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HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

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President of the World Bank Group Robert B. Zoellick

MR. ZOELLICK: I would like to welcome all of you for joining us for this event, and I want to start by thanking Prime Minister Putin and the Government of Russia for graciously hosting this effort to pull together the tiger range countries, the scientific community, conservation groups, and law enforcement for a combined effort.

I think all of us know, as an outdoorsman, the Prime Minister has had a personal interest in wildlife conservation, including the tigers, and Russia is a wonderful example of what can be done with the right combined effort to take a tiger population that had been reduced to perhaps 40 or 50 tigers and bring it back to about 450 or 500 tigers.

So, this is a good case of what can be accomplished with the right leadership. So, I want to personally thank the Prime Minister, not only for his interest but, given his demanding schedule, for hosting this event.

I also am absolutely delighted that we have the other Prime Ministers here today. This shows, I think, an unmatched, high-level interest in the topic of tigers, biodiversity, and conservation, but I also want to thank all the people who helped prepare this process. I know this has been going on in one form or another for over a year or two. I know there have been preliminary meetings in Thailand and India and other locations, and I think the reports that I've received of the work over the past two days shows the benefit of that in bringing parties together.

I believe our hosts are going to open with a brief video...

Video presentation

[Applause.]

MR. ZOELLICK: Let me just open by again thanking Prime Minister Putin, the Government of Russia, all the leaders of the tiger range countries for their commitment for trying to save wild tigers from extinction.

Their personal involvement is certainly a heartening sign to all the groups—governmental, international, scientific, and conservation—that are here with us. So, I'd like to personally thank all of them.

Together, we've made some progress since the launch of the Global Tiger Initiative in 2008. The defining feature of the Global Tiger Initiative is that it is owned and driven by the tiger range countries themselves. As the World Bank has learned the hard way in other fields of development, if a local country doesn't own the process, no matter how well intentioned the outsiders who seek to support it, the plans won't work.

At the same time, tigers and illegal traffickers in dead tigers don't respect borders. So, we need international cooperation for borderless habitats, to stop demand in illegal trade, and to attack the criminal networks that prey on wildlife.

We also need to draw the very best insights from scientists and conservationists, law enforcement, advocacy groups, rangers and park rangers, and managers, to try to customize our actions while trying to achieve our common goals.

Time is short. With only 3,200 tigers left in the wild, we have little margin for error. This summit is highlighting what could be the last chance for an incredible animal.

The Global Tiger Recovery Program, driven by the tiger range countries and based on the foundations of 13 customized national tiger recovery priorities, offers a new approach to the conservation of wild tigers. It describes what the tiger range countries will do to carry out the St. Petersburg Declaration, and the Global Tiger Recovery Program is an expression of the collective will of the tiger range countries.

The Global Tiger Recovery Program also lays out opportunities for international partners to assist as we share a common responsibility through a process of mutual feedback loops and accountability among the tiger range countries and the international partners. The cooperative process we are forging may well create a new business model for wildlife conservation.

The World Bank Group is proud to be a catalyst, a convener, and a colleague of the many, many parties who are more experienced and expert at wildlife conservation. We look to learn from all of you. We look for opportunities to use our networks and resources to encourage the various parties to find win-win solutions and to hold all our feet to the fire, including our own.

I am pleased to announce today that the World Bank Group will support the Global Tiger Recovery Program in five ways:

First, the World Bank is working with Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan and, we hope, India, to finance a South Asia regional wildlife project of approximately \$100 million. Our cooperating partners include WWF, IUCN, Traffic, the International Fund for Animal Welfare, WCS, and others.

Second, we will work on a similar project with tiger range countries in Southeast Asia as well as with CITES, Interpol, UNODC, WCO, and, most importantly, regional institutions, such as the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network, to stop the illegal trade and trafficking in tiger body parts, and this could include additional finance.

Third, the World Bank will not finance any infrastructure project that impacts core tiger breeding areas, areas that the tiger range countries plan to make inviolate. We can and will foster smart, Green infrastructure development that not only maintains ecosystems, but enhances them.

I hope the principles of Green infrastructure will become part of the public policy of tiger range countries and international finance institutions. Bricks and mortar should not bury biodiversity. Critical ecosystems should not be paved over for short-term economic gains.

Fourth, the Bank will work with Nepal, Malaysia, the World Wildlife Fund, and other interested partners to develop a new wildlife premium market initiative to complement the funding that we expect to come from the REDD+ program. REDD+ will finance efforts to preserve forests and to avoid deforestation, but we don't want just silent forests without the roars of tigers and the calls of other species. This new

market initiative would recognize the value of wildlife and return benefits to local communities while providing sustainable financing for tiger conservation.

More generally, the Bank has committed to integrating natural capital valuation into natural accounting and national accounting systems. This may help tiger range countries to assess the true value of tiger range landscapes.

Fifth, we will continue to provide support for the Global Tiger Initiative so it can work with the Global Tiger Forum, regional institutions, country programs, scientific bodies, NGOs, the GEF, UN agencies, and others to examine the progress with the Global Tiger Recovery Plan.

Where we can, we will try to help mobilize other resources and expertise to assist. If there is interest in the World Bank coordinating a multi-donor trust fund to support the Global Tiger Recovery Program, we'd be pleased to do so.

Like all of you, I've been struck by the small window we have to turn the population of wild tigers around. In working together, quickly learning from what works and what doesn't, mobilizing public attention and support, I believe we can save wild tigers, their natural landscapes, and all the biodiversity that lives with the tiger.

So, thank you very much.

I'd now like to turn to Prime Minister Putin. I want to again thank him and the Russian Federation for bringing together so many heads of government and ministers to adopt the St. Petersburg Declaration. Frankly, without his leadership, we wouldn't be here today.

So, Спасибо <Spaciba.> (Thank you.)

[Applause.]

Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin

PRIME MINISTER PUTIN: [translation from Russian]

Ladies and gentlemen, today we have come together to discuss a very specific issue – environmental protection and conservation as well as restoring what's been lost in nature. But before we start, I would take a moment to acknowledge the tragic stampede in Cambodia today that killed several hundred people. On behalf of the Russian government and all my colleagues, I'd like to extend my deepest condolences to the people and government of Cambodia, to the injured and to the families of the victims.

Now I'd like to get straight to the issue at hand. I would like to welcome all of you who have come to St. Petersburg today, to thank you for responding to this World Bank initiative and accepting our invitation to this international forum on the conservation of the tiger – one of the most beautiful and regal creatures in the wild.

The presence of heads of government, heads of numerous international organizations, prominent scientists, environmentalists and social activists is itself an important sign. Delegations from 13 countries and three international organizations have come to this forum. Naturally, we will be discussing the conservation of the tiger today, and nobody in the world can accuse us of focusing here on insignificant things. Nobody will say that we've gathered heads of government and ministers just to talk about some cats.

Everyone understands that this forum is not only about a specific wild animal – the tigers. Rather, this forum is about the fact that we are beginning to understand and address wildlife conservation issues at the governmental level. This forum is about future generations rather than the next election. This forum is about preserving the world's treasures for future generations. This forum is about preserving nature. It is

proof of our willingness to work out a strategy for cooperation and to take active, practical measures toward this end.

The tiger is on the brink of catastrophe. Look at the numbers – tiger habitats are currently only 7% of what they used to be. This situation is sad and, I dare say, tragic. Over the past century the population of tigers in the wild has decreased almost 30 times over, from 100,000 to just over 3,000. Three of eight tiger subspecies are completely extinct – three of eight! These are more than just disturbing statistics. They represent irreparable losses of our planet's wildlife, a distress signal that nature is sending to us in the hopes of being heard. It is our responsibility to repay our debts to nature, to save what can still be saved, and to repair our past mistakes.

Yes, people have always admired the tiger and invented legends about the tiger's strength and beauty. But, at the same time, they callously competed for tiger trophies, mercilessly killing adult tigers and tiger cubs that had just opened their eyes for the first time. Humans have cruelly hunted these royal cats for sport and profit.

The expansion of civilization to the traditional habitats of tigers has played an equally important role in tiger extinction, as I have already mentioned. Selfish profit seeking, the reckless exploitation of forests and ill-conceived infrastructure projects have deprived the tiger of almost any chance of survival.

The tiger's story could have been even worse but for the efforts of scientists and environmental activists who have fought against extinction. As the history of the tiger shows, while engaging in development, we must focus on more than just economic activity; we must also focus on such things as nature conservation, as economic development and conservation are often at odds.

One of the first to speak up about tiger conservation was Russian biologist Lev Kaplanov. As early as the 1930s, working in the Ussuri taiga, he wrote that "our main goal is to preserve the tiger in the wild for future generations as one of the jewels of nature." It was largely thanks to his efforts that this country was the first in the world to completely ban the hunting of tigers in 1947. The international community followed suit, and now the ban has been enshrined in the laws of all countries that are home to the tiger.

Russia is the first country to devote a national government program to the cause of protecting the tiger and restoring its population. A network of nature reserves has been created under this program, and large-scale research has been launched.

Along with pulling the tiger back from the brink of extinction, the program has also paved the way for the incremental growth in numbers.

The population of the Amur tiger, with Russia's Siberia covering most of its habitat area, has grown more than tenfold over the past 60 years. Several decades ago, the number of tigers living in the region was estimated at just 20 to 30. Now it has increased to 500.

Much of the credit for that should be given to international conservation organizations, such as the World Wildlife Fund, the Wildlife Conservation Society, and the International Fund for Animal Welfare. Contributions from Russian nature protection programs also deserve a lot of credit. To proceed with our efforts, we have adopted a National Strategy for the Conservation of the Amur Tiger. Its key requirements will be reflected in the programs created for the development of Russia's Far East, as well as in agreeing investment projects and new construction sites, including ones related to infrastructure. Focused as we are on the broadest possible introduction of sustainable wildlife management principles, we seek to reconfigure the structure of economic activity in areas populated by tigers.

A ban was recently imposed in Russia on the logging of Korean cedar, called the fruit of the Far Eastern taiga. In an ecosystem, everything is interrelated: If cedars disappear, the boar and the deer will have nothing to eat and will soon be gone, leaving no food for the tiger.

Also, we intend to impose harsher punishments for tiger poaching and trafficking.

Tiger research will be brought to a whole new level. Already, the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Russian Geographical Society have embarked on a large-scale research program into the tiger's biology.

A joint action plan has been drawn up in collaboration with our Chinese colleagues. One of its priorities will be to create special trans-border zones to ensure free tiger migration, as our friends in China and ourselves did earlier for the leopard. We've already established one such zone on the border with the People's Republic of China.

Incidentally, we're facing serious problems with the Far Eastern leopard here, in Russia as well, where its population has shrunk to 30-40 individuals, which was the case with the tiger in the past.

Consultations regarding cooperation on tiger conservation are also underway with North and South Korea. Our country is willing to share its accumulated wealth with others. The resettlement of tiger families could pave the way for the revival of the tiger population in areas where it is now extinct, notably in Iran and Kazakhstan.

We greatly appreciate that our partners from Iran and Turkmenistan are helping us restore the leopard population in the Caucasus. Together, we can take a step toward restoring the tiger habitat. We seek close cooperation with all those who are aware of their responsibility and are willing to commit themselves to working with others for the cause of nature conservation.

Let me remind you about the Global Tiger Initiative, mentioned earlier today by World Bank President Robert Zoellick.

It was declared in 2008, and all the 13 countries where tigers live approved it. Each then developed a national strategy for the preservation of these animals. Symbolically, we have made a new step forward in 2010, the Year of the Tiger according to the Chinese calendar. Within the current St. Petersburg Forum, we have adopted a global program for restoring the tiger population. It will enable the states involved to coordinate their efforts, attracting significant financial, administrative and technical resources, and to stimulate collaborative research.

I'd like to emphasize that by approving this program, our countries commit themselves to complying with environmental requirements. But the most important task will be to integrate our tiger conservation targets into long-term socioeconomic development plans. Achieving these objectives will require firm political will and heavy investment, financial or otherwise. But I'm sure that the motivation for such efforts is there.

Our willingness to pursue this large-scale cooperation and our adherence to the cause of preserving wildlife – the tiger in this case – will be reiterated in a special declaration to be adopted later today by the prime ministers and the heads of the official delegations of the countries that are home to tiger habitats.

The great humanist Mahatma Gandhi once noted that in a country where tigers live well, everyone lives well. This is a true and profound remark. If people are capable of taking care of Mother Nature, of our splendid big cats, they can take care of their fellow human beings as well.

While our discussion today is about the fate of the tiger, we are in fact touching on issues that are critical for the entire planet, humanity and its future. Using the example of the tiger, we are speaking about how to preserve nature. We are saying that human civilization can only develop sustainably if we take a responsible attitude to nature, our common home. We all have to work hard and join forces to ensure that this attitude becomes widespread.

Thank you for your attention. Thank you very much.

MR. ZOELLICK: Thank you very much, Prime Minister, and again, thank you and your colleagues for organizing this important event in such a wonderful location.

China has also shown a growing determination to save its wild tigers. With the Giant Panda, China has already showed the world that it can recover a large, wide-ranging, charismatic species. This same resolve will help us to recover tigers.

I was encouraged last year when I had an opportunity to meet China's State Forestry Administration about expanding habitats in China. China has a strong program in habitat recovery and the Changbaishan landscape to spur tiger recovery, and China's new partnership with Russia to cooperate on the management of trans-boundary of protected areas offers a fine example of the international partnerships we will need.

So, I would like to introduce the Prime Minister of China, his Excellency, Wen Jiabao.

Premier Wen Jiabao, People's Republic of China

PREMIER WEN [translation from Chinese]:

Honorable Prime Minister Putin, ladies and gentlemen, friends, I am very delighted to attend this forum at the invitation of Prime Minister Putin and jointly discuss wild tiger conservation, an urgent issue pertaining to the ecological environment and wild animal conservation. Over the past century, due to human population growth, expansion of human activities and ecological destruction, wild tigers world wide have declined in number from approximately 100,000 to less than 3,500 at present, bringing the species to the brink of extinction. More seriously, presently there are still problems of an ever-shrinking habitat for, and rampant poaching of, wild tigers. Faced with this stern situation, the international community should engage in sincere cooperation, take pragmatic actions and make concerted efforts to push ahead with the undertaking of wild tiger conservation, so that wild tigers, an endangered species, can continue to survive and thrive on the planet Earth—our common homeland. Human existence and development need a healthy and balanced ecological environment, with wild tigers at the top end of the food chain in the ecological system and playing an important role in safeguarding the health and balance of the ecological system. Should wild tigers become extinct, the ecological balance and the environment for human survival would be affected. In this sense, it would be a disaster for both tigers and human beings.

The Chinese government and people attach great importance to wild tiger conservation. With four tiger subspecies within its territory, China represents a country with the most complete coverage of tiger subspecies. China completely banned tiger hunting at the beginning of the 1980s, followed by a complete ban on the trade in tiger bones and the use of tiger bones as medicine in 1993. The Chinese government has constantly improved the laws and regulations concerning wild tiger conservation, implemented China's wild tiger recovery plan, strengthened the building of a network of nature reserves and grassroots conservation stations, severely cracked down on poaching, offered government compensation for any damages on the part of residents caused by the activities of wild tigers and other wild animals, and has also taken exploratory efforts at tiger re-wilding. Since the year 2000, the Chinese government has implemented a series of major ecological building initiatives such as natural forest conservation, farmland conversion back into forests, wild animal and vegetation conservation, and nature reserve building. This year is the Year of the Tiger in China. The China Association for Wild Animal Conservation has taken the initiative of organizing a campaign of Wild Tiger Conservation in Action, with a large number of volunteers proactively participating in tiger-loving cultural exhibitions such as tiger-loving calligraphy, painting and photography, as a result of which public attention to wild tiger conservation has noticeably increased.

With the concerted efforts of the government and various circles of society, in China, wild tiger habitats have been effectively restored and improved, the population of wild tigers is displaying a trend of gradual expansion, and wild tiger conservation has increasingly developed into a self-conscious action on the part of the general public. While constantly strengthening the protection of our own wild tigers, we have also actively taken part in international wild tiger conservation actions by signing government to government

tiger conservation agreements with countries like India and Russia, and by conducting a series of actions relating to wild tiger conservation together with other countries and international organizations.

Ladies and gentlemen, friends... Wild tiger conservation is our shared responsibility. Here, I would like to put forward the following propositions:

First, humankind needs to constrain its own behaviors. The human beings are the most intelligent of all the species. For a long period of time, in order to meet its own needs, humankind has continually expanded the space of its activities and encroached upon the territory where wild animals survive. It is now time for us to change human behaviors and offer better protection to wild animals. When human development is in conflict with the survival of tigers and other wild animals, humankind should change its own behaviors and habits, assume the obligation of protecting the wild animals, make earnest efforts to transform patterns of economic development and lifestyles, and strengthen the conservation of the natural ecology environment, so that human development and the natural ecology system live in harmony.

Second, the livelihood of the general public living in the tiger range needs to be ensured properly. Wild tiger conservation involves a host of factors, such as economic, social and cultural ones, and the top priority should be how to address the contradictions between wild animal and ecological environment conservation vis-à-vis social and economic development. When it comes to wild tiger conservation, the focus is on the conservation of habitats, and the crux lies in the proper solutions for the livelihood of the people residing there. We need to conserve wild tigers and also make earnest efforts to help the wild tiger range to develop its economy, improve people's living standards and, by way of necessary guidance and support, help the people in such areas to change their production patterns and lifestyles and reap more direct benefits from wild tiger conservation so that they conscientiously support and participate in this initiative.

Third, international cooperation needs to be strengthened comprehensively. At present, the tiger range countries are mostly developing countries, some of which are still mired in extreme poverty. The tiger range countries need to strengthen cooperation in an all-round way, exchange experience extensively and earnestly shoulder their responsibilities. Developed countries should also take an active part and offer necessary technical and financial assistance to the poorer tiger range countries. Countries should enforce more stringent legal and administrative instruments, and severely crack down on tiger poaching and the trade in, and smuggling of, tiger products. The governments and people in various countries need to work together, support one another and join forces in wild tiger conservation efforts.

Ladies and gentlemen, friends, the future decade will be the most important period of time for wild tiger conservation across the globe. The Chinese government will further intensify wild tiger conservation efforts, take more effective measures to restore, expand and optimize wild tiger habitats, and better balance the relationship between wild tiger conservation on the one hand and the development of the local economy and the improvement of people's livelihoods on the other, so that the population of China's wild tigers will significantly grow. China stands ready to strengthen cooperation and exchanges on wild tiger conservation with other countries and relevant international organizations, and to promote wild tiger conservation as a common undertaking of mankind for a greater harmony between man and nature.

Thank you, Your Excellency Prime Minister Putin. Thank you all.

[Applause.]

MR. ZOELLICK: Well, thank you very much, Premier Wen, for those constructive and very practical suggestions.

Bangladesh is a tiger stronghold as well, and the Prime Minister has already taken steps to establish a wildlife crime control unit, and to approve a new wildlife conservation act.

Bangladesh's Sundarbans landscape, shared with India, is the only place in the world where tigers live in mangrove forests. So, tigers in Bangladesh also face the threat of rising sea levels due to climate change.

Bangladesh has also had serious challenges of human/tiger conflict, but has worked to engage the local communities around the Sundarbans as co-managers of the protected area so as to mitigate conflict and institute a compensation program.

So, it's my pleasure to introduce the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, her Excellency, Sheikh Hasina.

[Applause.]

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh

PRIME MINISTER HASINA: His Excellency, Mr. Vladimir Putin, honorable Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, honorable heads of governments and heads of delegations from the tiger range countries, honorable World Bank President, distinguished participants, guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Allow me at the outset to express my sense of thanks to Prime Minister Vladimir Putin for inviting me to the International Summit on the Preservation of Tigers in the historic city of St. Petersburg.

Indeed, I am happy to be in the Russian Federation, whose moral support and unique [inaudible] during our [inaudible] and in the reconstruction of our [inaudible] country, we shall never forget.

The holding of this summit reflects our profound concern over the future of one of the most majestic and awe-inspiring creatures that ever roamed on the face of our planet. It is a tragedy that the population of this beautiful animal over the past century has been reduced from over 100,000 to a mere 3,700 worldwide, now. The cause of this depletion, of course, lies with indiscriminate industrialization and unplanned human population growth which have forced human beings to transgress and encroach on the natural wildlife habitat of the tigers and all other such species.

The need of raw material for expanding industrialization and ever-increasing human population have led to indiscriminate felling of trees and razing of vast tracts of land for agriculture, food, and cash crops.

Driven from their natural homes, tigers and other animals keep on encroaching new areas in search of food and sanctuary. Sadly, all that the [inaudible] done is death, sometimes, through brutal, relentless [inaudible].

Moreover, the growing demand for various body parts of tigers for superstitious cures and uses that [inaudible] their skins for decoration homes have led to their end.

The modern communication and transportation systems have also spurred poaching to a horrifying level. The unfortunate result is that the population of tigers is being systematically killed to the point of near-extinction. So has been the case of many other species of animals.

It is a natural drive of human beings to strive for material growth, generating prosperity and following the ideal lifestyle. In our mindless drive to acquire this, we have been destroying the natural laboratory of our planet.

Ironically, our own actions are responsible for the destruction of all we are striving for; that is, our homes, lifestyle and, ultimately, human civilizations. Indeed, all these could be had even after caring for and preserving our ecological heritage and its divine balance of biodiversity and spaces.

Saving of tigers and their natural habitats also saves our environment. On top of the food chain, these big cats require large areas to support viable populations. They act as an umbrella, securing the future

of other species which share their habitat. If these habitats regenerate and expand with the reclamation of forests and increased carbon absorption, the capacity, "reasons" [ph.] biodiversity and climate also improves. Truly, climate biodiversity and one life are all interconnected.

Excellencies, distinguished guests, and participants, Bangladesh, with 440 Royal Bengal Tigers, has one of the largest populations. Their home is the Sundarbans, the largest mangrove forest in the world with a unique bioclimatic role over an area of 6,017 square kilometers, and the Sundarbans also protects the southern coastal Bangladesh from tidal surges and cyclone, forming in the Bay of Bengal.

Declared as a natural World Heritage site in 1997 by UNESCO, the Sundarbans faces severe threats of global warming and sea level rise, climate change, and cyclones, saline water intrusions and tidal surges. Moreover, encroachment of 1.2 million people and the livelihood of the forest have made tiger/human conflicts common.

Over and above the recent cyclones like [inaudible] is recent times have made matters even worse. The Royal Bengal Tiger is our national animal. To protect this magnificent creature, our government has approved a Bangladesh Tiger Action Plan 2009 to 2010, enacted Bangladesh Wildlife Conservation Act 2010, with 12 years suggested sentence for tiger poaching and life sentence for second-time offense. Approved protocol on conservation of Royal Bengal Tigers of the Sundarbans within Bangladesh and India to improve cross-border wildlife crime control capacity building, share scientific research, et cetera; approved a World Bank project on strengthening regional cooperation for wildlife protection between Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, and India; created 76 tiger response teams and 2 tiger immobilization teams in places around the Sundarbans to mitigate tiger/human encounters, and held a Global Tiger Day on 29 July, 2010, for awareness of the animals' predicament.

Since the Sundarbans needs to be saved for use [inaudible] storage of biodiversity, besides the precious Royal Bengal Tiger, our government is implementing the Sundarbans Management Support Project, 2005 to 2010; development and rehabilitation of a communication system in Sundarbans, 2009 to 2010; development and rehabilitation of infrastructure in Sundarbans, 2009 to 2012; USAID-assisted integrated protected area for management in three protected areas in Sundarbans; EU-assisted Sundarbans Environment and Livelihood Security Project, and tiger conservation landscape from the impacts of climate change.

The international community, including those who are present here, can join in our effort to save this natural green wonder, the Sundarbans, by clicking your support for it in the website, www.New7Wonders.com. This click of yours could help the world's largest mangrove forest becoming one of the new natural 7 wonders, thereby preserving along with it the Royal Bengal Tigers and millions of other species.

Excellencies, ladies, and gentlemen, today's forum is vitally important for finding ways and means of protecting tigers around the world. All the 13 tiger range countries are strongly represented here, displaying their commitment to preserve this beautiful animal. In support of the noble efforts of these countries, the World Bank, the Global Environment Facility, the Smithsonian Institution, and other important organizations have already launched in 2008 the Global Tiger Initiative to double the world tiger population by 2022.

However, much more is needed, particularly for tackling poaching, smuggling, and encroaching of the tiger's habitat. This summit, the first of its kind to save an animal, will no doubt succeed in attracting worldwide attention to these problems. Certainly, a unified voice and promise of the united action would succeed in saving this rare animal and its habitats from extinction. It could also be the beginning of a new era of saving other species and replenishing our Mother Earth with all its natural wonders.

Let us not forget that human civilizations are a productive, global, ecological balance with all species where existing in harmony and providing resources and essentials vital for our own survival and progress. Let us not forget that every species, particularly those endangered as the tiger, is important for its own defined role in our world ecological system. Indeed, all species, including the tiger as well as us are all linked in a mysterious, miraculous chain. Let us also not forget, therefore, that their existence and those of other species provides the natural support to our own existence in this planet.

I thank you all.

[Applause.]

MR. ZOELLICK: Thank you very much, Prime Minister.

Before we hear from the Prime Ministers of Lao PDR, Nepal, and Monique Barbut of the Global Environment Facility, the Russian Government has arranged for a visit by video with the Youth Tiger Forum in Vladivostok, which all of you know sits in the midst of a tiger landscape. Young advocates such as the members of the Youth Forum will be vital voices, and we also hope that some of these talented individuals will become the scientists and conservationists of the future.

SPEAKER: [Speaking Russian.]

[Applause.]

MR. ZOELLICK: Please.

SPEAKER: Honorable sirs and ladies, here in Vladivostok, we are happy to meet you, and I'm glad to pass the word to the Youth Delegates from the tiger range countries and the United Kingdom.

SPEAKER: Good afternoon. I am Anusha Shankar [ph.] from India. Over the past week here in Vladivostok, the home of the Amur Tiger, young delegates from 14 countries have gathered to help protect the tiger. We are here because it is important; it is crucial for us to save the tiger. By saving it, we preserve the beauty of our natural world and help secure our future.

During the forum, we walked the Tiger Trail. We met with experts who are passionate about tiger conservation. We learned about the Amur Tiger and exchanged information about the situation of tigers in each of our countries. We also drafted a youth appeal in which we call upon the government officials and our citizens, especially the youth of our countries to help us let the tiger survive in its home, in the wild.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

SPEAKER: Good afternoon. I am Sosata Jiang Chang [ph.] from Laos.

We young people care about tigers. We support you to save our wild tigers. Please support our youth outreach projects. We hope that this meeting of heads of government, it's not the last. We strongly urge that at least once in every three or four years our countries meet again to assess progress.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

SPEAKER: Good afternoon. I am Shao Xiang Yung [ph.] from China.

We hope for [inaudible] and we demand that you, the heads of the governments, sign a declaration which you have proclaimed to the world and henceforth save the tigers together.

It's really a great chance for the youth from 14 countries to come together and from this Declaration, with a passion for tiger conservation and the beliefs for a better world.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

SPEAKER: Good afternoon. I'm Duncan Thomas, from the United Kingdom.

One can judge our attitudes towards the environment by our action for the tiger. Although in the United Kingdom we have no tigers, the conservation of nature is a global issue and one in which our country can, and should, invest.

125,000 British people signed the petition to save the tiger. We support your efforts, and we urge you to make this summit the change in direction that we so crucially need.

Save the tiger.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

SPEAKER: Good afternoon. I am Kavita Khur [ph.] from Nepal.

I am proud and happy to be on the land of Amur Tigers. It is a great achievement for us to be here. Compared to the historic period, only 3,200 tigers remain. Loss of habitat, poaching, depletion of [inaudible] species and conflict between human and tiger have led to the decline the number of tigers. They are on the verge of extinction.

It's a great pleasure to get a chance to see them, but I am shocked [ph.] that our future generations may not get the chance to see them.

We want to hand over living planet with tigers and full of natural wonders, so I would like to request everyone and especially heads of governments to give their hands for saving the tigers. Let's pledge to save the tiger and save so much more.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

SPEAKER: Thank you. With this, I am passing the word to St. Petersburg, to the Prime Ministers of the tiger range countries.

[Applause.]

MR. ZOELLICK: Well, we would all like to thank you for taking the time and energy to pass this issue on to another generation, and I want to thank the Russian Government for hosting you and the World Wildlife Fund for bringing you into this very important action plan.

As the host, Prime Minister, do you want to say anything?

PRIME MINISTER PUTIN [translation from Russian]: Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to thank all the participants again and to underscore the point made just now by our young friends and colleagues gathering in Vladivostok.

Of course it is of paramount importance to protect this magnificent, regal animal, the tiger, for future generations. But it is even more important to develop, on the basis of work in tiger conservation, some general approaches to wildlife protection and principles for collaborative efforts that could go hand in hand with development. The idea behind this is to create conditions that would stimulate economic and infrastructure development while at the same time enabling us to preserve what we have been given by God, so that future generations can enjoy all the splendor of nature on this planet.

I'd like to thank the World Bank and you personally, Mr. Zoellick, for coming up with the idea to hold such forums and for your own conservation efforts. Thank you very much indeed.

[Applause.]

MR. ZOELLICK: Do any of the other Prime Ministers wish to respond?

SPEAKER: Good afternoon, I'm Dmitri Laptev from Russia.

Thank you very much for your kind attention. We wish you success in your work, and we hope we will save the tiger together!

SPEAKERS: Let's save the tiger together!

[Cheering.]

[Applause.]

MR. ZOELLICK: <Spaciba>, and thank you.

I would next like to introduce Monique Barbut of the Global Environmental Facility.

The GEF, as I think all of you know, has been a vital financial contributor to tiger conservation, along with a host of other biodiversity issues and, together with the World Bank and other partners, helped co-found the Global Tiger Initiative.

The GEF has also worked with us to mobilize broader support through an innovative Save Our Species campaign that reaches out to the private sector, which we were able to launch at the recent Nagoya Biodiversity Conference.

So, we look forward to working closely with the GEF in continuing its generous support for tiger and biodiversity conservation and working with the tiger range countries that wish to use some of their GEF allocations to fund the Global Tiger Recovery Program.

So, Monique.

Monique Barbut, CEO and Chairperson, Global Environment Facility

MS. BARBUT: Many thanks.

Your Excellency, Prime Minister Putin, honorable heads of governments, Excellencies, Mr. Zoellick, ladies and gentlemen, it is my immense pleasure to be here with you today in what I consider the most beautiful city of the world. And, coming from Paris, I am sure you will appreciate I am not saying this lightly.

[Applause.]

MS. BARBUT: Beyond our great surroundings, this is a remarkable gathering and one that does not happen very often in the international conservation arena.

If you look at this room today and you look at the political, financial, and technical firepower which is there, it is really, I am sure, sufficient to change the course for the wild tiger. And this is something that must happen for biodiversity and for the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of people in more than a dozen countries.

Over the course of the last decade, tens of millions of dollars in GEF grants have been awarded to tiger range countries for projects intended to protect tiger habitats. These investments were, in large part, successful in protecting key habitats, but the fact remains that we have not stopped the hemorrhaging when it comes to losing wild tiger in nature.

I am not sure why this happened, but I suspect we did not have our eyes on the ball at all times. Now we cannot fail, and this renewed opportunity is bound to be the last one for the wild tiger. I am not a tiger specialist, but from a funder perspective, I believe that a certain number of quite-obvious elements need to be brought to the frontline of priorities if we are to succeed and for which I believe there is already a high degree of agreement around.

First, we can't recover tiger populations if poaching continues at the current level.

Second, immediate protection measures must be introduced at the sole sites where the majority of the world's remaining tigers exist.

Third, if we do all this but refrain from looking beyond these key priority sites, we may win this first battle, but we will surely lose the war. Therefore, we also must address land use issues at the much larger landscape scale.

Finally, if all this means nothing to local people, we will have prolonged the agony of wild tigers and the risk their survivals in the future.

Let's now talk business. At the GEF, we are ready to move with the World Bank, attending to the priorities of all countries here today. We understand that a certain number of countries have come forward with a wish to program around \$35 million of the GEF allocation for action on behalf of the tiger. If these projects make sense, GEF will be ready to support them.

But I don't think this will go beyond business as usual. Therefore, if these investments are designed to produce benefits for biodiversity beyond the tiger and also result in the reduction of emission from deforestation and forest degradation, the GEF would provide countries with an additional \$12 million from our REDD+ (Plus) incentive mechanisms which will be used as anchor for the needed coordination mechanisms at the regional level.

Furthermore, we would like to make available to tiger conservation what Mr. Zoellick just referred to, the Save Our Species program, SOS, an initiative we share with the World Bank, IUCN, and the private sector, to support small grants to organizations in the tiger range countries.

Therefore, GEF would be approaching \$50 million in GEF grants for this initiative, provided that co-financing leverage is secured.

We believe that such a significant commitment by the GEF is definitely bound to attract the necessary resources from the other donors and from the countries themselves. However, this more ambitious scenario requires that a suitable governance structure among donors, tiger range countries, and other significant players is agreed upon, specifically a structure that is conducive toward directing resources strategically to countries. Otherwise, the fragmentation of resources will work against the objectives of the program and will make it difficult for countries to access what they need.

Let me conclude by recognizing that for the most difficult of global challenges, it takes enlightened leadership to get great ideas to flourish. Without vision and determination, many wonderful proposals end up sinking without a trace. Prime Minister Putin brought us today together, providing the necessary political momentum across all the tiger range countries. It is also groundbreaking that an institution like the World Bank is embracing this renewed goal to save the tiger, an unusual undertaking for a development institution. But without a doubt, it has been the vision of one individual, Bob Zoellick, that inspired this institution to take this challenge to the scale it deserves.

Thank you, Mr. Putin; thank you, Prime Ministers; thank you, Bob. It is now time to move from words to action, and we will be there with you.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

MR. ZOELICK: Well, thank you, Monique, for that very important commitment, your comments underscored a vital point. Now having the tiger range countries in the lead, we can work with others—donor governments, private sector, and other sources of biodiversity and climate change funding—to try to leverage this enterprise. So, I thank you for that.

Lao PDR, which I had the opportunity to visit last month, shares a tiger conservation landscape with Cambodia and Vietnam. Tiger numbers are very small there now, but the Eastern Plains landscape is the largest wilderness in Southeast Asia. So, the potential for tiger recovery is enormous.

I had a chance to visit a new hydropower site that was both producing electricity, but in an innovation, also dedicating revenues from that electricity to pay villagers to serve as rangers for a tremendous natural reserve. So, we very much appreciate the Lao Government's commitment to strengthening trans-boundary cooperation with its neighbors to stem the illegal wildlife trade.

I also want to applaud the Prime Minister's leadership in adopting a tiger action plan, creating a tiger taskforce, protected area commission, and a wildlife enforcement network.

So, it is my Pleasure to introduce the Prime Minister of Lao PDR, Bouasone Bouphavanh.

Prime Minister Bouasone Bouphavanh, Lao PDR

PRIME MINISTER BOUPHAVANH [translation from Laotian]:

Your Excellency Prime Minister Vladimir Putin of the Russian Government, Your Excellency Prime Ministers, your Excellency President of the World Bank Robert Zoellick, Excellencies, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Lao delegation, I would like to express my sincere congratulations to the Russian government, particularly Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, for organizing and hosting this important event, and also for their warm hospitality. I think this Summit is a very important event because conservation of wild tigers is the greatest concern in a revolution process of development and human well-being, and is in parallel with biodiversity conservation and environment protection.

As we are all aware that the tiger is a flagship and most ecologically important species to the forest ecosystems and is now experiencing an extremely rapid decline all over the world, thus if appropriate measures are not taken immediately, tigers will become extinct. The rapid decline of tigers is an ominous signal that cooperation of all nations must be taken seriously to maintain tigers in nature. I would like to express my congratulations to the youth representatives from 13 countries in organizing their important

activities together to demonstrate their respective countries' national policy and government support for tiger conservation.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, as one of the tiger range countries with remaining tigers in the wild, Lao PDR is proud to see the efforts of the GTI and its active motivation in efforts to increase the effectiveness of tiger conservation through exploring institutions in the context of the tiger recovery program, a sustainable financing mechanism, project management, and international cooperation. Therefore, we strongly support the results of the New Delhi meeting in October which finalized the Tiger Recovery Program, and we are delighted to sign the St. Petersburg Declaration on tiger conservation.

In Lao PDR, tiger surveys were recently undertaken in only one site near the Lao-Vietnam border called Nam Et-Phou Louey in Houaphan Province. The results suggested there are about 20 tigers there. We now have a specific tiger action plan to recover tigers by 2020, with our primary goal to double tiger numbers from the current population numbers. In order to achieve our goal, we understand that we are facing several challenges. These include a limited budget and shortage of modern tools or equipment to conduct research and data collection on tigers and their prey, and very few national experts. Also, tiger poaching and the illegal trade of tiger parts continues.

However, we will raise our attention and our efforts to effectively recover tigers as planned, as they are treated as part of our national heritage. So far, the government has established 21 national protected areas, which covers approximately 15% of the country's total land area, and contributing to the national goal of a 70% increase in forest coverage by 2020. Alongside, the government developed national strategies for 2020 aimed at protecting forests and biodiversity. As a signatory to the international Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Lao PDR is effectively working alongside the global community to maintain biodiversity sustainability.

The Government of Lao PDR acknowledges that wild tigers in the country are facing serious threats caused by humans. If tiger numbers decline further, the forest ecosystems will lack ecological balance and will become dispensable. Therefore, the Lao PDR Government requests the Global Tiger Initiative and other relevant international agencies and friendly countries to work with us to provide support for much needed on the ground conservation interventions to recover tigers as well as to maintain forests and biodiversity conservation.

The Government of Lao PDR is committed to work alongside the international community to reverse the crisis of tiger extinction, and we believe that the outputs of this International Tiger Forum in St. Petersburg are an important step toward the protection of tigers from extinction and toward increasing tiger numbers across the tiger range countries.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

MR. ZOELLICK: Thank you very much, Prime Minister, for your efforts and your partnership.

When it comes time to innovation in tiger conservation, Nepal has been a superb leader. Nepal pioneered community-based approaches that allowed tiger and other wildlife populations to recover, while still delivering economic benefits to local people. It led the way in landscape conservation and recently added a new national park to extend the protected areas of Terai Arc landscape under leadership of my friend, Minister Deepak Bohara. Now, Nepal plans to pilot the wildlife premium market concept in three corridors in this landscape. Nepal has shown, in very practical ways, how to leverage the global tiger initiative to save tigers and the country's natural wealth, while helping people overcome poverty and gain opportunities. So, it's a pleasure to have with us the Prime Minister of Nepal, His Excellency, Madhav Kumar Nepal.

Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal, Nepal

PRIME MINISTER NEPAL: Your Excellency, the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, Mr. Vladimir Putin, distinguished heads of the government, and leaders of the tiger range countries, honorable President of the World Bank, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to express my sincere thanks to the government and friendly people of the Russian Federation for jointly hosting the first international tiger conservation forum of heads of government in this beautiful and historic city of St. Petersburg.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to his Excellency, Mr. Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister of the Russian Federation for the kind invitation to attend this forum and for the generous hospitality extended to me and my delegation every since our arrival here.

The principal objective of our foreign policy is to promote friendship and cooperation with all countries in the world. On a bilateral level, Nepal and Russian Federation enjoy growth and friendly relations, and we appreciate the development assistance provided by Russia and various friends during the last few decades.

As Nepal is a member of the tiger range countries, I am proud to bring the masses of goodwill from our people to the friendly people, government, and leaders of the Russian Federation and all distinguished leaders who have gathered here. I'm extremely encouraged to find growing global concern to conserve the majestic tiger species a phenomenon that gained momentum from the Kathmandu Global Tiger Workshop in 2009, with [inaudible] and pre-summit meetings in the other capitals and cities as a run-up to this momentous summit designed to make a global approach for the conservation of the endangered species.

I am confident that this important initiative for undertaking international tiger conservation forum will mark a turning point in the annals of tiger conservation and herald a new chapter in promoting effective management, research, collaboration, and cooperation among the tiger range countries.

Excellencies, Nepal is one of the few countries plentifully endowed with highly diverse biological resources. I am delighted to note that the Government of Nepal has taken many important steps to conserve its rich biological diversity. Our [inaudible] to us was actually initiated in early 1970s with establishment of Chitwan National Park to conserve and manage [inaudible] ecosystems, currently one of the best known tiger habitats in South Asia.

The Chitwan National Park is actually the first national park of Nepal and a World Heritage site. This was at the time when we started the tiger ecology project in Nepal in collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution to engage in tiger research. Since then, our government has brought timely improvements and transformations in its conservation policies and relevant laws and updated protective area management approaches with a view to protecting our unique flora and fauna. Despite [inaudible] and constant efforts on the part of the 13 tiger range countries during the last four decades, we have to acknowledge the stark reality that the tiger--it's babies and habitat are increasingly facing threats of great magnitude.

The dwindling tiger population and, more importantly, the high rate of loss of historic habitat range warrants immediate, strategic, and bold conservation actions at landscape level, including trans-boundary areas. The primary threats of tiger conservation are growing encroachment on its ecological base, particularly in terms of habitat loss, regular trends of poaching and illegal trade. This existential test has been further challenged by global warming, incidences of extreme poverty, deforestation, and our failure to realize [ph.] our developmental needs.

Excellencies, I would like to reiterate here that Nepal is committed and dedicated to ensure long-term survival of the endangered tiger species in their natural habitats. Over the past one year, we have taken many important initiatives as committed in different global forums.

One such effort has been the establishment of a high-level national tiger conservation committee chaired by the Prime Minister. We have also established a wildlife crime control bureau to curb poaching and illegal trade. We have expanded tiger habitat by declaring Banke National Park. With this, Nepal has established and managed 20 protected areas covering more than 23 percent of the total area of the country.

As an outcome, the recent tiger monitoring regions [ph.] show a stable tiger population. We have also given high priority to carefully balance ecological integrity of the protected area with social and economic needs of the local communities. Bipartisan management is a vivid example. It is my pride to share that we have made [inaudible] in conservation by changing our conservation approach from a strict conservation to community-based conservation.

At policy level, Government of Nepal has been implementing a five-year tiger conservation action plan. We are also closely collaborating with our neighboring countries to strengthen trans-boundary conservation efforts. It is my pleasure to share that Nepal and China have recently signed a memorandum of understanding to strengthen trans-boundary conservation. With an open border, Nepal and India have long been engaged in strengthening trans-boundary conservation efforts through regular and effective bilateral meetings. We are working to establish South Asian Wildlife Enforcement Network, SAWEN, and have already hosted the first South Asian expert group meeting in Kathmandu earlier this year. Nepal has also expressed commitment to host the SAWEN Secretariat.

I would like to support the proposals just recommended by World Bank President Mr. Zoellick in this important meeting.

Excellencies and friends, Nepal looks forward to have a tangible and concrete result of this meeting, and reissues our firm commitment to fully implement the outcomes of the forum.

On behalf of the Government of Nepal, I join other delegates in our common commitment to complete the ambitious yet realistic target of the Global Tiger Recovery Plan for doubling the tiger population by 2022.

However, less-developed nations like Nepal facing pressing problems of poverty therefore need new and additional support in implementing the Global Tiger Recovery Plan and enhancing institutional, technical, as well as technological capacities to ensure that the target is made.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of--and valued partnership, with our key bilateral as well as multilateral partners in conserving the tiger population and improving the livelihood of people living in and around the protected areas. I am confident that we will receive greater support and understanding of the international community in conserving the tiger, one of the last remaining and the most beautiful creations of nature.

Now, I would like to show my solidarity to--and the support for the initiative taken by the young people who have assembled in Vladivostok. We all are encouraged by the interest and initiative of our young people regarding the preservation of this precious animal. We all come--we all have to fulfill the expectation of our younger generation by our own actions.

Now, I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank your Excellency, Prime Minister Putin, for hosting this important international forum and for successfully drawing the highest attention for the protection of the wild tigers.

The President of the World Bank, Mr. Robert Zoellick, deserves a special credit for bringing all the tiger range countries on one common platform to save the last remaining tiger[s].

I would like to mention--especially mention about the proposals that I have mentioned that we will be together to protect that precious species in that part of the world, it means, South Asia.

So, the Global Tiger Initiative has created a political momentum that has given a ray of hope for the stabilization and recovery of tigers. I am confident that this momentum will be continued until we start achieving our goals of doubling the tiger population.

Finally, we believe that tiger conservation is our common and shared responsibility. Let us once again reiterate our commitment in doubling the tiger population by 2022 with a view to conserving this unique creature for our future generations.

Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

MR. ZOELLICK: Thank you very much, Prime Minister. And again, thank you to Nepal for being one of the driving forces behind this initiative.

I also wanted to acknowledge and thank the tiger range country ministers who are present here today. Many of them spend many hours helping to organize preliminary sessions that were critical building blocks for this meeting, and they're leading the way with very practical steps of progress.

With the leadership of Minister Suwit, Thailand is developing a regional conservation and research center to help expand capacity.

Thailand has also done a fantastic job in the establishment of the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network, which is becoming a model for cooperation in combating wildlife crime that is clearly leading to striking results.

Malaysia and Bhutan have made very important commitments to protect large tiger landscapes. Malaysia's Central Forest Spine Plan is pioneering smart Green infrastructure to help maintain wildlife corridors.

Bhutan enshrines connectivity in its constitution, so as to let tigers move freely from the tropics to the timberline in a beautiful, mountainous nation.

Both Vietnam and Cambodia have strengthened their wildlife law enforcement networks and have strong community engagement programs.

Indonesia's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation with Norway's voluntary fund will help finance Indonesia's priorities for conservation of the Sumatran Tiger.

With about half the world's wild tigers left within its borders, India's role in tiger conservation is absolutely paramount. And although they couldn't be here today, I know from conversations with Prime Minister Singh and with Environment Minister Ramesh that they've strongly supported this effort as they have within India.

India's Project Tiger launched the first-ever efforts to save the tiger in 1973, and since then it has created 39 tiger reserves and six major landscapes with source populations of tigers. India's biologists are international leaders in tiger conservation. In large part due to the Wildlife Institute of India's world class training, all of us are now looking to India's leadership in implementing the Global Tiger Recovery Program and helping us by piloting other innovations.

So, I want to conclude by thanking all the Prime Ministers for what has been a striking personal sign of commitment. I'm sure all of you share my great feeling that an institution like this and an effort like this with leaders of government has never come about before, and for that I have a special thanks for Prime Minister Putin, because I'm sure it's a big boost to have the heads of government show leadership in a common drive to save an iconic species.

I think all the leaders also recognize that an event like today is dependent on the preparation of many people, some who are in the room today, some who are outside that have been instrumental in bringing together governments, conservation groups, scientific groups, NGOs, international organizations, and I want to thank in particular my colleague Keshav Varma. All of them have my strong gratitude.

So, as we leave St. Petersburg, we know we need to take this as a good day, but move directly on to the implementation of the Global Tiger Recovery Program. It's absolutely vital that the impacts of this forum are felt on the frontlines of conservation. Park rangers and forest guards need our help. They certainly will recognize the mobilization of high-level interest through the joint actions of their leaders.

I hope we come out of this forum with our partnership strengthened and our objectives aligned, because we know we still have a lot of work to do. Together, we need to support the emergence of national mechanisms for implementation of national priorities. We need to provide training, equipment, technology, and resources to park rangers and forest guards, bring skills training to the doorsteps of tiger parks.

To help in a modest way, the World Bank will also create an Internet portal to connect rangers and managers of all tiger conservation landscapes so they can share their experience with one another.

We need to create inviolate core tiger breeding areas and maintain these landscapes over the next three years as a start.

We need to put the heat on poachers and traffickers in the tiger range countries and around the globe with intensified interdiction at hot spots.

Like our partner John Scanlon of CITES, I, too, want to see poachers behind bars and jails, not wild tigers behind bars in zoos. And we need to create the financing mechanisms to support the national priorities and the global recovery program.

As you've heard today, our aim is to double the wild tiger population by 2022, the next year of the tiger. All of us aim and commit to that challenge and, as President of the World Bank Group, I promise our full support.

So, I want to thank you very much, and invite Prime Minister Putin to add any closing comments as our host.

[Applause.]

PRIME MINISTER PUTIN [translation from Russian]:

Mr. Zoellick, ladies and gentlemen, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, who has spoken here today, and other leaders from countries where tigers live have all highlighted the problems we're here to discuss.

All the speakers have pointed out that many of the countries where tigers still live face economic difficulties and are in need of outside assistance and support. Admittedly, addressing the challenges of wildlife conservation in such countries is no easy task. Their governments find themselves in a dilemma as they are above all expected to raise the living standards of the people. This is why to be able to ensure global wildlife protection, we should support national governments that are aware of the importance of the issue we're examining here today. I really appreciate that Mr. Zoellick has already set forth guidelines for such assistance.

We're talking today about the conservation of the tiger and its habitat. We're also discussing wildlife conservation in general. But we realize that wildlife is actually part of the human being's habitat. So, at the end of the day, it's all about humanity's well-being. This is something that we should remember. And it's the reason that we are gathered here today. Thanks to everyone for participating.

[Applause.]

MR. ZOELLICK: Thank you