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Press Release

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Contact: Charlotte Gallogly
info@worldtrade.org **305-871-7910**

PortMiami and MIA Directors Highlight International Growth at World Trade Center Miami's State-of-the-Ports Briefing

MIAMI (Feb. 12) – International trade and commerce, a powerful economic driver for Miami-Dade County, will continue to grow in 2014, according to Bill Johnson, Director, PortMiami, and Emilio González, Director, Miami-Dade Aviation Department. In their presentations to more than 1,000 attendees at the World Trade Center Miami's (WTCM) 27th annual State-of-the-Ports briefing on Feb. 12th, Johnson and González highlighted recent accomplishments at the seaport and Miami International Airport (MIA), and predicted another strong year for international trade and passenger traffic.

"Together PortMiami and MIA had an economic impact of more than \$60 billion last year, and supported more than 500,000 jobs in our state, directly or indirectly," said WTCM President Charlotte Gallogly, who organized the annual event. She also thanked the luncheon sponsors, including AECOM, Bouygues Civil Works, Florida East Coast Railway, Flagler Global Logistics, Miami Tunnel, POMTOC (Port of Miami Terminal Operating Company), Seaboard Marine and South Florida Container Terminal.

Eric Dahl, chief executive officer of the World Trade Centers Association in New York, said he was impressed by the high level of cooperation in Miami-Dade among local governments and private sector. "You don't see this collaborative approach in many other U.S. cities, and it's very encouraging to see the WTCM bring everyone together at a major event like this," he said. "Globally, our World Trade Center Association brand is on a significant growth trajectory, especially in China, India and Latin America."

In his remarks, Johnson noted that PortMiami has \$2 billion in infrastructure improvements underway, and noted that the "deep dredge" of the port now underway will enable fully loaded "panamax" vessels to transit the wider Panama Canal and unload here. "We will be the closest U.S. port to the canal and the only one south of Norfolk with that capability," he said.

Other projects include the reopening of Florida East Coast Railway service to the port and the scheduled May 19th opening of the Miami Access Tunnel, which will allow trucks and buses to reach I-95 without going through downtown or facing a single stoplight. "While cargo volume was flat in 2013 at just under 1 million TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units), we anticipate steady growth in the second half of the decade," Johnson said.

In the cruise sector, PortMiami surpassed 4 million passengers and is headed for a record year. "The world's busiest cruise port is getting busier and will approach 5 million passengers in 2014," Johnson said.

Miami-Dade's aviation sector is also soaring, with four straight years of record passenger traffic, including 40.5 million air travelers in 2013. "We are recognized as an international brand," said González, who noted that MIA is now the #1 U.S. airport for international flights and international air freight. In addition, 70 percent of Florida's international visitors and 97 percent of Florida's total air trade, by value, comes through MIA. In terms of cargo volume, MIA saw a slight increase to 2.11 million tons.

During 2013, MIA added seven new international routes and a new carrier, XL Airways of France, González said. This year, MIA will have new flights to Brussels and in June Qatar Airways will begin Florida's only direct service to the Middle East. Four other air carriers are expected to launch service through MIA later this year.

Other infrastructure improvements at MIA include automated passport control kiosks that cut immigration wait times for U.S. citizens, renovations to the military hospitality lounge and the MIA Hotel lobby and lounge, González said. "We're also developing an online store, a mobile app and a new emagazine," he added. "We have a bright future ahead."