Thank you, Madame Chair, distinguished fellow delegates,

It is a pleasure to participate in this important discussion. During the past several months or so, we have all embarked on a journey of considerable promise—a journey in which can improve the way we do business around the globe in making people’s lives better and enhancing the environment for our tomorrow.

In Johannesburg last September, we all pledged ourselves to work together in partnership to promote sustainable development. Less than a year later we are here in Kiev to talk about how partnerships can help protect the environment and enhance sustainability across Europe and Eurasia.

The United States is excited about this approach. For several years now, we’ve had the pleasure and opportunity to be working in partnership with many of you gathered here on everything from improving Ukraine’s water systems to sharing best practices with Croatia’s and Georgia’s national parks; from improving energy efficiency in Poland to building revolving funds for environmental work in Kazakhstan and Ukraine.

In the Sava river basin, we are working closely with riparian countries, other donors and NGO and private sector partners to create a regional institution to jointly manage these countries’ shared waters. This initiative is part of the $970 million initiative the United States launched at the WSSD to increase access to drinking water and basic sanitation, improve watershed management, and increase the efficient use of water for agriculture.

The United States understands that resources are important and governments need to deliver their share. In fact, over the past three years, the United States has invested over US $280 million on environmental projects in Central Europe and Eurasia.

In these efforts, we have seen that good governance is critical—transparency, accountability, and sound models for financing. In partnership with nations present here, with NGOs, the World Bank and others, much of our focus has been on capacity building.

Together we have focused on place-based projects and programs that produce energy, protect forests, provide safe drinking water and cleaner air, and that offer training and creative financing. We invite those interested to review this booklet, which we have recently put together to summarize many of these joint partnerships that we are engaged in together.
Madame Chair, together we need to listen, to learn, to take risks, and to commit ourselves and our resources to collaborative action. We can learn from our mistakes and our successes, and then move forward. This Fifth Forum of Ministers is an excellent opportunity to take stock, cooperate with one another to commit to further action to ensure a legacy of sustainability, improved economies and environmental enhancement for this special region of the globe.

Thank you.