

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND INTRODUCTION AND FOR INVITING ME TO BE HERE WITH YOU THIS MORNING.

TO ALL OF THIS MORNING'S SPEAKERS, MR. OLADEINDE, DR. BLYDEN, AND MR. POONOOSAMY, I THANK YOU FOR THE ATTENTION YOU HAVE PLACED ON MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, AND WE STAND READY TO WORK WITH YOU TO EXPAND AND STRENGTHEN OUR TIES TO THE AFRICAN CONTINENT.

[PAUSE]

YOU'VE ALL HEARD FROM SOME OF THE BEST PEOPLE IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY.

FROM OUR AIRPORT AND SEAPORT DIRECTORS, THE PRESIDENT OF OUR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, OUR CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU, OUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY, AND THEY HAVE ALL DONE A WONDERFUL JOB IN TELLING YOU THE MANY REASONS WHY MIAMI-DADE COUNTY IS SUCH A GREAT PLACE TO DO BUSINESS.

AND THEY ARE ALL RIGHT, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S PREMIERE PLACES TO VISIT AND DO BUSINESS.

BUT WE ARE MORE THAN THAT.

I WANT TO ADD THAT THE GREATEST RESOURCE MIAMI DADE COUNTY HAS 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.

[PAUSE]

LET ME GIVE A SPECIAL RECOGNITION TO COMMISSIONER DENNIS MOSS WHO CHAIRS OUR TRANSPORTATION AND AVIATION COMMITTEE ON THE COUNTY COMMISSION.

HE HAS BEEN AN OUTSPOKEN LEADER ON BRINGING MIAMI-DADE COUNTY CLOSER TO THE COUNTRIES OF AFRICA AND IN ALL EFFORTS TO INCREASE OUR COMMERCIAL AND CULTURAL TIES.

IN SPEAKING TO A LOCAL NEWSPAPER EARLIER THIS YEAR, COMMISSIONER MOSS SAID SOMETHING THAT MAKES A WHOLE LOT OF SENSE:

“YEARS AGO WHEN WE WERE WORKING ON OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH SOUTH AMERICAN COUNTRIES, SOME PEOPLE WERE BASICALLY SCRATCHING THEIR HEADS AND WONDERING, ‘WHY ARE YOU WASTING YOUR TIME?’... TODAY THAT PAID OFF FOR US. IT WASN’T EASY; IT WASN’T FAST. BUT WE CONTINUED TO NURTURE THOSE RELATIONSHIPS.

AND WE BENEFIT FROM IT. WE BENEFIT, AND THE COUNTIES IN SOUTH AMERICA ALSO BENEFIT.”

THIS THIS IS TRUE.

OUR GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION HAS MADE US THE GATEWAY TO LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN.

COMMISSIONER MOSS, DEAR FRIENDS, THERE IS NO REASON WE CAN’T ALSO BE THE GATEWAY TO AFRICA AS WELL.

[PAUSE]

ALREADY, MIAMI HAS 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.

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.

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.

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

[PAUSE]

OUR TRADE AND TOURISM SECTOR IS THE BACKBONE OF OUR ECONOMY, WITH THE VALUE OF TOTAL TRADE THROUGH THE COUNTY TOPPING \$93 BILLION FOR LAST YEAR.

AND WE CONTINUE TO EXPAND TRADE BY REACHING OUT TO THE WORLD THROUGH TRADE MISSIONS AND EFFORTS SUCH AS THIS ONE.

[PAUSE]

WE'VE HEARD FROM OUR AIRPORT DIRECTOR, DR. GONZALEZ, AND ABOUT THE WORK WE ARE DOING TO ATTRACT NEW AIRLINES.

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.

WE ARE TAKING THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEVERAGE THIS GROWTH BY MAKING AVIATION A LEADING INDUSTRY HERE IN MIAMI-DADE.

JUST THIS MORNING, I SPOKE AT AN EXPO FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS PUT TOGETHER BY BOEING TO ATTRACT YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN TO THE AVIATION INDUSTRY.

ACCORDING TO THEIR STUDIES, THE INDUSTRY WILL NEED NEARLY HALF A MILLION PILOTS BY THE YEAR 2030.

MIAMI IS BOEING'S PRO FORMA FLIGHT TRAINING CAMPUS FOR THE AMERICAS AND THE LARGEST TRAINING CAMPUS IN THEIR GLOBAL NETWORK. THEY OFFER TRAINING ON 17 FULL-FLIGHT SIMULATORS, TO AN ESTIMATED 4,500 FLIGHT AND MAINTENANCE TRAINING STUDENTS PER YEAR WILL TRAIN AT THE MIAMI CAMPUS.

THE PILOTS OF TOMORROW ARE BEING TRAINED HERE, IN MIAMI.

[PAUSE]

I ALSO NOTICED THAT THE TITLE OF THE CONFERENCE IS "TECHNOLOGY AS A DRIVER OF US- AFRICA AIR SERVICE AND TRADE DEVELOPMENT...."

HERE IN MIAMI, WE ARE FULLY 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 TECHNOLOGY MAP.

I ALSO HOSTED A MAYORAL INNOVATION SUMMIT WITH MAYORS REPRESENTING CITIES RANGING FROM MADRID, BARCELONA, BUENOS AIRES AND MEXICO CITY, TO SANTO DOMINGO AND KINGSTON.

TO EXPLORE HOW TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION CAN HELP MOVE OUR CITIES FORWARD.

AS A RESULT OF OUR EFFORTS, JUST A FEW WEEKS AGO, MICROSOFT ANNOUNCED THE FIRST EVER MICROSOFT INNOVATION CENTER IN THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE LAUNCHED HERE, IN MIAMI.

THE M.I.C. WILL SUPPORT A VIBRANT TECH ECOSYSTEM BRINGING 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.

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

AND WE NEED TO DO THIS WITH ALL OF YOU.

ALREADY, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY HAS EXISTING TIES TO AFRICA.

WE HAVE SISTER CITIES AGREEMENTS WITH DAKAR, AND ARE LOOKING FOR AGREEMENTS WITH CITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO.

OUR AIRPORT HAS A SISTER AIRPORT AGREEMENT WITH THE MURTALA MUHHAMED AIRPORT IN NIGERIA.

AND OUR SEAPORT HAS SISTER PORT AGREEMENTS WITH CITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA, MOROCCO, SENEGAL AND NIGERIA.

THIS IS A GOOD START, BUT WE CAN DO SO MUCH MORE!

AND THIS IS WHERE WE NEED YOUR HELP.

WE STAND READY TO PARTNER WITH YOU TO BRING MIAMI-DADE COUNTY CLOSER TO AFRICA AND TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ALL THE OPPORTUNITIES GREATER TIES WILL BRING TO ALL OF US.

YOU HAVE A FRIEND IN COUNTY HALL...

AND I LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING ALL OF YOU, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY IS A PLACE YOU CAN ALWAYS CALL HOME.

THANK YOU!

