



U. Desmond Alufohai Division Director, Protocol & International Affairs



U. Desmond Alufohai is the **Director of Protocol and International Affairs Division**, Miami-Dade Aviation Department. The Office of Protocol and International Affairs Division was created in 1988 to facilitate the movement of diplomats, dignitaries, elected officials, and VIPs through Miami International Airport (MIA) and to support the airport's international programs and initiatives. MIA was the first airport in the U.S., and one of the few major airports in the world, to offer a full array of protocol services, including a diplomatic lounge. Mr. Alufohai leads the largest protocol office of any airport in the United States.

Prior to joining Miami-Dade Aviation Department, Mr. Alufohai served as Senior International Trade Coordinator and head of the International Trade Programs for Miami-Dade County's Economic Development and International Trade Agency from 2003 until joining the Aviation family in 2019. He previously served as Executive Director and head of membership services & training department for Junior Chamber International (JCI) as well as JCI's Director for Growth & Development for Africa and the Middle East from 1991 - 2002.

Mr. Alufohai has worked as a leader in the international community for more than 30 years. He continues to travel extensively throughout the world, conducting trade missions, workshops, organizational fieldwork, and essential professional development training. He has visited more than 90 countries and made notable contributions during his tenure at JCI as the liaison to the following organizations: United Nations Agencies (UNICEF & UNESCO); World Health Organization [WHO]; and the African Union (AU). He was a delegate to the International Model United Nations (IMUN) in New York (1991).

Mr. Alufohai obtained a Bachelor of Science (BS) degree from the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria, and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree from Anna Maria University in Paxton, Massachusetts, USA. Additionally, he has acquired the following professional certifications:

- **Graduate of the Protocol School of Washington®** - Trained as an Intercultural Etiquette and Protocol Trainer in a comprehensive training course designed to train individuals to teach business etiquette, international protocol, and dining seminars. The Protocol School of Washington® is accredited by the Accrediting Council for Continuing Education & Training (www.ACCET.org) - the first and only nationally accredited school of its kind. ACCET is officially recognized by the U.S. Department of Education - (2019).
- **Certified Global Business Professional (CGBP)** - the highest global educational designation, recognition and credentials in all fields related to international trade and commerce - (2015).
- **Certified Meeting Professional [CMP]** - the highest educational credentials recognized globally as the badge of excellence in the meeting, convention, exhibition, and event industry - (2014).
- Mr. Alufohai also completed the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) International Trade Certification Program. He is an International Training Fellow [ITF], Management Consultant, Instructor and Adjunct Professor.

He is a respected business and community leader as exemplified as follows:

Mr. Alufohai was designated a member of **South Florida's District Export Council** by The Honorable Wilbur Ross, United States Secretary of Commerce to contribute leadership and business experience in support of the nation's joint industry/government expansion effort. The South Florida District Export Council provides leadership and international trade expertise to complement the U.S. Commercial Service's export promotion efforts.

Mr. Alufohai is the Founding Chairman of the **Florida International Affairs Foundation (FIAF)**. He was appointed to the FIAF by the Florida Secretary of State in 2021. FIAF's mission is to supplement the programs and services of the Florida Department of State's Office of International Affairs (OIA) within the Division of Arts and Culture, by fostering, creating, and enhancing diplomatic and cultural relationships and facilitating consular relations between the state and all foreign governments doing business in Florida.

- Member, Board of Directors of **Florida Export Finance Corporation (FEFC)**.
- Member, **Black Hospitality Initiative (BHI)** Board of Directors (Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau).
- National President, **Ora-Ekpen Association USA, Inc.**
- Founding President, **University of Benin Alumni Association of North America (UBAANA)** Florida Chapter.
- Founding member, Mayors' **African Trade Task Force**.
- Former Governing Council Member - **North American Small Business International Trade Educators (NASBITE)**.
- Former Chair, Stakeholders & Community Engagement Committee, **World Trade Center Miami**, Board of Directors.

He is the recipient of the following awards and accolades:

- Recipient of the Consular Corps of Miami, Florida **"2023 Person of the Year Award"** [2023]
- Recipient of the **"Miami Magnet Award,"** presented by the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau (GMCVB) for immense contribution to the tourism, leisure, hospitality, meetings, and convention industry [2018]
- Inductee – 5000 Role Models of Excellence Project, founded by Congresswoman Frederic S. Wilson [2016]
- South Florida's 50 Most Powerful & Influential Black Professionals in Business & Industry [2015]
- Awarded the Minority Enterprise Development **"International Trade Advocate of the Year"** [2015]
- Distinguished Alumnus Award – University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria [2014]
- Recipient of the prestigious Nigerian American Foundation Heritage Award [2011]
- Featured in the inaugural edition of **"Who's Who in South Florida"** [2007]
- Miami-Dade Black Heritage Community Pillars Award [2004]
- Miami-Dade County coveted Cultural Ambassador Award [2003]
- Voted Ten Most Outstanding Young Persons of Nigeria [1998]

Mr. Alufohai is fondly referred to as "Mr. International" by his peers and associates due to his extensive international travels and proficiency in international affairs, intercultural etiquette, protocol, and diplomacy. He was instrumental in establishing the Sister Cities engagement between Miami-Dade County and Dakar, Senegal and Miami-Dade County and Cape Town, South Africa. He communicates effectively in French. He has authored articles cited in international communications, local newspapers, and association journals.

He is a member of the following professional organizations:

- Protocol & Diplomacy International – Protocol Officers Association (PDI-POA)
- National Diversity Council (NDC) – Florida Chapter
- Society of Government Meeting Professionals (SGMP)