

*Speech by HSH the Prince  
On receiving the "Teddy Roosevelt award"  
Washington, 20 October 2009*

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear friends,

It is a genuine pleasure for me to be with you this evening. You know how close I feel to your country, through both my Mother's family and my own personal history.

That's why I'm so happy to be the guest of the International Conservation Caucus Foundation, whose methods based on dialogue and especially on environmental concerns are extremely close to my own personal commitment.

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Your Foundation, Ladies and gentlemen, opens the way to a new perception of global problems, an approach that can bring together personalities from different political and professional horizons around a common goal.

Today, this is rather uncommon, but I have no doubt that, tomorrow, it will be the norm in the face of stakes that cannot be reduced to sectorial approaches. From now on, we face challenges that far exceed those confronting us until now.

When our environment is under threat, life itself is at stake.

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I am thinking, of course, of our ways of consuming, working and traveling that must adapt to dwindling natural resources on which we have built our growth.

I will take only one example, now classic, that of China. We realize today that if every person in China used as much paper as every American, China would use up over 300 million metric tons, equivalent to all the forests on the Planet!

The same reasoning applies of course to other raw materials and to India, whose population will soon exceed China's...

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When I say that life is at stake, I am thinking of the survival of all humankind. Indeed, the facts are now known, and they are implacable: how will we be able to supply enough safe water to a population of nine billion individuals when we already have so much difficulty with only six billion human beings?

So, when the World Bank fears that, in 2025, five billion people will not have enough drinking water, how will we be able to satisfy their demands, while also meeting the ever-growing needs of intensive farming?

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We must devise a different way of managing the Planet, acting through all possible means, mobilizing as widely as possible and leaving no innovation unexplored.

This is what you are doing by bringing together policy-makers and entrepreneurs, Republicans and Democrats, people from NGOs and from administrations. This is also what you do by undertaking specific determined actions to raise awareness among people in charge from all horizons and of all opinions.

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These principles, Ladies and gentlemen, are also those that guide my commitment. They explain why I decided to create a Foundation in 2006 to diversify my means of action as much as possible and provide an international instrument complementary to those of my country.

This Foundation is active in three main areas - the fight against climate change, protection of biodiversity and water conservation - and acts in partnership with other institutions, local players, international organizations, enterprises and NGOs. Together, we strive to provide concrete effective answers to problems linked to environmental degradation.

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Water management in Burkina Faso, support for Indians suffering from deforestation in the Amazon and protection of bluefin tuna, an endangered species in the Mediterranean: the long list of our actions is testimony to the diversity of our concerns. But these projects address one or more of the Foundation's privileged areas, always with the same objective: refusing to give up in the face of imminent catastrophe. With local contacts, with our partners, with the populations concerned, this is what we do each and every day.

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For me, this diversified innovative action is perfectly complementary to the policy I ask my Government to conduct. A policy of determination, whether domestic - instituting sustainable measures for urban planning and transport - or foreign - through diligent mobilization in international discussions on climate and international aid targeting development - sanitary and social in particular - in the most vulnerable countries.

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Of course, Monaco is not the United States of America, and our action may seem very modest in the light of the problems we address. I believe, however, that what is essential, beyond obviously determinant quantitative results, is to show the way for responsible commitment and solidarity.

A commitment from all countries, regardless of their power, wealth or size, and all talents.

What is most important remains not to be resigned tomorrow to becoming mere spectators of catastrophes caused by human activity.

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If we allow them to be perpetrated, these phenomena will be irreversible. Whether it is the melting and disappearance of Arctic ice, the thawing of permafrost in northern regions, or the oceans' dramatic acidification, these phenomena would spare no region of the Globe. We cannot forget this.

At the dawn of the International Year of Biodiversity, I can also mention the extinction of plant and animal species entailing imbalance in many ecosystems, again due to human activity. The examples are many, all with the same significance.

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In the face of such threats, which have already become reality in some regions, what is most urgent is to take action, mobilize as many people as possible with the will to engage in a fight that, if we carry it through, will be the honor of our century for future generations.

I cannot but think, here, of President Theodore Roosevelt, whose emblematic figure is so very present this evening. I am thinking of his extraordinary ability to be ahead of his time. By creating the system of National Parks, Forests and Nature Reserves and by introducing fairer, more sustainable water management, Teddy Roosevelt was one of the first Heads of State to place the environment - a term that didn't exist at the time - at the heart of a coherent vision of his country. .../...

And since I have this opportunity to evoke his memory, I would also like to emphasize his aptitude to be concerned with others, and especially to understand that the fate

of the most distant countries has an impact on those closest to us. All these issues, Ladies and gentlemen, are not that far away from what brings us here this evening.

The Nobel Prize that crowned his courageous commitment in the service of peace resonates for all of us as an injunction: that of never being satisfied with thinking in terms of the here and now, but constantly seeking to understand the world with and for others, elsewhere and tomorrow.

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This is why I am so honored this evening to receive this distinction that invites me to follow in the footsteps of so lofty a model.

Ladies and gentlemen, Dear friends,

I began by recalling the very strong ties linking me with your country; they include admiration, interest and closeness. In the name of these ties, in the name of your wonderful welcome for me tonight, I would like to tell you how much I appreciate being able to count on you and the United States in the action engaged to save our Planet.

Thank you