COP16 Plenary Statement of U.S. Special Envoy for Climate Change Todd Stern

Thank you Madam President.

I am honored to represent the United States at this Conference, and to support the President of the COP and the Government of Mexico toward a successful outcome.

Last year in Copenhagen, my President joined with leaders and others representing countries from around the world to find a formula that could bridge a wide diversity of interests and perspectives and forge a new path on climate change – one on which all Parties could embark together.

The resulting Copenhagen Accord did not find universal acceptance, but it provided a significant step forward in our work – capturing for the first time in an international instrument the mitigation targets and actions of all the world's major economies to be implemented in an internationally transparent manner, and paving the way for new institutions and support for climate finance, technology, adaptation, and REDD.

The United States has worked hard to operationalize the elements that our leaders agreed last year. We have invested more than $90 billion to transform the way our country produces and consumes energy, and taken a range of new regulatory and other actions to reduce emissions. And we will continue to work with Congress on legislative solutions to enhance our energy security and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

We have secured $1.7 billion worth of climate assistance in our first year of fast start - financing that will support adaptation activities for the most vulnerable, combat deforestation in the world's most biologically diverse tropical forests, and help countries develop on a low-carbon pathway.

Madam President, now is the time to take the next step. We can and must do this through a balanced package of decisions that builds on understandings in Copenhagen and makes meaningful, comparable progress on the key elements of our negotiations.

In this package, we can agree to launch the establishment of a Green Fund to serve as a centerpiece of an enhanced financial climate architecture. We can move forward on substantial arrangements for technology, adaptation, and REDD.

We must also move forward to capture the targets and actions to be implemented by Parties in a decision by the Conference of the Parties, so that these are an inherent part of our effort going forward.

And we must clearly lay out the elements of transparency – including international consultation and analysis – that will provide us assurance that countries are carrying through on their undertakings, and that will help us gauge progress in our collective efforts.

We can do all these things and begin a new operational phase in our work, even as we continue to work to progressively strengthen the Convention over time.

Madam President, I want to assure you of the firm commitment of President Obama and my country to working with all nations toward a solution to climate change, starting with a successful outcome this week.