

WCC 2012
MONACO
SPEECH FOR OPENING CEREMONY

- Hon Michel Roger-Minister of State and President of the Governing Council of Monaco
- Ministers and other officials of the Government of Monaco
- Your Excellencies, members of the Diplomatic Corps
- Directors and Members of the World Federation of Consuls
- President and members of the Association of Honorary Consuls of Monaco
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Today, I am very proud, happy and privileged to be part of the FICAC World Congress of Consuls 2012 in the beautiful city of Monte Carlo, Monaco.

I take this opportunity to convey our heartfelt gratitude to Minister of State, Hon Michel Roger, for taking time from his busy schedule to be with us, address us and declare the 10th FICAC World Congress of Consuls 2012 officially open.

I am deeply honoured, deeply appreciative and humbled that the FICAC World Congress of Consuls 2012 has received the distinguished patronage of His Serene Highness Prince Albert II.

In addition, His Serene Highness Prince Albert II will take the time to add his presence here later today to address us. This will be a great honour, ladies and gentlemen.

The Palace of Monaco has announced the offering of a medal issued on the occasion of His Serene Highness Prince Albert II's accession to the throne, to all delegates of the FICAC World Congress of Consuls. What a great honour. This deserves a special round of applause.

The Office des Emissions de Timbre-Poste of the Principality of Monaco issued on August 22, 2012 the FICAC WCC 2012 Commemorative Stamp. This is indeed a historic event for our Federation. We extend special thanks to His Serene Highness for making it possible.

I cannot say enough about the graciousness and the hospitality that we have each received from we arrived here in Monaco. To say nothing of the logistics, the preparation, the setting, the atmosphere and the attendance here today.

I must now congratulate and thank the President, Hon. Moustapha El-Solh, and members of the Association of Honorary Consuls of Monaco, the Chairman of the Organising Committee, Hon. Takis Touliatos, and members of the

Committee, for the excellent work that they have done in making World Congress 2012 a huge success. Thank you very much.

At this Congress, we are celebrating our 30th anniversary, and several members of our Federation from all over the world will be honoured this evening for the excellent work that they have done in the countries in which they have the honour to serve.

This Congress gives us the opportunity to strengthen further the bonds of existing friendships, as well as to form new friendships and develop a deeper understanding between the countries that we have the honour to represent.

This is important, as the advances in technology and communication have reduced the world into what is now described as a global village.

Living in this environment demands interdependency between countries, which has significantly changed the way we think and relate to each other.

As Consuls representing countries worldwide, this has placed and continues to place, a tremendous responsibility on us. The policies and programmes that our countries adopt and the cooperation between our countries will impact on the kind of world that will emerge. Our decisions and advice and reports given to our Governments must therefore be based on sound and well-researched information.

As you all know, our Federation has a Partnership Agreement with the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation for cooperation in environment and climate change. This could include cooperation in project identification and funding, pooling of expertise and dissemination of information.

These issues are of global concern, as climate change, loss of biodiversity and ozone layer depletion cannot be addressed by countries acting alone. Climate change is potentially the biggest risk factor facing humanity, and it is played out in the political, social and economic spheres, vital to the security and viability of countries.

I must again thank His Serene Highness for honouring us by allowing FICAC to work with the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation and assist in the promotion of international awareness of these important matters.

This programme must be given priority by the next administration of our Federation.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Colleagues, our Federation notes with respect, the consideration that Monaco is giving to smaller states, and notes Monaco's international cooperation with countries of the Southern Hemisphere.

Coming from a small country myself, I appreciate the attention that is being given to these countries and the stated commitment of Monaco's International Cooperation Directorate to increase its official development assistance significantly by 2015. We are most grateful.

We want it to be known that the World Federation of Consuls stands ready to cooperate with Monaco whenever called upon to do so. Again, many thanks to Monaco and to His Serene Highness Prince Albert II for all that has been done and is being done for cooperation with our Federation.

And so now, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Directors and members of the World Federation of Consuls, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you all here today. I thank you for coming. I know that you will find it worth your while.

Welcome to the 10th FICAC World Congress of Consuls 2012.

Thank you very much.