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**TRANSCRIPT FROM WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2022: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS
DELIVERS REMARKS AND RAISES ECUADORIAN FLAG**

Commissioner Manuel Castro, Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs: Thank you so much. Thank you so much, Arthur. Very special.

Commissioner Castro: Here you go, Arthur. Well, thank you so much, Arthur, and to the Bowling Green Association for this partnership, which allows us to celebrate and uplift our immigrant communities, but also celebrate the fight for democracy, freedom and the values that we share. And so I thank you, Arthur, and the Bowling Green Association for the work that we have done together. And of course our team here at the mayor's office of immigrant affairs and everyone at city hall and city government who helps put together these events. Again, my name is Manuel Castro and I am the commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. [Speaks in Spanish.]

Commissioner Castro: And so with that, I would also like to acknowledge and thank Commissioner Mermelstein, who is here with us today, commissioner of the Mayor's Office of International Affairs. I would also like to thank Ambassador Jose Sandoval who's joining us here today, along with Dr. Rodriguez Benitez. [Speak in Spanish.] And of course Comité de Galo Plaza for all the support and work in pulling this event together and all the community organizations that have worked together with my office to ensure the wellbeing of Ecuadorian communities across New York City. We'll talk more about our wonderful Ecuadorian communities and how they make this one of the richest cities in the world because of their contributions, not just to our economy, but our culture and our life here in New York City. So first I would like to invite Ximena to speak and share a few words about Comité de Galo Plaza and about today's activities. Thank you, Ximena.

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Commissioner Castro: Gracias Ximena. And next I'd like to invite Commissioner Mermelstein to share a few words with us.

Commissioner Ed Mermelstein, Mayor's Office of International Affairs: Thank you so much, Commissioner Castro. My name is Edward Mermelstein. I am the commissioner for

international affairs in New York City. I'm very happy to join our mayor who is coming shortly. Mayor Adams, members of our administration, Ambassador Espinosa, Ambassador Sandoval, the Bowling Green Association, and all of you who are celebrating the 213th anniversary of Ecuadorian independence. The Latin American international community has been an essential partner of our office, and we are so excited to build on these relationships. A small fact, New York City is the third largest Ecuadorian city in the world by population. Another small fact, Queens is the largest county in America for the Ecuadorian immigrant population. New York is proud to be home to more than 200,000 Ecuadorian nationals who contribute immensely to this city. I look forward to working with the council, my colleagues, and the Ecuadorian community to achieve our mayor's vision. I'd like to congratulate once again the Ecuadorian community for 213 years of independence, and thank you for your partnership.

Commissioner Castro: So before I invite Ambassador Sandoval to share a few words, I want to acknowledge and thank Shaina Coronel, our director of communications. Shaina, as many of you might know, is the daughter of Ecuadorian immigrants. And I tell you, we couldn't get much of the work done without Shaina's leadership in our office, especially over the last couple of months, last couple of weeks. She's worked tirelessly for the immigrant community, and I know how important it is because she is a daughter of immigrants and has seen for herself the struggles and the challenges that Ecuadorians face, but also how beautiful the community is, and despite all the challenges, they're coming together and thriving, and they're represented and here today. So on behalf of the City of New York, thank you Shaina for all that you do for our communities. Thank you Shaina. And now I would like to invite Ambassador Sandoval to share a few words.

[...]

Commissioner Castro: Thank you so much, ambassador. [Speaks in Spanish.] And now it is my great honor to introduce to you the mayor of the City of New York, Mayor Eric Adams.

Mayor Eric Adams: Thank you. Thank you so much. And this is a extremely significant moment when you look at the history of the Ecuadorian people. And don't allow anyone to take your historical connection away. In 1809, Ecuador became the first Hispanic American nation to declare its independence. The first. And your actions caused a cascading effect throughout the entire region, those who proclaim their independence from Spain. And today, I'm proud to celebrate your 213 years of independence. I also want to welcome the council generals, the ambassadors, the dignitary, the community leaders, artists, and the group of women who sold the flag. Thank you so much.

Mayor Adams: And New York City is an Ecuadorian city. We have the largest Ecuadorian population outside of Ecuador lives right here in New York City. And what is wonderful about this country, this is one of the few countries on the globe where you are not told to abandon your homeland as you embrace your adopted land. In fact, our secret weapon is when you bring the arts, the culture, your business acumen, your benevolence and friendships and relationships and mix it with the American culture. That is what makes us great as a country and no one does it better than the Ecuadorian community. And I say thank you for that and let's continue to do the relationship building that we are doing.

Mayor Adams: For over 100 years, the bond between our city and Ecuador has been strong. The steadfast friendship was forged by great global leader and 29th president Ecuador, Galo Plaza. There is a piece of history that sits out in front of City Hall with his name on a piece of granite, permanently part of our platform of this city and country. He said living in New York helped him learn the virtues of freedom and democracy. And he took those values with him to Ecuador. He was a New Yorker through and through, but he was an Ecuadorian through and through, and that's the marriage that we enjoy so much.

Mayor Adams: Serving as the Ecuadorian president as a diplomat for the United Nation, he fought to bring those freedoms to the rest of the world. And so we want to say thank him. And we want to thank him in the spirit of what he represented. And what are we doing today in a significant of this moment that I want to be here each time we raise a flag for another country. This is Bowling Green, right here after at of the bull. We are bullish on saying that our city and country is a diverse place that welcome all groups. That's who we are.

Mayor Adams: And just as we welcome groups in yesteryears, we are on the precipice of welcoming new groups. Even when other states tell them they're not welcome here in America and New York, we are saying you are welcome here and we are going to provide the support you deserve. That's what makes us great. And that is why it is so important during these periods of time. And so I thank my commissioner of international affairs as we continue to reach out to new arrivals in new countries. And I thank my once dreamer, my commissioner of Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, who brings his life story to know how important it is for us to open our borders and allow people in. Because all of us have the energy and the spirit that's associated, not only with the American dream, but the dream to reach our full potential.

Mayor Adams: And to the Bowling Green Association, this plot of real estate, this has become our modern day United Nations. You have allowed us to raise flags after flags and bring us together and show that this city is representative to everyone. I'm excited to be here today with the Ecuadorian people. I was excited to march with you in the parade for many years. I'm excited as we move our city forward together as one city unified with the beauty of our different cultures, different ethnicities, and different understandings of each other.

Mayor Adams: And so today, in honor of the community's generosity and fierce commitment to fairness, I, Eric Adams, mayor of the City of New York, hereby proclaimed Wednesday, August 10th, 2022 in the city of New York as Ecuadorian Heritage Day. Congratulations to you.

Commissioner Castro: Thank you, Mayor Adams. This is why we are truly... It's a true honor to serve under your leadership and in your administration. Que viva Eric Adams. And with that, I would like to start the ceremony and welcome us to sing or listen to the American national anthem.

[...]

Commissioner Castro: Now I would like to invite Mayor Eric Adams and Ambassador Sandavol to raise the Ecuadorian flag.

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Commissioner Catro: And now, to conclude our flag raising ceremony, I would like to invite Ximena back up, along with [inaudible].

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