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Remarks

H.E. Ambassador Robert Jackson
United States Ambassador to Cameroon

Congo Basin Forest Partnership
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Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a great pleasure to be here with you at the close of this important session of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership.

It has been impressive to see this partnership in action and to see the quality of constructive dialogue and collaboration among the many partners in this room. It is clear that, in the ten years since this partnership's inception, it has matured under the committed leadership of successive facilitations, with close collaboration among African governments, COMIFAC, and other long-standing partners. It is also encouraging to see the partnership continue to grow, with new private sector partners and donors such as Norway committing to the CBFP principles and bringing new resources to bear.

As we look toward Rio+20 in Brazil next June, we see a prime opportunity to showcase the partnership and its accomplishments, and hope to work with many of you to do so.

Indeed, it is difficult to imagine where we would be now if not for the collaborative platform this partnership has offered in the past ten years, to focus our collective efforts in strategic ways. Its informality and flexibility has allowed all partners to work effectively and efficiently, and to adapt with the changing times. Most importantly, the partnership has supported several key achievements:

- Strategic and inclusive land management planning across broad ecological landscapes throughout the basin;
- The development of national parks and other protected areas;
- Better forest concession management;
- Improvements in transparency and access to information;

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take action in the short term. We can only do this if we present leaders with a coherent narrative that goes beyond the forest canopy and links the region's future prospects with the short-term decisions leaders make to address the passing crises of the moment. This narrative must not only tell a compelling story; it must also be backed up with the best science and world-class analysis.

Therein lies our opportunity, as a partnership, to engage with leaders and stakeholders in and outside the forest sector: to reverse policies that generate unsustainable outcomes; to develop incentives to advance sustainable practices; to bring to bear timely and accurate data to inform decision making; to mobilize urgent, ambitious and cooperative action to meet internationally-agreed goals; and to strengthen regional, national and local institutions.

To that end, we continue to see COMIFAC as a key intergovernmental partner in the region and we hope to see support from all Central African COMIFAC countries materialize, to make COMIFAC a self-sustaining body. We commend Cameroon most recently for taking that step.

As all of us here know, much remains to be done to address the drivers of deforestation and biodiversity loss in Central Africa. But the potential is also considerable for economic growth and development of livelihoods through sustainable management of forests and wildlife. The keys lie in partnership – real partnership – and rock solid political will and commitment from all corners to transform challenges into opportunities, and to achieve what we all wish for the region: healthy ecosystems and, ultimately, secure and prosperous people.

Thank you for your attention.

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