

THANK YOU DIANE AND MANNY, AND THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU HAVE DONE TO BRING EMERGE AMERICAS AND THE MAYORAL INNOVATION SUMMIT TO FRUITION.

DISTINGUISHED FRIENDS, AND TO ALL MY FELLOW MAYORS, GOOD MORNING AND A WARM WELCOME TO ALL OF YOU.

I THANK YOU FOR BEING WITH US THIS MORNING AND FOR JOINING US FOR THIS EXCITING SUMMIT.

THERE IS A BOOK THAT WAS PUBLISHED JUST LAST YEAR WRITTEN BY URBAN SCHOLAR BENJAMIN BARBER, AND IT HAS A THOUGHT PROVOKING TITLE:

“IF MAYORS RULED THE WORLD.”

WHAT IF MAYORS DID IN FACT RULE THE WORLD?

JUDGING FROM THE ATTENDANCE AND GATHERING OF MAYORS WE HAVE WITH US TODAY, AND THE DEPTH OF ISSUES WE ARE SET TO DISCUSS, THIS MAY NOT BE A BAD THING!

THE BOOK'S SUB-TITLE IS "DYSFUNCTIONAL NATIONS, RISING CITIES..."

AND ISN'T THAT WHAT WE ARE SEEING MORE AND MORE AROUND US?

THERE IS A GROWING BODY OF THOUGHT THAT IS STARTING TO SEE THE BENEFITS AND OUTCOMES WHEN MAYORS TAKE THE LEAD TO TACKLE AND SOLVE MANY OF THE LEADING ISSUES OF OUR TIME.

WHEN IT COMES TO THE THINGS THAT MATTER MOST TO PEOPLE...

EDUCATION, SAFETY, MOBILITY, THE ENVIRONMENT, TECHNOLOGY -

IT IS MAYORS WHO ARE LEADING THE WAY, AND COMING UP WITH THE MOST INNOVATIVE APPROACHES IN THESE AREAS.

CONTRAST THIS TO WHAT IS GOING ON IN MANY OF OUR NATIONS TODAY.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS ARE TOO BIG AND TOO COMPLEX TO HANDLE MOST BASIC OF PROBLEMS.

THEY ARE MIRED IN BUREAUCRACY AND UNABLE TO ACT WITH REGARD TO TACKLING THE ISSUES WE ALL FACE.

IT IS CITIES AND MAYORS WHO ARE AT THE FRONT.

THINK ABOUT THIS, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT LAST YEAR SHUT DOWN FOR ALMOST TWO WEEKS. THE GOVERNMENT CLOSED ITS DOORS!

BUT, IN OUR CITIES...

GARBAGE WAS PICKED UP AND STREETS REMAINED CLEAN, POLICE AND FIRE KEPT OUR CITIZENS SAFE, OUR ROADS AND BRIDGES WERE OPEN, BUSES AND OTHER PUBLIC TRANSIT TOOK PEOPLE TO AND FROM WORK, LIFE WENT ON....

NOW, IMAGINE IF ANY OF OUR CITIES WERE TO SHUT ITS DOORS.

NO ONE HAS TO TELL US MAYORS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN!

AS MAYORS, WE ARE ALL ON THE FRONT LINES, WE ARE THE FIRST RESPONDERS OF GOVERNMENT.

WE CANNOT HIDE IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL. OUR CONSTITUENTS SEE US EVERY DAY, AT SCHOOLS, AT THE MARKET, ON THE STREET.

WE ARE THE GOVERNMENT CLOSEST TO THE PEOPLE.

AND AS THE WORLD BECOMES MORE URBANIZED, AND THE POPULATION OF CITIES CONTINUES TO GROW...

IT IS UP TO ALL OF US TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF OUR CITIZENS, AND COME UP WITH WAYS TO HELP OUR CITIES MOVE TOWARD THE FUTURE.

TODAY'S GATHERING IS AN EXAMPLE OF THIS.

WE KNOW THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY, OVER HALF THE WORLD'S POPULATION LIVES IN URBANIZED AREAS.

WE ALSO KNOW THAT OUR NEIGHBORS IN LATIN AMERICA ARE EXPERIENCING THIS GROWTH IN A MORE DRAMATIC MANNER...

WITH 85% RATE OF URBANIZATION EXPECTED IN THE NEXT DECADE.

AS MORE AND MORE PEOPLE MOVE INTO OUR CITIES, WE ALL FACE THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION OF HOW TO BALANCE POPULATION GROWTH WITH AN INCREASED NEED IN SERVICES.

AND WE FACE THIS WITH TIGHTER REVENUES AND INCREASED FISCAL AND BUDGETARY PRESSURES.

ALL OF THE MAYORS IN THIS ROOM FACE THIS CHALLENGE.

AND THE ANSWERS WE COME UP WITH WILL AFFECT THE MANY LIVES THAT DEPEND ON US FOR THEIR BASIC NEEDS AND SERVICES.

BUT I HAVE GREAT HOPE THAT WE WILL ALL RISE TO THIS CHALLENGE.

AND WE WILL DO SO BY HARNESSING AND TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE POWER OF CREATIVITY THAT EXISTS IN EACH OF OUR CITIES.

RICHARD FLORIDA, WHO HAS JOINED US TODAY, IS RIGHT WHEN HE STATES:

“THE REAL KEY TO UNLEASHING OUR CREATIVITY LIES IN HUMANITY’S GREATEST INVENTION - THE CITY.”

CITIES ARE THE CENTERS OF CREATIVITY, WE ARE THE CENTERS FOR INNOVATION.

SO TODAY WE ASK...

HOW WILL WE BEST POSITION OUR CITIES TO OFFER THE MOST POSSIBLE AVENUES FOR ADVANCEMENT?

HOW DO WE MAKE OUR CITIES ATTRACTIVE TO THE FORCES OF CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION?

ALL OF US ARE HERE TO EXPLORE THOSE QUESTIONS AND TO LEARN FROM ONE ANOTHER.

LET ME OFFER THREE GENERAL FOCUS AREAS WHERE WE ARE WORKING TO ATTRACT THE ENTREPRENEURS WHO WILL HELP INNOVATE AND TRANSFORM OUR CITIES.

IT ALL STARTS WITH PEOPLE.

HUMAN CAPITAL IS THE FOUNDATION OF ANY TRANSFORMATIVE MOVEMENT.

FOR INNOVATORS, YOU NEED THE ABILITY TO RECRUIT AND WORK WITH TOP TALENT.

THEY WORK IN COMMUNITY, AND NEED ACCESS TO OTHERS WHO WILL CHALLENGE THEM TO THINK HIGHER, AND MORE CREATIVELY.

THIS IS WHY WE MUST INVEST IN THE QUALITY OF LIFE AREAS - EDUCATION, PARKS AND GREEN SPACES, ARTS AND CULTURE - THAT ATTRACT TALENTED PEOPLE.

NEXT, WE MUST BECOME CENTERS OF CONNECTIVITY AND CONVERGENCE.

HERE IN MIAMI, WE WANT TO BE A GATEWAY TO INNOVATION AND WE DO THIS BY BEING OPEN TO NEWCOMERS WHO BRING NEW IDEAS.

WHEN YOU OPEN YOURSELVES AS A CENTER FOR THINKERS AND INNOVATORS TO GATHER, EVERYTHING ELSE FLOWS IN.

YOU ALSO NEED ACCESS TO MARKETS, CLIENTS, SUPPLIERS, ALL THE ESSENTIALS FOR COMMERCIAL INTERACTION.

FINALLY, OUR GOVERNMENTS MUST GO FROM BEING BARRIERS TO BECOMING ENABLERS.

MANY TIMES ENTREPRENEURS SUCCEED AND THRIVE IN SPITE OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES. WE NEED TO CHANGE THAT.

WE NEED TO SUPPORT ACCELERATORS AND INCUBATORS, OUR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, AND ALL THE PLACES THAT SERVE AS CREATION CENTERS FOR INNOVATION.

WE MUST ALSO USE TECHNOLOGY FOR OPEN DATA AND A MORE ACCESSIBLE AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNMENT.

CAN ANY OF US IMAGINE ATTRACTING INNOVATORS IF WE ARE NOT INNOVATIVE OURSELVES?

THIS IS WHY WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND AND USE TECHNOLOGY TO TRANSFORM OUR CITIES INTO BETTER PLACES TO LIVE, WORK, AND INNOVATE.

THIS ALSO INCLUDES WIRING OUR CITIES TO ENHANCE THE FREE FLOW OF DATA.

IN ALL THESE WAYS, AND IN THE WAYS WE WILL EXPLORE AND DISCUSS TODAY...

WE CAN LEARN FROM ONE ANOTHER, AND UNLEASH THE POWER OF CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION THAT WILL CARRY OUR CITIES FORWARD.

THANK YOU, AND I LOOK FORWARD TO SPENDING THE DAY WITH YOU...

