



GOBIERNO DE CHILE

SPECIAL WOMEN



NEWS

International Analysis and Press Department • Communication Secretariat • La Moneda Palace

December 15, 2008 • No.98

DID YOU KNOW?

- ★ Chile has joined the group of countries, organizations and individuals supporting the initiative “Say NO to violence against women,” led by actress Nicole Kidman and sponsored by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (Unifem). The campaign invites people to add their names to a call to make ending violence against women an international priority. The initiative arose as part of the United Nations’ global campaign.
- ★ Chile has also made a commitment to the hemispheric campaign “Let’s act now for mothers and children,” an international cooperation plan and exchange of experiences within Latin America aimed at fulfilling two Millennium Goals in which the region is lagging: reducing infant mortality (4) and improving maternal health (5).



- ★ As part of a pilot program, 70 newspaper delivery persons from Chile’s Metropolitan (Santiago) Region were trained as domestic violence monitors. The participants were trained in techniques for detecting, investigating and preventing this problem, as well as in active listening and the provision of appropriate guidance in cases of family violence.



Women’s assembly in Chile

With a call to strengthen national institutions focused on women – and thus to reinforce the gender perspective in public policies – the 34th Assembly of Delegates of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM/OAS), a specialized body of the Organization of American States, convened in Santiago from November 10 to 12.

In the Santiago Declaration, ratified by the delegates of the 33 attending countries, the group called upon the United Nations, the permanent observers to the OAS and international cooperation organizations to reaffirm their commitments to gender equality and equity in the hemisphere.

During the opening session, President Michelle Bachelet stressed her government’s determination to “place the challenges of inclusion, justice and solidarity at the center of our concerns.” This means building a social order in which inequality and discrimination have no place, and that means, “eliminating the clear discrimination which exists against women.”

At the encounter, Laura Albornoz, Minister of Chile’s National Women’s Service (Sernam), was elected as the new president of CIM. She will hold this post for the 2008-2010 period, replacing Jacqui Quinn-Leandro, the Minister of Labor of Antigua and Barbuda.

QUOTES FROM PRESIDENT BACHELET

"Women leaders have much to contribute, and there are elements of great opportunity here, because women are also bridge-builders, builders of agreements – and this is something we need in our countries, so that we can muster the necessary strength and delicacy to undertake changes as substantive as those our societies require."

Interview in the newspaper *Página/12* (Argentina). Buenos Aires, October 6, 2008.

"I believe that we have defined the boundaries, in the sense that women in this country feel that there is no bar against them, and if they have the merit, the talents and the skills, they will be able to do things that may not have been feasible in the past."

At the annual luncheon of the *ComunidadMujer Corporation*. Santiago, September 2, 2008.

"When women occupy the position they truly deserve in a society, the entire society benefits, in every sphere: the women benefit, but so do the men (...); when women's chances are improved, greater opportunities for development arise. Thus, the conditions are created for relations that are more equal and more complementary."

At a meeting with women entrepreneurs. Santiago, August 30, 2008.

"This March 8, with the conviction that comes from lived and shared experience, we can affirm that for women, equality has become more than just a dream. Equality is a reality that is being constructed day by day. Through the exercise of democracy and participation, we are building the equality that all women deserve."

At the celebration of International Women's Day. La Moneda Palace, March 8, 2007.

"In January 2006, Chile took a symbolically and politically transcendent step. For the first time in the country's history as a republic, Chilean men and women elected a female President. In analyzing the many meanings of this electoral victory, we find that what it essentially reflects is the defeat of exclusion – perhaps the most comprehensive and most persistent exclusion we have ever known."

On her election as President of the Republic. In the periodical *Política Exterior* (Spain), No. 115, Jan./Feb. 2007.

Addressing the closing ceremony, Albornoza underlined her commitment to strengthening CIM's political role, stating: "for this purpose, I will stand ready to hear, understand and welcome the diverse suggestions of the representatives of the member States."

Laura Albornoza, new CIM president



Laura Albornoza (40) earned a law degree from the University of Chile, a master's in Management and Human Resources Management from the International School of Business in Madrid, and a doctorate in Civil Law from the University of Seville. Before her appointment as Minister of the National Women's Service (Sernam), she served as deputy head of Sernam's Interministerial Coordination Department, and from 2002 to 2004, as chief of staff for Sernam's deputy director. She is married and has two children.

"Nothing justifies violence against women"

There is one statistic of which Chile is not at all proud: over 50% of the country's women have been the targets of violence. In response, the government has been energetically addressing the topic. Its main emphasis is on enforcing and further strengthening the country's Domestic Violence Law, enacted in 2005, which criminalizes these acts. The administration hopes that by the end of the year, Congress will approve a new bill containing more severe penalties for those who assault and kill women.

And this is not all. During 2009, the government plans to increase the number of women's shelters and assistance centers from 58 to 90 throughout the country, since one of the most common problems faced by domestic violence victims is that they are separated from their usual support networks. The training program for police officers and officials of the justice system will also be continued and expanded, preparing these personnel to address domestic violence cases more effectively.

Furthermore, in November 2008, Sernam began its annual campaign aimed at raising awareness among aggressors and society in general, urging them to put themselves in the place of domestic violence victims. This year, it highlights the myths surrounding violence against women, as well as the "justifications" used by perpetrators to avoid taking responsibility. The campaign's motto is: "Don't let excuses increase the pain. Nothing justifies violence against women."



FACTS

The National Service for Women (Sernam) was created by law in 1991. Its director holds ministerial rank, and its mission is to “design, propose and coordinate policies, plans, measures and legal reforms to produce equality of rights and opportunities among men and women; and to reduce discriminatory practices in the country’s political, social, economic and cultural development process.” Its work is focused on eradicating domestic violence, supporting programs for female small business owners and microentrepreneurs, creating and maintaining Women’s Centers, and achieving progress on gender issues.

In 2008, Chile was ranked 65th among 128 nations in a survey of gender equality carried out by the World Economic Forum.

In 1998, employers were prohibited from requiring a pregnancy test prior to job transfers, promotions or the renewal of employment contracts for female workers.

With a current average of 13 years of education, today’s Chilean working women are better prepared for the labor market than ever before.

Codelco’s new copper mine, named “Gabriela Mistral” or “Gaby,” is a pioneering project for the exploitation of low-grade deposits, using state-of-the-art technology. It is also noteworthy for the high proportion of women in its workforce: some 24% of operators (the average for the sector is around 7%). At the mine’s inauguration, President Bachelet stressed that “the reference to Gabriela is not merely symbolic. Let us celebrate – as I celebrate very profoundly – the fact that one out of every four workers in this mine is a woman. I believe that this also reflects a country which includes, integrates and appreciates skills and talents in both men and women.”

In addition to improving the labor climate, gender equality brings benefits to companies and to the country as a whole. This was made clear by a study undertaken by the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and Sernam, which showed that if Chile eliminates its gender-based income gap, it will be able to reduce extreme poverty by 8% and increase per-capita income by 2%.

Fully equal

Equal pay for equal work: this is the principle behind the “Iguala” (Equalize) program, which seeks salary equity between men and women in both public and private organizations. It further aims to ensure that hiring and promotion decisions will no longer be affected by any form of discrimination. In short, the program aspires to create a new labor culture in Chile, as part of a universal spectrum of rights for all women.



Culminating efforts launched two years ago with the implementation of “best practices” in the labor market, “Iguala” encourages companies to go beyond the requirements of the current Labor Code. Starting in 2009, on a voluntary basis, businesses will be able to earn a “Seal Iguala,” reflecting government certification of equal treatment in the following areas: hiring processes; career development and access to training; parity representation of men and women at executive level; working conditions; maternal and paternal protection; balancing of work responsibilities and family duties; and the prevention and punishment of workplace and/or sexual harassment.


Expanding employment among women has been one of the government’s ongoing concerns, since it helps raise family incomes and reduce poverty. During the past quarter, female labor force participation surpassed 40%. Of the 180,000 new jobs created during the period, 67% were filled by women, mainly young mothers. A key statistic has been the exponential growth in day care centers, from 760 in March 2006 to 3,300 in 2008 – and reaching 4,200 by the end of President Bachelet’s term.

Pension reform: special benefits

On July 1 of this year, Chile’s pension reform – a key commitment of President Bachelet’s administration, reflecting its central emphasis on social protection – went into force. The reform includes a special benefit for women, which will be implemented starting in 2009.

The benefit consists of an extra pension payment to all mothers for each biological or adopted child, regardless of their current social situation or the amount of their previous retirement contributions. Thus, it includes those who have dedicated their lives to caring for their families, helping to ensure equity between men and women in the retirement system.

OUTSTANDING CHILEAN WOMEN




Gabriela Mistral, born Lucila Godoy Alcayaga, was a teacher, poet and diplomat. In 1945, she became the first Latin American to win the Nobel Prize for Literature. Among her most famous works are *Sonetos de la Muerte* (1914), *Desolación* (1922), *Ternura* (1924), *Tala* (1938), and *Lagar* (1954). In 1951, she was awarded the National Literature Prize.



Violeta Parra, folklorist and creative artist, not only graced the world with poems in the *décima* style and songs such as *Gracias a la vida*, *Volver a los 17* and *Runrún se fue p'al norte*; further evidence of her talent can be seen in her plastic and visual arts, including works of embroidery, oil paintings and wire sculptures which were exhibited in 1964 at the Louvre's Museum of Decorative Arts.

Isabel Allende is one of the best-known novelists from Chile and Latin America as a whole, with translations of her books appearing in at least 27 languages. Among her works are *La casa de los espíritus* (1975), which was also filmed as a movie; *De amor y de sombra* (1984); *Eva Luna* (1987); *Retrato en sepia* (2000); *Mi país inventado* (2003); *Inés del alma mía* (2006); and *La suma de los días* (2007).

Eloísa Díaz was the first woman to receive a medical degree in Chile, in 1887.




Marcela Paz was the creator of a much-loved character in Chilean children's literature: the clever and mischievous *Papelucho*. In numerous books, readers followed the adventures recorded in his diary, in which he

became a detective or historian, was treated in a hospital, got lost, met a Martian, or was diagnosed as "dixleso" (dyslexic). The author, whose real name is Esther Hunneus, dedicated her career to writing for children. She was honored with numerous awards, including the National Literature Prize (1982).

Elena Caffarena, distinguished attorney and social activist, was the main force behind the women's suffrage movement in Chile. Throughout her life, she struggled to change the limited image of women, centered on motherhood and domestic tasks. In 1935, she founded the Emancipation Movement of the Women of Chile, which coordinated efforts to fight for women's rights as workers, mothers and citizens. In the same year, she won recognition of women's right to vote in municipal elections.

The reform's most significant innovation is the replacement of the assistential pension with basic solidarity and disability pensions. For the first time in Chile, all individuals in the lower 60% income group are guaranteed a pension of 65,000 pesos per month – rising to 75,000 in 2009 – even if they have never paid into the system. In addition, lower-income individuals will receive a solidarity pension to boost their monthly checks.




The reform also includes measures to benefit young people entering the labor market for the first time. A special subsidy for these workers will help promote youth employment while providing additional capital for their first years of contributions. Furthermore, one of the reform's guarantees is that assistance is individual: for instance, a married couple can combine their pensions, which continue for life.

On the first day alone, over 1,800 applications were received, 1,400 of them from women. In November, 80,499 pensions were already being paid, with 78% going to women. Among these recipients, 70,986 had not previously been eligible for a pension. In this first stage, the focus is on men and women over age 65 from households among the poorest 40% of the population – rising to 60% by 2012 – who were unable to make payments during their working lives, or who have not accumulated sufficient funds to retire with dignity.

More political participation

The scarcity of Chilean women in the political arena has led the government to introduce a bill which seeks to promote more equal participation.



The bill, "Balanced Participation among Women and Men," calls for a 30% minimum threshold for women candidates on the electoral slates of political parties. It would also lengthen the campaign period for female candidates running for public office for the first time. The measure's fundamental aim is to reduce the gap between the country's commitment to equality and the unequal opportunities persisting among Chilean men and women in the political sphere. "We believe that more women deputies, senators, mayors and council members will help renew and transform our country's politics," stated Minister Alborno.

CHILEANS AROUND THE WORLD

In 2008, President Michelle Bachelet was chosen by *Time* magazine as one of the world's 100 most influential people. Her biographical sketch for the issue was written by Hillary Clinton, who pointed to her qualities: "Being a woman in politics can be tough business, and Bachelet made it look effortless. In our meeting, I learned why: because Bachelet, 56, speaks and leads from her heart." The newspaper *El País* also included her among the 100 most influential Ibero-Americans during 2008. In the category "politicians, entrepreneurs and executives," the periodical referred to her as "one of the world's the most recognized national leaders," while also praising the "historic" pension reform undertaken by her administration.

The government of Denmark presented a symbolic torch to the Minister of Sernam, Laura Albornoz, in recognition of the country's special efforts to achieve gender equity and its fulfillment of the third of the eight UN Millennium Objectives, which seeks to promote women's autonomy and the equality of men and women.



The World Bank has named Isabel Guerrero as vice president for southern Asia. An economist with 26 years of experience at the bank, she is the first Latin American woman to hold

this post. She will work toward achieving the 15 Millennium Development Goals in the region by 2015, including poverty reduction, universal primary education, decreased infant mortality and gains in literacy.

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights chose Cecilia Medina Quiroga as its president for the 2008-2009 term. An academic at the University of Chile, she had also been serving as a judge for the court.



She has had a long teaching and research career in the field of international law, especially in the area of human rights.

"Go for it, girl!"

The number of female entrepreneurs in Chile is rising. Several government programs have been created to help them build their businesses, but public awareness of these offerings is low. To help publicize them, the Chilean Economic Development Agency (Corfo) has launched a new campaign called "¡Juégatela, mujer!" (roughly: "Go for it, girl!").

The idea is to encourage women to find out more about the State subsidies and loans available to them and learn how to apply. The campaign features the stories of three businesswomen who received support for their projects from Corfo.

Currently, Chile's Congress includes only two female senators out of a total of 38, and 19 female deputies out of 120. Across the country, there are 43 women among Chile's 345 mayors. In the most recent municipal election, only 18.9% of the candidates were women. However, some advances have been made. The number of female ministers has risen across the four administrations of the Concertación coalition, with one in the first, three in the second, and five in the third. President Bachelet's first cabinet featured gender parity, with 10 female ministers. In 2006, for the first time in Chile, a woman was designated as Treasurer General of the Republic. President Michelle Bachelet named Pamela Cuzmar to the post, putting an end to a 466-year tradition of masculine domination.

A broader legislative agenda

Advances have also been seen on other important legislative issues of interest to women. Laws already approved by Congress include a measure giving all employed women the right to feed their babies during working hours, and another which simplifies the provision of nutritional assistance payments.

Bills which are currently in the first or second stages of legislative approval include the Matrimonial Economic Regime, a commitment made by the State before the Inter-American Human Rights Commission; a Legal Guardianship bill, which codifies the joint administration of children's assets by both the father and mother; a Human Trafficking bill, which penalizes the trafficking and exploitation of persons in accordance with the provisions of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Complementary Protocol; and a bill addressing the order of family surnames. Another proposed law would make maternal leave more flexible, allowing women to transfer up to three weeks of prenatal leave to the postnatal period, with medical authorization and approval from the Labor Board, while also expanding the leave period to one year in the case of disability, thus promoting the health of both mothers and infants during the lactation period.

Legislation which is in preparation or under study includes a constitutional reform measure to prohibit advertising that incites discrimination; a bill imposing legal sanctions on sexual harassment and sexual aggression, which are currently viewed merely as offenses against decency and good manners; and a new institutional structure for gender issues, which would provide Sernam with a new organic law.



PEOPLE OF CHILE

Women: persistent progress

Zoila Bustamante fishes for a living – and last November, her colleagues throughout Chile elected her president of the country's National Artisanal Fishing Confederation. **Verónica Villarroel**, a lyric soprano, is a distinguished figure on the world's leading stages. Physician **Marcela Contreras** was awarded the title of “Dame Commander” by Queen Elizabeth II in recognition of her work as director of the United Kingdom's National Blood Service.

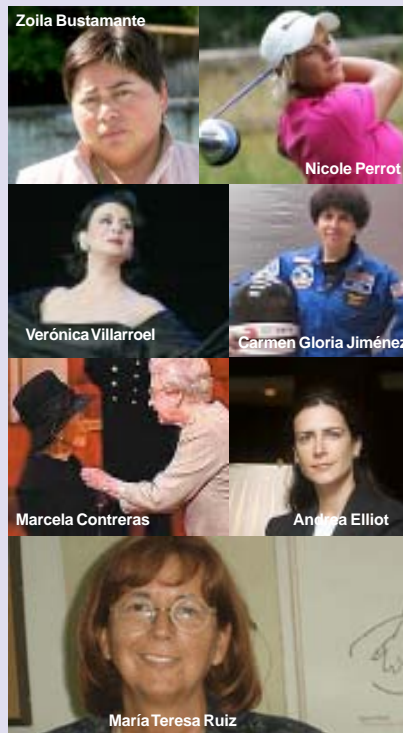
All three are Chilean women, and they all share a quality that typifies the women of this country. Here it is called *ñeque* that is, the strength, energy and persistence to get ahead, to continue striving for their work and their families.

Thanks to this force and determination, Chilean women have been making progress toward achieving a more equal place in society, enjoying new rights and programs that have improved their situation and their quality of life, especially during the past decade. One example suffices: since 2006, the country has been led by its first woman President.

“In Chile, every woman's right to life and safety must be respected,” stressed President Michelle Bachelet in her Message to the Nation on May 21, 2008. Women are not an isolated “sector” within public policy; instead, their perspective is represented across all fields of government action, including health, social security, entrepreneurship, education and training.

The changes

According to the most recent national census, undertaken in 2002, women outnumber men in Chile, comprising 50.73% of the population, with an average



life expectancy of 78 years. Although their labor market participation remains relatively low, it has risen significantly during the past ten years: in the second quarter of this year, it reached 40.09%, a 7.5% increase over the 1992 figure.

Yet this is not the only change experienced by Chilean women in recent decades. Their average number of children – which stood at around five during the 1960s – had decreased to 2.3 by the time

of the 2002 census. The 2006 Socioeconomic Characterization Survey (Casen) found that eight out of ten families with a single head of household are led by women. Added to this is the rising participation of Chilean women in fields previously dominated by men, including science, technology, research and sports. Work life has become a priority for Chilean women, and they are starting families at a later age.

Like Zoila, Verónica and Marcela, many other Chilean women stand out for their achievements. Astronomer **María Teresa Ruiz** discovered a supernova in the act of exploding, two planetary nebulae in the galaxy halo, and most significantly, a “brown dwarf” in the neighborhood of our solar system. Golfer **Nicole Perrot** became the only Chilean to join the sport's global elite in the LPGA (Ladies' Professional Golf Association). Journalist **Andrea Elliot** Romero won the prestigious Pulitzer Prize for a series of reports for *The New York Times*. Scientists **Francisca Brown** and **Guisella Gacitúa** were the first Chilean women to reach the South Pole by land. Finally, with a doctorate in science and math education, **Carmen Gloria Jiménez** was the only Chilean chosen for NASA's “Educator Astronaut” program.

All of these achievements required plenty of *ñeque*!



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