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Statement by Joop Atsma, State Secretary for Infrastructure and Environment

The Netherlands

High Level Segment COP16 –Cancun

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Madam President,

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Colleagues,

Let me begin by thanking the government and people of Mexico for organising and hosting this conference – the biggest global environmental gathering of the year.

It is evidence of Mexico's strong commitment to tackling the issue of climate change head-on. And of its leadership role in this global effort.

Madam President, I am honoured to address you today, on behalf of the new Dutch government. Let me share with you some of the goals I have set as State Secretary for Infrastructure and the Environment, and explain how the Netherlands hopes to contribute to the global drive to combat climate change.

For the Netherlands, the EU's climate change policies are the main means of achieving our national ambitions on greenhouse gas reductions, renewable energy and energy efficiency.

To protect the Netherlands against rising sea and river levels, we are implementing a national Delta Programme. In the past we have struggled against the water, but our future depends on learning to live with it. Together with Indonesia, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Mozambique and Egypt, we have a long-term commitment to solving the problems caused by drinking water shortages and flooding.

Regarding the transport sector, we can take big steps towards reducing our carbon emissions by transporting people more efficiently and switching to greener energy resources. Our aviation industries obviously play a major role in this. KLM/Air France is developing bio-kerosene for its fleet of planes – a fine example of a multinational corporation recognising its responsibility for creating a cleaner planet.

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Madam President, our goal remains unchanged: a strong and comprehensive, legally binding global agreement to effectively fight climate change. Although there are no magic solutions, allow me to make three suggestions.

Firstly, we need to be practical and realistic if we want to achieve the two-degree target set in Copenhagen. In building the new regime, we need to

start and then strengthen. It is better to take two small but feasible steps than one very big but unrealistic leap.

Secondly, we need to fill the toolbox. Real progress in these negotiations is only possible if we focus more on what we *can* do and *how* we can do it: the tools needed to make policies effective.

Finally, we need to involve the private sector and markets. We haven't done enough to make them a real partner in these negotiations. For a new regime to be effective, it must improve existing market mechanisms and introduce new ones. But unless we engage the private sector, any new regime will fail.

Ladies and gentlemen, Madam President, the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol have come a long way since the Rio Summit in 1992. We should never be afraid of modernising the regime by taking practical and realistic steps.

As always, the Netherlands is more than ready to be part of that global endeavour.

Thank you.