Beat: Technology

U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN KERRY OFFICIAL REMARKS AT COP21 PLENARY

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SECRETARY KERRY: Monsieur le President Hollande, Mr. Secretary-General, and my friend, Laurent Fabius, president of COP, let me begin by simply saying: Laurent, you have done a superb job, as everybody has said, exercising critical multilateral stewardship here, and everybody is very grateful for your leadership.

This is a tremendous victory for all of our citizens "" not for any one country or any one bloc, but for everybody here who has worked so hard to bring us across the finish line. It´s a victory for all of the planet and for future generations.

We have set a course here. The world has come together around an agreement that will empower us to chart a new path for our planet "" a smart and responsible path, a sustainable path. And extraordinarily, we are 196 delegations, 186 plans. That is a remarkable global commitment.

We have reached an agreement that, while everybody here understands there are things here and there that everybody doesn´t like, it will help the world prepare for the impacts of climate change that are already here and also for those we know are now headed our way inevitably.

And we have reached an agreement that, fully implemented, will help us transition to a global clean energy economy and ultimately prevent the worst, most devastating consequences of climate change from ever happening.

We are sending literally a critical message to the global marketplace. Many of us here know that it won´t be governments that actually make the decision or find the product, the new technology, the saving grace of this challenge. It will be the genius of the American spirit. It will be business unleashed because of 186 nations saying to global business in one loud voice: We need to move in this direction.

And that will move investment. That will create new, greater research and development, and the next great product will come that will change our lives.

I want to express on behalf of President Obama and the United States our deepest gratitude to France. France, in the most difficult circumstances, after loss of life and terror, stood proud, stood up, stood strong, set an example to the world. And now here today the world says thank you by restoring the global community´s faith that we can accomplish things multilaterally. France has played a pivotal role in galvanizing the international community and every one of our delegations here today have joined in that effort.

I know, and Laurent knows from our experience negotiating last year (or earlier this year; it seems like last year) how difficult it can be to get five or six countries, seven countries united around a consequential agreement, let alone 195. We all know that while not everyone in this room will think this is perfect, that is exactly the way it should be. It wouldn´t be a good agreement if we didn´t feel that way.

On behalf of the United States, I can say categorically that while, yes, we think this is in our interest, as I think every nation here does, much more importantly this is in the interest of every nation on Earth. We´ve taken a critical step forward, and there is no question but that what we do next, how we implement our targets, how we build this agreement, how we build it out for each of our nations and how we strengthen it in the time ahead "" that is what will determine whether we´re actually able to address one of the most complex challenges humankind has ever faced.

I look forward to working with everyone here. And I´d just say on a personal level, this week that I have spent here in this negotiation has been really rewarding on a personal level for the relationships and the incredible energy and commitment of every delegation “ no matter what their interests, there´s been a remarkable spirit of collegiality, a determination not to repeat mistakes of the past, and a compelling urgency to the sense that we had to be successful.

We, I think, as a result can leave behind on Earth a legacy for our children and our grandchildren, generations to come. And I know that we will all of us be better off for the agreement that we have finalized here today.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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