

Eco Fest 2007

Thank you for the opportunity to join you this evening; thanks to the organizers for putting together an interesting and insightful program.

It's a pleasure to be here on the shores of beautiful Lake Ohrid to kick off the Eco Fest. We want to celebrate the environment and to recognize the importance of preserving it so that future generations of Macedonians, as well as tourists and others visiting your country can enjoy it.

Preservation of the environment is a long-term commitment, and it is one that involves all of us. The commitment starts locally, with each one of us, with our awareness of how our actions impact the environment. Here in Macedonia, we can stop littering, pick up garbage, walk instead of drive short distances, or turn off lights when not needed to save energy.

It is a global commitment as well, and it impacts all countries through important issues such as climate change. The U.S. is committed to developing a long-term, strategic framework that addresses this crucial concern through collaboration with our European partners and partners throughout the world.

The strategy, as proposed this week by President Bush, is based on economic growth and energy security—countries need to grow and expand to create jobs and better lives for their citizens, and they need reliable energy supplies to do it.

It is based on the idea that “one size won't fit all,” but that national and regional strategies are the most effective and realistic. And this is where you come in, where we all come in. It is your concern and active engagement with your fellow citizens—through events like this festival—that raise awareness about the environment and climate change and encourage others to be a part of a long-term solution that will ensure the environment and its beauty and resources are here for future generations to enjoy as well.

So have fun, enjoy the festival, and thanks again for the opportunity to be here!