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OFFICIAL REMARKS OF UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL BAN-KI MOON AT  
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Prime Minister [Patrick] Manning,  
Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honor to be with you this afternoon. Thank you, Prime Minister, for chairing this important summit and for hosting this splendid luncheon. And thank you, Secretary-General [José Miguel] Insulza, for your leadership of the OAS at this critical moment. Rarely has there been a better time for us to come together.

Excellencies:

Discussions here have been good one. We spoke about our common economic future and advancing a prosperity agenda for all. We affirmed the need for greater social equity, social inclusiveness and social justice, as President Obama eloquently put it. We agreed on a shared imperative: the need to safeguard people from hardship, not only the poorest and most vulnerable but also the emerging middle class.

Excellences, Ladies and gentlemen, the issue I have been asked to speak about—sustainability—is fundamental. It is essential to economic recovery today and peace and security tomorrow. As I see it, we face new realities.

First: as a global community, we are living on the edge. The last two years have brought a series of crises: energy, food, climate change and global recession. I fear worse. Today's economic crisis, if not handled properly, could evolve into a full-scale political crisis — defined by social unrest, weakened governments and angry publics who have lost faith in their leaders and their future.

Second: we are entering a new age of austerity. We face more problems with fewer resources. National budgets have shrunk. Aid programs are squeezed. Voluntary contributions are drying up.

Yet there is a third reality — a cause for optimism. These challenges, after all, are interrelated. If we are smart about it, if we work at their inter-connections, solutions to each can be solutions to all. We can get more value for our collective dollar, peso and real. We can find effective, efficient, enduring solutions for a more sustainable, inclusive and prosperous future.

Ladies and gentlemen: At the recent G-20 summit in London, world leaders explicitly recognized these linkages. They agreed on a genuine global stimulus that advanced the interests of all nations, not a few. They stood against protectionism, and they recognized the Millennium Development Goals as an engine for development, growth and quality jobs creation worldwide. They took a major step toward a “Green New Deal” and vowed to reach agreement at the UN climate change conference in Copenhagen.

I know how important this is to you. I have seen shrinking glaciers in Antarctica and the Andes. I have seen the effects of deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon and the loss of biodiversity. The very existence of some Caribbean nations, including portions of Trinidad and Tobago, could be threatened if sea levels rise. Bold, visionary leadership is needed to seal a deal in Copenhagen. It

must be ambitious, effective and fair. It must offer rich nations a way to cut emissions. But no less important, it must support poorer countries as they adapt to the adverse impact of climate change.

We need to protect vulnerable populations, including indigenous peoples, and we need financial incentives to preserve forests and the livelihoods of those who depend on them. It is a tall order but we can do it. Even now, we see nations of the Americas leading the way: Brazil, Mexico, the United States. By tackling climate change we also deal with the economic crisis — green jobs for green growth. All of us see the links between economic growth and political stability, democracy and human rights. For me, as Secretary-General, collective social and economic security is a basic principle of justice — global social justice.

Excellencies, we must push this prosperity agenda. Opportunities are coming up at the July G-8 meeting in Italy and the climate change summit at the United Nations in September. As for me, I pledge to bring the UN together in coordinated, decisive and innovative ways. We will create a new mechanism for coordinating additional financing for food security to help the most vulnerable nations weather the storm. We will support a Global Jobs Pact — a recovery strategy to meet peoples' most basic demand for decent work. We will launch a UN Global Vulnerability Alert, collecting real-time information on the social effects of the economic crisis world-wide.

Ladies and gentlemen, I ask you to support these initiatives. I count on your help along the difficult road to Copenhagen. Ultimately, solidarity and common cause must be our greatest strength. We have before us, today, an opportunity to re-invent how we as nations work together to deliver collective solutions to our collective problems. The times require a new multilateralism as the foundation of a new and sustainable prosperity for all.

We need a new vision, a new paradigm, a new multilateralism. A multilateralism that is organized around delivering a set of global goods. A multilateralism that harnesses both power and principle. A multilateralism that recognizes the interconnected nature of global challenges. A multilateralism with institutions that have the necessary authority and resources. You of the Americas have made great progress — socially, economically and politically, supported by the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. I salute your achievements.

On the other hand, nowhere in the world is the gap between rich and poor so wide. When we talk about social equity and social inclusion, we must mean what we say and deliver. Success brings greater responsibility to act on the world stage. Many of you contribute to UN peace-keeping. Brazil is helping in West Africa. These are admirable demonstrations of global thinking and commitment. Yet they are exceptions rather than the rule.

Let the Americas be guided by a spirit of global solidarity. Let us be good neighbors. Haiti, for example, is at a turning point. We made progress at this week's donor's conference in Washington, but we need to continue building that partnership for change. As we know, fresh winds of changes are blowing in this hemisphere in ways large and small. As Secretary-General, I welcome fresh approaches, new flexibility and a sense of give-and-take, on all the inter-related challenges we face.

Thank you.