

LET ME BEGIN BY WELCOMING THE HONORABLE PAULINO RIVERO BAUTE...

PRESIDENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CANARY ISLANDS...

LET ME ALSO WELCOME YOUR DELEGATION.

SEÑOR PRESIDENTE, MIEMBROS DE LA DELEGACION, BIENVENIDOS.

WE ALSO HAVE WITH US THE HONORABLE JAVIER PAGALDAY, CONSUL GENERAL OF SPAIN IN MIAMI.

AND, WE HAVE SEVERAL MEMBERS OF OUR BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, INCLUDING OUR CHAIRWOMAN, REBECA SOSA.

BIENVENIDOS A TODOS USTEDES...

ES UN GRAN HONOR PARA NOSOTROS QUE NOS ACOMPAÑEN ESTA MAÑANA.

MR. PRESIDENT, YOUR OFFICIAL VISIT REINFORCES THE CLOSE AND STRONG TIES THAT EXIST BETWEEN OUR TWO COMUNITIES.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY AND THE CANARY ISLANDS SHARE NOT ONLY HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL TIES...

BUT BECAUSE OF OUR GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION, WE ARE BOTH GATEWAYS FOR COMMERCE AND TRADE.

WE ARE KNOWN AS THE GATEWAY TO LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN AND "THE CANARY ISLANDS IS THE EUROPEAN HUB IN AFRICA".

NO SOLO COMPARTIMOS EL ESTATUS DE SER UNA PUERTA AL COMERCIO, SI NO TAMBIEN COMPARTIMOS AFINIDADES HISTORICAS Y CULTURALES.

OUR COMMUNITIES SHARE LONG-STANDING TIES.

SINCE 1992, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY HAS A SISTER CITY AGREEMENT WITH THE CABILDO OF TENERIFE.

OUR SEA PORT, PORTMIAMI ALSO HAS A SISTER SEAPORT AFFILIATION WITH PORT OF LAS PALMAS, AND PORT OF SANTA CRUZ DE TENERIFE.

I.T.C.'S CHAIR COMMISSIONER JOSE "PEPE" DIAZ LED A BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MISSION TO THE CANARY ISLANDS IN JANUARY 2005.

IN JANUARY 2008, CHAIRWOMAN SOSA LED A MIAMI-DADE COUNTY SISTER CITIES GOODWILL MISSION TO TENERIFE TO MARK THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR SISTER CITY AGREEMENT.

WE ALSO EXPLORED WAYS TO INCREASE BILATERAL RELATIONS TO BENEFIT BOTH COMMUNITIES.

AS A RESULT, SEASONAL DIRECT AIR SERVICE WAS ESTABLISHED BY AIR EUROPA BETWEEN TENERIFE AND MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT FROM JUNE 2009 THRU JANUARY 2010.

WE NEED TO WORK TOGETHER TO RE-ESTABLISH THIS LINK AND INCLUDE AN EXTENTION TO WESTERN AFRICA.

LET ME ALSO SHARE THAT I THINK IT'S NO SECRET THAT SPANIARDS LOVE MIAMI.

WHEN YOU LOOK DOWN BRICKELL AVENUE IN OUR FINANCIAL DISTRICT...

THE SPANISH FLAG FLIES OVER MANY OF OUR MOST IMPORTANT BANKS AND OTHER BUILDINGS.

SPAIN HAS THE MOST NUMBER OF MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES DOING BUSINESS IN FLORIDA, AND MANY OF THESE COMPANIES ARE FROM THE CANARY ISLANDS.

WE ALSO INCREASED OUR TOTAL TRADE WITH SPAIN BY OVER 4% FROM THE PREVIOUS YEAR. BUT WE CAN ALWAYS DO MORE, AND THAT'S WHY WE'RE HERE.

NO ES UN GRAN SECRETO QUE A LOS ESPAÑOLES LES ENCANTA MIAMI.

SI MIRAN POR LA AVENIDA BRICKELL, MUCHOS DE NUESTROS BANCOS Y OTROS EDIFICIOS LLEVAN LA BANDERA ESPAÑOLA AL LADO DE LA NUESTRA.

Y AUNQUE EL COMERCIO ENTRE EL SUR DE LA FLORIDA Y ESPAÑA AUMENTÓ UN 4% EL ULTIMO AÑO, TODAVIA PODRA CRECER AUN MAS.

Y POR ESTA RAZON ESTAMOS AQUÍ HOY.

SEÑOR PRESIDENTE, ESTIMADOS MIEMBROS DE LA DELEGACION, MIAMI ES SU CASA...

GRACIAS POR ESTAR CON NOSOTROS Y LES DESEO UNA VISITA MUY GRATA Y PRODUCTIVA.

AND NOW I'LL TURN IT OVER TO THE VARIOUS REPRESENTATIVES FROM OUR AIRPORT, PORT MIAMI, THE GMCVB AND THE BEACON COUNCIL TO SAY A FEW WORDS.

MUCHAS GRACIAS A TODOS!

