



CHILE

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NEWS

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President Ricardo Lagos reads the final Summit declaration in the name of the 21 APEC Leaders. La Moneda Palace, November 21, 2004.

DID YOU KNOW?

- ★ 19% of Chile's territory is protected by law through an extensive system of National Parks, complete with routes inviting visitors to explore them on foot, bicycle or horseback, or by boat.
- ★ The Sendero de Chile (Chilean Trail), the route through the Andean foothills which will allow travelers to explore the length of the country by 2010, will reach the milestone of 1,000 completed kilometers early this year. To the new segments opened in Torres del Paine – in the extreme south – and Alto BíoBío, in the Eighth Region, another 800 completed kilometers are being added, from Visviri, on the northern border, to Cabo de Hornos.
- ★ Along the coast of the Fifth Region, more than 500 vessels lie submerged, shipwrecked between the 14th and 20th centuries. The Chilean branch of Sek International University is working on an archeological map project to determine the wrecks' locations and characteristics and preserve their historical and cultural value. At least 60 ships have already been identified, but the information is maintained strictly confidential to prevent looting.

A good year

During 2004, Chile did its homework well. The country passed long-awaited legislation; successfully implemented new stages of its reforms to the justice system, health care and education; and captured the world's attention as host of the APEC Leaders' Summit. In addition, the country was able to recover its rate of economic growth and acknowledge painful moments from its past with maturity.

To its characteristics of trade openness, political stability and competitiveness (the World Economic Forum placed it first in the region), Chile added economic growth that surpassed all projections – approximately 6%, according to Finance Minister Nicolás Eyzaguirre. The country further initiated negotiations for Free Trade Agreements with China and Japan, as well as a tripartite accord with New Zealand and Singapore. Meanwhile, ECLAC pointed to Chile as the only country in the region to fulfill its millennium goal of reducing extreme poverty.

The protection of the family was also a priority, as shown by the entry into force of a new Civil Marriage Law, which includes provisions for divorce, creates Family Courts endowed with specialized advisory bodies, and increases by 500% the number of judges exclusively dedicated to these types of cases.

In education, the country placed the Full School Day Law into effect, which also stipulates that at least 15% of students must come from low-income families, prohibits expulsion for economic reasons, and imposes fines on schools that refuse to enroll pregnant students. A Teacher Evaluation System, the first of its kind in Latin America, was also inaugurated to help improve instruction and educational quality.

Another momentous advance during the year was the agreement reached by the government and senators from all parts of the political spectrum to reform the 1980 Constitution, drafted and approved under the regime of General Augusto Pinochet. The change – the most radical yet undertaken to the document – fulfills a long-term aspiration of the Concertación coalition administrations in their efforts to consolidate democracy in the country.

In the area of human rights, an enormous step forward was taken with the Report on Political Imprisonment and Torture, officially released by President Ricardo Lagos in November, which compelled all Chileans – including the Armed Forces – to confront the dark side of the country's recent past. A bill providing reparations for the victims, presented by the government with broad public support, has been approved by the legislature.



Monsignor Sergio Valech presents the Report on Political Imprisonment and Torture to President Lagos.

FACTS

The Heritage Foundation identified the Chilean economy as the most liberal in Latin America, ranking it in 11th place among 155 countries, one place ahead of the United States. The report referred to the country as "the economic star of the region".

In November 2004, the economy grew by 7.5% in comparison with the same month of the previous year, the most favorable rate in seven years.

Mining exports reached the historic figure of 16.5 billion dollars in 2004, boosted by an increase in production and rising copper prices.

Chile leads Latin America in digital access to public information, according to the United Nations' 2004 *Global E-government Readiness Report*. The country stands out for providing information in a simple and accessible manner, through sites such as www.gobiernodechile.cl, www.chileangovernment.cl and www.600mineduc.cl, which also offer services on line.

The European Union has proposed a wide-ranging agreement with Chile to facilitate air transport between the two territories. The agreement would permit European airlines to fly to Chile from any member state of the bloc, not necessarily from their country of origin, while also allowing foreign airlines to initiate EU-bound flights from Chilean airports.

The record figure of 3.2 billion dollars was registered by shipments of the forestry sector during the past year, thanks to the substantial rise in prices for cellulose and wood on international markets.



The year also ended well for the President. Four polls undertaken by institutions with various political leanings showed solid public support for his administration, ranging from 49% to 73.2%. In addition, one of the surveys selected the President by a broad margin as Person of the Year.

A regional platform

Between January and October 2004, foreign investment in Chile expanded by 219%, representing transactions valued at 6.5 billion dollars. This figure confirms the country's current status as the leading destination for investments in the region.

Approximately 17 multinational companies have already chosen Chile as their center of operations for Latin America. When explaining the reasons for their choice, they concur in emphasizing the country's economic stability, clear and consistent regulations, low corruption levels, and high-quality workforce.

BHP Billiton, Xerox, PPL and Unilever Bestfoods are some of the most noteworthy companies maintaining regional headquarters in Chile. An additional 25 have located at least one of their management offices in the country and do not rule out the possibility of basing their highest regional executives there. This is the case, for example, with Telecom Italia, the courier company TNT, the Dutch pharmaceuticals firm Organon, the electric company Hydro Québec, and the mining enterprise Phelps Dodge.



The Spanish cured-meat firm Martínez Barragán installed its offices in Chile a few months ago, with plans not only to conquer the domestic market but to use Chile as a platform for exports to other regional destinations, and even to Europe and Asia. The German multinational firm Software AG, Europe's second leading company in software sales, opened Santiago offices in June 2004, while the Tata Group, India's most powerful holding company, inaugurated a regional headquarters for its technological branch, TCS, a year ago.

Additional new projects have already been announced: the Taiwanese giant Teco Electric & Machinery plans to construct a software plant with sufficient capacity to cover the Chilean market in addition to that of Peru, Bolivia, and Argentina; and the U.S. firm FedEx is considering the establishment of a call center and logistics facility for the region. The Dutch multinational Nunhems, the world's fourth leading seed company, has launched a vigorous expansion plan based in Chile, and the Belgian chemical group Solvay has announced the construction of a plant and distribution center to supply hydrogen peroxide (oxygenated water), a vital input for the cellulose and mining industries.

Chile comes to Asia's assistance

Representing the people of Chile, to whom the scenario is not an unfamiliar one, President Lagos has launched a campaign of solidarity to assist the victims of the earthquake and tsunami in Southeast Asia. The initiative also aims to repay the support provided to Chile on other occasions, after the natural disasters suffered by the country throughout its history.

The resources collected in Account 1007 of the Banco Estado will be donated to UNICEF to assist with four high-priority tasks defined by the organization: preventing the deaths of injured children, arranging orphans' adoption by family members, protecting children from sexual trafficking, and reopening schools in the affected regions. A wide range of groups – including artists, the communications media, large retailers, the Banking Association, the National Export Council and the Unified Labor Federation

QUOTATIONS FROM THE PRESIDENT

"These two years on the Security Council reaffirm our conviction that, for countries such as Chile, multilateral issues are a national concern."

On Chile's participation in the UN Security Council from 2003 to 2004.
January 9, 2005

"We hope for increased growth in 2004. But what does it mean to govern under democracy? It means ensuring that this growth reaches all spheres, and that is what we are doing."

Announcing the start of an assistance program for low-income senior citizens.
January 5, 2005

"To all of the family members of the victims, I would like to express the enormous and heartfelt solidarity of all Chileans. And I would also like to say that we are initiating a campaign to help those brothers and sisters in Asia who need it most."

On aid to the victims in Southeast Asia.
December 31, 2004

"This effort is related to the way we want to integrate ourselves within Latin America, from the point of view of the educational role in Chile, and to return to the unique work we had in the past (...). This is a demonstration of our understanding that if Chile advances and progresses, it can share this with other countries of the region."

At the launch of the "República de Chile" scholarship, which will finance the studies of 30 Latin American postgraduate students.
December 21, 2004

"In declaring our coastal shores to be a protected area, what we are doing is guaranteeing that our grandchildren and the children of our grandchildren will be able to continue observing the beauty of the Humboldt penguin, the sea lions and the bottlenose dolphins, and that we will continue preserving these species."

Upon signing the decree creating the country's second Protected Marine Area.
December 10, 2004

(CUT), as well as soccer star and UNICEF ambassador Iván Zamorano – have organized themselves to provide donations.



In addition, the government has dispatched to Thailand and Indonesia four forensic experts and six physicians specializing in areas such as epidemiology, first aid, emergency care, rescue services, disaster response, and public and environmental management, in order to assist in caring for the survivors and identifying the victims.

Offering renewed hope

Each year, from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego, seven million children suffer burn injuries. With this painful figure in mind, Chilean plastic surgeon Jorge Rojas refuses to rest in his search for new ways to help the Corporación de Ayuda al Niño Quemado, Coaniquem (Corporation to Support Burned Children), continue its valuable rehabilitation work in Chile and abroad.



Rojas, the founder of the institution – the largest of its type in the region, in existence for 25 years – proudly points to what he considers Coaniquem's greatest achievement: never having refused treatment to a child who needs it but whose family is unable to pay.



The project began as an initiative of young Chilean doctors who were disturbed by the neglect of juvenile burn victims once they overcame the acute phase of their accidents. In 1982, the doctors opened a small polyclinic in one of Santiago's poorest districts, serving 250 young patients. Today they operate facilities totaling 3,600 m² and provide free care to more than 8,500 Chilean patients each year, as well as 150 from other countries.



The Corporation maintains a network covering a significant portion of the region – an unprecedented achievement for a charitable foundation – made possible by a network of alliances aimed at gaining support from private companies and the public. This system has become a model for many other institutions, and Coaniquem is currently the subject of a study at Harvard University, as an example of innovation and success in cooperative efforts with private entities to further a project for the public benefit.

A laboratory on a salar

The Huasco Salar, in Chile's extreme north, shelter a wealth of rare, unstudied species of tiny plants and animals. The secrets of this treasure trove for science will be investigated by Pedro Labarca, holder of the 2004 National Award for the Natural Sciences, in conjunction with teachers and students from rural schools on the northern Andean plateau.

The project won the government's Bicentennial Seal competition, thanks to its potential for contributing to Chile's development as a country characterized by integration, social equity, economic growth and commitment to the environment. Ecologists, microbiologists, physiologists and, molecular biologists will work at the site, which is considered a natural biological laboratory unique on earth.

OVERHEARD

President Lagos "has offered us assistance in spite of Chile's small size and the distance between our countries. Other forms of coordination will also be looked at, including within the framework of the United Nations, so that all of us can contribute to an early warning system that might be able to prevent events like this in the future."

Susmita Gongulee, India's ambassador to Chile. January 4, 2005

Chilean plant and animal health inspection systems are "in a word, excellent. (...) I had a very good impression of the sophistication and scientific knowledge of our counterparts in Chile. I am very impressed with the country's efforts to eradicate the fruit fly."

Ron Dehaven, administrator of the United States Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) December 27, 2004

"We highly value the results (of the agreement with Chile). Thanks to it, we can characterize our relations in the economic, political and cooperation spheres as excellent."

Eneko Landaburu, director general for External Affairs at the European Commission. December 17, 2004

CHILEANS AROUND THE WORLD

The Chilean ambassador to the Latin American Integration Association (Aladi), Héctor Casanueva, will take office as director general of that organization starting in March. At that time, he will assume the responsibility for coordinating the work to implement the Free Trade Area approved by the Council of Ministers in October.

Treinta Poemas para leer antes del próximo jueves (Thirty Poems to Read Before Next Thursday) by poet Juan Cameron, was awarded the 2004 City of Alajuela International Poetry Prize, presented by Costa Rica. The jury described the work as "a humanized book of poetry."

Chile's comptroller-general, Gustavo Sciolla, was elected president of the Organization of Latin American and Caribbean Supreme Auditing Institutions (OLACEFS). The organization noted that its choice represented "recognition of the deserved prestige of the Chilean Comptroller's Office for its 77-year performance characterized by independence, professionalism and honesty."

They will be joined by teachers and students from the Second Region villages of Camiña, Chiapa, Mamiña, Sagasca, and Pica. The laboratory, equipped with state-of-the-art technology and high-resolution video cameras, will become operational in February. The project also includes an ecotourism route established in cooperation with the Aymara indigenous communities of the area and financed by the Doña Inés de Collahuasi Mining Company.



Featuring three-kilometer lagoons lying at 3,800 meters above sea level, the salar are the remnants of a lake from the distant geological past. The researchers' aim is to study how local species have adapted to the zone's extreme conditions and the salinity of the water, which is four times greater than that of the sea. The area is considered to offer a high potential for scientific discovery and future biotechnological applications.

Preliminary studies have identified microscopic algae, protozoa, and crustaceans, which represent "a fascinating world to explore," in Labarca's enthusiastic opinion. The scientist also hopes that the Huasco laboratory will become a model of scientific training for Chile's children and youth.

Party in the port

More than 400,000 people visited the plazas, hillside stairways, trams and convoluted alleys of Valparaíso during the port city's fourth annual Carnavales Culturales. The event is linked in partnership with Barranquilla, whose own carnival is considered the oldest folk culture event along Colombia's Caribbean coast.



During the last week of December, music, dance, literature, theater, cinema, and other artistic expressions filled the majority of the city's public spaces, with 240 free activities offered in more than 50 locations. The infectious joy and energy of the Colombian dancers captivated their audiences, who let themselves be transported by the cumbia, the mapalé and other rhythms characteristic of the performers' homeland.

This year's event included activities focused on the heritage, cuisine, and folk art of both Colombia and Chile's Fifth Region. As hosts of the event, the citizens of Valparaíso were offered opportunities to showcase various aspects of their cultural identity. The tango and cumbia clubs in the port attracted large numbers of participants, as did the performance of young people from the Hip Hop Cultural Center. The literary field was represented with the initiative "Poetry Climbs the Hills," through which books were donated in various places throughout the city.

Valparaíso is Chile's cultural capital, and UNESCO has designated its historical quarter and some of its hills as a World Heritage site.



Raúl Matas

In Chile, he was called “El Maestro,” a title spontaneously awarded by the public and his colleagues, and one with which his audience – loyal through years of radio and television programs – remembered him after his passing on December 31, 2004.



The death of Raúl Matas at the age of 83 was profoundly felt in Chile as well as abroad, where he was regarded with respect and affection. He was considered a legend in the field of communications, where he forged one of the most brilliant and enduring careers of the Spanish-speaking world.

In six decades of thorough dedication to journalism, he was able to translate his unique style from radio to television as few others could. The press described him as a “gentleman, a humble man, an apostle of life, with great credibility, generous and free of envy.” The multitudes at his memorial service gave testimony of this.

His innate talent as a communicator was evident at an early age. He liked to recount that from the first time he had heard foreign radio broadcasts, he had

set himself the goal of working in the field. At the age of ten, he made his debut before a microphone, only to be laughed out of the studio due to his tender age.

Starting in 1940, he worked for various communications media in Chile, but his most successful program was born eleven years later, on *Radio Minería*. *Discomanía* remained on the air for 25 years and was broadcast in more than 100 Ibero-American cities.

He also knew how to take advantage of opportunities on the international level: he worked in Buenos Aires, served as a correspondent in New York, and in 1959 moved to Spain, where he successfully reproduced his radio program.

Chilean television viewers got to know Matas’ face up close in the late 1970s, when he joined the team of *Television National’s 60 Minutes* news program as a anchorman. From that time on, he presided over a series of talk shows, remembered today by more than a generation.

Friends and family members report that he disliked talking about his awards or the famous foreigners with whom he often socialized. In contrast, he poured all of his enthusiasm and his enormous capacity for dialogue into serious and meaningful topics which he thought would be useful to the public.

He collected pens and was a coffee fanatic. His greatest act of rebellion was to study journalism, as those close to him joked.

His career gained significant recognition. In 1999, he won the Ondas Prize as one of the ten leading voices in Ibero-American radio, and the Madrid Wax Museum exhibited a replica of his face.

After his death, media around the world published articles in his memory. *Agencia Ansa*, the Spanish newspaper *El Mundo*, Mexico’s *El Universal*, *La Voz de Asturias* and *El Nuevo Herald* concurred in lamenting the loss of “one of the pioneers of radio broadcasting in the Spanish-speaking world.”

His program *Memorables*, on *Radio Oasis*, kept him busy up to his final days. As was typical for him, the broadcasts were characterized by the engaging treatment of a range of topics, discussed in refined and graceful language.



AGENDA

- ★ January 2-8: Working Visit of Bulgarian Foreign Minister Solomon Passy. Santiago, Punta Arenas and, Antartica.
- ★ January 5: Participation of Interior Minister José Miguel Insulza in the meeting of CARICOM Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministers. Georgetown, Guyana.
- ★ January 5-8: Official tour of Foreign Minister Ignacio Walker to Guatemala, Panama, Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic.
- ★ January 6: Meeting of Minister José Miguel Insulza with the vice president of Venezuela, José Vicente Rangel, and the country’s Foreign Minister, Alí Rodríguez. Caracas.
- ★ January 10-12: State Visit of the President of Bulgaria, Georgi Parvanov. Santiago and Valparaíso.
- ★ January 12: Participation of Foreign Minister Walker in the UN Security Council’s open debate on the situation in Haiti. New York.
- ★ January 16-25: Official Visits of President Ricardo Lagos to Egypt, India and Germany.
- ★ January 27: State Visit of Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero. Santiago.

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