

President Tong,

President Remengesau,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

At the end of this day, which once more has been extremely profitable, I would like, first of all, to express my gratitude to you.

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Thanks to all of you who agreed to join us today – our discussions this year have once again provided valuable insight in quite a unique way on key issues concerning the ocean. A wide variety of views were expressed as well as many common objectives shared.

The discussions answered questions about the present and defined pathways for the future; they evoked ocean issues without ignoring the people who live around them.

I would like to express my sincerest thanks to you for all this and for your commitment, in my own name, on behalf of my Foundation and the Oceanographic Institute, and also in the name of all those who are concerned about these issues and who will find reasons for hope in our dialogue.

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It is difficult to draw a single conclusion from such rich and diverse talks. From the status of large predators to marine protected areas, not to mention the exploitation of marine resources, the topics dealt with were varied and numerous. However, they outline a few common principles. I can summarise them in three words: creativity, continuity and complementarity.

First of all, creativity.

In this period of crisis, when it is often difficult to ensure that concrete measures for ocean preservation and environmental protection in general are adopted, I believe that we should be open to all new ideas, to all innovative solutions, even if incomplete or partial.

Contrary to political progress, which is fed by major laws and universal values, the environmental cause lives off pragmatism, in the noble sense of the word. It needs to conduct tests, to proceed by trial and error, to make adjustments – and sometimes even to fail – in order to identify the most relevant solutions.

We cannot resolve the situation of the oceans with a universal treaty or a single technical solution. There are too many interests at stake, too many diverse practices, too many different seas even, to be able to hope for a universal solution. Between the high seas and the coastal waters, between the ocean floor and the ocean surface, between the Antarctic and the Mediterranean, the problems are not the same and neither are the solutions!

This is even more so in that such issues evolve over time. Advances in our knowledge, still fraught with gaps as far as the seas are concerned, often lead us to reassess the situation. And technology itself moves so fast that we have to constantly adapt.

This is a constraint of course, as it forces us to continually recommence the task. But it also provides an opportunity, since so many productive ideas stem from this necessity to invent, for instance those we discussed today on blue growth. Could we have imagined such prospects only ten years ago?

We know that technology will continue to evolve and that is why our first task is to evolve with them!

The second requirement: continuity.

In this situation where we are continually inventing, it might seem that all our efforts will be contradicted tomorrow. I believe that it is precisely the opposite. Although ideas and solutions evolve, they obey a logic that remains and pursue goals which cannot be achieved in a few months, or even in a few years.

Therefore, just as we need to reassess our thoughts and actions, we also need to demonstrate perseverance in order to allow enough time to any ideas, inventions and projects to develop and reach their full potential.

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Those of you who attended the previous editions of the Monaco Blue Initiative will have noticed that the topics we dealt with today already featured on the programme of previous editions. This does not mean that these are the only issues that currently affect the oceans. It simply means that our work requires time, that the dialogue is never finished, and that these issues need time to mature.

We were eager to make this coherence, this long-term insistence, one of the principles of the MBI. And I believe that the positive developments at the moment with regard to a species like the bluefin tuna, which has represented a substantial part of our work since 2010, are there to prove the merits of our determination.

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In a similar vein, the remarkable efforts made here by the Oceanographic Institute to raise awareness of the plight of sharks deserve to be highlighted.

Finally, the third requirement: complementarity.

Once again, this is a trademark of the Monaco Blue Initiative which we were keen to pursue today by bringing together individuals and experts, who always gain from joint dialogue, to discuss common issues.

All of you here are an example of the virtue of dialogue, in which I believe more than ever before, especially the dialogue concerning environmental issues.

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When dealing with topics that intermix the challenges, levels and players involved, we cannot dispense with open dialogue, in which all the stakeholders should be represented and able to assert their legitimate interests.

This is what our initiative sets out to do – not to impose any hierarchy between players, between interests, between points of view – insofar as they share the same conviction: the need to protect our seas and oceans more efficiently.

This is the basis of a method which I believe is essential, because this is the only way of guaranteeing that we won't stray along incomplete or ineffectual paths.

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I am thinking for example of marine protected areas, exactly the type of topic for which the greatest synergy is necessary, at all phases of the process.

When it comes to creating a different way of living with the sea, of using its resources and building its future, it is essential that everyone be involved.

And I believe that this applies to all the challenges with which we are faced and which require individuals and companies alike to make major adjustments. That is why we need to alert, to explain and to convince unremittingly. That is why we need to unite.

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This is what we are doing today by joining forces in order to find innovative solutions and to offer our oceans a future which is less bleak.

This is like a synopsis of the world; a world in which progress can only be made if everyone agrees to transcend their own interests, to break away from their individual habits, to look beyond the people around them and their time. We can only advance if we can see what unites us, beyond our differences - and if I may say so, beyond the seas...

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I think that the presence amongst us today of the President of Kiribati and the President of the Republic of Palau, in addition to other eminent figures from various countries, provides the finest illustration.

"We come from many places, but we share a common future" said President Obama. These words of hope embody the challenge of this responsible century. They also sum up the ultimate goal of the Monaco Blue Initiative.

Thank you.