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COA Honors Mercado Libre, CMI, and Leaders of Embraer and FedEx at BRAVO Business Awards

The executives and companies were celebrated for their forward-thinking spirit and achievements in Latin America during the 30th edition of the awards.

MIAMI, FL, UNITED STATES, October 17, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Council of the Americas (COA) held the 30th BRAVO Business Awards on October 16 at the Ritz-Carlton Coconut Grove in Miami, honoring leaders and companies for their impact across Latin America, their contributions beyond the region, and their role in shaping the Western Hemisphere's future.

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>
> *Susan Segal, president and CEO of AS/COA*

“Today, Latin America is defined by extraordinary companies and business leaders that have transformed their industries and are redefining what global leadership looks like,” said Susan Segal, president and CEO of Americas Society/Council of the Americas (AS/COA). “Our honorees remind us that Latin America is no longer just a destination for investment but a source of innovative talent, creativity, and enterprise.”

"As we approach 2026, Latin America’s dynamic private sector is no longer on the sidelines of global strategy—it is at the table, making footprints on the global stage and undergoing an important transformation," said Maria Lourdes Teran, vice president of AS/COA in Miami and chair of the BRAVO Business Awards. "The companies and visionary leaders that we are honoring are not only establishing new standards of excellence within the private sector but are also shaping a future marked by prosperity and meaningful progress throughout the Americas."

Mercado Libre received the BRAVO Company of a Generation Award, in recognition of 25 years of innovation, growth, and entrepreneurship that have transformed commerce and finance across the region. The award was accepted by Ariel Szarfsztejn, president of commerce and incoming CEO of the company.

"This award speaks directly to Mercado Libre's core mission: democratizing commerce and financial access across Latin America. Throughout our 25 plus year history, we've championed the entrepreneurial spirit and relentless innovation of the communities we serve. Looking ahead, we're hyper-focused on driving a new era of transformation that will create new opportunities for millions of entrepreneurs and significantly advance financial inclusion throughout the region," said Szarfsztejn.

L-R: Luiz Vasconcelos, FedEx LATAM & Caribbean; Ariel Szarfsztejn, Mercado Libre; Susan Segal & Maria Lourdes Teran, AS/COA; Andrés Gluski, AES Corporation; Francisco Gomes Neto, Embraer; Felipe Bosch Gutiérrez & Juan José Gutiérrez Mayorga, CMI (photo:Gort Productions)

Francisco Gomes Neto, president and CEO of Embraer, was honored with the BRAVO Transformational Leader of the Year Award for his exceptional leadership in guiding the Brazilian aerospace company through a period of profound transformation, global expansion, and leadership.

"It is a deep honor to be recognized as the 2025 BRAVO Transformational Leader of the Year. This award goes to the amazing team of Embraer that has always faced the most challenging scenarios with dedication, team spirit and an unshakable confidence that we can always overcome difficulties when we work together. I would like to thank the Council of the Americas and the BRAVO Business Awards team for this recognition. We are very optimistic about the future of Embraer. We are stronger than ever and ready to fly higher," said Gomes Neto.

The BRAVO Dynamic Leader of the Year Award was awarded to Luiz R. Vasconcelos, president of FedEx Latin America & Caribbean, for driving strategic initiatives that have significantly improved connectivity, boosted competitiveness, and strengthened trade throughout the region.

"Partnership is what moves our region forward. Every day, we see how collaboration among businesses, governments, and communities opens doors, creates jobs, and strengthens connectivity across Latin America and the Caribbean. When we work together, progress becomes something we can all share," said Vasconcelos.

Corporación Multi Inversiones (CMI) was presented with the BRAVO Corporate Legacy Award, accepted by Juan José Gutiérrez Mayorga, chairman of CMI Foods, and Felipe Bosch Gutiérrez, chairman of CMI Capital, in recognition of the multigenerational enterprise's expansion across 15 countries and its commitment to sustainable development and social impact throughout Latin America and the United States.

"This recognition motivates us to continue innovating and generating sustainable impact in the region. At CMI, guided by our values and the commitment to build a legacy that transcends generations, we work every day with integrity and responsibility to face the challenges of the present and strengthen our future. This award inspires us to continue on this path, with our sights set on the next 100 years," said Gutiérrez Mayorga.

"We receive the BRAVO Corporate Legacy Award with deep gratitude—an acknowledgement that fills us with pride and strengthens our commitment to the development of the region. We greatly value the work of the Council of the Americas and its members in promoting free trade and sustainability. At CMI, we share that vision for the future and reaffirm our determination to continue contributing to the progress of the communities where we operate," added Bosch Gutiérrez.

2025 COA SYMPOSIUM AND 30TH BRAVO BUSINESS AWARDS

More than 500 corporate leaders gathered in Miami for Latin America's premier business engagement and dialogue platform. Watch the videos.

Earlier in the day, the COA Symposium brought together over 500 CEOs, senior executives, and thought leaders to explore the theme, "Driving Latin America's Future: Innovation, Competitiveness, and Global Integration."

The event was centered on critical discussions concerning geopolitics, sustainability, digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and investment opportunities in the region.

The opening panel, titled "Latin America's Opportunity in Today's Evolving Geopolitical Context," covered opportunities in AI, fintech, and other sectors. The panelists highlighted the region's advantages and discussed how Latin America can leverage its diverse resources by improving in key areas.

"If we want to seize the opportunity related to AI, I think every government in every country has to understand that the education system has to change in order to be ready to seize those opportunities. [...] So we have to align and probably think about up-skilling and re-skilling in order to have that talent that is needed today," said Blanca Treviño, president and CEO of Softtek.

Shu Nyatta, co-founder & managing partner of Bicycle Capital, echoed Treviño's sentiment and added that the region can achieve substantial growth by pursuing modernization and fintech: "Relatively speaking, Latin America is in an extraordinary position because of the confluence of geopolitics and AI," he said. This panel was moderated by Andrés Gluski, president and CEO of The AES Corporation and chairman of AS/COA.

During a second panel, "Legacy and Leadership—A Century of Latin American Excellence," CEOs from multilatinas with over 100 years in operation shared the core values and enduring strategies that have enabled their companies to grow and successfully navigate market volatility over the past century.

"[Castillo Hermanos] never sacrificed long term success to achieve short term results, and this is also something that is key. The company, in 139 years has gone over several crises, depressions, wars, more than one pandemic, and it always has had this vision that these challenges will pass, and that the company has to remain strong and has to find opportunities," explained Roberto Lara, CEO of the Guatemalan conglomerate.

João Schmidt, CEO of the Brazilian investment holding company Votorantim, outlined the core elements driving the company's success: "Always run a very diversified portfolio. We don't know what's going to happen in the future, we need to adapt. But at the same time, some things are permanent. Generosity, for example, has to be a permanent feature for us. It moves our people, and that, alongside courage, allows Votorantim to continue to thrive."

In another conversation, two executives from Corporación Multi Inversiones (CMI), Felipe Bosch Gutiérrez and Juan José Gutiérrez Mayorga, provided a deep dive into their business philosophy.

Next, Francisco Gomes Neto of Embraer joined a chat moderated by Brian Winter, editor-in-chief of Americas Quarterly. Gomes Neto provided an overview of the company's history—which was founded in 1969—outlined Embraer's dedication to sustainability, discussed how they overcame the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, and shared his vision for the future of aviation.

Jaime Vallés, vice president of Asia Pacific & Japan at Amazon Web Services (AWS), delivered a keynote on the transformational and potential economic opportunity of artificial intelligence for the region.

"True transformation is not only about technology. Technology is only the enabler. [...] Transformation requires a lot more than technology. It is about culture, talent, skills, and an innovation mindset," argued Vallés.

In a conversation about the power of innovation in finance, Cristina Junqueira, co-founder and chief growth officer of Nubank, spoke about the company's 11-year history, its advancements in fintech, and its approach to implementing AI while upholding their core corporate values. This conversation was moderated by Luis Alberto Moreno, managing director at Allen & Co. and former president of the Inter-American Development Bank.

"We started the company out of that place, out of a place of just not settling, refusing to settle, [...] out of a deep belief that if we built something dramatically better—using technology, using design—people would just come," explained Junqueira.

The symposium continued with a panel discussion titled "Financial Services Transforming Latin America's Economic Future," moderated by Alejandro Anderlic, head of government & external affairs for Latin America at Salesforce. The panelists discussed the power of digital transformation in advancing growth and inclusion.

Juan Ignacio de Lorenzo, SVP & head of distribution for consumer lines at CHUBB Latin America, highlighted that there is still work to be done when it comes to financial inclusion: "We have to expand the base. There are many customers under-serviced. There are many customers outside the formal system," he said.

When it comes to the challenges and opportunities that the panelists face in their own companies and sectors, Annali Duarte, head of Latin America, global payments solutions at Bank of America said: "I think that the challenge is really not only the regulatory framework that is there, but also for many companies is really to change the infrastructure of their system."

Antonio Silveira, vice president for private sector at CAF - Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean, explained the organization's efforts to improve its financial and development assistance to companies and governments throughout the region.

Ariel Szarfsztejn of Mercado Libre, spoke with Susan Segal of AS/COA about the Argentine company's journey. Szarfsztejn shared insights into his personal path to leadership, the company's core values, the current AI transformation, and his strategic vision for guiding the company in the years ahead. He spoke of maintaining Mercado Libre's image as a powerful symbol of Latin American entrepreneurship, resilience, and impact.

Public officials from Central America, including El Salvador's Minister of Economy Maria Luisa Hayem, were also present at the event to discuss opportunities for regional economic integration.

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In partnership with: CAF - Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean

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For more information, visit: www.as-coa.org/bravo2025

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ABOUT COUNCIL OF THE AMERICAS

Council of the Americas is the premier international business organization whose members share a common commitment to economic and social development, open markets, the rule of law, and democracy throughout the Western Hemisphere. The Council's membership consists of leading international companies representing a broad spectrum of sectors, including banking and finance, consulting services, consumer products, energy and mining, manufacturing, media, technology, and transportation.

ABOUT BRAVO BUSINESS AWARDS

For three decades, the BRAVO Business Awards have recognized leadership and excellence in business and policy in the Western Hemisphere. The award ceremony also seeks to disseminate and inspire other relevant actors in the hemisphere to become agents of change and enable others to continue building success in the Americas. The awards gala is preceded by an annual Council of the Americas Symposium, which brings together key players from business and government institutions to discuss the most important business issues and trends affecting the region.

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