

**Draft Ministerial Declaration of the High Level Segment of
Ninth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests
on the occasion of the launch of the International Year of Forests**

1. We, the Ministers gathered at the High-level Segment of the Ninth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests and for the launch of the International Year of Forests 2011, underscore that forests are an integral part of the global environment and human well-being, providing multiple goods and services essential for people worldwide and crucial for sustainable development and the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.
2. We welcome the United Nations designation of 2011 as the International Year of Forests as a landmark opportunity to raise awareness and strengthen political commitment and action worldwide, this year and in the years to come, to achieve sustainable forest management.
3. We stress the vital role and significant contribution of all types of forests and trees in addressing the complex and interconnected global challenges related to economic and social development, poverty eradication, environmental sustainability, food security and agriculture, energy, water, mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, combating desertification and land degradation, conservation of biodiversity, watershed protection and disaster risk reduction.
4. We recognize that 1.6 billion people – nearly one fourth of the world’s population -- depend on forests for subsistence, livelihood, employment and income generation, and stress the crucial role of local people, including women, and local and indigenous communities in achieving sustainable forest management.
5. We welcome the efforts undertaken by countries in advancing sustainable forest management at all levels but are deeply concerned that 13 million hectares of forest continue to be lost each year and underscore the need to reverse this trend.
6. We reaffirm the importance of the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007 as an integrated framework for national action and international cooperation to promote implementation of sustainable forest management and achieve the four shared Global Objectives on Forests contained therein.
7. We welcome new and emerging forest-related financing initiatives and encourage the promotion of synergies between climate change and sustainable forest management activities, noting that sustainable forest management encompasses a comprehensive approach to forest values.
8. We recognize that the United Nations Forum on Forests, with its universal membership and comprehensive mandate, plays a vital role in addressing forest related issues in a holistic and integrated manner and promoting international policy coordination and cooperation to achieve sustainable forest management. We invite the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to continue its support to the Forum and encourage stakeholders to remain actively engaged in the Forum’s work.
9. Bearing in mind the foregoing, we commit to:

- a. Improve the livelihoods of people and communities, in particular in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, by creating the conditions needed for them to sustainably manage forests, including through strengthening cooperation in the areas of finance, trade, transfer of environmentally sound technologies, capacity-building and governance, as well as by promoting secure land tenure, participatory decision-making and benefit sharing, in accordance with national legislation, policies and priorities;
 - b. Develop and implement cross-sectoral and multi-institutional policies, mechanisms and actions at all levels which integrate sustainable forest management into development plans and programmes;
 - c. Accelerate implementation of the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests and efforts towards achievement of the four shared Global Objectives on Forests contained therein, through national, regional and international actions and cooperation;
 - d. Take a meaningful decision on forest financing at the 10th session of the Forum in 2013 as envisaged in the resolution of the Special Session of the Forum's 9th session;
 - e. Undertake immediate steps towards implementing the forest-related outcomes of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals agreed in September 2010;
 - f. Work with the governing bodies of member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, in particular the three Rio Conventions, to integrate, as appropriate, the sustainable management of all types of forests into their strategies and programmes and promote coherence and synergies as related to forests;
 - g. Contribute substantively to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 and its preparatory process by highlighting the economic, social and environmental benefits of forests to people and the contributions of sustainable forest management to the themes and objectives of the Conference.
10. We invite the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to consider this Declaration as the contribution of the United Nations Forum on Forests to the Conference.
 11. We agree to meet again at the 11th session of the Forum in 2015 to review our progress in meeting these commitments, as well as the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests.