



Good morning, I am Wellington E. Webb, Mayor of the City and County of Denver, Colorado, and I am very pleased to be here with you this morning, along with my nine colleagues from the United States. I am also the President of The United States Conference of Mayors.

I would like to thank Ambassador Felix G. Rohatyn for the impetus he has provided in creating this first Transatlantic Summit of Mayors. We were very glad to have welcomed Ambassador Rohatyn to our Annual Winter Meeting in Washington, D.C. in January 1999, where the idea for this meeting was born with American mayors participating.

I would also like to thank others for their efforts to bring this conference to fruition - Ambassador John Kornblum, U.S. Ambassador to Germany, with whom I was pleased to spend some time recently---I had the privilege of delivering the keynote address for the New Traditions Conference in the new German Reichstag, home of the German Parliament.

And I would like to thank Mayor Raymond Barre of Lyon for hosting this Summit of Mayors. I would also like to recognize, J. Thomas Cochran, Executive Director of The United State Conference of Mayors, President of Aspen Institute of France, who organized this Summit, Mr. Mellario.

The United States Conference of Mayors is a non-profit, bi-partisan public interest group in the United States, which represents cities of 30,000 population and higher. Our purpose is to work for public policy that benefits the cities of the United States - through influencing the Congress of the United States, the President and his Executive Departments, and helping to shape public opinion.

We also provide technical assistance to our colleagues throughout the United States including the Best Practices Center, and programs related to a variety of other public policy issues.

If there is one theme that I would like to impart during this session, it is this: the 19th century was a century of empires. The 20th century was a century of nation states. The 21st century will be a “century of cities”.

In one sense, this reflects a renewed faith, a rediscovery of the vitality and richness that has long characterized our great urban centers.

This is a faith that seemed lost during a 3-decade period, beginning in the early 1960s. That was a time that saw many of our great cities struggle with soaring crime rates, neglected infrastructure, poor

financial management, and profound social unrest; while other cities languished under the heavy hand of economic and political oppression.

But, thankfully, it is a faith that has been restored. As one American author (Fred Siegel) has written, “lining city streets are vestiges of a world that worked. As we look for the future, we may be increasingly surprised to see it gazing back at us from an unexpected corner of the past.”

We are facing a new era, owing, in large measure, to a remarkable confluence of events; as the forces of commerce, culture, technology, and political create devolution - globalization - metro economies and unprecedented opportunity for all of our citizens.

And, our cities are both the heart and soul of this historic and global transformation.

There is a vitality and new confidence in our cities that is reflected in the bricks and mortar of exciting new projects and in stories about improved governance, strong public/private partnerships, economic growth and declining crime.

Cities are the repositories of our civilization and the catalysts for our future. They are what the great urban historian Peter Hall has described as the “crucibles of creativity” that “command and control the New Economy, as well as the service agencies that minister to them... that continue to attract the talented and ambitious...Places that ignite the sacred flame of human intelligence and the human imagination.”

In modern times, federal jurisdictions have constituted the principal intersection between different nations and peoples. But the New Economy and the new technology have changed that dramatically. In the increasingly diverse and decentralized economic and cultural ties across national borders, our cities and regions play a vital role.

And our regional economies have emerged as the engines that drive our national economies. In the United States, our metro economies accounted in 1999 for 84% of national gross domestic product and 84% of national employment. Two of the fastest growing segments of the U.S. economy, high-tech and business services, are almost entirely concentrated within metro areas. From 1992 to 1998, most of the economic gains made the United States were generated within cities and counties in the metro areas.

In the United States, both major political parties are coming to recognize the growing importance of cities and metropolitan regions and the federal government is slowly ceding more authority on issues such as health care, transportation, economic development, and welfare to state and local governments. Sometimes, it is done reluctantly, and on a small scale, but is a trend that has enormous popular appeal in our country.

And, as you know, many cities and metropolitan regions such as Denver have developed our own highly successful strategies for promoting international trade.

And our regional economies have interesting similarities. Our regions are experiencing significant diversification of our economies; a rapid growth in industries such as environmental technology and media, information, and communication; and large-scale public transit projects.

Between devolution and globalization, the role of mayors and cities has changed drastically.

In order to succeed as entities, cities must be sure of the following:

1. That their **Fiscal House** is in order.
2. That **Public Safety** is assured;
3. That **Education** is integrated into the workforce;
4. That we enhance our **Cities' Competitiveness** in the international economic arena; and
5. That we encourage the promotion of **cultural arts, visual/performing and professional sports**.

The potential for cities is limited only by our imagination, creativity and joint effort of our local public/private sector corporation.