

President Grímsson,
Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear friends,

First of all I would like to thank you most sincerely for inviting me to talk about Arctic issues. As you know, this is a topic which I hold close to my heart. And it is a cause that the Principality of Monaco, despite its distance, has always been dedicated to serve, and in which it will continue to be involved.

I would like to extend special thanks to you, Mr President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, for this particularly welcomed initiative - as much by its purpose, time frame and format.

Discussing Arctic issues is more than ever necessary today. Making it the focus of our discussions just a few weeks before COP21 is extremely timely. And doing this in the presence of various prominent figures from all over the world is I believe highly appropriate.

Only a few years ago, when most of us started to turn our attention to this issue, the Arctic did not present the form we know today. In hardly three decades, the Arctic landscape has significantly changed at all levels.

First of all, of course, there are new dangers.

These result from a combination of three phenomena: global warming which has upset the ecosystem balance, technical progress with the increasing risk of the uncontrolled exploitation of local resources and the relatively legal void which promotes this ominous headlong rush.

All three are of course connected. By opening up new routes, by authorizing the exploitation of new resources, climate change spurs the progress of a technique whose expansion is currently not limited by any international binding commitment...

But this is not the only change which has affected the Arctic during this period. Over the last few years, the environmental awareness of

the entire world, from Asia to Africa, from the Polar Circle to Tierra del Fuego, has been awakened.

This awakening has marked the beginning of a new era for the Arctic. A new era which is still incomplete but whose consequences are already very real: consequences of universal concern.

Everyone is now aware that the future of the Arctic is crucial, far beyond its neighbouring countries. And everyone is aware that the behaviour patterns of our entire world have a direct impact on the Arctic situation.

This awareness enables us, I believe, to better understand the true nature of the environmental crisis we are faced with. It is a crisis which is unique and global. A crisis which concerns every region of the world. And a crisis which calls for solutions on a similar scale.

These consist of dialogue, work of persuasion and practice. Work which I believe needs to target three audiences in particular with three different goals

First of all, multilateral fora, primarily the United Nations. Also civil society, NGOs and Businesses which are taking an increased interest in the Arctic, and consequently are becoming increasingly capable of influencing the future of these regions. Finally, and this should be at the core of our discussions, the indigenous populations. Those whose past was forged by the Arctic and whose future must more than ever be embodied by it.

Firstly, multilateral fora which are now the most relevant scale to address these issues. Faced with issues, which as I pointed out, concern the entire Planet, it would be unrealistic to want to move forward alone. This does not mean that the bordering countries do not have a specific responsibility to play in the Arctic but it does mean that they cannot evade the duty of collective responsibility.

And this also means, for the other countries of the world, the duty to focus properly on the Arctic. The interest shown by an increasing number of States in the work carried out by the Arctic Council should itself be considered a positive element and a sign of greater shared responsibility across the globe.

This multilateral work we need to accomplish should, I believe, target a dual objective, local and global. Locally, it requires the implementation of specific protective mechanisms, which are necessary due to the importance and fragility of the Arctic. Globally, this supposes coordinated and ambitious political action against global warming, which is currently one of the greatest threats hanging over the region.

As for the specific nature of this region, I believe that we need first and foremost to develop as quickly as possible large preservation areas, based on the model of marine protected areas. This is a way of ensuring the protection of a precious biodiversity between all. The US administration has adopted the promotion of protected areas and integrated ecosystem based management as part of its Arctic Council Chairmanship agenda. It is our hope that the Arctic countries will take the necessary steps to establish a connected network of Arctic MPAs .

However, on a broader scale, we need to think of new tools which are more adapted to current Arctic issues.

Consequently I think that we should create an original international text specific to the Arctic. It should be based on the concept of collective responsibility. It could be ratified by countries situated far beyond those present on site. Lastly, by no means calling into question the essential notion of sovereignty, it would affirm for these regions the higher interests of science and humanity. Such a text would of course primarily concern the regions located beyond national jurisdictions.

But another tool could also be enhanced in order to address the challenges of the Arctic more efficiently: the Montego Bay Convention. Since 1982, this text has in fact been the only one making it possible to outline the common management of the sea and the high seas.

It provides us an appropriate framework for genuine collective progress, provided that we seize the opportunity. That is why Monegasque diplomacy has made a commitment to the High Seas and I am placing great hope in the discussions which will initiate as of next year on the BBNJ.

Priority should also be given to the global objective of combating climate change. As the next conference in Paris draws closer, we should all agree to make every effort necessary in order that binding decisions at last be made - the only way of mitigating such tremendous global warming.

Everyone is I think aware that if we do nothing, our entire Planet will be made vulnerable, with increased temperatures that will rise widely beyond 2°C by the end of this century. These increased temperatures would be dramatic from every point of view, with the disruption of fragile ecosystems, such as the Arctic, but also other particularly serious indirect consequences, including ocean acidification for which Monaco plays a key warning role.

We need also to increase our scientific knowledge that is why for example my foundation has launched with the World Climate Research Programme of WMO a competition to develop and design an autonomous underwater vehicle able to collect scientific data under the sea-ice.

That is why we also need to join forces around binding objectives to limit greenhouse gas emissions. And we must all reduce our consumption of fossil fuels, as the Principality of Monaco is doing.

This involves both the development of clean energies and improved energy efficiency. It is a long and difficult task, especially in times of economic uncertainty. But it is the only way that will enable us to break with the spiral of environmental destruction, and thus ensure a serene and sustainable future, the Arctic included...

At a time when the threats hanging over it are also related to the prospects of oil exploitation and the potential ensuing risk of oil spills, we need to work together on a wider scale in order to set up a carbon-free economy, the only way of protecting ourselves against these hazards.

Faced with such a vast challenge as changing our economic model, we have no other choice but to work in close cooperation with civil society. We will do nothing against human-beings and nothing without them. This is the second direction in which we need to make efforts, and undoubtedly it is one of the most promising today.

The reservations of our contemporaries about these prospects, perhaps expensive in the short-term, in regard to the energy transition are comprehensible. We must convince them that this is a unique opportunity to enjoy new found progress, to reconcile humankind and nature, and to build a long-awaited development paradigm which is of benefit as much to current generations as to future generations.

For this, it is particularly important to work in conjunction with businesses, which most often have the innovation humankind needs and which meet its desires and support it in its development.

Businesses, Ladies and Gentlemen, are today capable of understanding their interest in the long term which cannot be limited to the destruction of global resources. They are capable of assuming their global and local responsibilities. And above all they can help us create a more sustainable world, as they can help us define the legal and regulatory aspects more accurately.

I am thinking for example of the demarcation of preservation areas, as referred to by the late Christophe de Margerie, CEO of the Total Group, shortly before his passing, who affirmed his

objection to any oil drilling activities by his group in the Arctic. I am delighted that another petroleum group - one of the largest in the world - recently announced that it too was stopping all drilling operations in the region.

To fully involve civil society in Arctic issues, we also need to work with NGOs, which have a valuable power of persuasion and essential tools for action. States today can no longer act alone. That is why my Foundation, highly active with regard to Arctic issues, supports various projects in this field.

And finally we need to work with international public opinion, which needs to take a similar stand for the Arctic as against climate change. Today it provides a springboard for responsible and efficient collective action. People are concerned about the future of their children. They are calling for a change of model. We need to respond to them, inform them and involve them.

One of them in particular needs to be closely involved in our discussions: the indigenous populations, who I am pleased to see are represented and given voice here.

These people are not only entitled, but also need to preserve their culture, their identity, their autonomy . But they also need to adapt, to open out, to acquire the keys of this world which must not be built without them.

At a time when the future of the Arctic is so uncertain, how can we not hear the voices of those living in and representing these regions? How can we contemplate their future, if we do not involve them in the process and don't provide the means for them to take direct responsibility?

This is why I have supported for several years projects such as the one conducted by the University of the Arctic, which offers these peoples from the Far North the capabilities that will enable them to take control of their destiny. At a time when the Arctic is attracting new economic interests which need to be monitored whilst a new green economy is emerging, these peoples must have access to progress and to freedom.

Because this is how, I believe, we need to approach Arctic issues, in this new age of environmental awareness: as an opportunity to re-invent all together our shared future. That of the indigenous people, of both neighbouring and distant countries, of businesses and NGOs, as well as of international institutions....

The importance, diversity and urgent nature of Arctic issues impose this invention work on all of us. The wide range of key topics which are at the heart of this Conference should, I believe, greatly help us.

President Grimsson, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends,

I would like to conclude by quoting the very powerful words of a great French scientist, for whom I have tremendous respect, a great connoisseur and staunch defender of the Arctic and its populations: Professor Jean Malaurie.

A few years ago, he declared in Monaco: "In this Arctic, a desert of ice and tundra, the last desert of our hemisphere, a place should be given to the creative imagination of technologists to invent a green economy, with cutting-edge technology, futurist architecture; in brief an economy that is profitable not only to the people of the North but to the entire universe. »

I hope that all together we will rise to this challenge of creative imagination, profitable to the entire universe. This is one of the greatest challenges we have to face. It is also one of the most urgent.

Thank you.