

YOUR EXCELLENCY...

MR. DIRECTOR...

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS AND FRIENDS...

IT IS MY PLEASURE TO WELCOME ALL OF YOU TO MIAMI-DADE COUNTY...

AND I THANK YOU FOR JOINING US THIS EVENING TO CELEBRATE THE LAUNCH OF QATAR AIRWAYS' SERVICE FROM MIAMI TO DOHA.

I AM REMINDED THAT EARLIER THIS YEAR, I HAD THE PLEASURE OF HOSTING A DELEGATION FROM QATAR WHICH CAME TO VISIT US AND LEARN ABOUT HOSTING LARGE SPORTING EVENTS AS YOUR COUNTRY PREPARES FOR THE WORLD CUP IN 2022.

WE ALSO WELCOMED OUR UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO QATAR, HER EXCELLENCY SUSAN ZIADEH AS PART OF THAT VISIT.

THE DELEGATION HAD ALREADY BEEN TO SEVERAL OTHER U.S. CITIES BEFORE COMING TO MIAMI.

IT WAS LATE JANUARY, AND THE ENTIRE NATION WAS GRIPPED IN A COLD SPELL.

EVEN CITIES WHERE IT USUALLY DOESN'T GET TOO COLD WERE ALL COVERED IN SNOW.

THAT IS, EXCEPT HERE IN MIAMI.

IT WAS A SIGNATURE BALMY WARM SOUTH FLORIDA EVENING.

AND AS I GREETED THE DELEGATION, I JOKED WITH THEM THAT MIAMI IS SO WELCOMING TO VISITORS...

THAT WE MADE SURE THE TEMPERATURE WAS AS SIMILAR TO QATAR AS POSSIBLE.

WELL, I CHECKED THE TEMPERATURES FOR DOHA TODAY.

AND WE'VE MADE IT SLIGHTLY COOLER FOR YOU.

SO I HOPE YOU ENJOY IT!

OUR COMMUNITIES SHARE MUCH IN COMMON.

DOHA AND MIAMI ARE BOTH BLESSED BY A BEAUTIFUL WATERFRONT.

WE HAVE IMPRESSIVE SKYLINES THAT HAVE GROWN TALLER IN THE LAST DECADE.

WE ARE GLOBAL CENTERS FOR TRADE, COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

AND WE SERVE AS THE BRIDGE BETWEEN DIFFERENT CULTURES AND DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD.

WE HAVE BOTH EMBRACED MULTICULTURALISM, WELCOMING PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD.

I MENTIONED THIS MORNING THAT DUE TO OUR GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION AND THE HISTORIC MAKE-UP OF OUR COMMUNITY...

MIAMI HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN KNOWN AS THE GATEWAY TO AMERICAS AND THE CARIBBEAN.

WE HAVE EXPANDED OUR REACH TO EUROPE...

AND TODAY, THANKS TO QATAR AIRWAYS...

WE ARE TAKING A STEP TOWARD BECOMING THE GATEWAY TO THE MIDDLE EAST AND BEYOND.

THIS IS IMPORTANT TO US BECAUSE MIAMI THRIVES AS A CROSSROADS OF COMMERCE AND CULTURE.

WE'RE LEADERS IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND TOURISM.

JUST LAST YEAR, THE VALUE OF TOTAL TRADE THROUGH MIAMI-DADE COUNTY TOPPED \$93 BILLION.

WE ALSO WELCOMED A RECORD 14.2 MILLION OVERNIGHT VISITORS TO OUR COMMUNITY.

AND IN ORDER TO ACCOMMODATE THESE VISITORS, OUR AIRPORT HAS MADE OVER \$6 BILLION IN IMPROVEMENTS, MAKING IT EASIER TO TRAVEL IN AND OUT OF MIAMI.

MIA BROKE A RECORD LAST YEAR WITH OVER 40 MILLION PASSENGERS IN 2013, MAKING IT ONE OF THE BUSIEST AIRPORTS IN THE NATION.

MIAMI ALSO HOSTS MAJOR SPORTING AND OTHER LARGE SCALE EVENTS, INCLUDING ART BASEL, ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ART FAIRS IN THE AMERICAS.

IN FACT, YOUR VISIT COINCIDES WITH THE NATIONAL BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION FINALS WHERE LEBRON JAMES AND OUR MIAMI HEAT ARE COMPETING FOR THEIR THIRD STRAIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP.

MIAMI IS ALSO EMERGING AS A HUB FOR HEALTH CARE TOURISM, AVIATION TRAINING, AND TECHNOLOGY-BASED BUSINESSES.

BUT OUR MOST IMPORTANT RESOURCE IS OUR PEOPLE. WE ARE OPEN AND DIVERSE.

MIAMI HAS PERHAPS THE MOST DIVERSE POPULATION OF ANY MAJOR AMERICAN CITY. OVER 60% OF OUR POPULATION IS FOREIGN BORN.

AND WE HAVE LEARNED TO BENEFIT AND PROSPER FROM THIS DIVERSITY.

IT DRIVES THE DYNAMIC GROWTH YOU SEE ALL AROUND YOU. AND IT'S TURNED US INTO A PLACE FOR INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY.

WE ARE PLEASED THAT YOU HAVE CHOSEN MIAMI.

AND WE INVITE YOU TO EXPLORE NOT ONLY SOUTH BEACH AND OUR VIBRANT URBAN CORE...

BUT ALSO OUR MANY OTHER NEIGHBORHOODS, WHERE YOU WILL FIND DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD, ALL LIVING WITHIN ONE CITY.

LET ME FINISH BY SAYING THAT I LOOK FORWARD TO EXPLORING DEEPER AND FURTHER CONNECTIONS BETWEEN QATAR AND MIAMI.

AND THOSE CONNECTIONS BEGIN HERE WITH ALL OF US.

YOUR EXCELLENCY...

QATAR AIRWAYS IS A VALUED PARTNER IN OUR COMMUNITY, AND WE ARE GLAD YOU ARE HERE.

YOU'LL ALWAYS FEEL WELCOME AND AT HOME HERE IN MIAMI.

THANK YOU, CONGRATULATIONS, AND PLEASE ENJOY YOUR EVENING!

