Reuters is reporting that the US has officially notified the UN today of its intention to associate itself with the Copenhagen Accord negotiated at last month's FCCC Conference of Parties. No surprises in the content of the pledge:

> Todd Stern, the top U.S. climate negotiator for the Obama administration, also gave notice that, as expected, it will aim for a 17 percent reduction in emissions of carbon dioxide and other gases blamed for global warming by 2020, with 2005 as the base year.

The Copenhagen Accord set a deadline of this Sunday, Jan 31, for countries to associate themselves with the Accord and submit pledges to be codified in the Accord's appendices. Developed countries will be submitting "quantified economy-wide emissions targets for 2020"; developing countries will be submitting "nationally appropriate mitigation actions." (FCCC secretary Yvo de Boer recently rocked the media boat by making the obvious point that, as the Copenhagen Accord is not a legally binding text and has no official ratification or signatory procedures, countries will remain free to associate themselves with the Accord and to make pledges under it even after Jan. 31.)

Last weekend, and after speculation circulated to the contrary, the BASIC group (Brazil, S Africa, India and China) indicated that they do intend to submit pledges by this Sunday (story here, subscription req'd). If you'd like to keep track of which countries have pledged what under the CA, the US Climate Action Network is posting updates here.

Today's US pledge reflects the approximate reductions to be achieved if the House's Waxman-Markey climate and energy bill were to become law. Given prospects in the Senate this spring, let's hope we don't look back on the pledge as merely an exercise in optimism.