



Strategic Accelerated Redemption Securities® Linked to One or More Equity Indices

- Strategic Accelerated Redemption Securities® (the “notes”) are senior unsecured debt securities issued by HSBC USA Inc. (“HSBC”). The notes do not guarantee the return of principal, and you may lose some or all of your investment. Payment of the Call Amount (as defined below) or payment of the Redemption Amount (as defined below) at maturity, as applicable, is subject to our credit risk. Unless otherwise set forth in the applicable term sheet (as defined below), we will not pay interest on the notes.
- This product supplement describes the general terms of the notes and the general manner in which they may be offered and sold. For each offering of the notes, we will provide you with a pricing supplement (which we may refer to as a “term sheet”) that will describe the specific terms of that offering. The term sheet will identify any additions or changes to the terms specified in this product supplement.
- The term sheet will also identify the underlying “Market Measure,” which will be an equity-based index or a “Basket” of equity-based indices.
- The notes will be automatically called if the Observation Level (as defined below) of the applicable Market Measure on any Observation Date (as defined below) is greater than or equal to the applicable Call Level (as defined below) for that Observation Date, all set forth in the applicable term sheet. If the notes are called, you will receive a cash payment for each unit of notes (the “Call Amount”) that will be set forth in the applicable term sheet. If your notes are “bear notes,” which would be specified in the applicable term sheet, your notes will be called if the Observation Level of the applicable Market Measure on any Observation Date is less than or equal to the applicable Call Level for that Observation Date. Except where otherwise specifically provided in this product supplement, all references in this product supplement to the “notes” shall be deemed to include a reference to bear notes.
- At maturity, if the notes have not been called, you will receive a cash payment per unit (the “Redemption Amount”) based on the direction of and percentage change in the value of the applicable Market Measure from the Starting Value to the Ending Value (each as defined below), calculated as described in this product supplement.
 - If the Ending Value is greater than or equal to (or, in the case of bear notes, less than or equal to) the “Threshold Value” specified in the applicable term sheet, you will receive the Original Offering Price (as defined below). We will determine the Threshold Value on the pricing date of the notes, which will be the date the notes are priced for initial sale to the public.
 - If the Ending Value is less than (or, in the case of bear notes, greater than) the Threshold Value, you will lose a percentage of the principal amount of your notes based on the percentage decline (or, in the case of bear notes, percentage increase) in the value of the Market Measure in excess of the Threshold Value, from the Starting Value to the Ending Value.
- The notes will be issued in denominations of whole units, as specified in the applicable term sheet. Each unit will have an “Original Offering Price” as set forth in the applicable term sheet. The term sheet may also set forth a minimum number of units that you must purchase.
- Unless provided for in the applicable term sheet, we do not intend to apply to have your notes listed on a securities exchange or quotation system. We make no representations that your notes will be listed or, if listed, will remain listed for the entire term of your notes.
- Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated (“MLPF&S”) and one or more of its affiliates may act as our agents to offer the notes.

*The notes offered hereunder are not deposit liabilities or other obligations of a bank, are not insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (the “FDIC”) or any other governmental agency of the United States, or any other jurisdiction, and carry investment risks including possible loss of the amount invested due to the credit risk of HSBC. Potential purchasers of the notes should consider the information in “Risk Factors” beginning on page S-9 and page S-3 of the accompanying prospectus supplement. **You may lose some or all of your investment in the notes.***

Neither the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (the “SEC”), nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or passed upon the accuracy or the adequacy of this document, the accompanying prospectus supplement or prospectus. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

Merrill Lynch & Co.

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SUMMARY

This product supplement relates only to the notes and does not relate to a direct investment in the Market Measure or any underlying security that is included in the Market Measure described in any term sheet. This summary includes questions and answers that highlight selected information from the prospectus, prospectus supplement, and this product supplement to help you understand the notes. You should read carefully the entire prospectus, prospectus supplement, and product supplement, together with the applicable term sheet, to understand fully the terms of your notes, as well as the tax and other considerations important to you in making a decision about whether to invest in any notes. In particular, you should review carefully the section in this product supplement and the accompanying prospectus supplement entitled “Risk Factors,” which highlights a number of risks of an investment in the notes, to determine whether an investment in the notes is appropriate for you. If information in this product supplement is inconsistent with the prospectus or prospectus supplement, this product supplement will supersede those documents. However, if information in any term sheet is inconsistent with this product supplement, that term sheet will supersede this product supplement.

Certain capitalized terms used and not defined in this product supplement have the meanings ascribed to them in the prospectus supplement and prospectus.

Investing in the notes is not equivalent to investing directly in any underlying Market Measure. You should understand the risks of investing in the notes and should reach an investment decision only after careful consideration, with your advisors, with respect to the notes in light of your particular financial and other circumstances and the information set forth in the relevant term sheet, this product supplement and the accompanying prospectus supplement and prospectus.

The information in this “Summary” section is qualified in its entirety by the more detailed explanation set forth elsewhere in this product supplement, the prospectus supplement, and prospectus, as well as the applicable term sheet. You should rely only on the information contained in those documents for information about this offering. We have not authorized any other person to provide you with different information about us or this offering. If anyone provides you with different or inconsistent information, you should not rely on it. None of us, the agents or our respective affiliates is making an offer to sell the notes in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted. You should assume that the information in this product supplement, the prospectus supplement, and prospectus, together with the term sheet, is accurate only as of the date on their respective front covers.

Unless otherwise indicated or unless the context requires otherwise, all references in this document to “HSBC,” “we,” “us,” “our,” or similar references are to HSBC USA Inc.

What are the notes?

The notes are senior unsecured debt securities issued by HSBC, and are not guaranteed or insured by the FDIC or secured by collateral **and are not, either directly or indirectly, an obligation of any third party. As further described in the accompanying prospectus supplement and prospectus, the notes will rank on par with all of the other unsecured and unsubordinated debt obligations of HSBC. Any payment to be made on the notes, including any return of principal at maturity depends on HSBC’s credit risk and the ability of HSBC to satisfy its obligations as they come due.** Each series of notes will mature on the date set forth in the applicable term sheet, unless we call the notes on an earlier date, as described in this product supplement and in the applicable term sheet. The notes do not guarantee the return of principal, and you may lose some or all of your investment depending on the performance of the Market Measure.

The notes are designed for investors who seek an early exit prior to maturity at a premium if the value of the applicable Market Measure is at or above (or, in the case of bear notes, at or below) its applicable Call Level on the relevant Observation Date. You must be willing to lose some or all of your principal if the notes are not called prior to their maturity, and the applicable Market Measure has declined below (or, in the case of bear notes, has increased above) the Threshold Value on the final Observation Date shortly before the maturity date. Unless specified in the applicable term sheet, your notes will not pay interest. You must be willing to forgo interest payments on your investment (such as fixed or floating interest rates paid on conventional non-callable debt securities) if the notes are non-interest bearing, accept a return that will not exceed the Call Amount, and bear the risk of loss of all or substantially all of your investment. You should also be aware that the automatic call feature may shorten the term of an investment in the notes, and you must be willing to accept that your notes may be called on any Observation Date. The Call Level, Observation Dates, Threshold Value, and Call Amount will be set forth in the applicable term sheet.

Are the notes equity or debt securities?

The notes are our senior debt securities and are not secured by collateral. However, the notes will differ from traditional debt securities in that their return is linked to the performance of the underlying Market Measure, and they do not guarantee the return of principal at maturity. Unless otherwise specified in the applicable term sheet, you will not receive interest payments.

If the notes are called prior to the maturity date, the total cash amount that you will receive as payment on the notes will equal the Call Amount specified in the applicable term sheet. If the notes are not called prior to the maturity date, at maturity you may receive an amount that is less than the Original Offering Price, depending upon the performance of the Market Measure over the term of the notes. We describe how this amount at maturity is determined beginning on page S-21. Any payment to be made on the notes depends on the ability of HSBC to satisfy its obligations as they come due. As a result, the actual and perceived creditworthiness of HSBC may affect the market value of the notes and, in the event HSBC were to default on its obligations, you may not receive the amounts owed to you under the terms of the notes.

Will you receive interest on the notes?

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable term sheet, you will not receive any interest payments on the notes. If the applicable term sheet provides for the payment of interest on the notes, the applicable term sheet will indicate the relevant terms on which you will receive interest payments. See “Description of the Notes—Interest.”

Is it possible for you to lose some or all of your investment in the notes?

Yes. Unless the applicable term sheet provides for the payment of interest on the notes, you will earn a positive return on your notes only if they are automatically called prior to their maturity date, as described in this product supplement and the applicable term sheet. If your notes are not called prior to maturity, your investment in the notes will not yield a positive return.

Further, if the Ending Value is less than (or, in the case of bear notes, greater than) the applicable Threshold Value on the final Observation Date shortly before the maturity date, then you will receive at maturity a cash amount that is less than the Original Offering Price of your notes.

You may lose all or a substantial portion of the amount that you invested to purchase the notes. Further, if you sell the notes prior to maturity, the price you may receive per unit may be less than the Original Offering Price.

What is the Market Measure?

The Market Measure will consist of one or more of the following:

- U.S. broad-based equity indices;
- U.S. sector or style-based equity indices;
- non-U.S. or global equity indices; or
- any combination of any of the above.

The Market Measure may consist of a group, or “Basket,” of the foregoing. We refer to each component included in any Basket as a “Basket Component.” If the Market Measure to which your notes are linked is a Basket, the Basket Components will be set forth in the applicable term sheet.

The applicable term sheet will set forth information as to the specific Market Measure, including information as to the historical values of the Market Measure. However, historical values of the Market Measure are not indicative of the future performance of the Market Measure or the performance of your notes.

Under what circumstances will the notes be called?

The notes will automatically be called on an Observation Date if the Observation Level of the Market Measure on that Observation Date is greater than or equal to (or, in the case of bear notes, is less than or equal to) the applicable Call Level set forth in the applicable term sheet.

What will you receive if we call the notes?

If your notes are called, you will receive the Call Amount applicable to such Observation Date. The Call Amount will be equal to the Original Offering Price per unit plus the Call Premium. The “Call Premium” will be a percentage of the Original Offering Price that will be set forth in the applicable term sheet. If the notes are automatically called on an Observation Date other than the final Observation Date, we will redeem each note and pay the applicable Call Amount on the fifth business day (as defined below) after the applicable Observation Date, subject to postponement as described in the section entitled “Description of the Notes—Automatic Call.” If the notes are called on the final Observation Date, we will redeem the notes and pay the Call Amount on the maturity date.

How is the Redemption Amount calculated?

If your notes are not called, then at maturity, subject to our credit risk as issuer of the notes, you will receive the Redemption Amount per unit of the notes that you hold, denominated in U.S. dollars. In no event will the Redemption Amount be less than zero. Unless the applicable term sheet provides otherwise, the Redemption Amount will be calculated as follows:

- If the Ending Value is equal to or greater than the Threshold Value, then the Redemption Amount will equal the Original Offering Price; or
- If the Ending Value is less than the Threshold Value, then the Redemption Amount will equal:

$$\text{Original Offering Price} + \left\langle \text{Original Offering Price} \times \left(\frac{\text{Ending Value} - \text{Threshold Value}}{\text{Starting Value}} \right) \right\rangle$$

In the case of bear notes, unless the applicable term sheet provides otherwise, the Redemption Amount will be calculated as follows:

- If the Ending Value is equal to or less than the Threshold Value, then the Redemption Amount will equal the Original Offering Price; or
- If the Ending Value is greater than the Threshold Value, then the Redemption Amount will equal:

$$\text{Original Offering Price} + \left\langle \text{Original Offering Price} \times \left(\frac{\text{Threshold Value} - \text{Ending Value}}{\text{Starting Value}} \right) \right\rangle$$

The “Threshold Value” will represent a percentage of the Starting Value, and will be determined on the pricing date and set forth in the applicable term sheet. If the Threshold Value is equal to 100% of the Starting Value, then the Redemption Amount for each note will be less than the Original Offering Price if there is any decrease (or, in the case of bear notes, increase) in the value of the Market Measure from the Starting Value to the Ending Value.

How will the Starting Value, the Ending Value, and the Observation Level be determined?

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable term sheet, the “Starting Value” will be the closing value of the Market Measure or a percentage of the closing value of the Market Measure on the pricing date (or on such date or dates other than the pricing date as specified in the applicable term sheet).

If the Market Measure consists of a Basket, the “Starting Value” will be equal to 100. We will assign each Basket Component a weighting (the “Initial Component Weight”), so that each Basket Component represents a percentage of the Starting Value on the pricing date. We may assign the Basket Components equal Initial Component Weights, or we may assign the Basket Components unequal Initial Component Weights. The Initial Component Weight for each Basket Component will be set forth in the applicable term sheet. See “Description of the Notes—Basket Market Measures.”

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable term sheet, the “Ending Value” will be the closing value of the Market Measure on the final Observation Date.

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable term sheet, the “Observation Level” will be the closing value of the Market Measure on any Observation Date.

See “Description of the Notes—Determining the Observation Level, the Starting Value, and the Ending Value.”

Is the return on the notes limited in any way?

Yes. Unless the applicable term sheet provides for the payment of interest on the notes, you will only receive a positive return on the notes if your notes are called. Even if the notes are called, unless otherwise provided in the applicable term sheet, your return on the notes will be limited to the Original Offering Price plus the applicable Call Premium. As a result, your participation in any upside potential (or, in the case of bear notes, downside potential) of the Market Measure underlying your notes will not be greater than the Call Premium. Each term sheet will set forth examples of **hypothetical** Ending Values, Call Levels, and Threshold Values, that demonstrate the impact of the call feature on your notes.

Can the maturity date be postponed if a Market Disruption Event occurs?

No. See the section entitled “Description of the Notes—Market Disruption Events.”

Who will determine the amounts payable on the notes?

The calculation agent will make all calculations associated with the notes, including determinations regarding the Starting Value, the Observation Level of the Market Measure on any Observation Date, the Threshold Value, the Ending Value, any Market Disruption Events, a successor market measure, business days, Market Measure Business Days, the amounts payable at maturity or upon a call of the notes, and calculations related to the discontinuance of any Market Measure. Unless otherwise set forth in the applicable term sheet, we or one or more of our affiliates, acting independently or jointly with MLPF&S, will act as the calculation agent, or we may appoint MLPF&S or one of its affiliates to act as the calculation agent for the notes. When we refer to a “calculation agent” in this product supplement or in any term sheet, we are referring to the applicable calculation agent or joint calculation agents, as the case may be. See the section entitled “Description of the Notes—Role of the Calculation Agent.”

Will you have an ownership interest in the securities that are represented by the Market Measure?

No. An investment in the notes does not entitle you to any ownership interest, including any voting rights, dividends paid, or other distributions, in the securities of any of the companies included in a Market Measure. The notes will be payable only in U.S. dollars.

Who are the agents for the notes?

MLPF&S and one or more of its affiliates will act as our agents in connection with each offering of the notes and will receive an underwriting discount based on the number of units of the notes sold. None of the agents is your fiduciary or advisor, and you should not rely upon any communication from any of them in connection with the notes as investment advice or a recommendation to purchase the notes. You should understand the risks of investing in the notes and should reach an investment decision only after careful consideration, with your advisors, with respect to the notes in light of your particular financial circumstances and the information set forth in the relevant term sheet, this product supplement and the accompanying prospectus supplement and prospectus.

How are the notes being offered?

We have registered the notes with the SEC in the United States. However, we will not register the notes for public distribution in any jurisdiction other than the United States. The agents may solicit offers to purchase the notes from non-U.S. investors only in reliance on

available private placement exemptions. See the section entitled “Supplemental Plan of Distribution” in the prospectus supplement.

Will the notes be listed on an exchange?

Unless provided for in the applicable term sheet, we do not intend to apply to have your notes listed on a securities exchange or quotation system. We make no representation that your notes will be listed or, if listed, will remain listed for the entire term of your notes.

What are the tax consequences of investing in the notes?

There are no Treasury regulations, published rulings or judicial decisions addressing the treatment for U.S. federal income tax purposes of securities with terms that are substantially the same as the notes. Accordingly, the proper U.S. federal income tax treatment of the notes is uncertain. Under the terms of the notes, you will have agreed with us to treat the notes as pre-paid contracts with respect to the Market Measure, as described under “U.S. Federal Income Tax Summary—General.” You are urged to consult your tax advisor as to the tax consequences of investing in the notes.

Does ERISA impose any limitations on purchases of the notes?

Yes. An employee benefit plan subject to the fiduciary responsibility provisions of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as amended (commonly referred to as “ERISA”), or a plan that is subject to Section 4975 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or the “Code,” including individual retirement accounts, individual retirement annuities, or Keogh plans, or any entity the assets of which are deemed to be “plan assets” under the ERISA regulations, should not purchase, hold, or dispose of the notes unless that plan or entity has determined that its purchase, holding, or disposition of the notes will not constitute a non-exempt prohibited transaction under ERISA or Section 4975 of the Code.

Any plan or entity purchasing the notes will be deemed to be representing that it has made that determination, or that a prohibited transaction class exemption (“PTCE”) or other statutory or administrative exemption exists and can be relied upon by that plan or entity. See the section entitled “ERISA Considerations.”

Are there any risks associated with your investment?

Yes. An investment in the notes is subject to risks. The notes do not guarantee the return of principal, and you may lose some or all of your investment. Please refer to the section entitled “Risk Factors” beginning on the following page of this product supplement and page S-3 of the prospectus supplement. If the applicable term sheet sets forth any additional risk factors, you should read those carefully before purchasing any notes.

RISK FACTORS

You will be subject to significant risks not associated with conventional fixed-rate or floating-rate debt securities. You should understand the risks of investing in the notes and should reach an investment decision only after careful consideration with your advisors with respect to the notes in light of your particular financial circumstances and the information set forth in the relevant term sheet, this product supplement and the accompanying prospectus supplement and prospectus.

General Risks Relating to the Notes

If the notes are not called, your investment may result in a loss; you may not receive a return of some or all of your principal. The notes differ from ordinary debt securities in that we will not pay you a fixed amount at maturity. Our payout to you will depend on whether your notes are called prior to the maturity date, and the direction of and percentage change in the value of the Market Measure on the relevant Observation Dates. If your notes are not called, you will receive on the maturity date a Redemption Amount that may be less than or equal to, but will not be greater than, the Original Offering Price of your notes. As a result, depending on the performance of the Market Measure, you may lose all or a substantial portion of your investment.

If your notes are not called, and the Ending Value is below (or, in the case of bear notes, above) the Threshold Value on the final Observation Date, the Redemption Amount may be less, and possibly substantially less, than the Original Offering Price. In no circumstances will you lose more than your entire investment in the notes.

Your return, if any, is limited to the Call Premium plus any interest paid on the notes. If the Observation Level of the Market Measure on any of the Observation Dates is greater than or equal to (or, in the case of bear notes, less than or equal to) the Call Level, the notes will be automatically called by us on that Observation Date. If the notes are automatically called, the amount payable on the notes will be the Call Amount, which is equal to the Original Offering Price plus the Call Premium applicable to the relevant Observation Date on which the notes are called (in addition to any accrued and unpaid interest in the case of interest bearing notes), regardless of the appreciation (or, in the case of bear notes, depreciation) of the Market Measure.

Your yield may be less than the yield on a conventional debt security of comparable maturity. Any yield that you receive on the notes, which could be negative, may be less than the return you would earn if you purchased a conventional debt security with the same maturity date. As a result, your investment in the notes may not reflect the full opportunity cost to you when you consider factors, such as inflation, that affect the time value of money.

Payments on the notes are subject to the credit risk of HSBC USA Inc. The notes are senior unsecured debt obligations of the issuer, HSBC, and are not, either directly or indirectly, an obligation of any third party. As further described in the accompanying prospectus supplement and prospectus, the notes will rank on par with all of the other unsecured and unsubordinated debt obligations of HSBC. Any payment to be made on the notes, including any return of principal at maturity, depends on the ability of HSBC to satisfy its obligations as they come due. As a result, the actual and perceived creditworthiness of HSBC may affect the market value of the notes and, in the event HSBC were to default on its obligations, you may not receive the amounts owed to you under the terms of the notes. Because your return on the notes depends upon factors in addition to HSBC's ability to pay its obligations, such as the value of the applicable Market Measure, an improvement in HSBC's credit ratings will not reduce the other investment risks related to the notes.

Your investment return may be less than a comparable investment directly in the Market Measure, or the components included in the Market Measure. Your return on the notes, if any, will not exceed the applicable Call Amount plus any interest paid on the notes. In contrast, a direct investment in the Market Measure or the components of the Market Measure would allow you to receive the full benefit of any appreciation in the value of the Market Measure or those components. Similarly, in the case of bear notes, a strategy such as a short sale could allow you to receive the full benefit of any depreciation in the value of the Market Measure or those components.

Your return on the notes, if any, will not reflect the return you would realize if you actually owned the securities underlying the Market Measure because, unless otherwise set forth in the applicable term sheet, the Observation Level on various Observation Dates, and the Ending Value, will be calculated without taking into consideration the value of dividends paid or distributions made those securities.

In addition, in certain instances, the Market Measure may consist of or include one or more equity indices that are traded in a non-U.S. currency, such as the euro or the Japanese yen. In such instances, if the value of that currency increases against the U.S. dollar during the term of your notes, you may not obtain the benefit of that increase, which you would have received if you had owned the securities included in the applicable index or indices. In the case of bear notes, you may not receive the benefit of any decreases in the value of the applicable currency.

You must rely on your own evaluation of the merits of an investment linked to the applicable Market Measure. In the ordinary course of their businesses, we, the agents, and our respective affiliates may have expressed views on expected movements in a Market Measure or the components of a Market Measure, and may do so in the future. These views or reports may be communicated to our clients and clients of these entities. However, these views are subject to change from time to time. Moreover, other professionals who deal in markets relating to a Market Measure may at any time have significantly different views from our views and the views of these entities. For these reasons, you are encouraged to derive information concerning a Market Measure and its components from multiple sources, and you should not rely on our views or the views expressed by these entities.

Commissions, fees and hedging costs may affect the price at which you will be able to sell the notes in secondary market transactions. The original issue price of the notes includes the underwriting commissions, certain fees and our cost of hedging our obligations under the notes. Such cost includes the expected cost of providing the hedge, as well as the profit expected to be realized in consideration for assuming the risks inherent in providing such hedge. As a result, assuming no change in market conditions or any other relevant factors, the price, if any, at which you will be able to sell the notes in secondary market transactions, if at all, will likely be lower than the original issue price.

We cannot assure you that a trading market for your notes will ever develop or be maintained. Unless otherwise set forth in the applicable term sheet, we will not list the notes on any securities exchange. Even if an application were made to list your notes, we cannot assure you that the application will be approved or that your notes will be listed and, if listed, that they will remain listed for the entire term of the notes. We cannot predict how the notes will trade in any secondary market, or whether that market will be liquid or illiquid. You should be aware that the listing of the notes on any securities exchange will not necessarily ensure that a trading market will develop for the notes, and if a trading market does develop, that there will be liquidity in the trading market.

The development of a trading market for the notes will depend on our financial performance and other factors, including changes in the value of the Market Measure. The number of potential buyers of your notes in any secondary market may be limited. We anticipate that one or more of the agents will act as a market-maker for the notes that it offers, but none of them is required to do so. Any such agent may discontinue its market-making activities as to any series of the notes at any time. To the extent that an agent engages in any market-making activities, it may bid for or offer any series of the notes. Any price at which an agent may bid for, offer, purchase, or sell any notes may differ from the values determined by pricing models that it may use, whether as a result of dealer discounts, mark-ups, or other transaction costs. These bids, offers, or completed transactions may affect the prices, if any, at which those notes might otherwise trade in the market.

In addition, if at any time the applicable agent were to cease acting as a market-maker as to any series of the notes, it is likely that there would be significantly less liquidity in any secondary market. In such a case, the price at which those notes could be sold likely would be lower than if an active market existed.

The amount that you receive at maturity or upon a call will not be affected by all developments relating to the Market Measure. The values of the Market Measure during the term of the notes other than on the Observation Dates will not be reflected in the amount that you receive at maturity or upon a call. The calculation agent will calculate the amount to be paid at maturity or upon a call solely by reference to the value of the Market Measure on the applicable Observation Date. No other values of the Market Measure will be taken into account. As a result, your notes may not be called, and you may receive at maturity less than the Original Offering Price of your notes, even if the value of the Market Measure has increased (or, in the case of bear notes, decreased) at certain times during their term before decreasing to a value below the applicable Call Level and Threshold Value (or, in the case of bear notes, increasing to a value above the Call Level or Threshold Value) on the applicable Observation Dates.

If the Market Measure to which your notes are linked is a Basket, changes in the value of one or more of the Basket Components may be offset by changes in the value of one or more of the other Basket Components. The Market Measure of your notes may consist of a Basket. In such a case, a change in the values of one or more of the Basket Components may not correlate with changes in the values of one or more of the other Basket Components. The values of one or more Basket Components may increase, while the values of one or more of the other Basket Components may not increase as much, or may even decrease. The opposite changes may occur in the case of bear notes. Therefore, in calculating the Market Measure on any Observation Date, increases (or in the case of bear notes, decreases) in the value of one Basket Component may be moderated, or wholly offset, by lesser increases or decreases (or in the case of bear notes, lesser decreases or increases) in the value of one or more of the other Basket Components. If the weightings of the applicable Basket Components are not equal, changes in the values of the Basket Components which are more heavily weighted could have a disproportionately adverse impact upon your notes.

The respective publishers of the Market Measures (each, a “Market Measure Publisher”), may adjust the Market Measures or any components of a Market Measure in a way that affects their values, and the respective Market Measure Publishers have no obligation to consider your interests. The Market Measure Publishers can add, delete, or substitute the components included in a Market Measure or make other methodological changes that could change the value of that Market Measure. You should realize that the change of companies included in a Market Measure may materially affect that Market Measure. Additionally, a Market Measure Publisher may alter, discontinue, or suspend calculation or

dissemination of its Market Measure or its components. Any of these actions could adversely affect the value of your notes. See “Description of the Notes—Discontinuance of a Market Measure.” The Market Measure Publishers will have no obligation to consider your interests in calculating or revising the Market Measure or its components.

Exchange rate movements may impact the value of the notes. The notes will be denominated in U.S. dollars. If the value of a Market Measure component is traded in a currency other than U.S. dollars and, for purposes of the Market Measure, is converted into U.S. dollars or another currency, then the amount payable on the notes on the maturity date or upon a call may depend in part on the relevant exchange rates. If the value of the U.S. dollar increases (or in the case of bear notes, decreases) against the currencies of the Market Measure or its components, the value of the Market Measure or its underlying components may be adversely affected. In such a case, the value of the applicable Market Measure may not reach the Call Level as of any Observation Date, your notes therefore will not be called, and any Redemption Payment that you receive based upon the Ending Value on the final Observation Date may be less than the Original Offering Price of the notes.

Unless otherwise stated in the applicable term sheet, the payment at maturity, or upon an automatic call of the notes, will not be adjusted as a result of changes in the applicable exchange rates between those currencies and the U.S. dollar. Exchange rate movements may be particularly impacted by existing and expected rates of inflation, existing and expected interest rate levels, the balance of payments, and the extent of governmental surpluses or deficits in the countries relevant to the applicable Market Measure and its components, and the United States. All of these factors are in turn sensitive to the monetary, fiscal, and trade policies pursued by the governments of various countries and the United States and other countries important to international trade and finance.

If you attempt to sell the notes prior to maturity, their market value, if any, will be affected by various factors that interrelate in complex ways, and their market value may be less than their Original Offering Price. Unlike savings accounts, certificates of deposit, and other similar investment products, you have no right to have your notes redeemed prior to maturity. If you wish to liquidate your investment in the notes prior to maturity, your only option would be to sell them. At that time, there may be an illiquid market for your notes or no market at all. Even if you were able to sell your notes, there are many factors outside of our control that may affect their market value, some of which, but not all, are stated below. Some of these factors are interrelated in complex ways. As a result, the effect of any one factor may be offset or magnified by the effect of another factor. The following paragraphs describe the expected impact on the market value of the notes from a change in a specific factor, assuming all other conditions remain constant.

- **Value of the Market Measure.** Whether or not your notes will be called prior to the maturity date and, if not called, the Redemption Amount, is determined by reference to the value of the Market Measure on the applicable Observation Dates. Consequently, the market value of the notes at any time generally will depend to a significant extent on the value of the Market Measure. The value of the Market Measure will be influenced by complex and interrelated political, economic, financial, and other factors that affect the capital markets generally and the markets on which the securities of the Market Measure are traded, and the market segments of which these securities are a part. Even if the value of the Market Measure increases (or in the case of bear notes, decreases) after the applicable pricing date, if you are able to sell your notes before their maturity date, you may receive substantially less than the amount that would be payable upon an automatic redemption or at maturity based on that value because of the anticipation that the value of the Market Measure will continue to fluctuate until

the Observation Level or Ending Value, as applicable, is determined. If you sell your notes when the value of the Market Measure is less than, or not sufficiently above the applicable Call Level (or in the case of bear notes is more than, or not sufficiently less than the Call Level), then you may receive less than the Original Offering Price of your notes. In general, the market value of the notes will decrease as the value of the Market Measure decreases, and increase as the value of the Market Measure increases, and the reverse will be the case for bear notes. However, as the value of the Market Measure increases or decreases, the market value of the notes is not expected to increase or decrease at the same rate. In addition, because the amount payable on the notes upon an automatic redemption will not exceed the applicable Call Amount, we do not expect that the notes will trade in any secondary market above that Call Amount. Similarly, if the notes are not automatically called on any Observation Date, your return will be limited to the Original Offering Price.

- **Volatility of the Market Measure.** Volatility is the term used to describe the size and frequency of market fluctuations. The volatility of the Market Measure during the term of your notes may vary. In addition, an unsettled international environment and related uncertainties may result in greater market volatility, which may continue over the term of the notes. Increases or decreases in the volatility of the Market Measure may have an adverse impact on the market value of the notes.
- **Economic and Other Conditions Generally.** The general economic conditions of the capital markets in the United States, as well as geopolitical conditions and other financial, political, regulatory, and judicial events that affect stock markets generally, may affect the value of the Market Measure and the value of the notes. If the Market Measure includes one or more indices that have returns that are calculated based upon currencies other than the U.S. dollar or prices in one or more non-U.S. markets (a “non-U.S. Market Measure”), the value of your notes may also be affected by similar events in those markets.
- **Interest Rates.** We expect that changes in interest rates will affect the market value of the notes. In general, if U.S. interest rates increase, we expect that the market value of the notes will decrease, and conversely, if U.S. interest rates decrease, we expect that the market value of the notes will increase. The level of prevailing interest rates also may affect the U.S. economy and any applicable markets outside of the United States, and, in turn, the value of the Market Measure. If the Market Measure is, or if any components of any Market Measure are, traded in currencies other than the U.S. dollar, the level of interest rates in the relevant foreign countries may also affect their economies and in turn the value of the related Market Measure or any component, and, thus, the market value of the notes may be adversely affected.
- **Dividend Yields.** If cumulative dividend yields on the securities included in the Market Measure increase, we anticipate that the market value of the notes will decrease; conversely, if those dividend yields decrease, we anticipate that the market value of your notes will increase. We expect that the opposite will be the case for bear notes.
- **Exchange Rate Movements and Volatility.** Foreign currency exchange rates represent the number of units of one currency (an “underlying currency”) for which one unit of another currency can be exchanged (a “base currency”). An exchange rate increases when the value of an underlying currency decreases relative to the applicable base currency, and decreases when the value of the underlying currency increases relative to that base currency. If the Market Measure of your notes includes any non-

U.S. Market Measure, changes in, and the volatility of, the exchange rates between the U.S. dollar and the relevant non-U.S. currency or currencies could have a negative impact on the value of your notes. The amount payable on the notes on the maturity date, and whether your notes will be automatically called on any Observation Date, may depend in part on the relevant exchange rates.

- **Time to Maturity.** As the time remaining to maturity of your notes decreases, we anticipate that your notes may have a market value that may be different from that which would be expected based on the levels of market interest rates and the value of the Market Measure. This difference will reflect a time premium or discount due to expectations concerning the Market Measure during the period before the applicable maturity date. In general, as the time remaining to maturity decreases, the value of the notes will approach the amount that would be payable at maturity based on the then-current value of the Market Measure.

Our purchases and sales, and those of the agents, may affect your return. We, the agents, and our respective affiliates may from time to time buy or sell the Market Measures, the components of Market Measures, or futures or options contracts on Market Measures or the components of the Market Measures for our own or their own accounts for business reasons. We also expect to enter into these transactions in connection with hedging our obligations under the notes. These transactions could affect the values of these components and, in turn, the value of a Market Measure in a manner that could be adverse to your investment in the notes. Any purchases or sales by us, the agents, and our respective affiliates or others on our or their behalf on or before the applicable pricing date may temporarily increase or decrease the value of a Market Measure or the components of a Market Measure. Consequently, the values of that Market Measure or the components of that Market Measure may change subsequent to the pricing date of an issue of the notes, affecting the value of the Market Measure and therefore the market value of the notes.

Our trading and hedging activities, and those of the agents, may create conflicts of interest with you. We, the agents, and our respective affiliates may engage in trading activities related to the Market Measure and the securities represented by the Market Measure that are not for your account or on your behalf. We, the agents, and our respective affiliates from time to time may buy or sell the securities represented by the Market Measure or related futures or options contracts for our own or their own accounts, for business reasons, or in connection with hedging our obligations under the notes. We, the agents, and our respective affiliates also may issue or underwrite other financial instruments with returns based upon the applicable Market Measure. These trading and underwriting activities could affect the Market Measure in a manner that would be adverse to your investment in the notes.

We expect to enter into arrangements to hedge the market risks associated with our obligation to pay the amounts due under the notes. We may seek competitive terms in entering into the hedging arrangements for the notes, but are not required to do so. We may enter into such hedging arrangements with one or more of our subsidiaries or affiliates, or with one or more of the agents or their affiliates. Such a party may enter into additional hedging transactions with other parties relating to the notes and the applicable Market Measure. This hedging activity is expected to result in a profit to those engaging in the hedging activity, which could be more or less than initially expected, but which could also result in a loss.

We or our affiliates may enter into these transactions on or prior to each pricing date, in order to hedge some or all of our anticipated obligations under the notes. These activities could increase (or in the case of bear notes, decrease) the value of the Market Measure on the applicable pricing date.

In addition, from time to time during the term of each series of the notes and in connection with the determination of the Ending Value, or upon a call, we, the agents, and our respective affiliates may enter into additional hedging transactions or adjust or close out existing hedging transactions. We, the agents, and our respective affiliates also may enter into hedging transactions relating to other notes or instruments that we or they issue, some of which may have returns calculated in a manner related to that of a particular series of the notes. We, the agents, and our respective affiliates will price these hedging transactions with the intent to realize a profit, considering the risks inherent in these hedging activities, whether the value of the notes increases or decreases. However, these hedging activities may result in a profit that is more or less than initially expected, or could result in a loss.

These trading and hedging activities may present a conflict of interest between your interest in your notes and the interests we, the agents, and our respective affiliates may have in our proprietary accounts, in facilitating transactions, including block trades, for our other customers, and in accounts under our management. These trading activities, if they influence the Market Measure or secondary trading in your notes, could be adverse to your interests as a beneficial owner of the notes.

Our hedging activities, and those of the agents, may affect your return on the notes and their market value. We, the agents, and our respective affiliates may engage in hedging activities that may affect the value of the Market Measure. Accordingly, these hedging activities may increase or decrease the market value of your notes prior to maturity, including on any Observation Date, and the payment that you may receive at maturity. In addition, we, the agents, and our respective affiliates may purchase or otherwise acquire a long or short position in the notes. We, the agents, and our respective affiliates may hold or resell the notes. For example, the agents may enter into these transactions in connection with any market making activities in which they engage. Although we have no reason to believe that any of those activities will have a material impact on the value of the Market Measure, we cannot assure you that these activities will not affect the value of the Market Measure and the market value of your notes prior to maturity, the amount you may receive at maturity, or whether the notes will be called.

There may be potential conflicts of interest involving the calculation agent. We may appoint and remove the calculation agent. We or one of our affiliates may be the calculation agent or act as joint calculation agent for the notes and, as such, will determine each Starting Value, the Observation Level of the Market Measure on any Observation Date, the Threshold Value, the Ending Value, any Market Disruption Events, a successor market measure, business days, Market Measure Business Days, the amounts payable at maturity or upon a call of the notes, and calculations related to the discontinuance of any Market Measure. Under some circumstances, these duties could result in a conflict of interest between our status as issuer and our responsibilities as calculation agent. These conflicts could occur, for instance, in connection with the calculation agent's determination as to whether a "Market Disruption Event" has occurred, or in connection with judgments that it would be required to make if the publication of an index is discontinued. See the sections entitled "Description of the Notes—Market Disruption Events," "—Adjustments to a Market Measure," and "—Discontinuance of a Market Measure." The calculation agent will be required to carry out its duties in good faith and using its reasonable judgment. However, because we may serve as the calculation agent, potential conflicts of interest could arise.

In addition, we may appoint MLPF&S or one of its affiliates to act as the calculation agent or as joint calculation agent for the notes. As the calculation agent or joint calculation agent, MLPF&S or one of its affiliates will have discretion in making various determinations that affect your notes. The exercise of this discretion by the calculation agent could adversely

affect the value of your notes and may present the calculation agent with a conflict of interest of the kind described under “—Our trading and hedging activities, and those of the agents, may create conflicts of interest with you” and “—Our hedging activities, and those of the agents, may affect your return on the notes and their market value” above.

The notes are not insured by any government agency of the United States or any other jurisdiction. The notes are not deposit liabilities or other obligations of a bank and are not insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or any other governmental agency or program of the United States or any other jurisdiction. An investment in the notes is subject to the credit risk of HSBC, and in the event that HSBC is unable to pay its obligations as they become due, you may not receive the full payments due on the notes.

The U.S. federal income tax consequences of the notes are uncertain, and may be adverse to a holder of the notes. There are no Treasury regulations, published rulings or judicial decisions addressing the treatment for U.S. federal income tax purposes of securities with terms that are substantially the same as the notes. Accordingly, the proper U.S. federal income tax treatment of the notes is uncertain. Under the terms of the notes, you will have agreed with us to treat the notes as pre-paid contracts with respect to the Market Measure, as described under “U.S. Federal Income Tax Summary—General.” You are urged to consult your tax advisor as to the tax consequences of investing in the notes.

Risks Relating to the Market Measures

You will have no rights as a security holder, you will have no rights to receive any of the securities represented by the Market Measure, and you will not be entitled to dividends or other distributions by the issuers of those securities. The notes are our debt securities. They are not equity instruments, shares of stock, or securities of any other issuer. Investing in the notes will not make you a holder of any of the securities represented by the Market Measure. You will not have any voting rights, any rights to receive dividends or other distributions, or any other rights with respect to those securities. As a result, the return on your notes upon any automatic call or at maturity may not reflect the return you would realize if you actually owned those securities and received the dividends paid or other distributions made in connection with them. Additionally, the values of certain equity based indices reflect only the prices of the securities included in the Market Measure or its components and do not take into consideration the value of dividends paid on those stocks. Your notes will be paid in cash and you have no right to receive delivery of any of these securities.

If the Market Measure to which your notes are linked includes equity securities traded on foreign exchanges, your return may be affected by factors affecting international securities markets. The value of an equity based Market Measure or Market Measure component that includes equity securities that are traded on foreign exchanges is computed by reference to the sales prices of those securities as reported by the exchange on which these securities are listed or admitted to trade. Therefore, the return on your notes will be affected by factors affecting the value of securities in the relevant non-U.S. markets. The relevant foreign securities markets may be more volatile than U.S. or other securities markets and may be affected by market developments in different ways than U.S. or other securities markets. Direct or indirect government intervention to stabilize a particular securities market and cross-shareholdings in companies in the relevant foreign markets may affect prices and the volume of trading in those markets. Also, there is generally less publicly available information about foreign companies than about U.S. companies that are subject to the reporting requirements of the SEC. Additionally, accounting, auditing, and financial reporting standards and requirements in foreign countries differ from those applicable to U.S. reporting companies.

The prices and performance of securities of companies in foreign countries may be affected by political, economic, financial, and social factors in those regions. In addition, recent or future changes in government, economic, and fiscal policies in the relevant jurisdictions, the possible imposition of, or changes in, currency exchange laws, or other laws or restrictions, and possible fluctuations in the rate of exchange between currencies, are factors that could negatively affect the relevant securities markets. Moreover, the relevant foreign economies may differ favorably or unfavorably from the U.S. economy in economic factors such as growth of gross national product, rate of inflation, capital reinvestment, resources, and self-sufficiency.

Unless otherwise set forth in the applicable term sheet, we and the agents do not control any company included in any Market Measure and are not responsible for any disclosure made by any other company. We, the agents, or our respective affiliates currently, or in the future, may engage in business with companies represented by the Market Measure, and we, the agents, or our respective affiliates may from time to time own shares of companies included in a Market Measure. However, none of us, the agents, or any of our respective affiliates have the ability to control the actions of any of these companies or assume any responsibility for the adequacy or accuracy of any publicly available information about any of these companies, unless (and only to the extent that) our securities or the securities of our respective affiliates are represented by that Market Measure or Market Measure component. In addition, unless otherwise set forth in the applicable term sheet, neither we, the agents nor any of our respective affiliates are responsible for the calculation of any index represented by a Market Measure or Market Measure component. You should make your own investigation into the Market Measure and the companies represented by the applicable constituent securities.

Unless otherwise set forth in the applicable term sheet, none of the Market Measure Publishers, their affiliates, nor any company included in the Market Measure or its components will be involved in any offering of the notes or will have any obligation of any sort with respect to the notes. As a result, none of those companies will have any obligation to take your interests as holders of the notes into consideration for any reason, including taking any corporate actions that might affect the value of the securities represented by the Market Measure or its components or the value of the notes.

Our business activities and those of the agents relating to the companies represented by a Market Measure or components of a Market Measure may create conflicts of interest with you. We, the agents, and our respective affiliates at the time of any offering of the notes or in the future, may engage in business with the companies represented by a Market Measure or components of a Market Measure, including making loans to, equity investments in, or providing investment banking, asset management, or other services to those companies, their affiliates, and their competitors. In connection with these activities, any of these entities may receive information about those companies that we will not divulge to you or other third parties. We, the agents, and our respective affiliates have published, and in the future may publish, research reports on one or more of these companies. This research is modified from time to time without notice and may express opinions or provide recommendations that are inconsistent with purchasing or holding your notes. Any of these activities may affect the value of the Market Measure and, consequently, the market value of your notes. None of us, the agents, or our respective affiliates make any representation to any purchasers of the notes regarding any matters whatsoever relating to the issuers of the stocks included in a Market Measure or its components. Any prospective purchaser of the notes should undertake an independent investigation of the companies included in a Market Measure and its components as in its judgment is appropriate to make an informed decision regarding an investment in the notes. The composition of those companies does not reflect any investment recommendations from us, the agents, or our respective affiliates.

Other Risk Factors Relating to the Applicable Market Measure

The applicable term sheet may set forth additional risk factors as to the Market Measure that you should review prior to purchasing the notes.

USE OF PROCEEDS

We will use the net proceeds we receive from each sale of the notes for the purposes described in the prospectus supplement under “Use of Proceeds and Hedging.” In addition, we expect that we or our affiliates may use a portion of the net proceeds to hedge our obligations under the notes.

DESCRIPTION OF THE NOTES

General

Each series of the notes will be part of a series of notes entitled “Notes, Series 1” that will be issued under the senior indenture, as amended and supplemented from time to time. The following description of the notes supplements and, to the extent it is inconsistent with, supersedes the description of the general terms and provisions of the notes and debt securities set forth under the headings “Description of Notes” in the prospectus supplement and “Description of Debt Securities” in the prospectus. These documents should be read in connection with the applicable term sheet.

The aggregate principal amount of each series of the notes will be set forth in the applicable term sheet.

The notes do not guarantee the return of principal at maturity.

Prior to the applicable maturity date, the notes are not repayable at the option of any holder. The notes are not subject to any sinking fund.

Unless automatically called prior to the maturity date according to their terms, the notes will mature on the date set forth in the applicable term sheet.

We will issue the notes in the denominations of whole units, each with a specified Original Offering Price. The CUSIP number for each series of the notes will be set forth in the applicable term sheet. You may transfer the notes only in whole units.

Notwithstanding anything contained in the accompanying prospectus supplement or product supplement to the contrary, the notes will be issued under the senior indenture, dated March 31, 2009, between HSBC USA Inc., as issuer, and Wells Fargo Bank, National Association, as trustee. Such indenture has substantially the same terms as the indenture described in the accompanying prospectus supplement.

Notwithstanding anything contained in the accompanying prospectus supplement or product supplement to the contrary, HSBC Bank USA, N.A. will act as paying agent with respect to the notes pursuant to a Paying Agent and Securities Registrar Agreement, dated June 1, 2009, between HSBC USA Inc. and HSBC Bank USA, N.A.

Interest

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable term sheet, the notes will not bear interest. If the notes provide for the payment of interest, the applicable term sheet will set forth the relevant terms on which you will receive interest payments.

Automatic Call

The notes will be called, in whole but not in part, if the Observation Level of the Market Measure on any Observation Date is greater than or equal to (or, in the case of bear notes, less than or equal to) the Call Level set forth in the applicable term sheet. The “Call Level” is the level of the Market Measure which will trigger an automatic call on an Observation Date.

If the notes are called, for each unit of notes that you own on the relevant Observation Date, we will pay you the Call Amount. The “Call Amount” will be equal to the Original Offering

Price per unit plus the Call Premium per unit. The “Call Premium” will be a percentage of the Original Offering Price.

The Observation Dates and the related Call Amounts and Call Premium will be specified in the applicable term sheet.

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable term sheet, if the notes are automatically called on an Observation Date other than the final Observation Date, we will redeem the notes and pay the applicable Call Amount on the fifth business day after the applicable Observation Date, subject to postponement as described below. If the notes are called on the final Observation Date, we will redeem the notes and pay the Call Amount on the maturity date.

Unless otherwise indicated in the applicable term sheet, if an Observation Date (other than the final Observation Date) is not a Market Measure Business Day (as defined below) or if there is a Market Disruption Event on that day, the applicable Observation Date will be the immediately succeeding Market Measure Business Day during which no Market Disruption Event has occurred or is continuing; provided that the Observation Level will not be determined on a date later than the tenth scheduled Market Measure Business Day after the scheduled Observation Date, and if that day is not a Market Measure Business Day, or if a Market Disruption Event occurs or is continuing on that day, the calculation agent will determine the Observation Level (or, if not determinable, estimate) in a manner which is considered commercially reasonable under the circumstances on that tenth scheduled Market Measure Business Day.

If the final Observation Date is not a Market Measure Business Day or if there is a Market Disruption Event on that day, the final Observation Date will be the immediately succeeding Market Measure Business Day during which no Market Disruption Event has occurred or is continuing; provided that the Observation Level of the Market Measure will be determined (or, if not determinable, estimated) by the calculation agent in a manner which the calculation agent considers commercially reasonable under the circumstances on a date no later than the second scheduled Market Measure Business Day prior to the maturity date, regardless of the occurrence of a Market Disruption Event on that second scheduled Market Measure Business Day.

If, due to a Market Disruption Event or otherwise, an Observation Date (other than the final Observation Date) is postponed, the date on which the Call Amount for that Observation Date will be paid, if applicable, will be the fifth business day following the Observation Date as postponed, unless otherwise specified in the applicable term sheet.

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable term sheet, a “business day” is any day other than a day on which banking institutions in New York, New York or in London are authorized or required by law, regulation, or executive order to close.

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable term sheet, a “Market Measure Business Day” means a day on which (1) the New York Stock Exchange (the “NYSE”) and The NASDAQ Stock Market (the “NASDAQ”), or their successors, are open for trading and (2) the Market Measure or any successor thereto is calculated and published.

Payment at Maturity

If the notes (other than bear notes) are not called prior to the maturity date, then subject to our credit risk as issuer of the notes, you will receive a Redemption Amount of notes that you hold, denominated in U.S. dollars. In no event will the Redemption Amount be less

than zero. Unless the applicable term sheet provides otherwise, the Redemption Amount will be calculated as follows:

- If the Ending Value is equal to or greater than the Threshold Value, then the Redemption Amount will equal the Original Offering Price; or
- If the Ending Value is less than the Threshold Value, then the Redemption Amount will equal:

$$\text{Original Offering Price} + \left\langle \text{Original Offering Price} \times \left(\frac{\text{Ending Value} - \text{Threshold Value}}{\text{Starting Value}} \right) \right\rangle$$

If the notes are bear notes and they are not called prior to the maturity date, then, unless the applicable term sheet provides otherwise, the Redemption Amount will be calculated as follows:

- If the Ending Value is equal to or less than the Threshold Value, then the Redemption Amount will equal the Original Offering Price per unit; or
- If the Ending Value is greater than the Threshold Value, then the Redemption Amount will equal:

$$\text{Original Offering Price} + \left\langle \text{Original Offering Price} \times \left(\frac{\text{Threshold Value} - \text{Ending Value}}{\text{Starting Value}} \right) \right\rangle$$

The “Threshold Value” represents a percentage of the Starting Value and will be determined on the pricing date and set forth in the applicable term sheet.

Determining the Observation Level, the Starting Value, and the Ending Value

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable term sheet (or as described below under “Basket Market Measures” with respect to Baskets), the following definitions will apply.

The “Observation Level” will equal the closing value of the Market Measure on any Observation Date.

The “Starting Value” will equal the closing value of the Market Measure or a percentage of the closing value of the Market Measure on the pricing date.

The “Ending Value” will equal the closing value of the Market Measure on the final Observation Date.

Market Disruption Events

A “Market Disruption Event” means any of the following events, as determined by the calculation agent:

- (A) the suspension of or material limitation on trading, in each case, for more than two hours of trading, or during the one-half hour period preceding the close of

trading, on the primary exchange where component stocks of a Market Measure trade as determined by the calculation agent (without taking into account any extended or after-hours trading session), in 20% or more of the stocks which then comprise Market Measure or any successor market measure; and

- (B) the suspension of or material limitation on trading, in each case, for more than two hours of trading, or during the one-half hour period preceding the close of trading, on the primary exchange that trades options contracts or futures contracts related to the Market Measure as determined by the calculation agent (without taking into account any extended or after-hours trading session), whether by reason of movements in price otherwise exceeding levels permitted by the relevant exchange or otherwise, in options contracts or futures contracts related to the Market Measure, or any successor market measure.

For the purpose of determining whether a Market Disruption Event has occurred:

- (1) a limitation on the hours in a trading day and/or number of days of trading will not constitute a Market Disruption Event if it results from an announced change in the regular business hours of the relevant exchange;
- (2) a decision to permanently discontinue trading in the relevant futures or options contracts related to the Market Measure, or any successor market measure, will not constitute a Market Disruption Event;
- (3) a suspension in trading in a futures or options contract on the Market Measure, or any successor market measure, by a major securities market by reason of (a) a price change violating limits set by that securities market, (b) an imbalance of orders relating to those contracts, or (c) a disparity in bid and ask quotes relating to those contracts will constitute a suspension of or material limitation on trading in futures or options contracts related to the Market Measure;
- (4) a suspension of or material limitation on trading on the relevant exchange will not include any time when that exchange is closed for trading under ordinary circumstances; and
- (5) if applicable to Market Measures with component stocks listed on the NYSE, for the purpose of clause (A) above, any limitations on trading during significant market fluctuations under NYSE Rule 80B, or any applicable rule or regulation enacted or promulgated by the NYSE or any other self regulatory organization or the SEC of similar scope as determined by the calculation agent, will be considered "material."

Adjustments to a Market Measure

If at any time after the applicable pricing date, a Market Measure Publisher makes a material change in the formula for or the method of calculating a Market Measure, or Market Measure component in the case of a Basket, or in any other way materially modifies that Market Measure so that the Market Measure does not, in the opinion of the calculation agent, fairly represent the value of the Market Measure had those changes or modifications not been made, then, from and after that time, the calculation agent will, at the close of business in New York, New York, on each date that the closing value of the Market Measure is to be calculated, make any adjustments as, in the good faith judgment of the calculation agent, may be necessary in order to arrive at a calculation of a value of the applicable Market Measure as if

those changes or modifications had not been made, and calculate the closing value with reference to the Market Measure, as so adjusted. Accordingly, if the method of calculating a Market Measure is modified so that the value of the Market Measure is a fraction or a multiple of what it would have been if it had not been modified, then the calculation agent will adjust the Market Measure in order to arrive at a value of the Market Measure as if it had not been modified.

Discontinuance of a Market Measure

If after the applicable pricing date, a Market Measure Publisher discontinues publication of a Market Measure (or otherwise fails to publish a Market Measure) to which an issue of the notes is linked, or one or more components of a Market Measure in the case of a Basket, and that Market Measure Publisher or another entity publishes a successor or substitute market measure that the calculation agent determines, in its sole discretion, to be comparable to that Market Measure (a “successor market measure”), then, upon the calculation agent’s notification of that determination to the trustee and to us, the calculation agent will substitute the successor market measure as calculated by the relevant Market Measure Publisher or any other entity and calculate the closing value on any Observation Date (and therefore whether an automatic call has occurred) and/or the Ending Value as described above under “—Payment at Maturity.” Upon any selection by the calculation agent of a successor market measure, the calculation agent will cause written notice of the selection to be promptly furnished to the trustee, to us, and to the holders of the notes.

In the event that a Market Measure Publisher discontinues publication of a Market Measure or otherwise fails to publish the Market Measure on an Observation Date and:

- the calculation agent does not select a successor market measure; or
- the successor market measure is not published on an applicable Observation Date,

the calculation agent will compute a substitute value for the Market Measure in accordance with the procedures last used to calculate the Market Measure before any discontinuance. If a successor market measure is selected or the calculation agent calculates a value as a substitute for a Market Measure as described below, the successor market measure or value will be used as a substitute for that Market Measure for all purposes, including for the purpose of determining whether a Market Disruption Event exists.

If a Market Measure Publisher (i) discontinues publication of the Market Measure before an applicable Observation Date or (ii) otherwise fails to publish the Market Measure on an Observation Date and the calculation agent determines that no successor market measure is available on any day that would otherwise be an Observation Date, then on each day until the earlier to occur of:

- the occurrence of an automatic call; or
- the determination of the Ending Value; or
- a determination by the calculation agent that a successor market measure is available,

the calculation agent will determine the value that would be used in determining whether an automatic call has occurred, computing the Call Amount or the Redemption Amount, as applicable, as described in the preceding paragraph as if that day were an Observation Date. The calculation agent will make available to holders of the notes information as to each such value; such information may be disseminated by means of Bloomberg, Reuters, a website, or any other means selected by the calculation agent in its reasonable discretion.

Notwithstanding these alternative arrangements, any modification or discontinuance of the publication of the specific Market Measure to which your notes are linked may adversely affect trading in the notes.

Basket Market Measures

If the Market Measure to which your notes are linked is a Basket, the Basket Components will be set forth in the applicable term sheet. We will assign each Basket Component an Initial Component Weight so that each Basket Component represents a percentage of the Starting Value of the Basket on the applicable pricing date. We may assign the Basket Components equal Initial Component Weights, or we may assign the Basket Components unequal Initial Component Weights. The Initial Component Weight for each Basket Component will be set forth in the applicable term sheet.

Determination of the Component Ratio for Each Basket Component

We will set a fixed factor (the “Component Ratio”) for each Basket Component, based upon the weighting of that Basket Component. The Component Ratio for each Basket Component will be calculated on the pricing date and will equal:

- the Initial Component Weight (expressed as a percentage) for that Basket Component, multiplied by 100; *divided by*
- the closing value of that Basket Component on the pricing date.

Each Component Ratio will be rounded to eight decimal places.

The Component Ratios will be calculated in this way so that the Starting Value of the Basket will equal 100 on the pricing date. The Component Ratios will not be revised subsequent to their determination on the pricing date, except that the calculation agent may in its good faith judgment adjust the Component Ratio of any Basket Component in the event that Basket Component is materially changed or modified in a manner that does not, in the opinion of the calculation agent, fairly represent the value of that Basket Component had those material changes or modifications not been made.

Unless otherwise set forth in the applicable term sheet, if a Market Disruption Event occurs on the pricing date as to any Basket Component, the calculation agent will establish the closing value of that Basket Component (the “Basket Component Closing Value”), and thus its Component Ratio, based on the closing value of that Basket Component on the first Market Measure Business Day following the pricing date on which no Market Disruption Event occurs with respect to that Basket Component. In the event that a Market Disruption Event occurs with respect to that Basket Component on the pricing date and on each day to and including the second scheduled Market Measure Business Day following the pricing date, the calculation agent (not later than the close of business in New York, New York on the second scheduled Market Measure Business Day following the pricing date) will estimate the Basket Component

Closing Value, and thus the applicable Component Ratio, in a manner that the calculation agent considers commercially reasonable under the circumstances. The final term sheet will set forth the Basket Component Closing Value, a brief statement of the facts relating to the establishment of the Basket Component Closing Value (including the applicable Market Disruption Event(s)), and the applicable Component Ratio.

Unless otherwise set forth in the applicable term sheet, if, for any Basket Component (an “Observation Date Affected Basket Component”), (i) a Market Disruption Event occurs on a scheduled Observation Date or (ii) the calculation agent determines that any scheduled Observation Date is not a Market Measure Business Day by reason of an extraordinary event, occurrence, declaration, or otherwise (any such day in either (i) or (ii) being a “non-calculation day”), the calculation agent will determine the closing value of each Observation Date Affected Basket Component for that non-calculation day, and as a result, the value of the Basket, as follows:

- The closing value of each Basket Component that is not an Observation Date Affected Basket Component will be its closing value on that non-calculation day.
- The closing value of each Observation Date Affected Basket Component will equal the closing value of that Basket Component on the first Market Measure Business Day following that non-calculation day on which no Market Disruption Event occurs or is continuing with respect to that Observation Date Affected Basket Component; provided that the closing value will be determined (or, if not determined, estimated) by the calculation agent in a manner which the calculation agent considers commercially reasonable under the circumstances on a date no later than the second scheduled Market Measure Business Day prior to the applicable scheduled Call Settlement Date, or, in the case of the final Observation Date, no later than the second scheduled Market Measure Business Day prior to the maturity date, regardless of the occurrence of a Market Disruption Event on that day.

The applicable Observation Date will be deemed to occur after the calculation agent has determined the value of the Basket as provided above. If, due to a Market Disruption Event or otherwise, an Observation Date (other than the final Observation Date) is postponed, the applicable Call Settlement Date on which the Call Amount for that Observation Date will be paid will be the fifth business day following the Observation Date as so postponed. However, if the final Observation Date is postponed, under no circumstances will the maturity date be postponed.

For purposes of determining whether a Market Disruption Event has occurred as to any Basket Component, “Market Disruption Event” will have the meaning set forth above in “—Market Disruption Events,” provided that references to “Market Measure” will be deemed to be references to “Basket Component.”

Computation of the Basket

The calculation agent will calculate the value of the Basket by summing the products of the closing value for each Basket Component on the applicable Observation Date and the Component Ratio applicable to each Basket Component. The value of the Basket will vary based on the increase or decrease in the value of each Basket Component. Any increase in the value of a Basket Component (assuming no change in the value of the other Basket Component or Basket Components) will result in an increase in the value of the Basket. Conversely, any

decrease in the value of a Basket Component (assuming no change in the value of the other Basket Component or Basket Components) will result in a decrease in the value of the Basket.

The following tables are for illustration purposes only, and do not reflect the actual composition, Initial Component Weights, or Component Ratios, which will be set forth in the applicable term sheet.

Example 1: The **hypothetical** Basket Components are Index ABC and Index XYZ, each weighted equally on a **hypothetical** pricing date:

Basket Component	Initial Component Weighting	Hypothetical Closing Value⁽¹⁾	Hypothetical Component Ratio⁽²⁾	Initial Basket Value Contribution
Index ABC.....	50.00%	500.00	0.10000000	50.00
Index XYZ.....	50.00%	3,500.00	0.01428571	<u>50.00</u>
Starting Value				100.00

Example 2: The **hypothetical** Basket Components are Index ABC, Index XYZ, and Index RST, with their initial weightings being 50.00%, 25.00% and 25.00%, respectively, on a **hypothetical** pricing date:

Basket Component	Initial Component Weighting	Hypothetical Closing Value⁽¹⁾	Hypothetical Component Ratio⁽²⁾	Initial Basket Value Contribution
Index ABC	50.00%	500.00	0.10000000	50.00
Index XYZ	25.00%	2,420.00	0.01033058	25.00
Index RST	25.00%	1,014.00	0.02465483	<u>25.00</u>
Starting Value				100.00

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- (1) This column sets forth the **hypothetical** closing value of each Basket Component on the **hypothetical** pricing date.
- (2) The **hypothetical** Component Ratio equals the Initial Component Weight (expressed as a percentage) of the Basket Component multiplied by 100, and then divided by the closing value of that Basket Component on the **hypothetical** pricing date, with the result rounded to eight decimal places.

Role of the Calculation Agent

The calculation agent has the sole discretion to make all determinations regarding the notes as described in this product supplement, including determinations regarding the Starting Value, the Observation Level of the Market Measure on any Observation Date, the Threshold Value, the Ending Value, any Market Disruption Events, a successor market measure, business days, Market Measure Business Days, the amounts payable at maturity or upon a

call of the notes, and calculations related to the discontinuance of any Market Measure. Absent manifest error, all determinations of the calculation agent will be final and binding on you and us, without any liability on the part of the calculation agent.

We or one of our affiliates may act as the calculation agent, or we may appoint MLPF&S or one of its affiliates to act as the calculation agent for the notes. Alternatively, we and MLPF&S or one of its affiliates may act as joint calculation agents for the notes. When we refer to a “calculation agent” in this product supplement or in any term sheet, we are referring to the applicable calculation agent or joint calculation agents, as the case may be. We may change the calculation agent at any time without notifying you. The identity of the calculation agent will be set forth in the applicable term sheet.

Same-Day Settlement and Payment

The notes will be delivered in book-entry form only through The Depository Trust Company against payment by purchasers of the notes in immediately available funds. We will pay the Call Amount or the Redemption Amount, as applicable, in immediately available funds so long as the notes are maintained in book-entry form.

Events of Default and Acceleration

If the notes have become immediately due and payable following an event of default (as defined in the accompanying prospectus) with respect to any series of notes that occurs and is continuing, the amount payable to a holder of the notes upon any acceleration permitted under the senior indenture will be equal to the Call Amount or the Redemption Amount described under the caption “—Automatic Call” or “—Payment at Maturity,” determined by the performance of the Market Measure. The performance of the Market Measure will be determined five Market Measure Business Days prior to the date of acceleration.

If the notes have become immediately due and payable following an event of default, you will not be entitled to any additional payments with respect to the notes. For more information, see “Description of the Notes — Events of Default” and “— Events of Default; Defaults” in the prospectus.

Listing

Unless provided for in the applicable term sheet, we do not intend to apply to have your notes listed on a securities exchange or quotation system. We make no representation that your notes will be listed or, if listed, will remain listed for the entire term of your notes.

SUPPLEMENTAL PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

MLPF&S and one or more of its affiliates may act as our agents for any offering of the notes. The agents may act on either a principal basis or an agency basis, as set forth in the applicable term sheet. Each agent will be a party to a distribution agreement with us.

Each agent will receive an underwriting discount or commission that is a percentage of the aggregate Original Offering Price of the notes sold through its efforts, which will be set forth in the applicable term sheet. You must have an account with the applicable agent in order to purchase the notes.

No agent is acting as your fiduciary or advisor, and you should not rely upon any communication from it in connection with the notes as investment advice or a recommendation to purchase any notes. You should make your own investment decision regarding the notes after consulting with your legal, tax, and other advisors.

We have agreed to indemnify the agents against certain liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act, or to contribute to payments made in respect of those liabilities. We have also agreed to reimburse the agents for specified expenses.

MLPF&S and its affiliates may use this product supplement, the prospectus supplement, and the prospectus, together with the applicable term sheet, in market-making transactions for any notes after their initial sale solely for the purpose of providing investors with the description of the terms of the notes that were made available to investors in connection with the initial distribution of the notes. Secondary market investors should not, and will not be authorized to rely on these documents for information regarding HSBC or for any purpose other than that described in the immediately preceding sentence.

U.S. FEDERAL INCOME TAX SUMMARY

The following discussion summarizes the U.S. federal income tax consequences of the purchase, beneficial ownership and disposition of the notes.

For purposes of this summary, a “U.S. holder” is a beneficial owner of the notes that is:

- an individual who is a citizen or a resident of the United States, for U.S. federal income tax purposes;
- a corporation (or other entity that is treated as a corporation for U.S. federal income tax purposes) that is created or organized in or under the laws of the United States or any State thereof (including the District of Columbia);
- an estate the income of which is subject to U.S. federal income taxation regardless of its source; or
- a trust if (1) a court within the United States is able to exercise primary supervision over its administration, and one or more United States persons (as defined for U.S. federal income tax purposes) have the authority to control all substantial decisions of the trust or (2) such trust was in existence on August 20, 1996 and such trust has a valid election in effect under the applicable Treasury regulations to be treated as a United States person.

For purposes of this summary, a “non-U.S. holder” is a beneficial owner of the notes (other than an entity classified as a partnership for U.S. federal income tax purposes) that is not a U.S. holder.

An alien individual may, subject to certain exceptions, be deemed to be a resident of the United States for U.S. federal income tax purposes by reason of being present in the United States for at least 31 days in the current calendar year and for an aggregate of at least 183 days during a three year period ending in the current calendar year (counting for such purposes all of the days present in the current year, one third of the days present in the immediately preceding year, and one sixth of the days present in the second preceding year).

This summary is based on interpretations of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the “Code”), Treasury regulations issued thereunder, and rulings and decisions currently in effect (or in some cases proposed), all of which are subject to change. Any such change may be applied retroactively and may adversely affect the U.S. federal income tax consequences described herein. This summary addresses only holders that purchase the notes at initial issuance, and own the notes as capital assets (as defined in Section 1221 of the Code) and not as part of a “straddle,” “hedge,” “synthetic security,” or a “conversion transaction” for U.S. federal income tax purposes or as part of some other integrated investment. This summary does not discuss all of the tax consequences that may be relevant to particular investors or to investors subject to special treatment under the U.S. federal income tax laws (such as banks, thrifts or other financial institutions; insurance companies; securities dealers or brokers, or traders in securities electing mark-to-market treatment; regulated investment companies or real estate investment trusts; small business investment companies; S corporations; investors that hold their notes through a partnership or other entity treated as a partnership for U.S. federal income purposes; U.S. holders whose functional currency is not the U.S. dollar; certain former citizens or residents of the United States; persons subject to the alternative minimum tax; retirement plans or other tax-exempt entities, or persons holding the notes in tax-deferred or tax-advantaged accounts; or “controlled foreign corporations” or

“passive foreign investment companies” (“PFIC”), both as defined for U.S. federal income tax purposes). This summary also does not address the tax consequences to shareholders, or other equity holders in, or beneficiaries of, a holder of a note. If a partnership (including for this purpose any entity treated as a partnership for U.S. federal income tax purposes) is the beneficial owner of a note, the treatment of a partner in the partnership will generally depend upon the status of such partner and the activities of the partnership. In addition, this summary does not address any state, local or foreign tax consequences of the purchase, beneficial ownership or disposition of the notes. Persons considering the purchase of notes should consult their own tax advisors concerning the application of U.S. federal income tax laws to their particular situations as well as any consequences of the purchase, beneficial ownership and disposition of the notes arising under the laws of any other taxing jurisdiction.

The applicable pricing supplement may contain a further discussion of the special U.S. federal income tax consequences applicable to certain notes. The summary of the U.S. federal income tax considerations contained in the applicable pricing supplement supersedes the following summary to the extent it is inconsistent therewith.

PROSPECTIVE PURCHASERS OF THE NOTES SHOULD CONSULT THEIR TAX ADVISORS AS TO THE U.S. FEDERAL, STATE, LOCAL, AND OTHER TAX CONSEQUENCES TO THEM OF THE PURCHASE, BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP AND DISPOSITION OF THE NOTES.

General

There are no Treasury regulations, published rulings or judicial decisions addressing the treatment for U.S. federal income tax purposes of securities with terms that are substantially the same as the notes. Accordingly, the proper U.S. federal income tax treatment of the notes is uncertain. Under one approach, the notes would be treated as pre-paid derivative contracts with respect to the Market Measure. We intend to treat each note consistent with this approach, and pursuant to the terms of the notes, each holder agrees to such treatment for all U.S. federal income tax purposes. Except for the possible alternative treatments described below, the balance of this summary assumes that the notes are so treated.

Tax Treatment of U.S. Holders

A U.S. holder’s tax basis in a note generally will equal the U.S. holder’s cost for the note. Upon receipt of the Redemption Amount or the Call Amount or upon the sale, exchange, redemption, retirement or other disposition of a note, a U.S. holder generally will recognize capital gain or loss equal to the difference between the amount realized at maturity or on the sale, exchange, redemption, retirement or other disposition and the U.S. holder’s tax basis in the note. Any such capital gain or loss will be long-term capital gain or loss if the note was held for more than one year. Long-term capital gain of non-corporate taxpayers may be eligible for preferential rates of taxation. The deductibility of capital losses is subject to certain limitations.

Although we intend to treat each note as a pre-paid derivative contract with respect to the Market Measure as described above, there are no Treasury regulations, published rulings or judicial decisions addressing the characterization of securities with terms that are substantially the same as the notes, and therefore the notes could be subject to some other characterization or treatment for U.S. federal income tax purposes. For example, the notes could be treated as “contingent payment debt instruments” for U.S. federal income tax purposes. In this case, in general, U.S. holders should be treated as described under “Certain U.S. Federal Income Tax Considerations—U.S. Federal Income Tax Treatment of the Notes as Indebtedness for U.S. Federal Income Tax Purposes—Contingent Payment Debt Instruments” in the accompanying prospectus supplement.

In addition, certain proposed Treasury regulations require the accrual of income on a current basis for contingent payments made under certain “notional principal contracts.” The preamble to the proposed Treasury regulations states that the “wait and see” method of accounting does not properly reflect the economic accrual of income on those contracts, and requires current accrual of income for some contracts already in existence. While the proposed Treasury regulations do not apply to forward contracts, the preamble to the proposed Treasury regulations indicates that similar timing issues exist in the case of pre-paid derivative contracts. If the IRS or the U.S. Treasury Department publishes future guidance requiring current economic accrual for contingent payments on pre-paid derivative contracts, it is possible that a U.S. holder could be required to accrue income over the term of the notes.

Other alternative U.S. federal income tax characterizations or treatments of the notes are possible, and if applied could also affect the timing and the character of the income, gain or loss with respect to the notes.

We will not attempt to ascertain whether any of the entities whose stock is included in a Market Measure would be treated as a PFIC. If one or more of the entities whose stock is included in a Market Measure were so treated, certain adverse U.S. federal income tax consequences might apply. You should refer to information filed with the SEC and other authorities by the entities whose stock is included in a Market Measure and consult your tax advisor regarding the possible consequences to you if one or more of the entities whose stock is included in a Market Measure is or becomes a PFIC.

Prospective investors in the notes should consult their tax advisors as to the tax consequences to them of purchasing the notes, including any alternative characterizations and treatments.

Tax Treatment of Non-U.S. Holders

In general, gain realized at maturity or on the sale, exchange, redemption, retirement or other disposition of the notes by a non-U.S. holder will not be subject to U.S. federal income tax, unless:

- (i) the gain with respect to the notes is effectively connected with a trade or business conducted by the non-U.S. holder in the United States, or
- (ii) the non-U.S. holder is a nonresident alien individual who holds the notes as a capital asset and is present in the United States for more than 182 days in the taxable year of the sale and certain other conditions are satisfied.

If the gain realized at maturity or on the sale, exchange, redemption, retirement or other disposition of the notes by the non-U.S. holder is described in either of the two preceding bullet points, the non-U.S. holder may be subject to U.S. federal income tax with respect to the gain except to the extent that an income tax treaty reduces or eliminates the tax and the appropriate documentation is provided.

We will not attempt to ascertain whether any of the entities whose stock is included in a Market Measure would be treated as a United States real property holding corporation (a “USRPHC”). If one or more of the entities whose stock is included in a Market Measure were so treated, certain adverse U.S. federal income tax consequences might apply. You should refer to information filed with the SEC and other authorities by the entities whose stock is included in a Market Measure and consult your tax advisor regarding the possible consequences to you if

one or more of the entities whose stock is included in a Market Measure is or becomes a USRPHC.

Other alternative U.S. federal income tax characterizations or treatments of the notes are possible, and if applied could also affect the timing and the character of the income, gain or loss with respect to the notes. Prospective non-U.S. investors in the notes should consult their tax advisors as to the tax consequences to them of purchasing the notes, including any alternative characterizations and treatments.

U.S. Federal Estate Tax

Under current law, while the matter is not entirely clear, individual Non-U.S. Holders, and entities whose property is potentially includible in those individual's gross estates for U.S. federal estate tax purposes (for example, a trust funded by such an individual and with respect to which the individual has retained certain interests or powers), should note that, absent an applicable treaty benefit, a note is likely to be treated as U.S. situs property, subject to U.S. federal estate tax. These individuals and entities should consult their own tax advisors regarding the U.S. federal estate tax consequences of investing in a note.

Notice 2008-2

In Notice 2008-2, the IRS and the Treasury Department requested comments as to whether the purchaser of an exchange traded note or pre-paid forward contract (which may include the notes) should be required to accrue income during its term under a mark-to-market, accrual or other methodology, whether income and gain on such a note or contract should be ordinary or capital, and whether foreign holders should be subject to withholding tax on any deemed income accrual. Accordingly, it is possible that Treasury regulations or other guidance could provide that a U.S. holder of such a note is required to accrue income in respect of the note prior to the receipt of payments under the note or its earlier sale. Moreover, it is possible that any such Treasury regulations or other guidance could treat all income and gain of a U.S. holder in respect of a note as ordinary income (including gain on a sale), or provide that the notes should be subject to the special constructive ownership rules of Section 1260 of the Code. Finally, it is possible that a non-U.S. holder of the notes could be subject to U.S. withholding tax in respect of the notes. It is unclear whether any Treasury regulations or other guidance would apply to the notes (possibly on a retroactive basis). Prospective investors are urged to consult with their tax advisors regarding Notice 2008-2 and the possible effect to them of the issuance of Treasury regulations or other guidance that affects the U.S. federal income tax treatment of the notes.

Information Reporting and Backup Withholding

Distributions made on the notes and proceeds from the sale of the notes to or through certain brokers may be subject to a backup withholding on "reportable payments" unless, in general, the holder complies with certain procedures or is an exempt recipient. Any amounts so withheld from distributions on the notes generally will be refunded by the IRS or allowed as a credit against the holder's U.S. federal income tax, provided the holder makes a timely filing of an appropriate tax return or refund claim. Reports will be made to the IRS and to holders that are not excepted from the reporting requirements.

THE PRECEDING DISCUSSION IS ONLY A SUMMARY OF THE TAX IMPLICATIONS OF AN INVESTMENT IN THE NOTES. PROSPECTIVE INVESTORS ARE URGED TO CONSULT WITH THEIR OWN TAX ADVISORS PRIOR TO INVESTING TO DETERMINE THE TAX IMPLICATIONS OF SUCH INVESTMENT IN LIGHT OF EACH SUCH INVESTOR'S PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES.

ERISA CONSIDERATIONS

Each fiduciary of a pension, profit-sharing, or other employee benefit plan subject to ERISA (a “Plan”), should consider the fiduciary standards of ERISA in the context of the Plan’s particular circumstances before authorizing an investment in the notes. Accordingly, among other factors, the fiduciary should consider whether the investment would satisfy the prudence and diversification requirements of ERISA and would be consistent with the documents and instruments governing the Plan.

In addition, we, the agents, and certain of our respective subsidiaries and affiliates may be each considered a party in interest within the meaning of ERISA, or a disqualified person (within the meaning of the Code) with respect to many Plans, as well as many individual retirement accounts and Keogh plans (also “Plans”). Prohibited transactions within the meaning of ERISA or the Code would likely arise, for example, if the notes are acquired by or with the assets of a Plan with respect to which we or any of our affiliates is a party in interest, unless the notes are acquired under an exemption from the prohibited transaction rules. A violation of these prohibited transaction rules could result in an excise tax or other liabilities under ERISA and/or Section 4975 of the Code for such persons, unless exemptive relief is available under an applicable statutory or administrative exemption.

Under ERISA and various PTCEs issued by the U.S. Department of Labor, exemptive relief may be available for direct or indirect prohibited transactions resulting from the purchase, holding, or disposition of the notes. Those exemptions are PTCE 96-23 (for certain transactions determined by in-house asset managers), PTCE 95-60 (for certain transactions involving insurance company general accounts), PTCE 91-38 (for certain transactions involving bank collective investment funds), PTCE 90-1 (for certain transactions involving insurance company separate accounts), PTCE 84-14 (for certain transactions determined by independent qualified asset managers), and the exemption under Section 408(b)(17) of ERISA and Section 4975(d)(20) of the Code for certain arm’s-length transactions with a person that is a party in interest solely by reason of providing services to Plans or being an affiliate of such a service provider (the “Service Provider Exemption”).

Because we may be considered a party in interest with respect to many Plans, the notes may not be purchased, held, or disposed of by any Plan, any entity whose underlying assets include plan assets by reason of any Plan’s investment in the entity (a “Plan Asset Entity”) or any person investing plan assets of any Plan, unless such purchase, holding, or disposition is eligible for exemptive relief, including relief available under PTCE 96-23, 95-60, 91-38, 90-1, or 84-14 or the Service Provider Exemption, or such purchase, holding, or disposition is otherwise not prohibited. Any purchaser, including any fiduciary purchasing on behalf of a Plan, transferee or holder of the notes will be deemed to have represented, in its corporate and its fiduciary capacity, by its purchase and holding of the notes that either (a) it is not a Plan or a Plan Asset Entity and is not purchasing such notes on behalf of or with plan assets of any Plan or with any assets of a governmental, church, or foreign plan that is subject to any federal, state, local, or foreign law that is substantially similar to the provisions of Section 406 of ERISA or Section 4975 of the Code or (b) its purchase, holding, and disposition are eligible for exemptive relief or such purchase, holding, and disposition are not prohibited by ERISA or Section 4975 of the Code (or in the case of a governmental, church, or foreign plan, any substantially similar federal, state, local, or foreign law).

Further, any person acquiring or holding the securities on behalf of any plan or with any plan assets shall be deemed to represent on behalf of itself and such plan that (x) the plan is paying no more than, and is receiving no less than, adequate consideration within the meaning of Section 408(b)(17) of ERISA in connection with the transaction or any redemption

of the securities, (y) none of HSBC, MLPF&S, or any other placement agent, nor any of their affiliates directly or indirectly exercises any discretionary authority or control or renders investment advice (as defined above) or otherwise acts in a fiduciary capacity with respect to the assets of the plan within the meaning of ERISA and (z) in making the foregoing representations and warranties, such person has applied sound business principles in determining whether fair market value will be paid, and has made such determination acting in good faith.

The fiduciary investment considerations summarized above generally apply to employee benefit plans maintained by private-sector employers and to individual retirement accounts and other arrangements subject to Section 4975 of the Code, but generally do not apply to governmental plans (as defined in Section 3(32) of ERISA), certain church plans (as defined in Section 3(33) of ERISA), and foreign plans (as described in Section 4(b)(4) of ERISA). However, these other plans may be subject to similar provisions under applicable federal, state, local, foreign, or other regulations, rules, or laws ("similar laws"). The fiduciaries of plans subject to similar laws should also consider the foregoing issues in general terms as well as any further issues arising under the applicable similar laws.

Purchasers of the notes have exclusive responsibility for ensuring that their purchase, holding, and disposition of the notes do not violate the prohibited transaction rules of ERISA or the Code or any similar regulations applicable to governmental or church plans, as described above.

This discussion is a general summary of some of the rules which apply to benefit plans and their related investment vehicles. This summary does not include all of the investment considerations relevant to Plans and other benefit plan investors such as governmental, church, and foreign plans and should not be construed as legal advice or a legal opinion. Due to the complexity of these rules and the penalties that may be imposed upon persons involved in non-exempt prohibited transactions, it is particularly important that fiduciaries or other persons considering purchasing the notes on behalf of or with "plan assets" of any Plan or other benefit plan investor consult with their legal counsel prior to directing any such purchase.