

MADAM PRESIDENT, THANK YOU KINDLY FOR YOUR INTRODUCTION.

YOUR LONG CAREER AS A DIPLOMAT AND IN PUBLIC SERVICE IS A TESTAMENT TO YOUR DEDICATION TOWARD OTHERS.

LET ME THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING THAT YOU AND THE EURO AMERICA FOUNDATION HAVE DONE TO ADVANCE RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR NATION AND THE EUROPEAN UNION.

LET ME ALSO THANK THE CITY OF MIAMI AND ITS MAYOR, TOMAS REGALADO, FOR HOSTING THIS EVENT.

AND A BIG THANK YOU TO DR. EDUARDO PADRON OF MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE WHO ALWAYS OPENS HIS HOME FOR THESE IMPORTANT GATHERINGS.

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, DEAR FRIENDS...

OUR WORLD IS CHANGING AT A DRAMATIC PACE.

THE INFORMATION AGE HAS MADE IT POSSIBLE THROUGH TECHNOLOGY FOR HUMAN INTERACTION AND CONNECTIVITY TO HAPPEN IN AN INSTANT... CREATING WHAT AUTHOR TOM FRIEDMAN FAMOUSLY DESCRIBED AS A FLAT WORLD.

IN THIS WORLD, THE EXPANSION OF ECONOMIC PROSPERITY RELIES ON THE ABILITY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PEOPLE.

THIS IS WHY I WANT TO BEGIN BY EXPRESSING MY SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE CONTINUED NEGOTIATION AND PASSAGE OF THE TRANSATLANTIC TRADE AND INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP.

AGREEMENTS SUCH AS THE T-TIP SERVE TO BRING US CLOSER TOGETHER...

AND FURTHERS THE STRENGTHENING OF COMMERCIAL AND CULTURAL TIES BETWEEN OUR PEOPLE.

THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT BECAUSE COMMERCIAL TIES HELP BROADEN ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES.

AND CULTURAL TIES ALLOW US TO LEARN ABOUT ONE ANOTHER AT A DEEPER LEVEL.

WHAT BETTER PLACE TO EXPLORE HOW TO WORK CLOSER TOGETHER THAN IN A CITY THAT HAS GREATLY BENEFITTED FROM THESE CONNECTIONS - MIAMI.

OUR GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION HAS MADE US THE GATEWAY NOT ONLY TO LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, BUT INCREASINGLY TO EUROPE, AFRICA, AND BEYOND.

THIS HAS MADE MIAMI A CROSSROADS OF COMMERCE AND CULTURE, AND WE HAVE BECOME ONE OF THE MOST DIVERSE PLACES IN THE WORLD.

IN FACT, CLOSE TO 60% OF OUR POPULATION IS FOREIGN BORN.

IT'S A PLACE WHERE DIVERSITY IS NOT A DISADVANTAGE, BUT A POSITIVE, A WAY OF LIFE.

IN OUR CULTURE, THE LANGUAGES WE SPEAK, THE FOODS WE EAT, WE CELEBRATE AND RELISH OUR DIFFERENCES...

AND YOU WILL ALL FIND SOMETHING THAT REMINDS YOU OF HOME.

MIAMI IS THE LOGICAL MEETING POINT FOR GOODS, SERVICES, AND PEOPLE FLOWING THROUGH EUROPE, LATIN AMERICA, AND THE CARIBBEAN, TO AND FROM THE REST OF THE UNITED STATES.

WE ALSO POSSESS THE HUMAN CAPITAL, RELATIONSHIPS, LINES OF COMMUNICATION, AND VITAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS THAT FACILITATE THE FLOW OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND COMMERCE.

MIAMI HAS THE LARGEST CONCENTRATION OF FOREIGN BANKS OUTSIDE NEW YORK.

WE ALSO HAVE WHAT I CONSIDER MUCH BETTER WEATHER.

OUR PROFESSIONAL AND LEGAL SERVICE SECTORS ALL CATER TO A WIDE ARRAY OF INTERNATIONAL CLIENTS AND DEMANDS.

AND MOST MAJOR COMPANIES HAVE THEIR LATIN AMERICAN OR INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS HERE.

OUR URBAN CORE AND DOWNTOWN IS ONE OF THE HOTTEST REAL ESTATE MARKETS IN THE WORLD.

IN FACT, MOST OF THE BUILDINGS YOU SEE AROUND YOU WERE NOT HERE 5 OR 10 YEARS AGO.

AND TO FURTHER SOLIDIFY OUR POSITION AS A CULTURAL DESTINATION, JUST A FEW BLOCKS

DOWN THE STREET FROM HERE, WE HAVE TWO BRAND NEW MUSEUMS...

A SCIENCE MUSEUM THAT IS SOON TO OPEN...

AND AN ARTS MUSEUM THAT WAS UNVEILED THIS PAST DECEMBER TO COINCIDE WITH OUR HOSTING ART BASEL, THE MOST IMPORTANT ARTS FAIR OF THE AMERICAS.

ALL OF THESE PROJECTS TOGETHER WITH NEW INVESTMENTS IN SHARED CIVIC SPACES SERVE TO ENHANCE OUR WATERFRONT AND URBAN EXPERIENCE.

WE ARE ACTIVELY INVESTING IN ALL THE FACTORS THAT CREATE A POSITIVE AND ROBUST CLIMATE FOR BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY.

FOR 2013, THE VALUE OF TOTAL TRADE THROUGH MIAMI-DADE COUNTY TOPPED \$93 BILLION.

AND WE CONTINUE TO EXPAND TRADE BY REACHING OUT TO THE WORLD.

LAST SUMMER, FOR INSTANCE, I LED A TRADE MISSION TO FRANCE AND SPAIN.

IN FRANCE, WE HIGHLIGHTED MIAMI-DADE AS A CENTER FOR OUR GROWING AVIATION AND AEROSPACE INDUSTRY.

AND SPAIN IS A LEADER IN BOTH THE NUMBER OF MULTI- NATIONAL COMPANIES DOING BUSINESS IN SOUTH FLORIDA AND FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT IN OUR REGION.

IF YOU LOOK DOWN BRICKELL AVENUE IN OUR FINANCIAL DISTRICT, YOU WILL DEFINITELY NOTICE THE PRESENCE OF THE SPANISH FLAG FLYING OVER MANY OF OUR BANKS.

JUST A FEW WEEKS AGO, MAYOR CARLOS TRIAS OF BARCELONA WAS IN MY OFFICE...

WE SIGNED A PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY AND BARCELONA TO BOOST COMMERCIAL, CULTURAL, EDUCATIONAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COMMUNITIES.

THROUGH THESE AND OTHER EFFORTS...

ALREADY A LARGE NUMBER OF MULTI-NATIONAL COMPANIES ARE PLANNING TO EXPAND OR LOCATE IN MIAMI WITHIN THE NEXT 12 TO 18 MONTHS, AND

IT'S THE HIGHEST LEVEL WE'VE SEEN IN MANY YEARS.

LET ME HIGHLIGHT SOME AREAS WHERE WE ARE SEEING OPPORTUNITIES FOR GREATER CONNECTIONS.

OUR TOP TWO ECONOMIC ENGINES ARE MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AND PORT MIAMI.

ON ANY GIVEN DAY, OUR AIRPORT HAS MORE THAN 150 FLIGHTS TO LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN AND 20 DAILY DEPARTURES TO EUROPE.

AND, STARTING THIS SUMMER, QATAR AIRWAYS WILL ADD MIAMI TO THEIR ROUTES, MAKING US ONE OF SIX U.S. CITIES SERVICED BY THE AIRLINE.

MIA HAS MADE OVER \$6 BILLION IN IMPROVEMENTS AND BROKE A RECORD WITH OVER 40 MILLION PASSENGERS IN 2013, MAKING IT ONE OF THE BUSIEST AIRPORTS IN THE NATION.

AND OUR AIRPORT CONTINUES TO GROW.

WE ALSO CONTINUE TO HAVE A RECORD NUMBER OF CRUISE PASSENGERS IN PORT MIAMI.

AND, WE ARE FINISHING THE DEEP DREDGE OF OUR CARGO CHANNEL, ENSURING THAT PORT MIAMI

THRIVES IN THE POST PANAMAX ERA, ENHANCING OUR CONNECTIVITY TO LATIN AMERICA.

THIS MONDAY, WE CELEBRATE THE OPENING OF OUR PORT TUNNEL, A ONE BILLION DOLLAR INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT THAT WILL ALLEVIATE TRAFFIC IN AND OUT OF THE PORT.

THE TUNNEL IS A PRIME EXAMPLE OF THE TYPE OF PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS THAT WE WISH TO CONTINUE THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY.

THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR JOINED TOGETHER TO FINANCE, DESIGN AND CONSTRUCT THIS TUNNEL.

AND, MIGHT I ADD, ON TIME - ON BUDGET - AND WITHOUT TOLLS!

WE WANT TO EXPAND THIS THINKING INTO OTHER AREAS OF INFRASTRUCTURE ENHANCEMENTS.

THAT IS WHY, AS WE TACKLE THE URGENT CHALLENGE OF RENEWING OUR INFRASTRUCTURE AT A PACE THAT MATCHES THE COUNTY'S RAPID GROWTH...

WE CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE THE BENEFITS OF PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS.

FOR INSTANCE, WE ARE GETTING READY TO MAKE THE LARGEST INVESTMENT IN DECADES TO REPLACE AND IMPROVE OUR WATER AND SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE...

AND WE WANT TO DO THIS WITH THE HELP FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

IN NOVEMBER OF LAST YEAR, WE ASKED FOR INPUT FROM THE INDUSTRY...

AND WE RECEIVED OVER THIRTY RESPONSES FROM AROUND THE WORLD TO HELP PUT TOGETHER MORE THAN \$7 BILLION WORTH OF PROJECTS.

THE OPPORTUNITIES ARE HERE, AND WE WANT THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO JOIN US IN THIS WORK.

FINALLY, MIAMI IS GROWING AS A TECHNOLOGY HUB, ESPECIALLY FOR LATIN AMERICAN ENTREPRENEURS.

I MENTIONED EARLIER THAT WE ARE KNOWN AS THE GATEWAY TO THE AMERICAS, BUT INCREASINGLY WE ARE BECOMING THE GATEWAY TO INNOVATION.

WE ARE EMBRACING THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT COME FROM TECHNOLOGY, AND I AM PROUD TO BE KNOWN AS A TECH MAYOR.

EARLIER THIS MONTH, WE HELD THE FIRST EMERGE AMERICAS CONFERENCE, WITH 6000 OF THE BRIGHTEST MINDS IN THE AREAS OF TECHNOLOGY COMING TOGETHER TO HELP PUT US ON THE GLOBAL THE MAP.

AS PART OF EMERGE, I HOSTED A MAYORAL INNOVATION SUMMIT.

THIS WAS A GATHERING WITH SOME OF MY FELLOW MAYORS REPRESENTING CITIES RANGING FROM MADRID, BARCELONA, BUENOS AIRES AND MEXICO CITY, TO SANTO DOMINGO AND KINGSTON.

WE EXPLORED HOW TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION CAN HELP MOVE OUR CITIES FORWARD.

LET ME GIVE YOU AN EXAMPLE OF THIS.

EARLY ON IN MY ADMINISTRATION, WE MADE AN INVESTMENT IN A TECHNOLOGY ACCELERATOR CALLED VENTURE HIVE IN SUPPORT OF THEIR

INITIATIVE TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN TECH ENTREPRENEURS.

VENTURE HIVE HAS ALREADY BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RELOCATION OF MORE THAN 20 STARTUPS FROM ALL OVER THE GLOBE...

AND IT'S CHANGING THE WAY THE WORLD VIEWS SOUTH FLORIDA AS THE NEXT GREAT TECH HUB.

WELL, JUST A FEW WEEKS AGO, MICROSOFT ANNOUNCED THE FIRST EVER MICROSOFT INNOVATION CENTER IN THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE LAUNCHED HERE, AT VENTURE HIVE, IN MIAMI.

THE M.I.C. WILL SUPPORT A VIBRANT TECH ECOSYSTEM THAT WILL BRING STUDENTS, DEVELOPERS, ENTREPRENEURS AND ACADEMIC RESEARCHERS TOGETHER.

THEY WILL WORK TO ACCELERATE TECHNOLOGY ADVANCES, AND FURTHER STIMULATE OUR TECH ECONOMY THROUGH TRAINING, PARTNERSHIPS, AND INNOVATION.

AND THIS IS HOW OUR COMMUNITY GROWS AND PROSPERS, THROUGH EXPANDING CONNECTIONS, AND BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER.

MIAMI HAS BEEN ALWAYS BEEN BLESSED BY GREAT WEATHER AND BY OUR BEAUTIFUL NATURAL RESOURCES, INCLUDING SOME OF THE BEST OCEANFRONT PROPERTY IN THE WORLD.

BUT OUR GREATEST RESOURCE IS THE QUALITY OF OUR PEOPLE.

WE ARE TRULY A MICRO-COSM OF THE COLLECTIVE HUMAN EXPERIENCE.

PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER COME HERE AND WE HAVE LEARNED TO LIVE AND WORK TOGETHER TO CREATE WHAT YOU SEE ALL AROUND YOU TODAY.

WE ARE ALWAYS WORKING TO STRENGTHEN AND EXPAND THE TIES BETWEEN OUR COMMUNITY AND THE REST OF THE WORLD...

SO WE ARE TRULY HONORED THAT YOU ARE HERE.

THANK YOU, AND YOU'LL ALWAYS HAVE A HOME HERE IN MIAMI!