

**ON BEHALF OF THE UNITED STATES, IT IS AN HONOR TO JOIN  
FELLOW MEMBER STATES FOR THIS MINISTERIAL LEVEL  
SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND  
DEVELOPMENT.**

**SPECIAL THANKS TO EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ALISJAHBANA [*AH-  
LEASE-JAH-BAH-NAH*] FOR HER EXCELLENT LEADERSHIP AND TO  
THE ESCAP SECRETARIAT FOR THEIR EXCELLENT WORK IN  
PREPARING THIS MEETING.**

**THE UNITED STATES REMAINS COMMITTED TO ADVANCING THE  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS, INCLUDING THOSE  
FOCUSED SQUARELY ON THE ENVIRONMENT, A TOP PRIORITY  
FOR THE BIDEN-HARRIS ADMINISTRATION. IT IS INSPIRING TO  
SEE COUNTRIES FROM THROUGHOUT THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION**

**COME TOGETHER TO SHARE IDEAS ON HOW TO GROW OUR ECONOMIES WHILE ALSO PROTECTING OUR ECOSYSTEMS.**

**THE U.S. INDO PACIFIC STRATEGY CALLS FOR BUILDING RESILIENCE TO 21ST CENTURY TRANSNATIONAL THREATS, INCLUDING COOPERATING TO REDUCE VULNERABILITIES TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUPPORTING THE TRANSITION TO CLEAN ENERGY.**

**AS JUST ONE EXAMPLE OF HOW THIS TRANSLATES INTO PARTNERSHIP IN THE ESCAP REGION, AT THE U.S.-PACIFIC ISLANDS SUMMIT IN SEPTEMBER 2022, WE ANNOUNCED SMALL GRANTS TO SUPPORT A RANGE OF ENVIRONMENT FOCUSED PROJECTS IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS. AND OUR PACIFIC ISLAND FOREST RESTORATION INITIATIVE IS DEVELOPING LOCAL**

**CAPACITY FOR FOREST RESTORATION, WHICH WILL ADDRESS BOTH AIR POLLUTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE.**

**WE APPLAUD THE FOCUS ON AIR POLLUTION AT THIS EVENT.**

**THE UNITED STATES RECOGNIZES THAT AIR POLLUTION IS A**

**GLOBAL THREAT TO HUMAN HEALTH, ECONOMIC**

**DEVELOPMENT, AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY. ALL ACROSS**

**THE ESCAP REGION, WE ARE WORKING TO ADDRESS IT.**

**FOR EXAMPLE, WE ARE FUNDING A PROJECT LED BY DUKE**

**UNIVERSITY THAT HAS ESTABLISHED PARTNERSHIPS WITH**

**UNIVERSITIES AND NGOS IN NEARLY EVERY COUNTRY IN SOUTH**

**AND CENTRAL ASIA AIMED AT BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY TO**

**MANAGE AIR QUALITY AND REDUCE AIR POLLUTION.**

**WE THEREFORE WELCOME THE ADOPTION OF A REGIONAL  
ACTION PROGRAM ON AIR POLLUTION AND CONGRATULATE  
ESCAP FOR EXCELLENT LEADERSHIP ON THE ISSUE.**

**TOO OFTEN, WE MAY SEE AIR POLLUTION AS A PROBLEM THAT IS  
TOO EXPENSIVE TO SOLVE. THE TRUTH IS, CURBING AIR  
POLLUTION HAS MASSIVE ECONOMIC BENEFITS. SINCE 1970,  
WHEN THE UNITED STATES ENACTED THE CLEAN AIR ACT, WE  
HAVE REDUCED THE EMISSIONS OF THE MOST DANGEROUS  
POLLUTANTS BY 78 PERCENT, WHILE OUR ECONOMY HAS GROWN  
BY NEARLY 300 PERCENT. TOTAL PRIVATE SECTOR JOBS  
INCREASED BY 223 PERCENT DURING THE SAME PERIOD.**

**THE U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY ESTIMATES  
THAT FOR EVERY DOLLAR INVESTED IN CLEANING THE AIR, 30-90**

**DOLLARS ARE RETURNED IN IMPROVED HEALTH AND ECONOMIC PRODUCTIVITY.**

**ALL COUNTRIES CAN ENJOY SIMILAR BENEFITS.**

**WE ARE PLEASED THAT THE REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAM CALLS FOR INCREASED REGIONAL COOPERATION. NOT ONLY DOES COOPERATION ALLOW US TO BUILD AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT CAPACITY MORE EFFICIENTLY, BUT IT IS ALSO THE ONLY WAY TO EFFECTIVELY ADDRESS TRANSBOUNDARY AIR POLLUTION.**

**THE REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAM WISELY CALLS FOR MEMBER STATES TO SHARE AIR QUALITY DATA. THAT IS CRUCIAL. ONLY BY OPENLY SHARING AIR QUALITY DATA CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE REGIONAL SOURCES OF AIR POLLUTION AND DEVELOP ECONOMICALLY EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES.**

**FINALLY, WE STRONGLY SUPPORT THE REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAM'S CALL FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF AN OPEN REGIONAL PLATFORM FOR THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND BEST PRACTICES ON AIR POLLUTION CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS. THAT IS AN IMPORTANT TOOL AS WE MOVE FORWARD TOGETHER.**

**THE UNITED STATES LOOKS FORWARD TO COLLABORATING WITH FELLOW ESCAP MEMBER STATES TO IMPLEMENT THE REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAM, AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE LAUNCH EVENT IN MONGOLIA EARLY NEXT YEAR.**

**OUR ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES ARE GREAT, BUT I AM OPTIMISTIC WE CAN OVERCOME THEM IF WE WORK TOGETHER.**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION.**

