

# City of Miami, Florida

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## **The Brookings Institution** *Board Meeting in the City of Miami*

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### **Remarks as Prepared for Delivery**

February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2009

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GOOD AFTERNOON. WELCOME TO MIAMI. BIENVENIDOS...

MIAMI IS A VIBRANT, DYNAMIC AND DIVERSE CITY – AMERICA'S MOST DIVERSE CITY. OVER 60% OF OUR RESIDENTS ARE FOREIGN BORN; CLOSE TO 150 LANGUAGES/DIALECTS SPOKEN EVERY DAY.

OUR CITY'S CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND MULTILINGUAL ABILITY IS OUR GREATEST ASSET AND A REFLECTION OF OUR HEMISPHERIC RELATIONSHIPS.

THESE TIES HAVE GREATLY CONTRIBUTED TO MIAMI'S BECOMING THE EPICENTER OF BUSINESS FOR THE AMERICAS.

WE HAVE THE LARGEST CONCENTRATION OF INTERNATIONAL BANKS, MORE THAN HALF FROM LATIN AMERICA. WE ARE HOME TO 6 OF THE 10 LARGEST FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE WORLD, TO CLOSE TO 2,000 MULTI-NATIONALS AND OVER 300 OFFICES/HEADQUARTERS OF FORTUNE 500 COMPANIES.

OUR AIRPORT IS #1 IN INTERNATIONAL CARGO AND BETWEEN #1 AND #2 IN INTERNATIONAL PASSENGERS. OUR PORT IS THE BUSIEST PASSENGER CRUISE PORT IN THE WORLD.

AMERICA ECONOMIA MAGAZINE AGAIN RATED MIAMI AS THE NUMBER 1 CITY TO CONDUCT BUSINESS IN LATIN AMERICA, CITING OUR STRENGTHS IN TELECOMMUNICATIONS, INFRASTRUCTURE AND SECURITY.

MIAMI HAS OPENED ITSELF TO THE WORLD AND THE WORLD HAS COME TO US.

BUT, MIAMI, LIKE OTHER CITIES IN THE COUNTRY, FACES A CHANGING WORLD.

DURING THE LAST FEW DECADES, THE WORLD HAS CHANGED AT A PACE NEVER BEFORE IMAGINED.

AND YET, THIS MUCH WE KNOW.....THAT OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN WILL LIVE IN A WORLD OF EXPONENTIAL CHANGE.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY, OVER HALF THE WORLD'S POPULATION LIVE IN METRO AREAS. IN THE US, IT IS 85%, IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, 78%.

METRO AREAS DRIVE THE WORLD'S ECONOMIES. IN THE US, THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALMOST 90% OF ALL JOBS, INCOME, AND OUR GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT.

WE HAVE ENTERED A NEW ECONOMIC ERA WHERE INFORMATION FLOWS FREELY ACROSS THE GLOBE. BECAUSE INFORMATION FLATTENS THE WORLD, THE ROLE OF CITIES HAS BECOME MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER.

CITIES MUST FUNCTION AS INCUBATORS OF THE KNOWLEDGE-BASED BUSINESSES AND COMPETE TO ATTRACT KNOWLEDGE WORKERS WHOSE IDEAS SERVE TO GROW ECONOMIES.

IN ORDER TO ATTRACT THE BEST AND THE BRIGHTEST, CITIES MUST INVEST IN THE DRIVERS OF GROWTH.

IT IS IN THIS ENVIRONMENT THAT MIAMI HAS FINALLY EMERGED AS A GLOBAL CITY.

WE HAVE MOVED WAY BEYOND BEING A GATEWAY - TODAY, WE ARE THE POINT OF TRANSLATION - WHERE PEOPLE FROM THE NORTH, SOUTH, EAST AND WEST COME TOGETHER TO LIVE, WORK, UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER - AND PROSPER FROM THIS RELATIONSHIP.

WE OFTEN JOKE THAT LATIN AMERICAN SNEEZES AND MIAMI CATCHES A COLD, AND WE'RE SOMETIMES REFERRED TO AS THE NORTHERNMOST CITY IN LATIN AMERICA

THE FACT IS THAT MIAMI WAS REALLY A GLOBAL CITY BEFORE BECOMING MAJOR DOMESTIC CITY.

WE WILL ONLY CONTINUE TO BE RELEVANT IF WE CAN CONTINUE TO EFFECTIVELY COMPETE. AND NOT JUST WITH CITIES IN THE U.S., BUT ALSO INTERNATIONAL CITIES LIKE MONTERREY, LONDON, MADRID, NEW DELHI, SHANGHAI, WHICH ARE ALL PUSHING THE FRONTIERS OF PROGRESS

WE MUST CONTINUE TO RE-INVENT OURSELVES...TO PLAN, INNOVATE, LEAD AND CHANGE.

WE MUST PROVIDE FOR THE CURRENT NEEDS OF ITS RESIDENTS. BUT WE MUST ALSO INVEST IN OUR FUTURE.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THE MIAMI OF JUST 10 YEARS AGO. OUR LEADERS FAILED TO INVEST, AND WE LOST OUR WAY.

NOT ONE MAJOR PROJECT WAS BEING BUILT, WE HAD DOUBLE DIGIT UNEMPLOYMENT. PEOPLE WERE MOVING OUT, AND MIAMI WAS BANKRUPT. ECONOMIC GROWTH WAS NOT SUPPORTED, BUT MERELY AN ACCIDENT OF GEOGRAPHY.

WE CHANGED THAT – BECAUSE WE KNEW MIAMI WAS BETTER.

WE CHANGED THAT BY INVESTING IN OUR PEOPLE AND OUR NEIGHBORHOODS.

WE CHANGED THAT BY INVESTING IN JOB CREATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC SAFETY, OUR STREETS AND SIDEWALKS, FLOOD MITIGATION, PARKS AND GREEN SPACES, EDUCATION AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

AND WE DID THIS WITHOUT RAISING TAXES. IN FACT, THE CITY OF MIAMI HAS THE LOWEST MILLAGE RATE IN 50 YEARS.

TODAY, WE HAVE DOUBLE DIGIT POPULATION GROWTH, HAD FULL EMPLOYMENT UNTIL RECENTLY, THE BEST BOND RATING EVER, CRIME AT 30 YEAR LOWS, YOUNG PEOPLE MOVING IN, AND WE HAVE EVEN BEEN NAMED THE CLEANEST CITY IN AMERICA BY FORBES MAGAZINE.

OUR METRO ECONOMY IS THE 11TH LARGEST IN THE U.S., 40TH LARGEST IN THE WORLD, AND IS LARGER THAN THOSE OF EVERY COUNTRY IN THIS HEMISPHERE, EXCEPT CANADA, BRAZIL AND MEXICO.

OUR INVESTMENT STARTS WITH PEOPLE. IN THE NEW ECONOMY, KNOWLEDGE IS MORE POWERFUL AND MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER.

THE EDUCATION COMPACT IS OUR INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE OF OUR CITY. OUR SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP WITH THE SCHOOL BOARD HAS SERVED AS A MODEL FOR SCHOOL SYSTEMS THROUGHOUT AMERICA.

BUT IN SPITE OF OUR GAINS, CRITICAL CHALLENGES LAY AHEAD. OUR GRADUATION RATE REMAINS DANGEROUSLY LOW- AND WHILE THEY TALK ABOUT A WORLD CLASS EDUCATION SYSTEM, OUR LEGISLATURE SLASHES NEARLY A BILLION DOLLARS IN FUNDING FOR OUR CHILDREN.

WE REFUSE TO ACCEPT THE GROWING TECHNOLOGY GAP BETWEEN CHILDREN WHO WILL COMPETE IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY, AND THOSE WHO, NOT BY THEIR CHOOSING, WILL WATCH THE WORLD PASS THEM BY.

SO WE INVESTED IN ELEVATE MIAMI. THIS NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE CITY, SCHOOL BOARD, THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND PHILANTHROPY USES TECHNOLOGY TO OPEN UP A NEW WORLD OF LEARNING AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL MIAMIANS.

ELEVATE TOUCHES THE LIVES OF THOUSANDS OF SENIORS AND LOW INCOME RESIDENTS, TURNING LIBRARIES, PARKS, COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENT CENTERS INTO FREE ACCESS POINTS TO THE WORLD.

BUT LET ME FOCUS ON WHAT IT DOES FOR OUR CHILDREN. OUR SCHOOL PARTNERS DEVELOPED THE RITES OF PASSAGE CURRICULUM.

EVERY 6TH GRADER IN MIAMI WHO DOES WELL IN SCHOOL, FOLLOWS THE RULES, AND EARNS THE RESPECT OF THEIR PEERS AND ADULTS WILL TAKE HOME A FREE COMPUTER WITH FREE INTERNET ACCESS.

TO BREAK THE CYCLE OF POVERTY, IT IS NOT ENOUGH FOR US TO CREATE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY. WE MUST ALSO PROVIDE A DIFFERENT SORT OF EDUCATION - FINANCIAL LITERACY.

ACCESS MIAMI GIVES A "HAND UP" TO OUR RESIDENTS. THIS PROGRAM IS ONE OF THE NATION'S MOST COMPREHENSIVE EFFORTS TO COMBAT POVERTY.

THROUGH A WIDE RANGE OF TOOLS, INCLUDING TAX CREDITS, SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT, MICRO-LENDING, JOB PLACEMENT AND TRAINING, INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNTS, SAVINGS AND IRA ACCOUNTS, CREDIT AND FINANCIAL EDUCATION COURSES, WE ARE CHARTING A COURSE TOWARD SELF-SUFFICIENCY.

MANY OF OUR LOW INCOME RESIDENTS DO NOT HAVE A CHECKING ACCOUNT. WORSE YET, FEW UNDERSTAND WHY THIS PUTS THEM AT A DISADVANTAGE.

WE ARE BREAKING THROUGH THESE BARRIERS, CONNECTING THE UN-BANKED TO FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS. I AM PROUD THAT WE ARE ONE OF 6 CITIES CHOSEN TO DEVELOP A NATIONAL POLICY TO ADDRESS POVERTY BY FINANCIALLY EMPOWERING AMERICANS.

WE HAVE MADE A RECORD INVESTMENT IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING. OVER \$800 MILLION DOLLARS IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING HAS BEEN COMPLETED OR IS BEING DEVELOPED. OUR GOAL IS TO DEVELOP \$1 BILLION IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING BY 2010.

NOT FORGOTTEN MOST VULNERABLE AMONG US. WE CONTINUE TO INVEST IN OUR CITY'S HOMELESS, AND, AS A RESULT, HAVE REDUCED OUR HOMELESS POPULATION BY 50%

GUIDED BY THE PRINCIPLE THAT A GREAT CITY IS A COLLECTION OF GREAT NEIGHBORHOODS, OUR ADMINISTRATION HAS MADE UNPRECEDENTED INVESTMENTS IN ALL OUR NEIGHBORHOODS.

SIX YEARS AGO, WE DID NOT HAVE A CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN. WE DO NOW.

BY LEVERAGING OUR INVESTMENTS TO INCLUDE FEDERAL, STATE AND COUNTY PARTNERS, OUR CITY'S NEIGHBORHOODS WILL BENEFIT FROM OVER \$2 BILLION DOLLARS IN INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS OVER A 10 YEAR PERIOD.

THIS INCLUDES \$300 MILLION TO REBUILD OUR STREETS AND SIDEWALKS, \$100 MILLION IN PUBLIC SAFETY, OVER \$150 MILLION TO MITIGATE FLOODING PROBLEMS, AND OVER \$300 MILLION IN OUR PARKS.

THESE UNPRECEDENTED INVESTMENTS HAVE SERVED TO STRENGTHEN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS, CREATE JOBS AND LOWER OUR TAXES.

BUT, LET THERE ALSO BE NO DOUBT THAT WE WILL ONLY CONTINUE TO GROW IF WE CONTINUE INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE.

BEFORE THE NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE STIMULUS PLAN EVER CAME ABOUT, THE CITY AND COUNTY JOINED FORCES TO INVEST IN THE FUTURE OF OUR URBAN CORE.

LET'S LOOK AT THE SPECIFIC INVESTMENTS: THE MIAMI PORT TUNNEL. THE PORT OF MIAMI IS THE 2ND MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC GENERATOR IN REGION. IT CREATES ALMOST 20,000 JOBS IN THE CITY ALONE AND REPRESENTS A \$2.2 BILLION ECONOMIC IMPACT. THIS MEANS THAT HUNDREDS OF TRUCKS DRIVE THROUGH OUR DOWNTOWN EVERY DAY.

BUT WE FACE COMPETITION: JACKSONVILLE, FORT LAUDERDALE, PANAMA AND EVEN MARIEL, CUBA.

WE NEED TO INVEST IN THE MIAMI PORT TUNNEL SO WE CAN STAY COMPETITIVE AND IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE RESIDENTS OF MIAMI.

THERE IS ALSO THE MARLINS STADIUM. FORTY ACRES THAT SAT IDLE FOR ALL BUT 6 DAYS A YEAR CAN NOW BE HOME TO A BASEBALL STADIUM, RETAIL SHOPS, RESTAURANTS AND POSSIBLY EVEN A HOTEL.

FORTY ACRES THAT SAT IDLE FOR ALL BUT 6 DAYS A YEAR WILL NOW CREATE JOBS FOR THOUSANDS, INJECT MILLIONS OF DOLLARS INTO OUR ECONOMY, AND CREATE A SENSE OF PRIDE FOR A NEIGHBORHOOD THAT HAS LONG SERVED AS THE ENTRY POINT TO SO MANY IN SEARCH OF THE AMERICAN DREAM.

LET'S LOOK AT THE ARTS. GREAT CITIES ALSO DESERVE GREAT PLACES OF ART – THE MUSEUM PARK AND THE PERFORMANCE ARTS CENTER ARE OUR PLACE FOR THE ARTS. THEY GENERATE THOUSANDS OF JOBS AND BILLIONS OF DOLLARS

BUT IT'S ABOUT MORE THAN THAT. A POOR SCHOOLCHILD IN PARIS CAN WALK INTO THE LOUVRE AND BE INSPIRED BY A DA VINCI, A POOR SCHOOLCHILD IN NEW YORK CAN WALK INTO THE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY AND SEE A GIANT DINOSAUR, A POOR SCHOOLCHILD IN SYDNEY CAN GO TO THE OPERA HOUSE AND HEAR BEAUTIFUL MUSIC.

THESE OPPORTUNITIES DID NOT EXIST IN MIAMI – BUT THEY WILL NOW.

AND LET ME RESPOND TO THOSE WHO QUESTION OUR INVESTMENT IN CULTURE, AND WHO GIVE US A FALSE CHOICE BETWEEN INVESTING IN STREETS OR MUSEUMS. WE HAVE SHOWN THAT WE CAN DO BOTH. IN FACT, WE HAVE TO DO BOTH.

FINALLY, GREATNESS IS NOT A DISTINCTION THAT CAN BE ACHIEVED WITHOUT PROPER PLANNING. IF YOU FAIL TO PLAN, PLAN TO FAIL.  
THIS IS WHY WE INVEST IN PLANNING.

WE WANT OUR CHILDREN TO LIVE IN A CITY WITH A PARK WITHIN A HALF MILE FROM THEIR HOME, WHERE WE PRESERVE OUR HISTORIC BUILDINGS SO THEY CAN APPRECIATE THEIR PAST, WHERE WE ENSURE ACCESS TO THE WATERFRONT SO THEY CAN ENJOY THE BEAUTY OF NATURE, AND WHERE THEY DO NOT NEED A CAR, WHERE THEY CAN WALK, USE A BIKE SAFELY, OR RIDE A STREETCAR.

THIS IS WHY WE DEVELOPED MIAMI 21. IT IS MORE THAN A MASTER PLAN. IT IS A BLUEPRINT FOR A SUSTAINABLE MIAMI.

AND, WE MUST PLAN BECAUSE MIAMI IS ON THE FRONT LINE OF GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE. THIS IS WHY HAVE INVESTED IN INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY- ON ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF ENERGY LIKE THE SOLAR PANELS AT CITY HALL, AND ON MIPLAN, THE CITY'S COMPREHENSIVE GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN.

WE HAVE CHOSEN TO INVEST STRATEGICALLY – WE HAVE INVESTED IN THE THINGS THAT MAKE A CITY WORTH LIVING IN.

SOME WOULD ARGUE THAT TIMES ARE TOUGH, THE ECONOMY IS SLOW – THAT WE SHOULD NOT INVEST TO CREATE JOBS AND PROSPERITY- THAT WE SHOULD NOT GROW.

WHILE THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THESE ARE DIFFICULT ECONOMIC TIMES - WE WILL NOT LOSE FAITH IN OUR CITY - WE WILL NOT FAIL TO INVEST IN THE PROMISE IT HAS ALWAYS OFFERED.

AND WHEN THE VOICES OF DOUBT SAY WE SHOULD NOT OR CANNOT – WE WILL ANSWER, WHY NOT?

GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT IS NOT ABOUT VISION - IT IS A MANDATE- IT IS WHY WE EXIST - IT IS OUR MOST SOLEMN DUTY - TO LEAVE A CITY MUCH GREATER THAN THE ONE LEFT TO US.

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