



# CHILE NEWS

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At La Moneda Palace, President Lagos receives the President of Portugal, Jorge Sampaio, during his State visit to the country, July 7, 2005.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- ★ UNESCO has placed the saltpeter mining centers of Humberstone and Santa Laura on its World Heritage List. The towns were distinguished as examples of industrial archeology, highlighting the social movements and changes arising from the saltpeter operations during the last decades of the 19th century, as well as man's conquest of the desert, where 60,000 people came to live.
- ★ For the close connection between his work and popular culture, and the concise, rigorous and original nature of his creations, Argentine poet Juan Gelman was honored with the 2005 Pablo Neruda Ibero-American Poetry Award.
- ★ To make winter vacations safe as well as enjoyable, Chile's National Cancer Association has installed a signal alerting visitors to prevailing levels of solar radiation at the La Parva ski center, 45 minutes from Santiago. The idea is to help vacationers avoid the damaging effects of exposure to ultraviolet rays.

### A triumph for democracy

On July 13, after 15 years of political transition, the Chilean Senate finally approved sweeping reforms to the 1980 Constitution, eliminating the last “authoritarian enclaves” inherited from General Augusto Pinochet’s dictatorship. The change is the most significant institutional reform to a Constitution in the history of independent Chile.

“This is a great triumph for Chile and for its democracy,” declared President Ricardo Lagos from Australia. “We can now state that Chile’s transition has come to an end. We have a constitutional body of law which is in accordance with the country’s historical tradition, and, most importantly, which was accepted unanimously by the National Congress.” The President’s satisfaction was shared across all parts of the political spectrum; emphasis was placed on the agreement achieved after years of debate, which shows that “Chileans can take a broad view, placing Chile’s interests first,” as the President noted.

Among the 58 modifications to the Constitution, the most emblematic are the elimination of the designated and life senators, as of March 11, 2006; the reinstatement of the President’s authority to dismiss the commanders-in-chief of the Armed and Security Forces, from whom the “institutional guarantees” established by Pinochet are removed; and the recognition of Chilean nationality for children born abroad to a Chilean mother or father.

The Constitutional Court and National Security Council will also be modified. The members of the former will increase to 10, while the latter will become an advisory body to the President, convened only by him. The goal of modifying the binominal electoral system remains unfulfilled, but its provisions will be transferred from the Constitution to the organic law, which will facilitate its later modification. All of the transitional measures which permitted the continuation of Pinochet’s regime will be eliminated, and, through a special disposition, his signature will be replaced by that of President Lagos.

The legislative process leading to the reforms lasted more than five years in Congress. In October 2004, the government and senators from across the political spectrum reached a historic agreement – whose leading author was



Interior Minister Francisco Vidal is greeted by senator Alberto Espina.

Ministers and opposition senators celebrate the approval of the reforms.

The Minister Secretary General of Government, Osvaldo Puccio, with Senator Andrés Chadwick.

## FACTS

Solid support for President Lagos' management was revealed by a survey published in July by the Center for Public Studies (CEP). The poll showed a 61% approval rate for the government and a support level of 45% for the Concertación coalition's presidential candidate, Michelle Bachelet. The candidates of the opposition bloc Alliance for Chile, Joaquín Lavín and Sebastián Piñera, received 22% and 14%, respectively.

Chile, Singapore and New Zealand have signed the first multi-party free trade agreement uniting a Latin American country with the Asia Pacific region. Brunei Darussalam, the fourth member of the pact – known as P4 – will follow suit in August. In addition to the FTA, the three countries signed an environmental cooperation agreement and a memorandum of understanding on labor issues.

In May, Chile's economy grew by 6.4% compared to the same month in 2004, exceeding market expectations by nearly half a percentage point.

Chile has gained representation on the Administrative Council of the International Labor Office, which functions as the secretariat of the ILO. The Minister of Labor will exercise this function until 2007.

From 2000 to 2003, the percentage increase in female heads of households was similar to that registered during the entire decade of the 1990s: 3.1 percent, according to the National Socioeconomic Characterization (CASEN) survey.

The portal [www.chileparaninos.cl](http://www.chileparaninos.cl) invites children to get to know the country in an entertaining manner, offering stories, poetry, games and photographs related to the "Treasures of Chile," the country's history, and important figures such as Pablo Neruda and Gabriela Mistral. Visitors to the site can explore Valparaíso, Chiloé and the historic saltpeter mining towns or learn about the culture and traditions of Chile's indigenous peoples.

former Interior Minister and current OAS Secretary General José Miguel Insulza – which allowed their successful implementation (see *Chile News N° 61*). The new legal text will be ratified by the Congreso Pleno on August 16.

### A new beginning for health

No deadline has been missed: after three years of operation as a pilot program in the public health sector, the Program of Explicit Health Care Guarantees – known as the AUGE Plan – was extended to the entire Chilean population on July 1. During its first week of operation, more than 36,000 people accessed its services.



The State now guarantees health care access and financial protection to the entire population for 25 medical conditions representing the leading causes of mortality among Chileans, a figure which will rise to 56 by 2007. The plan is the most visible face of the government's Health Reform, the leading modification to the public health system since 1952.

In support of this effort, the government has implemented the Management Information System for Explicit Health Care Guarantees (SIGGES), one of the field's most noteworthy technological innovations, representing a revolution from the point of view of management. The system permits online monitoring of medical consultations, so that the authorities can identify bottlenecks, assist in diagnosis problems and focus the sector's resources more effectively. It connects nearly 800 health care facilities within the public system from one end of the country to the other.

The AUGE Plan sets maximum waiting times for each medical condition, ranging from 30 minutes to 60 days, depending on the seriousness of the problem and the risks involved. It also establishes unprecedented financial guarantees: affiliates of the public health system (FONASA) or private health plans (ISAPRES) with incomes above US\$270 per month pay only a 20% share for medical services, up to a level of 10% of their annual household income. Individuals with lower incomes contribute a co-payment of only 10%. Indigent patients or those with minimal resources receive care completely free of charge.

During the first week, cases of high blood pressure, diabetes and acute respiratory infections made up 78% of the demand for AUGE services among ISAPRES and FONASA patients. The Ministry of Health estimates that it will serve 1,700,000 individuals through the public health sector as well as 500,000 ISAPRES affiliates this year.

### Protection for sons and daughters

With the enactment of the Filiation Law, in 1998, Chile took an enormous step forward in protecting families: for the first time in the country's history, equal

## QUOTATIONS FROM THE PRESIDENT

"The health care reform we have implemented is one which will leave an enduring mark on Chile (...). There will be a 'before' and 'after' with respect to the AUGE Plan's effects on the country's health care systems."

Santiago, July 19, 2005

"I think it is a good thing that we have removed the binomial system from the Constitution, but the country is well aware of the position of the coalition that elected me. The Concertación was born to advocate for the elimination of the binomial system, but unfortunately, this has not yet been possible. We have waited 15 years to remove the 'authoritarian enclaves,' and I hope we will not have to wait as long to change the electoral system."

On the Senate's approval of the constitutional reforms.  
Canberra, July 14, 2005

"I think it is always gratifying. Now we must understand that to deserve this support, we must work with greater force, greater confidence and greater enthusiasm."

Regarding the support for his administration's leadership indicated by a public opinion survey.  
Sydney, July 14, 2005

"The decision to participate together with Australia and New Zealand in setting up a regional body to defend our fishing operations in the South Pacific seems very important to me. These countries have been very active in this area, and they want Chile's help. It is in our interest to participate and to see how we can combine our efforts to play a more active role in defending our fishing resources."

Canberra, July 14, 2005

"All Chileans repudiate what happened early this morning in London, and I believe that we must have a clear, strong and definite response."

On the attacks in the British capital.  
Santiago, July 7, 2005

The perpetrators of these acts "sought to interrupt the dialogue about building a better society, (and thus) democrats around the world, who wish to construct a world ruled by reason, dialogue and cooperation, in light of the challenges we face, must reaffirm our principles and reiterate our faith in politics and liberty as the only instruments for achieving progress."

Joint declaration with the President of Portugal, Jorge Sampaio.  
Santiago, July 7, 2005

rights were established for all children born in the country, putting to an end to the previous legal distinctions among them based on their parents' marital status.

Seven years later, on July 11, President Lagos implemented modifications to this body of law, aimed at improving its effectiveness and ensuring that mothers of babies who are not acknowledged by their fathers – 28,000 in 2004 alone – can, if they wish, insist upon the clarification of their children's identity.

The modifications, which enhance access to justice and protect the dignity of those involved, constitute a further advance in the government's family law initiative. The idea is to correct the problems which have hindered paternity investigations in the past, preventing the law's central objective – equality for all children – from being achieved on a generalized basis.



The new law simplifies the judicial procedures for initiating a paternity suit: it is no longer necessary to present letters, photographs or eyewitness testimony to demonstrate a relationship. It is also unnecessary to present a case in two different courts (civil and protection of minors); there will now be a single proceeding, presided over by a Family Judge.

The case in Family Court will consist of only two sessions: a preparatory hearing and that in which the judgment is presented. If the alleged father does not appear for the first hearing, or if he denies or expresses doubts about his paternity, the judge may order an immediate DNA test. If the man refuses to undergo the test, his paternity will be assumed for legal purposes, so that he must prove the contrary before the court.

### Mutual cooperation

President Lagos pursued an active agenda in Australia, where he arrived for a State visit on July 12. In addition to promoting Chile as a platform for entry into Latin America and advancing economic exchanges between the two countries, he reinforced the two countries' excellent bilateral relationship, which was reflected in significant cooperation agreements.



President Ricardo Lagos with the Prime Minister of Australia, John Howard.

## OVERHEARD

"President Lagos spoke to me about Chile's energy needs due to its rapidly-developing economy, which is experiencing continuous growth, and it interests us to seek new markets. Given our strong partnership at present, we would be very pleased to see this happen."

John Howard, Prime Minister of Australia.  
Canberra, July 14, 2005

"The relationship between France and Chile has never been so intense or characterized by such confidence. In all of our areas of exchange, the indicators are in the green, so that we must work to strengthen them and increase the speed of the exchanges even further."

Alain Le Gourrierec, Ambassador of France in Chile. Santiago, July 14, 2005

"There must be many ways in which (India and Chile) can work together. I believe that there are opportunities from horticulture to high technology, for example. India can learn how to export grapes. Chile, in turn, can emulate the Indian experience and become the back office for the Hispanic world."

Pramath Sinha, consultant for McKinsey & Company. Santiago, July 6, 2005

## CHILEANS AROUND THE WORLD

Miguel Cerda and Felipe Leal won the gold medal at the 2005 Rowing World Cup III in Switzerland in the lightweight pair without coxswain division. This is the athletes' third consecutive victory, following their silver medal obtained earlier in Germany.

The Chilean National Ballet and Santiago Ballet received high praise from the press and the public for their performances in Romania and Venice, respectively. *A Neruda: Carne de aire* "is a unique spectacle, fascinating, warm, full of beauty," wrote the Romanian newspaper *Rom Pres*. Regarding the performance of *Cuerpos pintados* at the Venice Biennale's Third Festival of Contemporary Dance, *El País* called it "a fully-realized exercise in ballet and the plastic arts, based on electronic soundtracks and body painting."

The young actor Santiago Cabrera portrays a leading character in *Empire*, the new epic mini-series from the ABC network, opened in July in the United States.

Together with Prime Minister John Howard, he presided over the signing of two memoranda of understanding on labor and scientific issues. The first included the new "Work and Vacations" program, which will permit young Chileans and Australians to participate in employment exchanges for a specific period of time, making Chile the first Spanish-

speaking country with which Australia has signed this kind of agreement. Starting in December, it will be open to 100 students or professionals between 18 and 30 years of age. The second agreement established technical cooperation links between the Chilean Nuclear Energy Commission and the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organization, which will promote increased interchange in this field.

The two countries also resolved to make rapid progress on an agreement eliminating double taxation, which will favor reciprocal investment and help establish Chile as a regional platform. The Australian government invited Chile, together with New Zealand, to join a regional body to defend fishing operations in the South Pacific, and announced its intention to bid on future natural gas supply contracts for the re-gasification plant being constructed by Chile's National Petroleum Company (ENAP).

A highlight of the activities was President Lagos' visit to the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO). He emphasized the outstanding level of research carried out there as well as the possibility of applying it in Chile: "Here we have seen a piece of the future, in which biotechnology offers effective opportunities to reduce costs and improve production."

In addition, the Chilean Agricultural Research Institute (INIA) and the Department of Primary Industries in Victoria, Australia, signed a five-year cooperation agreement on issues related to technology, biology and agriculture.

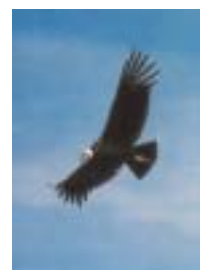
## Fragile green

The planet's southernmost and most pristine ecosystem, Cape Horn, in Chile's Antarctic province, has been declared a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO. This international recognition will permit the protection of 4.9 million hectares – three million of them aquatic – which make up one of the world's most biodiverse and least-polluted territories.

The distinction took into account both the cultural and biological uniqueness of the zone: it is the southernmost land with a pre-Columbian population – the nearly-extinct Yamana or Yagan people – and it also includes one of the



Visit to CSIRO.



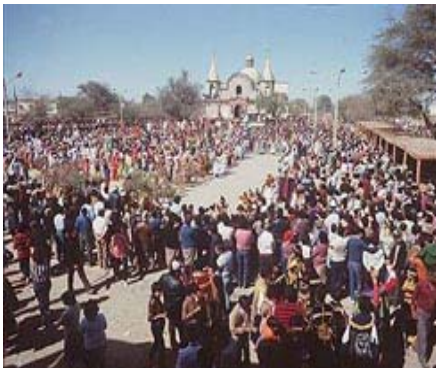
## AGENDA

- ★ July 7-8: State Visit of the President of Portugal, Jorge Sampaio. Santiago.
- ★ July 18: Participation of Foreign Minister Ignacio Walker in the Sixteenth Andean Presidential Summit, Lima.
- ★ July 22: Participation of Foreign Minister Ignacio Walker in the preparatory meeting for the Nineteenth Rio Group Summit, Buenos Aires.
- ★ August 8-9: Official visit of the President of the European Parliament, Joseph Borrel.



as the “diabladas”; indigenous legends; and carnival costumes introduced by Chinese immigrants who arrived to work in the saltpeter mines in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

According to the legend of the festival’s origin, in the mid-16th century, an indigenous princess who ruled the area with an iron hand fell in love with a Portuguese man who had been brought before her as a prisoner. Softened by love, the Tyrant of Tamarugal – as she was known – converted to the Catholic faith. However, the



romance awakened the ire of her subjects, who pronounced a death sentence on the pair when he baptized her. Years later, a priest of the Order of Mercy traveling through the mesquite forests discovered a mysterious cross at the foot of a tree. Upon learning the fateful story, he ordered the construction of a church on the spot, which now serves as the center of the celebrations.

planet’s few remaining non-fragmented temperate forests. In addition, it is the habitat of endangered species, including the condor and Magellanic woodpecker, as well as protected animals such as the nutria and elephant seal. The zone, which includes two national parks, is the country’s first Biosphere Reserve to cover maritime territory and populated sectors, such as Puerto Williams and Puerto Toro.

The designation will help promote scientific research as well as educational and conservation programs in the national parks. An additional seven ecosystems in Chile have been classified as Biosphere Reserves: Lauca Park, Fray Jorge Park, Juan Fernández Island, La Campana-Peñuelas Park, Las Araucarias Park, Laguna San Rafael and Torres del Paine.

### A whirlwind of color in the desert

They arrive from the north and the south, from the coast and even from neighboring countries, with their colorful clothing, irresistible music and joyful dances. For a full week, the village of La Tirana, in the middle of the Pampa del Tamarugal, demonstrates its devotion to the Virgin of Carmen, patron of Chile, whose day is celebrated on July 16.

The earthquake which ravaged the area just over a month ago did not shake the faith of the approximately 220,000 pilgrims. More than 200 dance groups performed, and Cardinal Francisco Javier Errázuriz – together with Bolivian Bishop Jesús Juárez of El Alto de La Paz and Marco Antonio Cortes, Bishop of Tacna and Moquehua, Peru – officiated during the main Mass ceremonies, in which prayers were offered for integration and brotherhood among the three countries.

The celebration splashes the arid Atacama desert with color in an astonishing spectacle of masks and disguises, made even more attractive through the mixing of highly diverse traditions: it combines Catholicism with ancient dances of the altiplano, such



# IDEAS OF CHILE

## Un Techo para Chile

Nothing holds them back, and no objective seems impossible to them: the young people of the program Un Techo Para Chile (A Roof for Chile) refuse to compromise in their quest to awaken society's collective conscience.

In 1997, a university project sparked an intense feeling of social unease among a group of students, after their exposure to the harsh conditions faced by squatters and their families, who lived in flimsy housing constructed from cardboard boxes and sheets of plastic and zinc. The students decided to build modest but dignified wooden houses, known as *mediaguas*. Starting with the construction of 350 homes, they increased this number to over 5,000 by 2000, allowing them to expand the idea to the national level.

The program was born in 2001, and with it the ambitious goal of eradicating "encampments" in



Chile by the country's Bicentennial, in 2010. Today, this call to action has borne fruit, with 30,000 volunteers throughout the country and more than 21,000 *mediaguas* constructed.

The commitment and high spirits of the young participants in Un Techo para Chile are sustained by rigorous and professional work, which in the short span of seven years has allowed the organization to become the

country's third leading charitable institution,



with offices in the majority of the country's regions.

What began with the construction of temporary housing to solve the urgent problem of extreme poverty has become a project with much more ambitious goals. Thus, the program's volunteers – including university and secondary school students, professionals and families – give remedial academic classes to children and adults, teach basic job skills, administer microloans for small businesses and implement economic development projects, in addition to



health care programs, computer initiatives and libraries.

Un Techo para Chile was created by young people, and it continues to be administered by them. Except for the general manager and the institution's chaplain, Jesuit priest Felipe Berríos, no one is older than 30, and the paid positions – not more than 50 to coordinate the group's initiatives throughout Chile – can only be held for two years, ensuring a constant turnover of people and ideas.

But the organization doesn't stop with ideas. With great creativity, it has used every available resource to assemble the necessary financing, because constructing 4,000 *mediaguas* per year comes at a price: over two million dollars

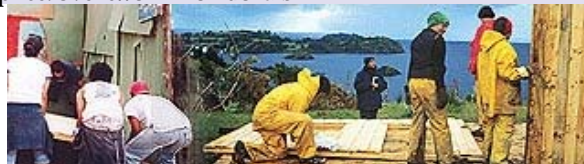
are needed, in addition to the cost of the rest of the programs. To raise these funds, volunteers



are willing to go out into the streets asking for help and knock on the doors of hundreds of companies. In addition to the opportunity to contribute resources, businesses are offered a unique experience, which has proved unforgettable for many: during a day of construction work, managers and employees work side by side as equals, which helps to enhance labor relations.

The country's advertising sector has also been a valuable ally, with the communications media actively participating in the campaigns' publicity: Un Techo a Mil (A Roof for a Thousand) filled television screens and radio programs in July. The group's latest fundraising idea is an orange bracelet bearing its name, sold for just under two dollars through a large retail store: within a month after its launch, the initiative collected over 200,000 dollars, an amount which significantly exceeded expectations.

The spirit, hard work and commitment which unites the program's young participants in Chile quickly found resonance abroad, becoming Un Techo para mi País (A Roof for My Country), which is already operating in El Salvador, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, Argentina, Bolivia, Mexico, Uruguay, Guatemala and Colombia. Through interchanges with the Chilean organization, the expansion, which began in 2001, has permitted the establishment of a Latin American network



of young people eager to achieve a common goal: eradicating poverty.

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