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# Secretary-General

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**PARTNERSHIP OF DEVELOPING, DEVELOPED NATIONS MUST RESPECT FOREST-COUNTRY  
SOVEREIGNTY.**

## **SUPPORT INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, SECRETARY-GENERAL TELLS HIGH-LEVEL EVENT**

Following are UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's remarks at the High-level Event on REDD (UN Collaborative Programme on Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation in Developing Countries) in New York, today, 23 September:

Welcome to this High-level Event. I thank UN-REDD for the video you have just seen. It has set the scene admirably.

I am delighted by the strong attendance. We have more than 85 Governments represented here today, including 14 Heads of State and senior Ministers. We also have notable leaders from civil society, non-governmental organizations and indigenous peoples organizations. I also welcome the media. You are critical partners.

Before my remarks, I would like to acknowledge my colleagues here on the podium. First, allow me to introduce three representatives from the forested regions of the developing world, who are making important efforts to demonstrate the potential of REDD. Speaking on behalf of the African Union is the President of the Republic of Congo, His Excellency Denis Sassou-Nguesso. Speaking on behalf of the Coalition for Rainforest Nations is the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, His Excellency Michael Somare. I also welcome the President of Guyana, His Excellency Bharrat Jagdeo, who will speak on the potential of REDD. Joining them, I am also pleased to welcome His Excellency Jens Stoltenberg, Prime Minister of Norway. Norway has been leading the way with generous support to forested developing countries for REDD activities. Finally, let me introduce World Bank President Robert Zoellick, with whom we are working closely in support of developing countries to implement REDD.

Yesterday saw the largest ever gathering of world leaders dedicated to preventing runaway climate change, protecting the vulnerable from its impacts, and catalysing global green growth. The world's forests play a pivotal role in this equation. They store carbon. They also release it. Some estimates show that global deforestation has contributed up to one fifth of annual greenhouse gas emissions in the 1990s. Reducing deforestation is essential.

Immediate action on REDD is a critical part of the climate change solution. Preserving forests also provides other valuable benefits. Biodiversity and soil conservation. Flood control. Combined, such services are worth billions — perhaps trillions — of dollars to the global economy.

Some 1.6 billion people depend on forests for sustenance and income. Sustainable forest management can create jobs and protect the livelihoods of indigenous people and local communities. Whichever way you look at it, protecting the world's forests is a good investment. That is why today's event is so important.

Developing countries have demonstrated commendable political leadership in placing REDD on the global agenda. Industrialized countries have provided generous support. REDD is a showcase for practical partnerships between developing and industrialized countries. The UN-REDD Programme and the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility are also promising examples of partnership between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods system. We now need to mobilize further funding for REDD and establish transparent systems to distribute payments and measure results. Interim finance is crucial for jump-starting progress.

Developing countries are willing to lead, provided they work in partnership with developed nations and receive the required financial and technical support. Such a partnership must of course respect the sovereignty of forest countries. It must also support indigenous peoples and others who are dependent on forests. REDD can deliver on these expectations. Forest management has proven to be an exceptionally difficult issue. It has far-reaching impacts and a wide constellation of actors.

Over the years, negotiators have sought to emulate the progress achieved in establishing international frameworks in other key areas of sustainable development, such as climate change, biological diversity and desertification. Two years ago, a landmark was achieved: the first-ever non-legally binding agreement on forests, endorsed by the General Assembly. The new instrument addresses the full spectrum of issues, from complete protection to sustainable use, from people to the environment to economics. It provides a broad foundation upon which to sustainably manage forests around the world. I look forward to the continued strengthening of these arrangements so that the world has a robust yet flexible forest regime.

REDD has an important role. It is a model of innovative leadership and partnership. It can help us to protect and sustainably manage the world's major forests. And it can inspire success in Copenhagen.

I would now like to invite our distinguished guests to make their brief statements.

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