

## Trailblazing ITC Mission to India Planted Miami-Dade's Flag in the Fastest Growing Major Economy in the World



### Message from Commissioner Natacha Seijas, Chair of the ITC

It is only fitting that the last edition of our newsletter for 2007 reflect some of the top accomplishments of our banner year. The missions to South Africa, India and the Commonwealth of the Bahamas carried Miami-Dade's flag around the world and gave us an opportunity to promote our community as a Global Gateway. The Annual Retreat for the second consecutive year brought the ITC Board of Directors and the Sister Cities Coordinating Council together to review our Strategic Plan.

Looming in the horizon for the beginning of 2008 are the Sister Cities Mission to Tenerife and our historic mission to Warsaw, Prague and Istanbul as well as our mission late in the summer of 08 to Peru and Chile, both growing economies in our hemisphere. Next year also promises to be one full of challenges and opportunities with many other planned events and activities.

As we bid goodbye to 2007, when ITC renewed its commitment to excellence, and to proudly carry Miami-Dade's flag far, we look forward to a New Year with great determination to build on that momentum.



*Pictured from left to right: ITC Senior Trade Specialist Desmond Alufohai, ITC Executive Director Tony Ojeda, Commissioner Natacha Seijas, Mayor Shubna Raul, Mrs. Mirtha Gonzalez, Mr. Alex Gonzalez ITC Asian Trade Initiatives Ad-Hoc Committee Chair, and Mr. Raul.*

The historic Miami-Dade County Exploratory Mission to India marked the first time that a U.S. local government visited India on an official visit, an accomplishment that was noted by the US Ambassador to India, David Mulford, as well as by Indian officials.

The Mission was led by ITC Chair, Commissioner Natacha Seijas, who said after its completion: "I feel particularly proud of our accomplishments in this mission because we have broken ground for Miami-Dade County in the Indian sub-continent, in a country of more than one billion people with one of the top growth economies in the world."

And beyond this historic significance, the Mission, which took place on September 30 to October 7, 2007, also marked the first Mission undertaken by ITC with the participation and involvement of Broward County's Office of Economic Development. There were 14 participants in the ITC delegation.

*(Read more on page 2)*

### Commissioner Seijas is Reappointed ITC Chair

Board of County Commissioners Chair Bruno Barreiro has reappointed Commissioner Natacha Seijas to serve a second two year term as Chair of the ITC Board of Directors. Her appointment is effective as of December 4, 2007.

Commissioner Seijas, who was originally appointed on December, 2005, expressed her satisfaction. "I am very pleased to be reappointed and appreciate the confidence that Chairman Barreiro has placed in me. The work that we do in ITC is critical to the people and the economy of Miami-Dade County, for we project the voice and the image of our community throughout the world promoting trade and our advantages. The momentum we have developed with high level missions to South Africa and India and upcoming missions to Europe, Turkey and South America are an indication of our success, as is the fact that we are getting the message out that Miami-Dade is a Global Gateway."

"I know that I speak for the entire Board and staff in congratulating Commissioner Seijas and in wishing her continued success during her tenure as our ITC Board Chair," said Executive Director Tony Ojeda.

## Broad County Attendance at Protocol Symposium Hosted By ITC



*From left to right: Dr. Ginger Barnard, Pauline Winick, Dr. Gary Ferraro, Dr. Sarah Mahler, Dale Webb, Jimmy Nares, ITC Chair, Commissioner Natacha Seijas, Walter Loy, and Board of County Commissioners Chair, Commissioner Bruno Barreiro.*

Representatives from most Miami-Dade County Departments - including two members of the Board of County Commission - participated at a Protocol Symposium hosted by the ITC and the Sister Cities Program. The program was administered by the Florida International University's

Transnational and Comparative Studies Center.

The half-day symposium on protocol techniques was held in order to provide training on how to assist and welcome foreign guest and dignitaries. It took place on October 19 at the J.W. Marriott

Hotel. With an attendance of 92, the roster well exceeded the expected 60 participants.

"We have convened here today to learn from experts on how to handle guests from all over the world who come to our county, truly a Global Gateway," said ITC Chair, Commissioner Natacha Seijas in opening the Symposium.

In attendance was BCC Chair Bruno A. Barreiro as well as management level representatives from departments as diverse as the

*(Read more on page 3)*



**Miami-Dade County's Sister Cities**

- Asti, Italy
- Asuncion, Paraguay
- Commonwealth of the Bahamas
- Cayman Islands, B.W.I.
- Iquique, Chile
- Kingston, Jamaica
- Lamentin, Guadeloupe
- Maldonado, Uruguay
- Mendoza, Argentina
- Monagas, Venezuela
- Pereira, Colombia
- Petit Goave, Haiti
- Pucallpa, Peru
- St. Kitts & Nevis Islands
- San Jose, Costa Rica
- Santa Cruz, Bolivia
- Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
- São Paulo, Brazil
- Stockholm, Sweden
- Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain
- Taipei, Taiwan
- Turks & Caicos Islands
- Veracruz, Mexico

**Joint ITC Board, Sister Cities Annual Retreat Reviewed Direction and Priorities for the 2008-09 Strategic Plan**



From left to right: Eva Swift, Emma Tibaldeo, Laurice Hunter-Scott, Walter Loy, Jose Luis Castillo and ITC Chair, Commissioner Natacha Seijas.



From left to right: Tony Ojeda, Rick Zelman, Commissioner Natacha Seijas, and Laurice Hunter-Scott.



From left to right: Eva Swift, Jose Luis Castillo, Commissioner Natacha Seijas, Walter Loy, Jimmy Nares, and Emma Tibaldeo.



From left to right, seated: Ralph Gazitua, Silvia Unzueta, and Sandrell Rivers. Standing, from left to right: Diana Gonzalez, and Desmond Alufohai.

A good turnout of members of the ITC Board of Directors and of members of the Sister Cities Coordinating Council attended the joint Annual Retreat on Saturday, December 1, 2007 to review the Strategic Plan, review our goals, and adjust them to changing conditions.

Participants during the half-day retreat reviewed all planned vs. actual activities; evaluated the agency's performance, and discussed new priorities and directives for FY 08-09 (October 1, 2008 to September 30, 2009).

The wide ranging discussion

focused on the ITC's mission statement and philosophy, centering on whether to refine the present statement and slightly broaden the mission to add to the agency's agenda some critical international issues that impact trade.

The results of the discussions and recommendations will be presented to a joint meeting of the ITC Board of Directors and the Sister Cities Coordinating Council on January 17 for approval.

ITC Chair, Commissioner Natacha Seijas, said at the beginning of the session that the successful retreat held on December of 2006 set the

framework for the one held this year. "Last year marked a new level of accomplishment for our annual retreat because we brought both boards together, the ITC Board of Directors and the Sister Cities Coordinating Council. The synergy we created generated momentum and creative energy in the organization," she said.

Commissioner Seijas also announced a donation to the ITC budget of \$30,000 from her District Office Budget. The ITC Budget and Finance Committee will recommend the allocation of these dollars for 2007-2008 ITC projects.

**Trailblazing ITC Mission to India Planted Miami-Dade's Flag**

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The Mission to India was also significant because it was the first time that the focus of an ITC mission was to "plant" the flag and brand Miami-Dade County as a platform for global trade.

The Asian Trade Initiatives Ad Hoc Committee under the leadership of Alex Gonzalez recommended the Mission to India. The ITC Board of Directors approved the mission on March 26, 2007.

There was ample opportunity to make presentations that branded the County as a global gateway and a platform for trade with the Americas to key U.S. and Indian officials, economic development agencies, trade organizations, Chambers of Commerce and enterprises, in both Mumbai and New Delhi.

Bill Johnson, Director of The Port of Miami had first ever meetings with the Jawaharlal Nehru Port

Trust and Mumbai Port Trust to explore ways to expand trade between Port of Miami and India.

And Miami International Airport Aviation Marketing Specialist Ernesto Rodriguez had meetings with Jet Airways to explore new air cargo and passenger routes, and ways to expand trade between India and Miami-Dade County.

## A Tribute to Walter Loy For His Leadership in Sister Cities

A luncheon in honor of Walter Loy was held at La Palma Restaurant in Coral Gables last October 24, 2007 as a "tribute" to his many years of service to the Miami-Dade County Sister Cities program. Members of the Sister Cities Coordinating Council and of the ITC Board of Directors as well as friends of Walter Loy, and the staff attended the event.

During the luncheon, Loy was presented with a special proclamation, and a plaque. He recently ended a long and distinguished tenure as Chair of the Sister Cities Coordinating Council.

ITC Chair, Commissioner Natacha Seijas praised Loy at the luncheon. She said: "We owe a debt of gratitude to Walter for his many years of unselfish dedication to the Sister Cities pro-

gram, just about from its inception more than 20 years ago. His energy, creativity and statesmanship have provided a wonderful leadership for the organization, and we will miss him in that capacity."

Said Tony Ojeda, ITC Executive Director: "Walter Loy has been the steady hand at the helm during a long period of transition and uncertainty for this program, and it is because of him that the Miami-Dade Sister Cities has come through many changes and challenges. When I came back to County government I asked Walter to help us reinvigorate the activities of the program, and with his firm leadership as chair of the Coordinating Council, he did that and more and we are grateful to him for that."



*Pictured above, from left to right, ITC Chair, Commissioner Natacha Seijas, presents a proclamation to Mr. Walter Loy*

## Sister Cities Mission to Tenerife Highlighted at Event for the President of the Cabildo



*From left to right: Walter Loy, immediate past Chairman of the Sister Cities Coordinating Council; ITC Chair, Commissioner Natacha Seijas; standing is Ricardo Melchior, President of the Cabildo of Tenerife; ITC Executive Director Tony Ojeda, and Pilar Mendez, Deputy Consul General of Spain in Miami-Dade.*

Ricardo Melchior, President of the Cabildo of Tenerife, the official host for the upcoming Sister Cities Mission to that Sister City in the Canary Islands, Spain, visited Miami-Dade during last September. On September 24, he was hosted at a lunch by ITC Chair, Commissioner Natacha Seijas and Walter Loy, at the time the Chairman of the Sister Cities Coordinating Council.

That upcoming Mission will take place on January 19th through the 24th and will include an intensive schedule of cultural exchange, citizen diplomacy events and many opportunities to promote Miami-Dade as a Global Gateway.

The delegation will meet with the highest officials in Tenerife, other nearby cities as well as with the President of the Government of the Canary Islands, His Excellency Don Paulino Rivero Baute. The Canary Islands is one of the autonomous regions of the Kingdom of Spain.

## Protocol Symposium *(Continued from page 1)*

Miami-Dade Police Department and Solid Waste Management. Of note is that a high ranking federal official, Mark Hatfield, Federal Security Director for the Transportation Security Administration at Miami International Airport, was also in attendance.

Said Tony Ojeda, ITC Executive Director: "As Miami-Dade County has become the Gateway to the Americas and beyond, we in county government have a unique opportunity to shape the impressions of Miami-Dade County that international guests take back with them to their homes and throughout the world. This Protocol Symposium offers useful and practical protocol techniques designed to avoid cultural misunderstandings and how to better communicate with our international guests."

## Mayor Alvarez Appoints Shelly Smith-Fano Chair of the Sister Cities Council

Mayor Carlos Alvarez has appointed Shelly Smith-Fano to Chair the Miami-Dade Sister Cities Coordinating Council. She was the Vice Chair of the Council, and the representative of the City of Asuncion, Paraguay. Corinna Moebius was appointed as Vice Chair. She had been a member at large of the Council. In her new role she will support the Chair and serve as Chair in her absence.

## Emma Tibaldeo becomes "dean" of Sister Cities

As a result of the departure of Walter Loy from the Sister Cities Coordinating Council, Emma Tibaldeo automatically became the longest serving member of the council and thus assumed the honorary role of "dean" of the Sister Cities Coordinating Council.

She recalled that even before Miami-Dade County had a formal Sister Cities program she began promoting a mission of Miami-Dade residents to her native Asti, Italy. That was the first mission undertaken, in 1985. In 2006 Miami-Dade sent its second mission to Asti, also under her leadership.



**Carlos Alvarez**  
Mayor

**Board of County Commissioners:**

**Bruno Barreiro**  
Chairman

**Barbara J. Jordan**  
Vice Chairwoman

**Barbara J. Jordan**  
District 1

**Dorrian D. Rolle**  
District 2

**Audrey M. Edmonson**  
District 3

**Sally A. Heyman**  
District 4

**Bruno A. Barreiro**  
District 5

**Rebeca Sosa**  
District 6

**Carlos A. Gimenez**  
District 7

**Katy Sorenson**  
District 8

**Dennis C. Moss**  
District 9

**Sen. Javier D. Souto**  
District 10

**Joe A. Martinez**  
District 11

**José "Pepe" Diaz**  
District 12

**Natacha Seijas**  
District 13

**Harvey Ruvin**  
Clerk of Courts

**George M. Burgess**  
County Manager

**Robert A. Cuevas, Jr.**  
County Attorney

## Miami-Dade County Took Relief Mission to Sister City Santo Domingo



From left to right: Roddy Gomez, the Mayor's Communications Assistant; Manuel Estrella, Secretary of State of the Presidency of the Dominican Republic, and Roly Marante, Chief of Staff of Miami-Dade Commissioner Rebeca Sosa. Gomez and Marante headed a relief mission to the Dominican Republic representing Mayor Carlos Alvarez and Commissioner Sosa on November 16 after tropical storm Noel hit that country causing significant loss of life and property. The humanitarian relief mission to the City of Santo Domingo from Miami-Dade County was a joint effort of Mayor Alvarez, Commissioner Sosa who is Honorary Chair for the Sister City of Santo Domingo in the Sister Cities Coordinating Council, and the Board of County Commissioners. Medicines, food, and water was collected at Miami-Dade Fire stations, Miami-Dade police stations and Team Metro Offices and were transported by FedEx, which donated the plane and fuel.

## On December 14 President Bush Signed the Peru-U.S. FTA; He Had Urged Miami-Dade Leaders to Support Free Trade Pacts

The U.S.-Peru Free Trade Agreement passed by the U.S. Senate on last December 4, and was signed into law by President Bush on December 14. It was a significant event for trade in the Americas. It is expected to help U.S. exporters have greater access to the Peruvian market.



Here is President George W. Bush's statement the day the FTA was passed: "I commend the Senate for approving the free trade agreement with Peru with strong bipartisan support. This agreement will level the playing field for American exporters and investors and will expand an important market in this hemisphere for U.S. goods and services, which will help strengthen economic growth and job creation in the United States. Approval of this agreement also signals our firm support for those who share our values of freedom and democracy and expanding opportunity for all."

President George W. Bush walks to the podium at the luncheon sponsored by the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce at the Radisson Hotel on October 12, 2007. Senator Mel Martinez introduced him. The President acknowledged that, "Miami is the Gateway to Latin America", and noted that our economic growth was 6.7% (twice the national average). He encouraged the audience to advocate with their representatives in Congress for the passage of the FTA's with Peru (which was subsequently approved), Colombia and Panama. He added that Miami is one of the cities that will benefit the most from the passage of the FTA's.

## Beacon Council Names Gary Goldfarb to ITC Board



Gary Goldfarb

The Beacon Council has appointed Gary M. Goldfarb as its representative on the ITC Board of Directors. He is on the Board of Directors of The Beacon Council, and in its Executive Committee. Goldfarb is also Chairman of the Infrastructure Committee. He is the Executive Vice President of WTDC, a logistics Infrastructure Company. WTDC were the operators of The Miami Free Zone. WTDC managed the day to day activities of this 47 acre foreign trade zone and developed the concept for an additional 17 acre park.

## Events

**1/04/08 to 1/08/08 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM**  
Spain Forum Hosted by The Beacon Council  
Pam Fuentes: 305-579-1330  
pfuentes@beaconcouncil.com

**1/17/08 5:00 PM**  
Joint ITC Board of Directors and Sister Cities Coordinating Council Meeting  
111 NW First St. 18th Floor Conf. Room  
Ricardo Bran: 305-375-1254  
rbran@miamidade.gov

**1/19/08 to 1/20/08**  
Franchise Expo South hosted By the Greater Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Miami Beach Convention Center  
Sandra Daley-Francois: 305-539-2940  
Sandra@gmcbv.com

**1/19/08 to 1/23/08**  
Outbound Mission to Tenerife, Canary Islands By Sister Cities International  
Adam Peters: 305-375-5420  
apeters@miamidade.gov

**Commissioner Natacha Seijas**  
ITC Chair

**Tony Ojeda**  
Executive Director

**The Jay Malina**  
International Trade Consortium

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**Roberto Fabricio**  
Editor

Please note that dates are subject to change.  
To announce upcoming events please call 305-375-4750.

