Your excellencies, ministers of transport, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen.

My name is Annie Petsonk. I am Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs at the U.S. Department of Transportation. I am honored to join you today.

I bring greetings from our Secretary Pete Buttigieg and share his best wishes for this Ministerial Conference.

The United States appreciates the opportunity to work with ESCAP on multilateral solutions to common challenges, particularly in the transport sector.

At the beginning of his administration, President Biden laid out five priorities: COVID recovery, economic recovery, climate, equity, and America’s engagement in the world.

As our Secretary says, we undertake these with safety as our guiding star.

Multilateral cooperation is key to building back better from the pandemic.

The United States is committed to multilateralism and to the Indo-Pacific region. We will cooperate through ESCAP and other UN bodies to amplify our collective strength, speed, and progress towards addressing our shared challenges, and we recognize ESCAP’s efforts towards achieving the objectives, thematic areas, and activities outlined in the 2022 – 2026 Regional Action Programme.

We would like to underscore the importance of working towards the objective of environmentally sustainable transport systems and services.

In April we submitted an ambitious nationally determined contribution to achieve an economy-wide reduction in U.S. greenhouse gas emissions of 50-52% below 2005 levels in 2030. The United States also has set a goal to reach net zero emissions by 2050, and at the UN Climate Conference in Glasgow last month we published our long-term strategy toward achieving that goal.

Transportation is our country’s largest source of greenhouse gas emissions. Our new Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will help reduce these emissions by repairing, upgrading, and modernizing our nation’s transit infrastructure, replacing thousands of transit vehicles, including buses, with clean, zero emission vehicles, and building our first-ever national network of electric vehicle chargers.

In the multilateral arena, at COP26 we participated in the first-ever “Transportation Day,” joining the Clydebank Declaration to promote green shipping corridors; joining the International Aviation Climate Ambition Coalition; and announcing a U.S. Aviation Climate Action Plan with a goal of net-zero emissions by 2050.

In September we announced the Sustainable Aviation Fuel Grand Challenge: an initiative to increase U.S. production of SAF to 3 billion gallons by 2030 and 35 billion gallons by 2050, enough to power all of U.S. aviation with sustainable aviation fuels.

We are working with partners to bring this positive momentum into next year’s Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and we hope you’ll join us there.

We’re also committed to increasing ambition at the International Maritime Organization (IMO). As our Secretary has recently urged, it is time for IMO to adopt a goal of zero emissions by 2050.

Turning to the road sector, the United States supports the Safe System Approach, which is the foundation that ensures Safe Road Users, Safe Vehicles, Safe Roads, Safe Speeds, and Effective Post-Crash Care. The Approach provides a real, practical framework for collaboration and offers the possibility of making traffic crashes and fatalities a thing of the past.
• Safer and more efficient connectivity and mobility can support increased prosperity, economic growth, and security for Indo-Pacific countries in ESCAP.
• Safe, sustainable, resilient, and high-quality infrastructure will be instrumental in meeting the Regional Action Programme’s objectives.
• As President Biden said to the UN General Assembly this year, “done the right way… with transparent, sustainable investment in projects that respond to the country’s needs and engage their local workers to maintain high labor and environmental standards, infrastructure can be a strong foundation that allows societies in low- and middle-income countries to grow and to prosper.”
• We look forward to our joint work to address common challenges and expand sustainable transport initiatives in the region.
• Thank you.