UNFCCC Climate Change Conference, Cancun
Statement by H.E. Minister Nikolaus Berlakovich
Federal Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Watermanagement
AUSTRIA

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Madam President,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Our children and grandchildren will tell us: you all were in Cancun, in Copenhagen, in Poznan and in Bali – at all Climate Change Conferences – what have you achieved for our world?

It is in our hands how they will judge our decisions and our political will.

It is in our hands if the future generation will say: why was it not possible that the world agreed to combat climate change. Why do we have to suffer today? Why do we have floods and other catastrophes? Why is the world not the same anymore?

But it is also in our hands that the future generation can say: you have achieved what was nearly impossible. You made it happen! You made it possible that the world agreed on joint measures against climate change and that the world stands united for more prosperity and freedom and that the world is still worth living!

Madam President, it is in our hands to achieve important steps here in Cancun. This Climate Conference marks a critical moment in the international negotiations. We need a balanced outcome – a package of decisions – here in Cancun.

We need to anchor the pledges for emission reductions made in the Copenhagen Accord. The pledges are still not enough to achieve the two degree target. To anchor the pledges is just a first step, but an important signal on our way.

Austria, as part of the European Union, is willing to agree on a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. However, other countries will have to commit themselves as well.

We also need to agree on MRV (monitoring, reporting, verification) – otherwise we will not take our commitments serious. In addition: this will enhance the credibility of all our climate actions.

And there are other elements for a good outcome here in Cancun: adaptation, technology transfer and reduction of emissions from deforestation.

And to prove that Austria, together with the EU, takes it seriously I want to reiterate our willingness to provide financial assistance to developing countries. We have provided the fast-start-financing and will take our share for the Green Climate Fund. However, the fund needs to be efficient, transparent and it needs to be clear how and where the money is used.

Madam President, I firmly believe that it is, above all, trust and respect that we, as Ministers, can bring to the negotiations. I was reminded of this when last month, I had the honor of hosting an international climate change meeting in Vienna – the Vienna Climate Dialogue.

This trust and respect is now needed in the final stage of the negotiations.

And we should all keep in mind: It is in our hands that our children will say: it was good that you were in Cancun – you proved your responsibility and you made an important step to protect the climate and to save our world!

Thank you!