**Remarks by United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon,**

**at the High Level Meeting on REDD**

**New York, 23 September 2009**--Your Excellencies, delegates, UN colleagues, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Climate change may well be the defining battle of our collective lifetimes – and we are running out of time to win it.

In just 75 days, governments will meet in Copenhagen for the crucial 15th Convention of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

But I am convinced that the battle can be won through strong leadership and partnerships. And yesterday, I saw world leaders begin to commit themselves in a way that could lead to agreements in December on critical action for climate change mitigation, adaptation, technology and finance.

Today I want to go beyond our deliberations of yesterday and focus on an area that is both urgent and promising: Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation in developing countries (REDD).

I say ‘urgent’ because our efforts to limit global warming to 2 degrees C above preindustrial levels will be almost unachievable without reducing the nearly 20 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.

I say ‘promising’ because REDD may offer the largest and most cost-effective source of emission reductions possible within the next decade. [*Source*: IPCC and other analyses indicate that REDD+ may provide as much as 30% of the total cost-effective mitigation potential in the period up to 2030] – while also financing new, alternative, low-carbon pathways to development for the forested countries. This can and must be done while respecting the rights and livelihoods of indigenous peoples and other forest dependent communities. Of course, when forests are protected and used more wisely, our precious biodiversity and ecosystem services are also sustained, ensuring clean water, productive soils, buffering against floods and droughts -- and helping tropical forest countries adapt to climate change and ensure food security. After all, REDD+ is clearly both an environmental and a development issue.

And REDD is promising because of the commendable political leadership already shown by developing countries to place and prioritize REDD in the UNFCCC process and on the global agenda -- and because of the generous investment of resources for REDD readiness by certain industrialized countries, such as Norway.

REDD is also promising and even unique because of the growing partnership and alignment between these developing and industrialized countries on what is needed to make REDD work. Many of these leaders are here with us today and we will soon hear from them.

And REDD is promising because of the growing cooperation and partnership between the Bretton Woods and UN systems -- through the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility and the UN-REDD Programme – in support of developing countries’ efforts to get ready for REDD.

REDD presents an opportunity to forge the frameworks, methodologies and institutions that could ultimately help bring the REDD revolution to sustainable land management even beyond the forest's edge.

I believe that REDD may even offer a foundation on which the necessary leadership and partnership can be generated to not only advance the REDD agenda, but also to contribute to the success of Copenhagen and beyond.

The recent report of the Informal Working Group on Interim Finance for REDD tells us that ambitious action on REDD during the period 2010 – 2015 could realistically aim to achieve a 25% reduction in annual global deforestation rates by 2015. Total payments needed to achieve these reductions are estimated at a total range of 15-25 billion Euros over the period 2010-2015.

Developing countries are clearly willing to lead and to seek to achieve this 25% emission reductions by 2015, and even 50% emission reductions by 2050, subject to the necessary partnership for finance and technical and administrative support from industrialized countries. It is crucial, however, that we all recognize the seriousness of the development choice developing countries are taking when embarking on the REDD path. A predictable framework of partnership and support is absolutely crucial if these efforts are to succeed.

It is also crucial that the incentive structure be designed in such a way as to generate significant economic benefits for developing countries, including for their indigenous peoples and other forest dependent communities.

Immediate action on REDD is a critical part of the climate change solution.Therefore, Copenhagen must include a REDD agreement that mobilizes the necessary finance, respects all key stakeholder groups while employing transparent systems for revenue distribution and measuring, monitoring, reporting and verification.

At this critical juncture, all sources of emissions must be examined and all options deployed if the world community is to ‘Seal the Deal’ and avoid dangerous climate change while leading to low carbon, resource efficient green economies —in this our forests are a natural ally.

Let us act today in such a way that Copenhagen will become known as the critical turning point when we decisively moved ahead with REDD. Thank you.