

*Symposium on the Ocean in a High CO2 World
Monterey, 26th September 2012*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

After Paris in 2004 and Monaco in 2008, this third *Symposium on the Ocean in a High CO2 World* comes at a more appropriate time than ever.

Eight years ago in Paris, your initial work paved the way for an objective assessment and coordinated action with regard to ocean acidification - an issue that is still little known today.

Four years ago, our meeting in Monaco led to an historical declaration, whereby, as you will recall, one hundred and fifty five scientists from twenty-six countries drew global attention to the reality of ocean acidification. In this respect, I particularly would like to commend the work accomplished by the International Acidification Reference User Group which has just published today its new international guide on ocean acidification and the key global challenges.

Today, after the exploration and alert phases, it is time for action.

This is why it gives me particular satisfaction to be able to take part in this symposium and I would like to extend my warmest thanks to the organizers, as well as to all of you, who, by your presence and your efforts have made the essential dialogue conducted together for the last eight years possible.

As I was saying, now is time for action. I believe that this view is shared, as demonstrated three months ago by the outcome document adopted by the Rio+20 Summit, in which paragraph 166 clearly affirmed "the need to work collectively to prevent further ocean acidification, as well as enhance the resilience of marine ecosystems and of the communities whose livelihoods depend on them".

The same text underlined "the need to support marine scientific research, monitoring and observation of ocean acidification and particularly vulnerable ecosystems, including through enhanced international cooperation in this regard. »

Such an affirmation, within the framework of the United Nations, was unquestionably an important phase in the implementation of concerted and ambitious policies on a global scale.

The Rio+20 Declaration moreover formed part of a positive movement. Other significant progress has indeed taken place over the last few months and a certain number of initiatives have been implemented.

A global partnership for the oceans has been created, under the aegis of the World Bank, bringing together over eighty partners: governments, private sector interests and international organizations.

Supported by the Government of Monaco and my Foundation, an Ocean Acidification International Coordination Centre was recently set up in Monaco within the premises of the International Atomic Energy Agency's Marine Environment Laboratory. It represents not only an enormous source of pride for myself but also gives me real hopes for the future.

Its role is to communicate, promote and facilitate global activities on ocean acidification. It will therefore work with science, policy makers, the public, the media and other stakeholders.

Focusing on international activities which are not currently funded at national or international levels, it will also support activities related to global actions on ocean acidification. These include international observation, joint platforms and facilities, collaboration between natural and social sciences, exchange of students and scientists, joint experiments, definition of best practices, open-access bibliographic database, data management, capacity building and dissemination.

The centre is expected to be fully operational during the coming months, for a planned duration of 3 years.

But is this initiative enough ? I do not believe so.

We are now aware of the insidious and serious mechanisms of acidification, the drop in ocean pH which reduces the calcium available for plankton, shellfish and crustaceans, threatening their survival and unbalancing the aquatic ecosystems.

Through them, we know that the entire marine food chain is affected, making this already critically endangered biodiversity even more vulnerable.

These threats are not new. But let's be honest who, other than environmental activists and scientists, has a clear awareness of these phenomenon ?

Contrary to global warming, of which it is the consequence, and the damage to biodiversity, of which it is one of the causes, ocean acidification remains, for most of our contemporaries, a largely unknown phenomenon. Despite its scientific impact, the Monaco Declaration itself was not enough to reverse this phenomenon.

Far from discouraging us, this should spur us into stepping up our efforts.

First, in the scientific field - a key staging post on which we can build our action.

To be combated effectively, ocean acidification must firstly be more widely understood. We need certainties. The whole world needs certainties.

As the Monaco Declaration has proved, scientific knowledge is the starting point for everything. This is what enables us to perceive problems and also to outline the prospects for solving them. It is above all what enables us to reach a consensus and unite the various stakeholders involved around common principles.

Faced with a phenomenon as complex as ocean acidification, global action is indeed necessary; this is what the Rio +20 Declaration called "international

cooperation". As Rio proved, this is difficult to implement. It is based on two priorities: sea preservation and efficient action against greenhouse gas emissions.

Preservation of the marine environment is one of the greatest challenges of the coming years. Against a background of rapid technological development, significant scientific progress and persistent legal uncertainty, it is now crucial that we succeed in improving ocean governance.

We need to give the oceans an appropriate status, naturally taking into account each other's economic and strategic interests, but also incorporating, and I would even say most importantly, the environmental imperatives that should be common to humanity.

It represents as much a moral duty as a vital necessity, because the risks hanging over the oceans are today so pressing. That is the reason why Monaco is committed, in all the fora where it is represented, to promoting greater consideration of the issues at stake with regard to sea regulation. I have myself made this a personal cause, in which I am actively engaged.

Alongside this fight to preserve the seas, we also need to combat global warming, a consequence of greenhouse gas emissions.

In this respect, and despite the relative disappointment that has accompanied the last UN negotiations on the subject, we must continue to work towards a binding international agreement prolonging the commitments under the Kyoto Protocol.

Some may think this is wishful thinking. As far as I am concerned, I believe that such an agreement is inevitable, that it is up to us to speed up its completion and that progress is being made in every country, despite political and diplomatic deadlocks.

When I see the efforts made by the world's biggest polluters to promote renewable energies, I know that awareness of the climate risk is now almost universal.

Through firm commitments, we now need to incorporate this into the texts.

How can we do this ?

Through relentless hard work within the multilateral fora, of course.

But also by mobilizing companies, NGOs and citizens. They alone have the power to change things, by both their behavior and by their capacity to put pressure on those who govern them.

It is why it is imperative to increase awareness and knowledge of the risks of ocean acidification, to explain the mechanisms and to remind people of the scale of the problem.

As such, this symposium is a powerful tool. The presence here of many partner companies, as well as film-makers, gives us hope to believe that this issue, for a long time confined to initiated circles, will soon be a widely-shared concern.

The fight against ocean acidification must tomorrow become a major cause of mobilization. This is how we will succeed in fighting this phenomenon on a global basis.

As Wangari Maathai, an admirable woman and Nobel Peace Prize winner, who was an active member of my Foundation's Board of Directors and who sadly recently left us, said: "You cannot protect the environment unless you empower people, you inform them, and you help them understand that these resources are their own, that they must protect them."

Thank you for your attention.