Mr President of Kiribati,

Mr President of Palau,

Madam Minister,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to open the third Monaco Blue Initiative today in Yeosu.

Indeed, the exceptional relocation of this event, the first sessions of which were held in the Principality of Monaco, means we can incorporate our approach into the context of the Yeosu International Exposition, dedicated to the key subject of the life of the oceans and coasts.

It also allows us to widen the audience of the Monaco Blue Initiative and include distinguished personalities, who I welcome warmly.

Through its dynamism, its inventiveness and its ambitions, but also through its traditions and culture, Korea is now a key player in the international debate and I sincerely hope that we can increase our contacts and projects with this country.

I am pleased that thanks to the welcome of the Korean authorities, we can use this day to extend our considerations to the seas and oceans in these regions of Asia and Oceania.

Our attendance here at this third Monaco Blue Initiative is therefore much more than a timing coincidence, it reflects the intention for dialogue and openness which is central to this process.

…/…

Launched at my instigation in 2010, by the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation and the Oceanographic Institute, right from the start, the Monaco Blue Initiative was set the objective of being a space for consideration and consultation involving as many of those concerned with the future of maritime areas as possible.

This naturally includes representatives from the environmental community who for years have worked to alert public opinion and decision-makers to the dangers faced by maritime areas, so vital to the balance of our planet and yet so often vulnerable.

It also includes politicians, who today are unable act alone, confronting challenges that often go beyond State borders and thus require the integration of many skills and processes.

It also includes the scientific community, whose expertise is essential in conducting responsible actions in fields where there are still uncertainties, even though we now have an accurate and undeniable analysis of the dangers to which our inaction would expose us.

And finally, this includes economic organisations, whose cooperation is needed on several levels, not only because they have substantial resources that we desperately need, but because they have a fundamental understanding of consumer expectations and the procedures for effective action.

At a time when the environmental approach is establishing itself as a global priority, there can be no question of it being a secondary consideration, removed from the economic realities that are also realities for the populations.

…/…

For all these reasons, I wanted the Monaco Blue Initiative to be primarily a place for discussion and meeting, which would help reconcile the protection of the marine environment and the concerns of local people, those who live with these seas and whose future must be a constant consideration for us.

Because, while we know that men are always responsible for the damage inflicted on the oceans, we also know that frequently, this harm is simply the result of the pressures suffered by these populations.

For them, environmental preservation too often presents itself in terms of an impossible trade-off between the present and the future, between man and his environment.

The damage suffered by nature firstly affects the most vulnerable populations, those who cannot protect themselves.

Since 2010, the Monaco Blue Initiative has worked constantly in the interests of reconciling the future of both the seas and man.

This work initially focused on the issue of deep seas, the status and understanding of which are currently central to many investigations.

These deep seas, which are home to an essential part of biodiversity, are too often ignored when not considered solely in terms of the irresponsible exploitation of their resources.

…/…

Yet, it is here, in what is one of our planet's last frontiers, that part of our ability to protect our shared heritage is played out, which is why I wanted to include them in the first Monaco Blue Initiative.

Alongside the deep seas, large marine species also appeared on our agenda in 2010, since they too are a focal point.

In the Mediterranean in particular, with Bluefin tuna, we have witnessed the complexity of protecting these symbolic species.

And although my country's initiative for Bluefin tuna did not result in a trade ban, I am sure that the attention focused on this species, due to the Monaco Blue Initiative helped to raise vital awareness.

Since this is one of the challenges of today's meeting, as with the majority of initiatives that we undertake to promote environmental protection, raising the awareness of our contemporaries to the risks that we face today and everyone's responsibility, to the best of their ability and means, to limit the impact and reverse a disturbing trend.

Faced with the problems that affect how we consume, travel and feed ourselves, everyone should be concerned.

But everyone must also feel that they are being considered. Because nothing would be worse than an action being carried out despite a population's best interest, or even against it.

…/…

Another of the Monaco Blue Initiative's challenges is to reveal ways in which ecological demands can be better reconciled with economic needs.

In this regard, the focus on marine protected areas since last year has been the practical embodiment of this commitment.

Marine protected areas could not in fact be designed as areas that exclude men. Instead, they offer ways in which to improve man's relationship with the sea, for the benefit of everyone.

By allowing sustainable management of the diversity of marine resources, marine protected areas allow us to develop them in real terms while observing the laws of nature and with the aim of improving lives.

In this regard, I can give at least three important reasons for developing these areas.

Firstly, obviously, an ecological interest. Everyone here understands the need to protect a threatened natural heritage.

Marine protected areas go further by offering the ability to restore ecosystems often greatly damaged by decades of senseless human actions.

They therefore allow us to help marine areas to regenerate in an extremely interesting way and I believe we will talk about this again shortly.

…/…

The other interest of marine protected areas is measured in terms of fisheries resources, and is therefore economic. Indeed, it has been proven that the creation of these reserves helps to increase not only fish stocks, but also their size and their reproductive abilities.

Consequently, these areas have positive effects from which fishing undeniably profits... provided that it respects the regulations.

But as I said, public support is needed and needed at all levels.

It would be futile and without a doubt useless to consider the value of these vital areas from a purely immediate economic perspective.

The third challenge for the Monaco Blue Initiative is to identify and study the difficulties that the development of these zones is facing, both in terms of definition and creation as well as daily management.

While this year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the Montego Bay Convention on the Laws of the Sea, I think it is vital that here we address all the aspects related to their development and their status.

A few days before the Rio+20 Conference, which I will attend, this consideration must enable us to reach practical proposals that can be applied quickly.

This is certainly the spirit in which I wanted to organise today's meeting, dedicated to dialogue and effectiveness.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Once again, I believe that the issue of the seas, which presents itself in similar terms in Yeosu and Monaco, can help us make real progress in the huge task of preserving our planet.

Because it gives us the opportunity to move forward together, and realising that, in the powerful words of President Obama speaking at the UN "we come from many places, but we share a common future".

Thank you.