**UPR Intervention for Ecuador, 13th Session May 21, 2012**

The United States warmly welcomes Vice President Lenin Moreno and the Ecuadorian delegation to the UPR Working Group.

We commend Ecuador for demonstrating commitment to the UPR process by accepting and implementing important recommendations made in the first round. We view as positive the passing of the Act Prohibiting Violence against Women and the Family and other efforts to address recommendations.

Like the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, we are concerned about the attacks on journalists in Ecuador. Specific actions taken by the government to limit freedom of expression and criminalize dissent include the use of criminal libel lawsuits and a growing state media operation that serves to broadcast government opinions and discredit critics. These laws and practices lead to self-censorship and are counter to Ecuador’s commitments to protecting freedom of expression.

We welcome Ecuador’s intention to reform the judicial system. However, we are concerned that the independence of the judiciary has not been improved and that the reforms could increase the government’s ability to influence the appointment and dismissal of judges.

We recognize that Ecuador has made progress on combating impunity; however anti-corruption efforts for police, prosecutors, and judges need improvement.

Bearing in mind these concerns, we would like to make the following recommendations:

1. Eliminate laws that criminalize opinion and accept visit requests from the OAS and UN Special Rapporteurs for Freedom of Expression.
2. Ensure that the Transitional Judicial Council appointed to reform the justice system operates independently of the government.
3. Conduct thorough, impartial, and timely investigations into all allegations of police and judicial misconduct or corruption.