

GOOD MORNING, EVERYONE!

AS MAYOR OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY -- THE MOST POPULOUS COUNTY IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA AND THE THIRD-MOST POPULOUS STATE IN THE COUNTRY -- I WANT TO WELCOME YOU TO THE FIRST MEETING OF THE MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (M.I.A.) ASIA TASK FORCE.

MANY OF YOU MAY ALREADY BE FAMILIAR WITH M.I.A., WHICH HAS CONNECTED MIAMI-DADE WITH THE WORLD FOR 86 YEARS -- FIRST WITH LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, AND LATER WITH EUROPE.

WHAT YOU MAY NOT KNOW IS THAT M.I.A. IS AMERICA'S NUMBER-ONE AIRPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL FREIGHT AND THE ONLY U.S. AIRPORT AMONG THE WORLD'S TOP-10 FREIGHT HUBS. THESE TOP RANKINGS ARE ESPECIALLY REMARKABLE GIVEN THE RECENT ECONOMIC CHALLENGES WE'VE EXPERIENCED IN KEY LATIN-AMERICAN MARKETS.

JUST AS IMPRESSIVE IS THAT M.I.A. SUPPORTS NEARLY 300,000 JOBS, EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY. M.I.A. IS ALSO THE LEADING ECONOMIC ENGINE FOR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY AND THE STATE OF FLORIDA -- GENERATING BUSINESS REVENUE OF NEARLY \$34 BILLION ANNUALLY.

WHILE M.I.A. HAS EVOLVED OVER THE YEARS, SO HAS MIAMI-DADE.

WE HAVE GROWN FAR BEYOND BEING JUST A TOURIST HOTSPOT TO BECOME A GLOBAL HUB FOR TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION, RESEARCH, FINANCE AND CARGO LOGISTICS.

WE ARE WHAT OTHER METROPOLITAN AREAS AROUND THE NATION WILL LOOK AND FEEL LIKE OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS.

AS MIAMI-DADE COUNTY CONTINUES TO GROW, WE MUST ADDRESS CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS.

WE NEED TO MAKE THE BUSINESS CASE TO AIR CARRIERS THAT STRONG ECONOMIC, EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL LINKS EXIST BETWEEN MIAMI-DADE AND ASIA. THESE STRONG TIES NECESSITATE DIRECT AIR SERVICE.

AND MANY OF YOU RECOGNIZE THAT IT'S TIME TO BRIDGE THE DISTANCE BETWEEN MIAMI-DADE AND ASIA THROUGH A DIRECT AIR ROUTE.

AS WE HAVE SEEN IN MANY CASES WHEN NEW AIR ROUTES ARE INTRODUCED, DOORS OPEN TO GREATER BUSINESS, TRADE AND INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

A DAILY FLIGHT BETWEEN ASIA AND MIAMI-DADE WILL CONSERVATIVELY MEAN THE CREATION OF MORE THAN 1,000 DIRECT AND INDIRECT INDUSTRY JOBS, AND AN ANNUAL ECONOMIC IMPACT BETWEEN \$125 AND \$150 MILLION -- SOMETHING WE CAN ALL BE PROUD OF.

I APPRECIATE YOUR PARTICIPATION TODAY AND LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING HOW WE CAN COLLECTIVELY SECURE THE FIRST-EVER NON-STOP PASSENGER AIR SERVICE BETWEEN MIAMI-DADE AND ASIA.

I ALSO LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING YOUR IDEAS REGARDING HOW THIS TASK FORCE CAN ULTIMATELY MAKE ITS CASE TO AIRLINES TO SERVE ONE OR MORE OF THESE ULTRA LONG-HAUL ROUTES.

ONCE AGAIN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THANK YOU FOR JOINING US TODAY.