



GOBIERNO DE CHILE  
MINISTERIO SECRETARÍA GENERAL DE GOBIERNO  
SECRETARÍA DE COMUNICACIONES

# CHILE

# NEWS

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

September 12, 2006 • No. 82



President Bachelet with family members of disappeared detainees, as she proclaims August 30 as the National Day of the Detained and Disappeared.

## On the regional trail

During August, Colombia and Ecuador were the destinations for President Michelle Bachelet, who is continuing to fulfill the commitment she made upon entering office: developing even closer ties with the countries of the region.

In Bogotá, she attended the ceremonies inaugurating President Álvaro Uribe for his second term, responding to a personal invitation from the Colombian leader. After meeting with Uribe, President Bachelet pointed to the need for countries bordering the Pacific to “advance vigorously toward integration with Asia-Pacific,” adding that this policy will offer new opportunities for the region. She further announced that the basic outlines had been defined for movement toward a Free Trade Agreement between Colombia and Chile.



President Bachelet also attended a dinner with Colombian and Chilean businesspeople and met with Costa Rican President Oscar Arias, with whom she reviewed a broad range of bilateral topics.

At the end of the meeting, she stated that Chile is working to strengthen its trade agreements with Colombia as well as with Panama, Costa Rica, Peru, Ecuador and Mexico, with the idea of making joint progress in approaching the Asia-Pacific market. “A very significant proportion of our conversations and agreements aims in this direction: building higher degrees of closeness with all of the countries bordering the Pacific, in order to provide better conditions for selling products, increasing exports, and therefore generating jobs and movement in our economies.”

The President initiated her State Visit to Ecuador with a tour of the pediatric unit of the Eugenio Espejo Hospital, which is actively supported by Chile. There, she conversed with young patients and the Chilean volunteers working at the institution.



## DID YOU KNOW?

- ★ President Michelle Bachelet is one of the world’s most powerful women, according to a ranking prepared by *Forbes* magazine. She was placed 17th on the general list and fourth among female political leaders. *Forbes* stressed that “her path to the summit was not an easy one.”
- ★ Easter Island’s stone statues, or moai, are on the candidate list to become one of the “Seven New Wonders of the World.” According to the description, “the moai have long fascinated the entire world and endowed this island with a mythical atmosphere.” Voting is open at [www.new7wonders.com](http://www.new7wonders.com), where nearly 20 million Web surfers have already cast their ballots.
- ★ During the past ten years, Bibliometro has lent out books at selected Santiago Metro stations. Today, it has more than 35,000 members and lends out hundreds of books each week; only a very few are not returned.

## QUOTES FROM PRESIDENT BACHELET

"We pay homage, with justice and dignity, to all of the Chilean men and women who were victims of this terrible scourge and whose names are already inscribed in our collective memory. Starting today, on each August 30 the entire country will remember them, as a tribute to their sacrifice and their commitment to a noble cause."

At the proclamation of the National Day of the Detained and Disappeared. La Moneda Palace, August 30, 2006.

"We want a country which moves forward on the basis of recognized merit (...), so that in Chile the cradle determines where you start, but not where you finish."

At the awarding of the Presidential Scholarships. La Moneda Palace, August 30, 2006.

"Our action as a government has a strong value-based content which we must promote and spread: solidarity, love, justice, equality, humanity, dignity and respect."

At the celebration of Solidarity Day, commemorating the death of Chilean saint Alberto Hurtado. Santiago, August 18, 2006.

"I believe that children are not the future, but the present. Because of this, we are going to work – and we are going to keep working energetically – to improve education, access and, of course, protection, so that children can enjoy equality from the beginning."

At a meeting with young people involved in the project «El Chile que sueño para el Bicentenario» («The Chile of my dreams for the Bicentennial»). La Moneda Palace, August 14, 2006.



"For Chile it is extremely important to continue to vigorously develop our political, commercial and cultural relations – our relations of all kinds – with Colombia."

Upon her arrival in Colombia, where she attended President Álvaro Uribe's inaugural ceremonies. Bogotá, August 6, 2006.

Later, she met with her Ecuadorian counterpart, Alfredo Palacio, with whom she signed a document broadening the ACE-32 Economic Complementation Agreement, marking the end of negotiations for an upcoming FTA between the two nations. "We have noted, with great satisfaction, the increase in bilateral trade exchanges, which reached 692 million dollars in 2005, nearly doubling what we had in 2003," the Chilean President stated.

The two Presidents also signed an agreement between Chile's National Petroleum Company, ENAP, and Petroecuador, aimed at studying the feasibility of direct contracts to supply Ecuadorian crude oil to Chile's refineries and ship liquefied gas, gasoline and diesel fuel from Chile to Petroecuador.

The visit included a special session of the Ecuadorian Congress as well as a presentation to representatives from the business, social and political spheres, within the framework of the celebrations commemorating 79 years of Ecuador's Central Bank.

### Trade expansion

Chile's wide-ranging network of trade agreements continues to expand – and not only within its own region, but in Asia as well.

After its ratification in the Senate, President Michelle Bachelet officially promulgated Chile's FTA with China on August 21. With this agreement, Chile now enjoys preferential access to 75% of the world's GDP. The treaty provides immediate tariff reductions for 92% of Chilean exports to China, starting on October 1, the first day of the agreement's entry into force.

The agreement "constitutes a decisive step in the country's efforts to secure its position in the Asia-Pacific region, an area of great dynamism and economic and trade projection, and it will allow us to reinforce our idea of making Chile a bridge that unites Asia and South America," stated Foreign Minister Alejandro Foxley.



Today, China is the world's sixth-largest economy, representing a potential market of 1.3 billion people toward which Chile will be able to aim its exports. The agreement also represents an excellent development opportunity for Chile's regions as well as a chance to strengthen the country's small and medium-sized export firms.

On August 22 in Lima, the Foreign Ministers of Chile and Peru signed a Free Trade Agreement, which will allow the two countries to deepen

## FACTS

In its most recent report, the International Monetary Fund pointed to Chile's "successful economic performance" over the past 15 years, during which it has prudently implemented its structural reforms and economic policies.

Chile's bottled wine exports showed a growth rate of 5.7% in the first half of this year, with returns of 364 million dollars. Total wine shipments – which include bottled, bulk and sparkling wine – reached a value of 422.6 million dollars, for an increase of 4.3%, according to figures from the organization Wines of Chile.

Chilean companies' investments abroad grew by 24% during the first half of 2006, compared to the same period of the previous year: to 1.1 billion dollars.

The country's leading avocado producers and exporters have united to create the Chilean Avocado Company, focusing on the production and sale of products derived from avocados as well as citrus and other fruits.



The government of Chile has awarded 210 Presidential Scholarships to young people pursuing postgraduate studies abroad. This fulfills the President's commitment to increase the number of these scholarships by 50%.

their bilateral trade and jointly face the challenge of making inroads into the Asia-Pacific region.”

In addition to the issues already covered by the Economic Complementation Agreement, ACE-38, in force since 1998, the accord includes measures to strengthen the existing dispute resolution mechanisms. It also incorporates new chapters on investment and bilateral trade in services.

The agreement, the first of its type to be signed between two South American countries, sets an especially good precedent for the region, since it contains a stable and transparent legal framework. This will allow businesses in both countries to further expand the flourishing network of bilateral investments.

These two agreements are added to the Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement, known as P4, among Chile, New Zealand, Singapore and Brunei Darussalam. Signed on July 18, 2005, the accord is aimed at creating an economic and strategic alliance among the partner nations, based on common interests and the desire to deepen their relationships in all of the areas covered by the agreement, including trade and economic issues, agriculture, and science and technology.

### The vote for all

On May 21, in her Message to the National Congress, President Michelle Bachelet called for the approval of a bill allowing Chileans who reside abroad to exercise their right to vote. The measure, a longstanding aspiration of the Concertación coalition administrations, has been blocked in the past by right-wing legislators.

In July, the Human Rights, Nationality and Citizenship Committee of the Chamber of Deputies approved the idea of legislating on the initiative, which has been under consideration for 14 years.

According to a 2005 survey carried out by the Foreign Ministry in 100 countries, 857,781 Chileans or children of Chileans are currently living abroad. Of these, 40.1% emigrated for economic reasons, 30.8% for family reasons and 12.1% for political reasons. In the same survey, 72.5% of those over age 15 were in favor of a measure allowing them to vote in Chilean elections.



The pending bill must now be voted on in the Senate. If it is approved, Chileans living outside the country will exercise their voting rights in the 2009 presidential elections.

## OVERHEARD

"The countries of the Andean Community are convinced that Chile's participation will significantly strengthen its efforts to deepen integration within the region, and it will permit the achievement of an effective convergence with Mercosur."

From the letter inviting Chile to join the Andean Community of Nations as an associate member. Bogotá, Colombia. August 8, 2006

"The Chileans were pragmatists and realists; they accepted the reigning economic model, and they were prudent but determined in investigating the horrors, in order to punish them in due time."

*El Comercio* newspaper, Ecuador. August 8, 2006

"More important than growth are the public institutions» (...) «I don't live here; I am not complaining about a rise in salaries, but from the outside, stability is much more important, and this is a signal that when copper falls, Chile will continue with reasonable growth rates."

Joydeep Mukherji, a director at Standard & Poor's, commenting on Chile's excellent classification within the region. August 30, 2006

## Chile, an example in the fight against malnutrition

A study undertaken in Jamaica demonstrated that malnourished children who have eaten breakfast score notably higher on a test of verbal fluency. That is to say, treating malnutrition can have a significant impact on the population.

During the 1960s, Chile suffered from one of Latin America's highest infant mortality rates: 120 per thousand. By 2005, however, the ratio had plummeted to 7.8 per thousand, the lowest in the region and only slightly higher than that of the United States.



During the past 30 years, Chile has exhibited dramatic improvements in health, nutrition and other social indicators – to the extent that it now appears as an example of a country which was able to overcome malnutrition, according to the annual report prepared by the United Nations World Food Programme.

This achievement has rested on a series of factors leading to ongoing commitments on the part of the Chilean government, the community and professional and academic groups.

Experts in the area of nutrition have been key players in the attainment of these results, especially in their joint work with specialists in other fields. Together, these professionals have formed working groups to focus on the needs of the more vulnerable members of society: children, pregnant women, and the elderly, poor and marginalized, among others.

As a result, the percentage of malnourished children in Chile fell dramatically, from 60% in 1950 to 1.7% in 2004. Similarly, the proportion of newborn babies with low birthweights (less than 2.5 kilograms) decreased from 11.6% to 4.8% between 1975 and 2000. As an additional indicator of this transformation, the average Chilean male at age 18 is now 11 centimeters taller than his counterpart from 30 years ago.

Regarding nutrition and national development, President Bachelet – a pediatrician by profession – wrote in a column published by ECLAC's *Desafíos* magazine that good nutrition for children is "a right that governments must protect"; thus "it must be considered in the design of public policies and guaranteed over time."

## A new advance in social protection for Chileans

For years, one of the basic instruments in the fight against poverty in Chile was the "Ficha CAS," a survey instituted in 1979 by the Comités de Acción Social (Social Action Committees). The CAS revealed the actual living conditions of low-income families, allowing assistance programs to be more effectively focused.

Now, the CAS is being replaced by a new Social Protection Survey, which is aimed at identifying vulnerabilities in families that go beyond the poverty levels measured by income and household possessions.

## CHILEANS AROUND THE WORLD

Journalist Mónica González received the New Journalism Award presented by the foundation headed by Colombian author Gabriel García Márquez, which is aimed at promoting quality journalism in Latin America. In addition to honoring her successful career, the award panel recognized her as “one of the region’s leading investigative journalists and an example of how to maintain the profession’s ethical values and pursue ongoing follow-up on a topic of public interest, such as the dictatorship in Chile.”

Carlos Ramón Dourthé is considered one of the most brilliant Chilean musicians of recent years. Living for the past 28 years in France, he has served as first cellist in that country’s prestigious National Orchestra since 1990.

## AGENDA

- ★ **September 5-7:** Visit of the Chairman of the Standing Committee of China’s National People’s Congress, Wu Bangguo. Santiago and Valparaíso.
- ★ **September 20:** President Michelle Bachelet addresses the 61st United Nations General Assembly. New York.
- ★ **September 20-25:** Official Visit of the Vice President of South Africa, Phumzile Mlobo Ngcuka. Santiago.
- ★ **September 21-30:** Senate President Eduardo Frei visits China.
- ★ **September 27:** Anti-corruption seminar by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Santiago.

The updated survey requires respondents to answer questions which were not included in the CAS, for instance on drug or alcohol use and disabilities among family members. This information will help the government pinpoint social problems and thus to prioritize the delivery of resources and programs.

The new study no longer evaluates the construction quality of housing, and it does not discriminate based on educational level. It seeks to identify all family groups living in a household, in order to detect “allegados” (persons whose lack of housing forces them to seek shelter with extended family or friends).

Between November 2006 and April 2007, the Social Protection Survey will be carried out among 1,700,000 families, or more than six million people. For the first time, homeless individuals will also be included, in order to facilitate their integration into the network of State benefits and protections.

### Parra to the people

Nicanor Parra considers himself an “antipoet.” With his caustic, colloquial and humoristic pen, he faces issues head-on and speaks his mind without artifice. Critics have commented that he took poetry down from its pedestal, bringing it closer to the spoken word, everyday life and the urban streets. Now he has brought his art to the very heart of Santiago.



Currently on display at the La Moneda Palace Cultural Center, his exhibition “Obras Públicas” (Public Works) highlights Parra’s unique creations during the past 20 years using visual, audiovisual and three-dimensional media.

The show includes displays of large-format reproductions of the artist’s notebooks, including his erasures. On the walls, unpublished poems and antipoems are presented through video. An enormous blackboard – alluding to the academic side of Parra’s career – offers definitions of antipoetry written in his own handwriting.

However, the work that has attracted the most attention is the gallery entitled “El Pago de Chile” (Chile’s Payback), in which the former Presidents of the Republic are portrayed as cardboard cutouts hanging from ropes. When President Bachelet inaugurated the exhibition, she commented that “this is an installation of art, of poetry, or of citizens’ antipoetry. We must promote and applaud liberty.”



# PEOPLE OF CHILE

## The bright side of aging

They take gymnastics classes, dance, travel ... Chileans over age 60 are not what they used to be. In recent years, diverse policies have been put into place to improve their quality of life: from readjusting pensions and improving health care to travels, sports and the promotion of reading.



According to the 2002 Census, the Chilean population has aged during the past ten years, as a result of the country's progress in health care and quality of life, along with lower birth rates and longer lifespans. Today, senior citizens make up 11.4% of the population, while 25.7% are under age 15.

The growing ranks of the elderly pose new challenges for Chile's government and society. The most important tasks are ensuring their integration, to avoid the emergence of a new type of poverty; guaranteeing their access to health care;

improving coverage for chronic illnesses; and addressing mental health issues.

The government has made a firm commitment to protect the elderly and to pursue new initiatives for their benefit. As the President has stated, "One of the pillars and main focal points of this administration is its determination to construct 'a Chile for all,' and from this standpoint, designing policies specifically aimed at older adults will be one of the priorities of these four years."

Heading up the effort is the National Service for the Older Adult (Senama), created by law in September 2002. Senama's central objectives are to put an end to discrimination and marginalization affecting older adults, ensure their full integration into society and protect their Constitutional and legal rights. Its basic tool is the National Fund for the Older Adult, which supports projects that directly benefit this group.



In March of this year, President Bachelet gave senior citizens a piece of good news: free health care for everyone over age 60 who is affiliated with the Public Health System. Furthermore, every patient must be attended within 48 hours of a request for care.



A favorite program for older Chileans is "Vacations for Senior Citizens": low-cost, all-inclusive trips within Chile, organized by the National Tourism Service (Sernatur). During its five years of operation, the program has directly served more than 100,000 people. It also benefits older Chileans living abroad, offering them discounts on return travel to the country.

Starting this year, the government will break new ground by providing an 80% subsidy to low-income seniors who have previously been unable to take advantage of the program. Four thousand elderly travelers will be the beneficiaries.



GOBIERNO DE CHILE  
MINISTERIO SECRETARÍA GENERAL DE GOBIERNO  
SECRETARÍA DE COMUNICACIONES

**EDITOR IN CHIEF:** Juan Carvajal, Director Communication Secretariat / **EDITOR:** María Paz del Río, Chief, International Analysis and Press Department / **TEXT:** Mónica Benavides, International Analysis and Press Department / **PHOTOGRAPHS:** Presidencia de la República / Senama

**TRANSLATION:** Patricia Linderman

**COMMUNICATION SECRETARIAT / LA MONEDA PALACE**

[depreint@msgg.gov.cl](mailto:depreint@msgg.gov.cl) / [www.segegob.cl](http://www.segegob.cl) / [www.gobiernodechile.cl](http://www.gobiernodechile.cl)