**Presentation by the Consul General of Brazil in Miami, Ambassador João Mendes Pereira, to be made at Brazil-Florida Business Council, 01/23/2019.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor for me to take part at this meeting with all of you, especially this admirable and inspiring executive Sueli Bonaparte, a restless Champion in the strengthening of the Brazil-US trade and investment relations. So, thank you Sueli for your kind invitation to be here with the members of the Brazil-Florida Business Council.

The importance of this talk is embodied in the proposed theme of my presentation: Brazil-US Trade Relations, which poses a challenge for me if we take into consideration the complexity and various aspects related to the bilateral ties between the two leading economies of the Americas, Brazil and the United States.

Dear Members of the Council

Our two countries have a longstanding track history of intense exchange of goods and services throughout the last century up to our days. The U.S has ever since become the chief destination of our exports, first with coffee, later with a vast array of not only agricultural products but also manufactured goods.

Currently, the trade balance continues to prove that there is room for more trade and interchange of riches and sophisticated value added outputs. This is shown by the density and variety of the flow of aircraft engines, for instance, in both directions, alongside with a stream of start-ups breakthroughs, banking, real estate and multiple fields of investments.

The U.S. has been a steady source of direct investment and knowledge that are key for Brazil’s development. In 2017, the bilateral trade mounts to US$ 57 billion and puts the U.S. as the chief importer for Brazilian industrial goods. American investments into Brazil were higher than U$ 11 billion, whereas the Brazilian flow of capital into the U.S did continue to grow at a very fast pace, especially in the segments of steel, food processing, construction, among others.

Let´s keep in mind that the relations between our two governments bear the hallmarks of mutual respect and an intertwining effort to boost cooperation and to generate concrete results in the benefit of the two partners and their respective people. This synergy has driven the solution arrangement that alleviated the barriers initially imposed against Brazilian steel and aluminum. Today, it can also be witnessed in the context of the OAS where the two nations have been coordinating positions in the case of Venezuela, for instance.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Bringing our focus to the state level, I have to remind that Florida is the fourth largest GDP in the U.S. If we consider it as a single economy, it would rank amongst the top 12 richest countries in the world. Only by those figures must we pay special attention to Florida.

Brazil ranks as the top one partner of Florida in economic terms. In 2017, the trade balance between us and Florida did reach more than U$ 20 billion, with a trade deficit for Brazil (we exported to Florida U$ 6,4 billion, whereas from here were originated US$ 19,8 billion).

The Consulate General wants to enhance the ties with the business community and join efforts to narrow that gap in the next months.

My Friends

The Brazil-US trade relations is one aspect of a much broader scenario in which the new Government of Brazil sets in motion a foreign policy aimed at restoring Washington as its main strategic partner. We can profit from the two leaders natural empathy to develop a more fruitful dialogue from now on. Sometime in the first semester of this year, President Jair Bolsonaro is scheduled to visit President Donald Trump. Details such as dates, agenda and level of the visit are being negotiated by the two sides. The fact that matter is that Brazil and the U.S. have the chance now to open a new phase in our bilateral history, where convergence of many points of view will prevail over differences or reciprocal indifference, should I say.

Member of the Council,

I would like also to share with you some considerations on possible perspectives for the Brazil-United States bilateral relations, particularly on its economic and commercial aspects. I can predict that Brazil will work towards making a qualitative and quantitative leap in our dialogue.

The good interchange between Presidents Bolsonaro and Trump contributes to this perspective. Several conversations and high-level visits took place following the American President’s call to congratulate President Bolsonaro on his election win. We truly hope that by establishing a solid ground for a dialog between the 2 countries, President Bolsonaro’s visit to Washington will be made possible during this first semester.

And what can we expect from this dialogue and the forthcoming presidential visit? We have a set of economic and commercial agreements and ongoing negotiations, with the intent of opening up markets for Brazilian and North-American products, such as the beef market, of Brazilian interest, and the pork market, of American interest.

In addition, the negotiations also include the treatment of specific demands, such as some tariff peaks and quotas on agricultural products, and measures implemented against Brazilian exports of steel and aluminum. Regulatory convergence issues also demand a closer follow-up and constant negotiation. These are important issues, whose solutions seek to facilitate trade and reduce barriers. Other initiatives may also be discussed in the bilateral agenda, such as the topics of double taxation, technological safeguards, and other types of commercial related understandings.

Florida plays an important role in this equation, since it is one of the American States with the closest proximity to Brazil. The Consulate General and APEX, whose director in the United States, Juarez Leal, is here with us today, are working in a coordinated effort to broaden this relation. And you can certainly help both Governments with yours suggestions and recommendations, so that the Brazilian presidential visit and the results shaped from it may be fruitful and beneficial for both countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In short, you can count on an improvement of the contacts between Brazil and the United States, putting back on the right track the diplomatic, political and economic discussions between the hemisphere's two powerhouses. I hope we all can contribute for the fast implementation of the policies and agreements that are to be coined. On my part, as the Consul-General of Brazil in Miami, I reaffirm my availability to work with you so we can reap the dividends of this renewed partnership between our nations.

Thank you.