



GOBIERNO DE CHILE

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President Michelle Bachelet in an official photograph from the Progressive Leader's Summit, along with U.K. Prime Minister Gordon Brown and U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden.

DID YOU KNOW?

★ Chile includes ecosystems that are recognized worldwide for their biodiversity and large numbers of endemic species. Thanks to this, the country ranks among the world's 34 most valuable places for resource conservation, as noted in a 2008 report on phylogenetic resources presented by the FAO.

★ In recent decades, Chilean troops have actively participated in UN peace missions in Cambodia, El Salvador, the Iraq-Kuwait border, Israel, Bosnia, Congo, East Timor and Cyprus. They are currently deployed in Haiti, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, India-Pakistan, Cyprus, and the mission to monitor the ceasefire in Palestine.

★ During the recent summer season, 424,536 foreign tourists entered Chile, for a rise of 6.4% compared to figures from January 2008. The largest proportion of visitors came from Argentina, with 209,000 (22.1% more than in 2008), followed by France with 8,876 (a 13.5% increase).



Administration's third anniversary



Working on location – that is how President Michelle Bachelet chose to spend the third anniversary of her inauguration, as she began what will be her last year in office. The motto for the event reflects her administration's main focus: “More protection, more development, more equality.”

The commemoration began with the fulfillment of a promise expressed in her Presidential Message last May: the presentation of 15,000 computers – out of a total of 30,000 – to the country's most outstanding students from lower-income families. The President personally delivered computers in the Metropolitan Region, while her ministers did the same in the country's other 14 regions. The initiative seeks to equalize opportunities and reduce the “digital divide.”



“We said we would lay the foundation for a social protection system that guarantees equal access to basic goods and services (...). Year by year, we have been moving toward this goal,” asserted the President. The achievements have included a massive day care center construction program; new sports stadiums throughout the country; assistance for senior citizens, women and youth through the Pension Reform; support for children and pregnant women through the ChileContigo program; the repair and construction of schools; expanded rights for workers; and larger public housing units.



Looking toward the future, in light of the current international economic situation, the President stressed that her government's actions have one main focus: “protecting families and creating and preserving jobs.”

QUOTES FROM PRESIDENT BACHELET

"This set of initiatives seeks to ensure that credit is available precisely where it should be: for businesses and individuals who need it. The liquidity and solidity of our financial system today must not merely appear as a positive factor in the reports of international analysts – although that naturally fills us with pride – but must be translated into tangible support and well-being for all."

Announcing the Pro-Credit Plan.
Santiago, March 29, 2009.

"We discussed the need to put people first, to ensure that the current economic recession does not become a social recession. And we affirmed that this is possible through policies that strengthen social protection, and above all, stimulate the creation of jobs."

At the conclusion of the Progressive Leaders' Summit. Viña del Mar, March 28, 2009.

"Investing in Chile is not an adventure; it is an experience that offers profits, benefits and success. I invite you to visit our country and share this experience."

At the closing of the seminar "Chile-India: Investment Opportunities."
Chennai, March 19, 2009.

"When we think of modernity, we tend to think of public works, scientific progress, and advances in knowledge – but the truth is that if a country does not give women all that they deserve, it cannot call itself modern. Modernity also means that women have access to the opportunities they need."

At the celebration of International Women's Day.
Santiago, March 9, 2009.

Softening the crisis

To cushion the effects of the international financial crisis, President Bachelet has announced a "Pro-Credit Plan" aimed at businesses and individuals. Its three main pillars are support for microenterprises, improved access to bank financing, and facilitation of non-bank loans. "We want entrepreneurs and individuals to have access to the financing that good projects deserve," emphasized the President.



Complementing the 4-billion-dollar fiscal stimulus package applied in January, the new plan is designed to spur growth and create more than 100,000 jobs. Funding for the measure comes from the country's strict policy of saving the additional revenues generated by rising copper prices in recent years. The initiative includes a special payment of more than 64 dollars to each family covered by the Unitary Family Subsidy, as well as affiliates of the Chile Solidario system and recipients of the family allowance, reaching a total of 1,700,000 households. It also provides 700 million extra dollars for public investments in urban and rural roadways, housing programs and irrigation projects throughout Chile.

The package further includes tax breaks and other stimuli for private investment; financing support for small and medium-sized businesses; and job protection measures, including a subsidy to encourage formal employment among lower-paid workers aged 18 to 24.

Summit in Chile

President Bachelet served as host for the Sixth Progressive Leaders' Summit, held on March 27 and 28 in Viña del Mar. The meeting brought together numerous prominent international figures, including U.K. Prime Minister Gordon Brown and U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden.

Under the theme "A Progressive Response to the Global Crisis," the leaders debated the main challenges facing the world today and the importance of coordinating a progressive response, as well as the need for a new economy and more effective environmental protection. The Summit's final declaration stressed their shared commitment to ensuring that the current economic recession does not produce a recession in social terms as well.



The series of encounters among progressive leaders was launched in 1999, when U.S. President Bill Clinton met in Washington with Prime Ministers Tony Blair of Great Britain and Massimo D'Alema of Italy, as well as German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder. Their aim was to discuss new political models for a globalized world. Since then, gatherings have been held in Berlin, Stockholm, London, Budapest and Johannesburg.

In addition to President Bachelet, Prime Minister Brown and Vice President Biden, participants in the final press conference included Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg of Norway; José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero of Spain; and Uruguayan President Tabaré Vázquez.

FACTS



The National Women's Service (Sernam) signed a cooperation agreement

with the National Women's Institute of Honduras, as well as an accord with Guatemala's Presidential Secretariat for Women.

Chile is in the best position in the region to resist the global economic crisis in the coming months, according to the Latin America Economic Survey, undertaken by Brazil's Getulio Vargas Foundation and Germany's IFO Institute. In the Expectations Index (EI) indicator, Chile had the highest average among 11 countries of the region. The study polled 137 experts from 16 countries.

"Centre des Petits Enfants" is the name of a new children's center in Haiti, created with the help of Chilean organizations. The National Council of Preschools and the Integra Foundation worked on the project.

In a recent article, *The Wall Street Journal* recommended the Chilean market as a refuge for investors, stressing the country's economic stability.



The Amaury Sport Organization (ASO) and the governments of Chile and Argentina have confirmed that the Dakar Rally will traverse both countries in 2010, thanks to the success of the previous competition. The race will include seven segments in each country.

On March 6, the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Chile and Australia entered into force. It covers trade in goods and services, investments, public purchasing and intellectual property.

The presence of U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden – special envoy of President Barack Obama – marks the return of his country's Democratic Party to the global progressive network. Both he and Prime Minister Brown also carried out Official Visits to the country.

Favorable relationship with India

"Essential" was the word used by President Bachelet to refer to her Official Visit to India, from March 16 to 20. The visit came at a key moment, coinciding with the 60-year anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic and political relations, as well as the third year since the implementation of a free trade accord which has brought a 600% increase in commercial exchanges between the two countries.

In an earlier stop in South Africa, President Bachelet met with President Kgalema Motlanthe, with whom she shared her perspectives on the international financial crisis.

Upon her arrival in New Delhi, President Pratibha Patil welcomed her with a special cultural event in honor of the two countries' 60 years of relations. On the following day, she met with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, signing agreements in the areas of renewable resources; education; geology and minerals; the peaceful exploration and utilization of space; agricultural innovation; information technologies; investment; a university alliance; and trade cooperation. The latter topic marks the launch of talks with a view toward a Free Trade Agreement. "We believe that everything we have achieved during this visit will allow Chile to confront its challenges as a country more effectively, since India's extraordinary experience and level of development in these areas are of great relevance to Chile."



Later, the President attended the closing ceremony of a seminar entitled "Trade and Cooperation Opportunities between Chile and India," where she announced that Chile will open a trade office in the country. The mission will also cover innovation and technology, spheres identified as being of common interest. President Bachelet also met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pranab Mukherjee; Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari; and the president of the Congress Party, Sonia Gandhi.

Her official activities also included the laying of a floral wreath at the Gandhi Raj Ghat Memorial, a tour of the Taj Mahal and a visit to the Jindal Foundation in Mumbai, whose principal aim is to combat global warming.

Significant reencounter

President Bachelet's State Visit to Cuba, undertaken from February 11 to 13 — the first by a Chilean Head of Government in over three decades — culminated in a private meeting with former President Fidel Castro.



OVERHEARD



"Chile is one of our closest partners in the region, and President Obama and I hope to deepen our cooperation and benefit not only from our alliance, but from your good counsel."

Joseph Biden, Vice President of the United States. Santiago, March 28, 2009.

"I would like to congratulate President Michelle Bachelet and her Minister of Finance for their achievements in recent years, most fundamentally for the capacity of Chile's economy as it finds itself in this situation."

Gordon Brown, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Santiago, March 27, 2009.

"I applaud, Madam President, the priority which you have placed on the issue of climate change."

Prince Charles of Wales. Santiago, March 9, 2009.

"I am deeply grateful that Your Excellency has given agriculture the importance that it deserves and has recognized the fundamental role that the agricultural sector plays as a necessary prerequisite for national development. At the same time, Your Excellency has worked diligently to improve food security and the welfare of all Chilean citizens, men and women alike."

Jacques Diouf, Director-General of the FAO. Santiago, March 7, 2009.

With the President of Cuba's Council of Ministers and Council of State, Raúl Castro, she discussed the international financial situation and strategies for jointly facing the challenges it presents for the hemisphere.

The two leaders presided over a signing ceremony for numerous accords, including International Cooperation Agreements in the fields of science and technology, forestry, agriculture, fishing and aquaculture, health, biotechnology, culture, higher education, mining, civil defense, sports, and trade and export promotion, as well as a scholarship program.



Culture was also on the agenda; President Bachelet spoke at the inauguration of the 18th International Havana Book Fair, at which Chile was a guest of honor.

Leaders in defense

On March 9 and 10, the Ministers of Defense of the Union of South American Nations (Unasur) gathered in Santiago to establish the South American Defense Council. The aim of the new pact is to strengthen mutual confidence through integration, dialogue and cooperation in the field of defense.

At the meeting, the South American countries agreed to strengthen their military cooperation mechanisms and to coordinate humanitarian missions, peacekeeping operations and the interchange of experiences. In contrast to alliances such as NATO, the Council will not involve a joint military force; "instead, its objective is to promote integration in the area of security."



Illustrious visit

From March 8 to 11, the Prince of Wales paid his first visit to Chile, accompanied by his wife Camilla. Marked by Prince Charles' special interest in topics such as environmental sustainability and climate change, the Official Visit also served to reinforce the longstanding ties between the two nations.

Together with President Bachelet, the Prince participated in the official launch of Chile's National Campaign for Energy Efficiency. He also attended a business roundtable on climate change, met with agricultural producers, and visited a biofuels plant as well as the Chilean Joint Center for Peacekeeping Operations.

In the Valparaíso Region, he toured the headquarters of Chile's naval forces and the frigate *Almirante Condell*, purchased in 2005 from the British Navy.

CHILEANS AROUND THE WORLD

The FAO awarded President Michelle Bachelet the Ceres Medal, in recognition of the country's progress in promoting agriculture and combating hunger. The award is presented to women who have made outstanding contributions to agricultural development and food security.

Margot Duhalde, Chile's first female combat pilot, was presented with the Veterans Badge by the British government, for her services to the Air Transport Auxiliary during World War II.

Photographer Carlos Gutiérrez took first place in the Nature Singles category of the World Press Photo 2008 competition. The prizewinning image is a nighttime portrait of the Chaitén Volcano in full eruption during an electrical storm.



Trinidad Soza Díaz, a 13-year-old Chilean student living in the United States, was chosen by a television station to read a letter to President Barack Obama, in which she expressed her concern about childhood obesity in the United States.

The president of Chile's Central Bank, José De Gregorio, was named Latin America's best Central Bank president during 2008 by the British periodical *The Banker*, based on a survey of bankers and economists.

In Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Soprano Cristina Gallardo-Domàs was awarded the International Giacomo Puccini Prize, presented by the Puccini Foundation of Torre del Lago. The award is one of the top honors in her field.

AGENDA

- ★ **March 27:** Official Visit of the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Gordon Brown. Santiago.
- ★ **March 27-28:** Progressive Leaders' Summit. Viña del Mar.
- ★ **March 28:** Official Visit of the Vice President of the United States, Joseph Biden.
- ★ **March 30-31:** President Michelle Bachelet attends the Second Summit of Heads of State from Arab and South American Countries. Doha, Qatar.
- ★ **April 1-4:** Official Visit of President Michelle Bachelet to the Russian Federation. St. Petersburg and Moscow.

Island paradise

In the Pacific Ocean, off the coast of the Coquimbo Region, some 500 kilometers north of Santiago, lies a small paradise: Damas Island. Together with the Choros and Chañaral Islands, it forms part of the National Humboldt Penguin Reserve, with all of its surrounding waters also classified as marine reserves.



The intense blue of the sky, the warm turquoise waters – allowing a clear view of the abundant sea life below, ideal for divers – and the white sand of its beaches, La Poza and Las Tijeras, beckon visitors year-round to discover the beauty of its 60 hectares, including places scarcely explored by human beings. Campers are required to respect

the valuable ecosystem. Although reaching the island involves an overland journey and a trip in a small boat, this has not deterred the increasing number of travelers who visit each year: 12,625 in 2007 and 17,774 in 2008.

Along with the striking landscape, the island's wildlife also provides a memorable experience. Bottlenose dolphins are the first to greet visitors, swimming playfully around approaching boats. On shore, the Humboldt penguin is the island's emblematic fauna, joined by sea lions and marine otters. Hawks, burrowing owls, cormorants, boobies, pelicans, vultures, and oystercatchers can also be observed, as well as the South American tern and the Yunco duck, unique to the area.



FESTIVALS OF CHILE

Viña del Mar International Song Festival



In Chile, when February comes around each year, a spirit of relaxation settles over the country, and

half the population seems to go on vacation. It is a time of beaches and bikinis, family outings and tourism, as well as the fiestas organized by every town and village for its inhabitants and visitors. And it is also a time when most people's thoughts and conversations turn toward the news and results emerging from the latest Viña del Mar International Song Festival.

With its 50-year history, the competition has already become a valued tradition, celebrated by the country as a fitting culmination to the summer season. Newspapers, television channels and radio stations offer special programs, supplements and broad coverage of the key figures, competition results and gossip related to the event, creating a climate of great expectation around the five-day spectacle offered to the world from the Valparaíso Region's leading seaside resort city.

The festival dates back to 1959, when a group of local musicians was invited to compete in a fair held by art students in the Quinta Vergara, a traditional park laid out by the city's founders. The initiative was a success, and it was repeated in the years that followed – at first in such a modest form that spectators had to bring their own chairs. In 1964, a simple open-air amphitheater was constructed, with a shell-shaped

wooden acoustic backdrop to help project the music toward the audience, who sat on wooden benches over a dirt floor, reclined on an adjoining hillside, or even perched on the branches of nearby trees.

The festival was first broadcast over the radio. Television coverage was added later, and over the course of the 1970s, the event gradually reached the entire country, thanks to the retransmission facilities of Chile's *Televisión Nacional*. Since 1974, the event has also been covered by television stations in Argentina, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Spain and South Africa. Four years later, in a technological milestone, festival broadcasts ushered in the era of color TV.

The competition's status as a musical spectacle has also evolved over time. In the early years, only Chilean artists competed, performing songs in the popular and folk categories. With the inclusion of foreign singer-songwriters, an international competition emerged. The creative battles of those decades produced a handful of songs that have become enduring classics of popular music, starting with *Laisse-moi le temps*, which won second place for France in 1973, but was later transformed by Frank Sinatra into a romantic anthem, known throughout the world as *Let me try again*.

For those who aspire to musical success, performing at La Quinta is both a dream and a great source of fear. The multitudinous audience at the festival each evening is viewed as

a “monster,” capable of “devouring” artists or heaping them with applause and awards. Spanish performer Julio Iglesias and Colombian artist Shakira are among those who accepted the challenge and vanquished the “monster” to become what they are today: outstanding figures in the world of show business.

Today, the Viña del Mar Festival has become a spectacle presented to the world by Chilean television, offering an image of a hardworking country which also knows how to enjoy a good party. At the 2009 event, Joan Manuel Serrat, Santana, Juanes and Simply Red shared accolades and awards with Chilean performers La Noche and Fernando Ubierno, in an extensive program which reaffirmed the idea of a popular fiesta with which the competition was born, on a calm summer evening in Viña del Mar, half a century ago.



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