



***Closing Remarks by Ambassador Costos
Global Entrepreneurship Week Panel Event
Fundación Rafael del Pino, Calle Rafael Calvo 39, Madrid
Wednesday, November 19, 2014 – 1:00pm-2:30pm***



Good afternoon. Thank you, Mathieu, for the kind introduction and to the Fundación Rafael del Pino for hosting the event today.

I'm here today to provide my support for the new advisory board for Spain's Global Entrepreneurship Week and to discuss what the U.S. Embassy is doing to support entrepreneurs here in Spain.

As many of you know, Global Entrepreneurship Week was launched in 2008 as a partnership between the United States Government, the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, and nearly 40 other international partners. Over the last six years, Global Entrepreneurship Week has expanded to include partners in over 140 countries, with over 25 million individuals participating in entrepreneurship events like this one.

Although Spain's economy is on the road to recovery, and the country has officially emerged from a recession, we know that significant challenges remain to reducing unemployment, creating jobs, and boosting incomes. *We at the U.S. Embassy strongly believe that entrepreneurship can be an important driver of economic growth and empower young people to determine their own economic future.*

President Obama has been a major supporter of entrepreneurship and Global Entrepreneurship Week since the beginning. On October 31, he proclaimed November "National Entrepreneurship Month" and lent his support to international entrepreneurship efforts, including the Global Entrepreneurship Week Summit being held in Marrakesh this week. In the President's announcement, he launched the Presidential Ambassadors for Global Entrepreneurship program. This is a select group of some of

America's top entrepreneurs, including Tory Burch, Steve Case, and Reid Hoffman, who will help cultivate startup communities and champion entrepreneurship overseas.

These initiatives highlight what Secretary of State John Kerry said in his address to this year's Global Entrepreneurship Summit attendees, "The United States has learned through its own experience that entrepreneurship is an essential driver of prosperity and of freedom."

I'm especially glad to be part of today's event to recognize the new members of the advisory board for Spain's Global Entrepreneurship Week. Some of you are longtime friends of the Embassy, and we look forward to getting to know more of you and working together to promote entrepreneurship in Spain. It's encouraging that this new board represents such a diverse group of people. This mix of academics, business leaders, entrepreneurs, and investors will undoubtedly help break down barriers in Spain's business and entrepreneurial ecosystems.

I urge you, and your organizations, to continue to work together to open opportunities for Spain's new generation.

Working together – collaboration – plays a key role in entrepreneurship. Young entrepreneurs I speak with tell me that working in teams and bouncing ideas off each other, is one of the best parts of being an entrepreneur.

But while open collaboration is essential for successful entrepreneurs, we are not seeing enough cooperation in the area of promoting entrepreneurship in Spain.

Spanish companies, academic institutions, and the government each play an important role in supporting entrepreneurship. All of these actors can either hold back Spain's economic growth or foster the type of collaboration that will generate more business opportunities for everyone.



Let's talk about the role of Spain's large businesses first. The many large and successful Spanish companies have a direct responsibility to create space for entrepreneurship and innovation in the marketplace. These companies need to make room for small businesses and allow them to flourish. As

His Majesty King Felipe noted last spring, Spain's big companies, world leaders in many sectors, could help open the door of international trade to small and medium-size enterprises, with the goal of expanding opportunities for everyone.

This sentiment is supported by research from Endeavor, whose local director – Adrian Garcia-Aranyos – is a new Global Entrepreneurship Week board member.

Endeavor's studies show that the companies in its network that promote entrepreneurship have produced over 400,000 jobs and nearly \$7 billion dollars in revenue in 2013 alone.

Some large firms are aware of the importance of small businesses in the market. In Germany and Japan, for example, large companies benefit from partnering with smaller companies in their value chain that can provide products and services at a lower cost and adapt more rapidly to trends because of their size. At the same time, large companies also help the smaller ones grow by providing them with experience in the market, providing a channel for international sales, and developing their expertise.

Thankfully, large Spanish companies are also starting to realize the value of innovation in the marketplace. We are seeing more and more companies make room for Spain's entrepreneurial spirit by creating foundations and accelerators, and providing funds to help support start-ups. Take for example, Telefonica Wayra, BBVA Innovation Center, Enel Lab, and Google Campus are just some of the large companies supporting entrepreneurship and innovation in Spain.

More companies must consider how they can partner with entrepreneurs and small businesses in ways that will benefit both sides and bring new innovation to market.

But it's not just big business that can help make room for entrepreneurship. Academic institutions can play a major role in supporting entrepreneurship and can be catalysts for bringing together various sectors – government, private, educational.



For example, I recently met with the Director of the Madrid-MIT M-Vision Consortium – an organization that exemplifies what we can achieve when everyone works together. With the support of the Comunidad de Madrid, M-Vision has created an innovation model that is working to bring exciting new health care technologies to market. The Consortium’s international network of academics, entrepreneurs, and health care

professionals, has created a dynamic ecosystem in both the United States and Spain that has unlocked creativity and created a space that encourages risk taking and trying out new ideas. M-Vision has proven that collaboration between academics, industry and government can produce real results, and I know this model can work in other sectors as well.

This is why I’m so glad to see the diversity on Global Entrepreneurship Week’s advisory board. I know that your varied backgrounds and experiences – *and your commitment to collaboration* – will help advance entrepreneurship in Spain.

And of course, governments have a major responsibility to foster the creativity and entrepreneurial spirit. Let me first talk about my government. One of the areas that the U.S. Embassy team has focused on is promoting and supporting entrepreneurship. We meet a wide array of imaginative, innovative Spaniards who are eager to get their great ideas to the market. And we work hard to support them as best we can. For example, the Embassy supports study abroad programs. Fulbright scholarships help outstanding Spanish students pursue degrees in the United States and learn about our society, culture, and yes, entrepreneurship.

In partnership with regional governments, we support English language training for a wide range of Spanish youth since proficiency in English is an essential skill in today’s global economy.

We also link U.S. and Spanish entrepreneurs and businesses. In celebration of Women’s Entrepreneurship Day today, we arranged a series of workshops for women entrepreneurs in both Valencia and Madrid. These workshops will allow U.S. and Spanish entrepreneurs to share their talents and expertise. Similarly, in June, we brought together young innovators for a two-day training and networking conference which we called “Tech Camp.” Participants shared ideas and explored how new

technology could support civil service organizations – particularly those that work with vulnerable youth populations.

And, as most of you know, the United States is fully committed to the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership or T-TIP. My government firmly believes that T-TIP will have a positive impact on economies in Europe and the United States. T-TIP will create jobs on both sides of the Atlantic. It will foster increased bilateral investment. It will generate new partnerships. And, most importantly, it will build a stronger economic future for our citizens.



The agreement provides an opportunity to increase the more than 13 million U.S. and European jobs and \$12 billion dollars in Spanish exports to the United States that are already supported by transatlantic trade and investment.

Our SelectUSA program promotes foreign direct investment into the United States, and the second edition of the SelectUSA Investment Summit will be held in Washington, D.C. in March 2015.

Establishing operations in the U.S. market, which our Commercial Service facilitates, can provide a strong entry-point into the Americas, especially for Spanish firms.

So, my government and our Embassy here in Madrid are working to support trade and investment between our two countries, and to support entrepreneurship that will benefit all of us. But, we are fully aware that what works in the United States may not necessarily have a direct application in Spain. Pedro and Jerry mentioned that many entrepreneurs, especially tech entrepreneurs, see Silicon Valley as the ultimate end goal, or exit. And while the U.S. Embassy works to connect entrepreneurs and businesses to the U.S. economy, I also think there are undiscovered opportunities for entrepreneurship right here in Spain.

I've spoken with several Spanish entrepreneurs who have found great success locally, within Europe, or by using the advantage of a shared language and culture to expand into Latin America. All of these are viable options for start-ups that should be considered. I want to highlight a few Spanish entrepreneurs that have achieved success by finding opportunities right in their own backyard:

- Yasmin Salem, who participated in a panel discussion at Casa de America this morning, created Mas Turah – the first Muslim women's hairdressing salon in Spain. She created her own success by finding an unfilled niche in the market.
- Clemente and Alvaro Cebrian, of El Ganso, turned their passion for affordable, trendy clothes into a recognized brand name in five countries. We have highlighted their ingenuity in our "YouR Company" videos on the Embassy website.
- David Troya, CEO and founder of Glamping Hub, is a great example of a Spanish entrepreneur who has capitalized on his experiences in Spain and the United States to achieve international success. As a Fulbright student at the University of San Francisco, David was immersed in the U.S. entrepreneurial community. With the support of his classmates and peers, David gained the confidence to build his own website and launch a global platform for upscale camping vacations. His company now offers unique accommodations for travelers in over 80 countries.

These young people, and all Spanish entrepreneurs, have truly impressed me with their creativity and determination to overcome the many obstacles to starting a new business in Spain.

And Spain's business climate is improving, making now – more than ever – the time to start a new business in Spain. Your country recently moved from fifty-second to thirty-third place in the World Bank's "Doing Business" list, thanks to new legislation and government initiatives in the past two years. Changes to bankruptcy and employment laws have made a positive impact on Spanish entrepreneurs.

However, there is more to be done. Spain still ranks seventy-fourth in the world in the ease of starting a business, and bankruptcy laws and the lack of cultural support for entrepreneurs dissuade many from entering the market. In order to move forward, Spain will need to address these challenges. But it will take all of us working together.

I applaud the entrepreneurs in the audience for your continued perseverance in the face of obstacles, and extend my support to you all. Your courage is inspiring and shows that even under difficult circumstances, you can find success.

In closing, I want to congratulate the Global Entrepreneurship Week board for taking this important step to make Global Entrepreneurship Week more inclusive and wide-reaching in Spain. You can count on the U.S. Embassy to support your efforts by continuing to foster the exchange of people, ideas, and investment between our two countries.

As His Majesty King Felipe has said: “Innovation requires the collaboration of all, from the public sector and the private sector, universities and industry; because innovation should be a priority and a responsibility shared by the whole of society.”

So let's work together not just the United States and Spain, but corporate executives, small company entrepreneurs, academics and government officials to generate more jobs, higher incomes, and more economic growth for everyone.

As always, I look forward to moving forward together!

Thank you.

