It is a pleasure to join other members of ESCAP in this RECI Ministerial for today’s discussion on securing an inclusive digital future in Asia and the Pacific.

Closing the digital divide and expanding connectivity for all is our shared goal.

The United States is deeply committed to a vision of global development that is inclusive, driven by innovation, and focused on those most in need. As Sustainable Development Agenda target 9.c notes, increased access to information and communications technology is essential for achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

To that end, we are making ambitious, concrete pledges to support digital connectivity and to bridge digital divides.

Our commitments include the Digital Connectivity and Cybersecurity Partnership, through which the United States will provide technical assistance and capacity-building to help developing country governments establish ICT policy and regulatory frameworks that enable a vibrant and inclusive digital economy.

To date, the USG has invested over $47 million to these efforts, and, through the Digital Invest program under DCCP, the United States is mobilizing private capital for digital connectivity infrastructure and digital financial services that strengthen open, interoperable, reliable, inclusive, and secure digital ecosystems in emerging markets.
Another example is the Federal Communications Commission, which, through its International Visitors Program, will offer expanded consultations, information sharing, and capacity building with regulatory counterparts from around the world. The enhanced IVP will include sharing of best practices on U.S. domestic efforts to close the digital divide, including gender considerations, and on tribal lands. The enhanced IVP will also include youth visitors and feature women, girls, and persons with specific needs.

These are just two examples of the work that the U.S. government is pursuing to support the vital goal of bridging digital divides, promoting sustainable, equitable, and transformational development through our digital ecosystems.

We look forward to continuing this work in ESCAP through the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Initiative, including by continuing to serve as co-chairs of Working Group 1, “Connectivity for All,” with Armenia. Through this and other efforts, we look forward to creating a better-connected world and greater opportunities for all.