

Ladies & gentlemen,

Friends,

I bid you a warm welcome to today's Birdlife International reception at the Monaco Embassy.

Birdlife International is an exceptional environmental protection organisation which inspires admiration for its sheer longevity and its mobilising ability. Birdlife's directors were trailblazers in highlighting the vital link between thinking global and acting local.

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By focussing on the issue of migratory birds, whose life is played out across manmade frontiers, Birdlife raises awareness of the need for solidarity between countries and continents to address issues common to all people.

Birdlife is an umbrella organisation which successfully federates NGOs, scientists, those involved in nature management and amateur naturalists. It provides a campaigning vehicle in which everyone can play a valuable role.

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This spirit also drives my Foundation which is currently working on over eighty projects across all continents. It is delighted to be a Birdlife partner.

We look forward to a fruitful working relationship which will enable us to implement a range of highly effective initiatives, in the Mediterranean, naturally, but also further afield in places such as the Indian Ocean.

I believe that biodiversity year, set to start in a few weeks' time will provide an ideal opportunity for more extensive work on our projects and raise public awareness of the importance of saving species for the balance of our world.

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At a time when all eyes are on the Copenhagen Conference I still believe that it is worthwhile recalling that the

dramatic environmental situation unfolding before us will require much more than a rethink in terms of growth and lifestyle.

Protecting threatened species is vitally important to developing a different relationship with our planet. Humanity needs to adopt a more humble attitude, aware that it needs other species to survive.

In light of past experience, getting people to accept this concept is likely to require significant effort. I know that I can count on you.

Thank you.