated mainly to meeting scientists working there. Visiting twenty-six bases, I had the opportunity of crossing paths in Antarctica with truly exceptional personalities, men and women entirely dedicated to trying to understand the Planet, saving our environment well beyond the Poles.

Indeed, what is happening in these very fragile regions concerns the future of all of us.

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Global warming and rising sea levels, pollution, threats to biodiversity: there more than elsewhere, the Planet's woes are visible to the naked eye, perceptible on a human scale.

But my Foundation's vocation reaches out far beyond the polar zones. My Foundation is present today on all continents, where it acts in accordance with other institutions and players in the field, thereby enhancing our capacity to take action.

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I am very proud of the many projects conducted with partners present in the United States: the Clinton Global Initiative, UN Foundation, Aspen Institute, Conservation International, Earth Institute, Chicago Field Museum, San Diego Scripps Institute, Peregrine Fund, Smithsonian Institution, NRDC and PEW, with which we will be signing a Memorandum of Understanding.

Faced with a challenge of this nature, all good will, all determination, all energy must be mobilized, States and NGOs, businesses and international institutions.

This is how we can take effective action. On its level and thanks to these partners, my Foundation already supports over a hundred and twenty projects all over the world.

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Some of them are directly operational, while others aim to raise awareness among populations or aid scientific research.

All of them respect the will not to give up in the face of a daunting challenge from which we cannot escape.

Through the wounds inflicted on our Planet, through the Poles made more vulnerable by warming, through the oceans made more acid by climate change, through all the species, threatened or extinct, it is our survival that is at stake.

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The efforts expected of us will be tremendous. In particular, we will have to proceed with an in-depth revision of the principles on which we have built our unparalleled prosperity for over two centuries. We will have to travel, consume, work and live differently.

We will also have to help the most fragile, the poorest countries, so they can advance by our side. While they have less responsibility than others for the perils threatening us, they are today their first victims. We will need them to restore balance on our Planet: ecological balance, as well as in economics, sanitation, migration...

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All this requires greater solidarity: towards those who are suffering today and towards those who will suffer tomorrow if we do nothing.

Indeed, there is no more room for doubt. The scientific data are unquestionable; challenging them means agreeing to the sacrifice of future generations to our selfish comfort.

The only alternative available to us is to accept, today, to change a few of our habits or suffer within fifty years irremediable upheaval of our environment.

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It is not too late to take action. We can still avert the worst-case scenario. This is, in particular, one of the goals of the meeting to be held next week in Copenhagen.

The Copenhagen Summit offers us the historic opportunity to bring together around a single objective all the countries in the world, under the aegis of the United Nations. Alas, it is unlikely this meeting can achieve the goals we had hoped for. But it will not be the last.

The road that is opening up to us is still long. After Copenhagen, we should be able to lay the foundations for sincere international cooperation on an issue that concerns all the World's peoples, regardless of their wealth, geographic locations, lifestyle or culture. .../...

We will need everyone's efforts.

And I would like to draw your attention to the role of the press, in this respect. As my great-great-grandfather said ninety-six years ago: “I appreciate the press for its great usefulness to scientists: it can help us by extending our results; it is the intermediary for reaching the ears and minds of the public.”

I am going to ask you, if you agree, to assume the role of intermediary starting now. As I have just announced, and before answering your questions, we are going to proceed with the signing of the memorandum of understanding between the Pew Charitable Trusts and my Foundation.

Thank you