Press Release
December 10, 2012

Statement by U.S. Ambassador to China Gary F. Locke
On the Occasion of International Human Rights Day

BEIJING - In celebrating International Human Rights Day today, we mark the sixty-fourth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Universal Declaration has played a key role in the international community’s efforts to, as Secretary Clinton said in her December 6 speech in Dublin, recognize human rights as “the God-given entitlement of every person” and embed those rights “into international law along with governments’ responsibilities to protect them.”

The promotion of human rights remains at the forefront of American diplomacy worldwide, including in China. Our bilateral relationship with China includes regular dialogue on human rights and rule of law. As we have underscored in meetings with Chinese leaders, the United States supports a strong, prosperous and successful China. We have also emphasized our belief that respect for the rule of law and the protection and promotion of the universal freedoms of expression, belief, association, and assembly are important to China’s ability to secure the growth, prosperity, and long-term stability that it seeks. As Secretary Clinton has said, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is not just a catalog of rights and government obligations; it is a time-tested blueprint for successful societies.

As I have recognized on many occasions, China has made great strides in developing its economy. But we remain concerned about human rights developments in China, including the continued imprisonment of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo and the extralegal house arrest of his spouse Liu Xia; the detention of disabled rights advocate Ni Yulan, who is in urgent need of medical attention; the imprisonment of rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng; the conviction of Chen Kegui, who was not represented by legal counsel of his choosing; and constraints on the religious freedom and practices of Tibetans, Uighurs, and other religious believers in China. We are deeply saddened by the increasing frequency of self-immolations in Tibetan areas of China.

In the spirit of this day, we remain cognizant of the work governments around the world should do to protect the universal human rights of all peoples. I once again urge the People's Republic of China to uphold its commitments to the Universal Declaration and promote and protect the internationally recognized rights of all its citizens.