

# United Nations

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Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

**New York, 23 September 2014**

## **New York, 23 September 2014 - Secretary-General's opening remarks at 2014 Climate Summit [as delivered]**

Good morning.

Thank you for coming to this unprecedented and important gathering today.

Looking at that film made me think of my childhood.

I grew up poor in war-torn Korea.

I dreamed of peace. I dreamed of prosperity. I dreamed of opportunity.

Sitting here today is, in so many ways, a dream come true.

But today the dreams of people throughout the world hang in the balance.

Climate change threatens hard-won peace, prosperity, and opportunity for billions of people.

Today we must set the world on a new course.

Climate change is the defining issue of our age.

It is defining our present.

Our response will define our future.

To ride this storm we need all hands on deck.

That is why we are here today.

We need a clear vision.

The human, environmental and financial cost of climate change is fast becoming unbearable.

We have never faced such a challenge.

Nor have we encountered such great opportunity.

A low-carbon, climate resilient future will be a better future.

Cleaner.

Healthier.

Fairer.

More stable.

Not for some, but for all.

There is only one thing in the way.

Us. We.

That is why I have asked you to be here today. Thank you for your leadership.

I am asking you to lead.

We must cut emissions.

Science says they must peak by 2020, and decline sharply thereafter.

By the end of this century we must be carbon neutral.

We must not emit more carbon than our planet can absorb.

No one is immune from climate change.

Not even these United Nations Headquarters, which were flooded during Super Storm Sandy.

We must invest in climate-resilient societies that protect all, especially the most vulnerable.

I ask all Governments to commit to a meaningful, universal climate agreement in Paris in 2015, and to do their fair share to limit global temperature rise to less than 2 degrees Celsius.

To do that, we must work together to mobilize money and move markets.

Let us invest in the climate solutions available to us today.

Economists have shown that this comes at minimal extra cost, while the benefits to our people and our planet are monumental.

We need all public finance institutions to step up to the challenge.

And we need to bring private finance from the sidelines.

We must begin to capitalize the Green Climate Fund.

And we must meet the broader 100 billion dollar-a-year pledge made in Copenhagen.

Let us also put a price on carbon.

There is no more powerful way to drive the market transformation we need.

All these actions demand collaboration, cooperation and coalitions -- today and all the way through to the Paris agreement next year.

The United Nations is doing its part.

We will be climate neutral by 2020.

All around the world, people around the world are acting.

Two days ago I was part of a massive people's climate march in New York, together with Mayor [Bill] de Blasio of New York City.

I was overwhelmed by the energy of the tens of thousands of people.

In cities around the world, hundreds of thousands of people called for action.

They demanded that leaders lead.

That is why we are here today.

We are not here to talk.

We are here to make history.

Today.

Thank you for your leadership. Thank you.