

Ambassador Zumwalt Draft Remarks
Partnership for Illicit Finance Opening Meeting
February 24, 2016

(As prepared)

Minister of Budget Birima Mangara
Representative of the UN Development Program Bintou Djibo
Representatives of Senegal, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mauritius, Lesotho, and Niger.
Ambassadors, distinguished guests,

I am delighted to join you this morning to open the second working group meeting of the Partnership for Illicit Finance. Following the inaugural working group meeting last June, I am pleased to see this important initiative moving forward with a growing number of delegations participating in this meeting.

The Partnership on Illicit Finance (PIF) was launched by President Obama and President Sall at the U.S.-Africa Leadership Summit in August 2014 as a forum to share experience and strengthen our efforts to combat illicit finance flows that undermine governance, hamper foreign investment and reduce economic growth. This is an initiative with a very practical focus of working together to develop and refine national action plans on countering illicit finance in each of our countries. After launching this process last June, this meeting provides an opportunity for technical experts to work towards developing and finalizing these plans.

I want to thank the Government of Senegal and particularly the Ministry of Finance for their leadership on this important initiative. Your leadership on this initiative is another example of our strong cooperation based on shared values and priorities. I also want to acknowledge the UN Development Program (UNDP) for partnering with the U.S. and Senegal to advance this initiative. We deeply appreciate all of the hard work that has gone into organizing this meeting and UNDP's role to advancing cooperation on combatting illicit financial flows in Africa.

For other delegations and technical experts that have joined this meeting, I know many of you have travelled from far and wide to come here. I want to thank you for making the effort you have taken to travel here and participate in this meeting.

I am pleased that the U.S. government is well-represented with Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Lisa Kubiske, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Treasury Eric Meyer and Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Peter Barlerin leading our team.

It is a sign of the importance of this initiative to our government that we have three senior U.S. officials leading our delegation.

In closing, I want to thank you again for supporting this initiative and wish you a very productive meeting. I believe that this meeting and your presence here today can lay the groundwork for members of this Partnership to work together to confront the important challenge of curbing illicit finance.