

GOOD AFTERNOON, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

THANK YOU FOR THAT INTRODUCTION, MR. DUFFELL. AND MY THANKS TO MR. GIL AND NICHOLAS REMILLARD FOR CHOOSING MIAMI-DADE AS THE HOST LOCATION OF THIS IMPORTANT FORUM, AND FOR GIVING ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK TODAY.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY IS THRILLED TO HOST YOU. AND ON BEHALF OF OUR 2.7 MILLION RESIDENTS, I'D LIKE TO WELCOME ALL OF YOU – FROM NEAR AND FAR -- TO OUR WORLD-CLASS COMMUNITY.

AS THE GATEWAY TO THE AMERICAS, MIAMI-DADE IS AN IDEAL LOCATION FOR THIS SUMMIT. AND BECAUSE OUR DIVERSE, BUSINESS-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY HAS WEATHERED THE MOST CHALLENGING OF ECONOMIC TIMES, WE'VE EMERGED STRONGER THAN EVER AND READY TO SHARE THE LESSONS WE'VE LEARNED FROM THE STORM.

AND WHAT WE'VE LEARNED FROM CHALLENGING ECONOMIC TIMES WILL ALLOW US TO PIONEER FOR THE GROWTH AND PROSPERITY THAT LIES AHEAD -- WHICH IS WHY WE'RE ALL HERE TODAY.

WE LIVE IN A TIME OF CONSTANT FLUX, AND IN ORDER TO ADAPT TO CONTINUOUS TRANSFORMATION, WE MUST WORK TOGETHER AS A GLOBAL COMMUNITY TO ADDRESS THE NEW CHALLENGES OF OUR GLOBAL ECONOMY – TO SHARE OUR EXPERTISE AND VISION, AND FORGE A PATH FORWARD FOR MUTUAL GROWTH AND PROSPERITY.

TODAY, I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT MIAMI-DADE COUNTY AS AN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND PARTNER IN OUR GLOBAL AGE.

OVER THE PAST SEVERAL DECADES, MIAMI-DADE HAS DEVELOPED THE HUMAN CAPITAL, THE RELATIONSHIPS, THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION, AND THE VITAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS THAT MAKE INTERNATIONAL COMMERCE TICK.

WE'VE CLEARLY GOT LOCATION ON OUR SIDE, TOO.

IN ADDITION TO OUR NEARLY PERFECT WEATHER, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY IS SITUATED AT THE NATURAL GEOGRAPHIC CROSSROADS BETWEEN NORTH AMERICA, SOUTH AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN.

THAT POSITIONING MAKES US THE LOGICAL DEPARTURE AND ARRIVAL POINT FOR GOODS FLOWING THROUGH ALL THREE REGIONS.

AND WE HAVE THE INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT THE HIGH-VOLUME GLOBAL TRADE AND COMMERCE THAT COMES WITH OUR IDEAL LOCATION.

OUR SEAPORT -- PORTMIAMI -- IS KNOWN AS THE "CRUISE CAPITAL OF THE WORLD."

OUR PORT HAD A \$27-BILLION ECONOMIC IMPACT ON OUR LOCAL ECONOMY IN 2015, AND OVER 207,000 JOBS WERE EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY SUPPORTED BY IT.

IN FACT, PORTMIAMI AND MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ARE OUR COMMUNITY'S TWO-LARGEST ECONOMIC ENGINES, AND ACCOUNT FOR NEARLY HALF-A-MILLION JOBS IN OUR COMMUNITY.

THEY BOTH ALSO HAD RECORD-BREAKING YEARS IN TERMS OF PASSENGERS AND CARGO IN 2015.

AND, AS YOU MAY KNOW, LAST JULY, PORTMIAMI COMPLETED THE "DEEP DREDGE PROJECT" TO EXPAND THE PORT'S MAIN HARBOR CHANNEL FROM -42 FEET TO A DEPTH OF -50/52 FEET. THIS MEANS

THAT PORTMIAMI IS THE ONLY MAJOR LOGISTICS HUB SOUTH OF VIRGINIA THAT'S CAPABLE OF HANDLING FULLY-LADEN POST-PANAMAX VESSELS.

AND MORE THAN \$1-BILLION OF CAPITAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS ARE TRANSFORMING PORTMIAMI.

FOR EXAMPLE, WE HAVE A NEW ON-DOCK INTERMODAL RAIL SERVICE LINKING PORTMIAMI TO 70 PERCENT OF THE U.S. POPULATION IN FOUR DAYS OR FEWER. AND YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED THAT WE HAVE A NEW TUNNEL LINKING THE PORT DIRECTLY TO THE UNITED STATES INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM.

WE HAVE A BIT OF TRAFFIC CONGESTION HERE IN MIAMI-DADE, AND THAT TUNNEL IS ALLEVIATING TRAFFIC WOES BY REMOVING APPROXIMATELY 14,000 VEHICLES FROM DOWNTOWN ROADWAYS EVERY DAY.

WE'RE ALSO LOOKING FORWARD TO THE OPENING OF THE EXPANDED PANAMA CANAL LATER THIS YEAR.

ALL OF MIAMI-DADE'S CAPITAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS TRANSLATE INTO MORE TRADE AND LOGISTICS JOBS FOR OUR RESIDENTS, AND MORE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY FOR OUR COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE.

BUT IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT INVESTING DOLLARS IN OUR INFRASTRUCTURE THAT MAKES MIAMI-DADE A GREAT INTERNATIONAL TRADE PARTNER. IT'S ALSO ABOUT TAKING A THOUGHTFUL, COORDINATED APPROACH TO BUILDING SMART NETWORKS THAT WILL MOVE GOODS SMOOTHLY AND EFFICIENTLY THROUGHOUT OUR STATE.

BACK IN THE LATE 1800S, MIAMI WAS A SMALL SETTLEMENT NEAR THE MOUTH OF THE MIAMI RIVER ON BISCAYNE BAY.

FAST FORWARD TO TODAY, AND IT'S PLAIN TO SEE THAT WE'RE LEVERAGING OUR GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION AND RESOURCES TO BECOME A GLOBAL COMMUNITY IN OUR OWN RIGHT.

FURTHERMORE, MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – WHICH I'M SURE MANY OF YOU TRAVELED THROUGH TO GET HERE TODAY -- IS NOT ONLY ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S MOST IMPORTANT HUBS. IT'S ALSO

QUICKLY BECOMING A GATEWAY TO EUROPE AND AFRICA -- IN ADDITION TO ITS UNDISPUTED TITLE AS THE GATEWAY TO THE AMERICAS ... ALL WHILE HAVING A \$34-BILLION ECONOMIC IMPACT ON OUR COMMUNITY AND SUPPORTING MORE THAN 282,000 JOBS IN OUR COUNTY.

AND SPEAKING OF JOBS, MIAMI-DADE CREATED MORE JOBS DURING THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY THAN ANY OF FLORIDA'S 67 COUNTIES.

IN FACT, WE'VE CREATED 132,000 PRIVATE-SECTOR JOBS IN OUR COMMUNITY IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS.

AND MIAMI-DADE COUNTY IS ALSO ATTRACTING MORE INVESTMENTS THAT ARE PROJECTED TO CREATE THOUSANDS OF NEW JOBS IN THE COMING YEARS.

WE'VE ALSO WORKED TO DIVERSIFY OUR ECONOMY BY INVESTING IN FIELDS RANGING FROM CLEAN ENERGY AND GROUND TRANSPORTATION TO ART, FILM AND ENTERTAINMENT.

THOSE INVESTMENTS ALONE ARE PROJECTED TO RESULT IN APPROXIMATELY 2,000 NEW, WELL-

PAYING JOBS IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.

ON TOP OF THIS, UNEMPLOYMENT HAS BEEN SLASHED IN HALF IN MIAMI-DADE. WHEN I WAS FIRST ELECTED MAYOR IN 2011, UNEMPLOYMENT WAS NEAR 12 PERCENT. IT STANDS AT ABOUT 6 PERCENT TODAY.

JUST HOW HAVE WE ACHIEVED ALL OF THIS? IN MIAMI-DADE, OUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER TO SET THE CONDITIONS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROSPERITY.

THAT'S NOT TO SAY THAT WE DON'T HAVE CHALLENGES. BECAUSE WE DO.

BUT WHAT SETS US APART FROM OTHER COMMUNITIES THAT HAVE NOT RECOVERED AS WELL AS WE HAVE, IS THAT WE WELCOME IDEAS AND INPUT FROM EVERYWHERE. WE WORK TOGETHER TO ADDRESS AND CONFRONT OUR CHALLENGES HEAD-ON.

I BELIEVE OUR COUNTY IS AN EXAMPLE FOR THE REST OF THE STATE AND COUNTRY.

AND ALTHOUGH ALL THE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND FALLING UNEMPLOYMENT RATES ARE WONDERFUL ACHIEVEMENTS, WE'RE NOT RESTING ON OUR LAURELS.

MIAMI-DADE IS A FORWARD-THINKING, WORLD-CLASS COMMUNITY THAT WELCOMES AND ENCOURAGES INVESTMENT HERE, AND RELISHES ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE AS AN IDEAS-AND-SOLUTIONS CENTER FOR THE AMERICAS.

IN FACT, WE PRIDE OURSELVES ON FOSTERING DIALOGUE TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES.

AND THAT'S WHY I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT MIAMI IS WHAT OTHER MAJOR METROPOLITAN AREAS IN THE U.S. LOOK AND FEEL WILL LIKE WITHIN THE NEXT 10 YEARS.

AS A TESTAMENT TO OUR SIGNIFICANCE, JUST LOOK AT THE PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT IN OUR COMMUNITY -- WHICH IS VISIBLE FOR ALL TO SEE WHEN DRIVING OR WALKING THROUGHOUT OUR COUNTY.

AS MAYOR OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, I WELCOME YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY AND ASK THAT YOU USE THE FREE TIME YOU HAVE TO EXPLORE OUR HOME.

YOU HAVE PARTNERS HERE WHO ARE WILLING TO WORK TO GENERATE IDEAS AND PROVIDE SOLUTIONS TO CRITICAL ISSUES THAT AFFECT US ALL, AND YOU HAVE STRONG SUPPORTERS IN THE COUNTY MAYOR'S OFFICE.

MY OFFICE IS ALWAYS OPEN TO NEW IDEAS AND FEEDBACK, AND NEW GLOBAL PARTNERS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THANK YOU AGAIN FOR YOUR TIME TODAY.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL, AND MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS MIAMI-DADE COUNTY!

