Good Morning.

On behalf of the United States and the Philippines, let me welcome you to the APEC Pathfinder II Dialogue on Combating Corruption and Illicit Trade: Partnerships for Sustainable Security, and to continue the discussion from our first gathering in Bangkok, Thailand in 2013.

It is an honor to have with us this morning our distinguished keynote speakers to help open Pathfinder II in the lovely city of Cebu, and we are equally honored, to have all of you – our distinguished delegates and Pathfinder family – joining us again.

Before I introduce our keynote speakers, let provide some contextual basis on this important APEC Pathfinder initiative.

But first, I would like to thank the members of the APEC Anti-Corruption and Transparency (ACT) Working Group, and APEC subfora-partners including the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC), Experts’ Group on Illegal Logging and Associated Trade (EGILAT), Oceans and Fisheries Working Group (OFGW), and the Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy (PPWE), and many others.

And of course, our international co-sponsors for the Pathfinder II Dialogue: the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD), and the Asia Rule of Law Initiative of the American Bar Association (ABA ROLI).

In partnership with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), APEC continues to elevate the fight against corruption and illicit trade across the Asia Pacific region.
As manifested in the ACT’s strategic plan, endorsed by APEC Senior Officials, and to meet our Leaders’ call for action, we continue to build pathfinding partnerships consistent with APEC’s overall agenda to build a better world and more inclusive economies, and to promote green, sustainable economic growth and development, shared prosperity, and an enduring peace.

Corruption and illicit trade undermine these important APEC priorities and goals.

The illegal economy and illicit trade that enable corruption and support organized crime, when converged with other threats, help fuel greater insecurity and instability across borders, markets, and communities.

The APEC Pathfinder Initiative has focused on the need to target corruption and illicit networks engaged in the trafficking of persons, wildlife, illegal logging, illicit fisheries, as well as on money laundering and the confiscation of the proceeds of these crimes, and how today’s transnational criminal organizations are endangering our collective security by infiltrating public institutions, sabotaging global supply chains, pillaging natural resources, and desecrating our human capital.

The APEC Pathfinder Initiative has also focused on the importance of inter-regional partnerships, information-sharing, best practices, and developing innovative ways to disrupt and dismantle the web of corruption and criminality related to illicit trade.

By strengthening international cooperation across borders, sectors, and industries through a spirit of active engagement and partnership of sustainable security, APEC is committed to nurture “cultures of integrity” across our economies, markets, and supply chains.

We hope that a commitment to integrity and enforcement can help to safeguard our rainforests, endangered wildlife, oceans and fisheries, and also protect our human capital and children, and promote the empowerment of women across Asia Pacific economies.

In short, this is the APEC Pathfinder framework to meet the ABAC recommendations to our Leaders to make the fight against corruption and illicit trade a priority for action across APEC communities.

It is an honor to introduce our distinguished keynote Speakers:
• The Honorable Justice Conchita Carpio-Morales, Ombudsman of the Philippines, 2015 APEC ACT Chair

• Mr. Eric Kneedler, Political Counselor, U.S. Embassy Manila

• H.E. Thinn Maung, Commissioner of the Anti-Corruption Commission, Myanmar

• The Honorable Greg Hunt MP, Minister for the Environment, Australia

• Assistant Secretary Lyndall Hoitink, Ministry for the Environment, Australia

• Undersecretary for Fisheries, Asis Perez, Philippines

Concluding Remarks: I am hopeful that when economies and communities unite and act together, we can inspire change to shape a better world for our children today and their sustainable futures tomorrow, nurture inclusive economies, a greener, healthier planet, safeguard our human capital, and help bring our humanity and planet back into balance.

Thank you.