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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

MESSAGE TO 23rd WORLD CONGRESS OF THE
INTERNATIONAL UNION OF FOREST RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS
Seoul, 23 August 2010

I am pleased to send greetings to the twenty-third World Congress of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations. I thank the Republic of Korea, whose forests play such an important role in its green growth strategy, for hosting this event.

Forests are crucial for sustainable development. They contain two-thirds of Earth's known terrestrial species; they provide valuable protection against land degradation, desertification and climate change; and they support sustainable incomes and economic and social stability for hundreds of millions of people across the globe.

The International Union of Forest Research Organizations has created a valuable community of international scientists to advance policies and practices that preserve forests. You play an essential role in strengthening long-term political commitment to sustainable forest management by connecting experts from academia, government and non-governmental organizations.

As governments strive to agree on international frameworks to protect the global environment, your support for the sustainable management, conservation and protection of the world's forests is particularly significant. The knowledge, networking opportunities and assistance to institutions that you provide is central to bringing about local, regional and international change.

In 2007, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests, the world's first framework document to promote sustainable forest management. The Instrument has formalized and strengthened international political will to reduce deforestation, prevent forest degradation and decrease poverty in forest-dependent communities.

To further raise awareness and promote global action, the United Nations has declared 2011 the International Year of Forests. I encourage all members of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations to help us commemorate the Year, and I wish you a most productive meeting.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ki-moon Ban".

BAN/Ki-moon