



## **PRESIDENT BACHELET: “I KNOW THAT WE CAN TRY FOR MORE AND THAT IN THE BICENTENARY, CHILE WILL BE A BETTER COUNTRY FOR ALL”**

- **The President started her Message to the Nation with an emotive message of support to the families affected by the eruption of the Chaiten Volcano to whom the President expressed “that the entire country is behind you”.**
- **The President called on all sectors of the nation to work together on important national goals and proposed new challenges looking toward the Bicentenary, reiterating the need for a powerful agenda of development and the consolidation of the social protection system.**
- **Together with support for entrepreneurs, innovation will be strengthened by actions aimed at forming human capital and encouraging scientific knowledge.**
- **Betting on the future: 2,500 postgraduate scholarships to study abroad in 2009; 35,000 scholarships for technical higher education; 30,000 boys and girls from families with scarce resources will receive personal computers and cities will be digitally connected.**
- **In Education, the PSU (University entrance exam) will be free for all public and subsidized private school students.**
- **The President announced an extraordinary bonus of \$20,000 pesos for 1.5 million pensioners.**
- **In Health, the President made a commitment to invest US\$ 600 million over the next two years and to hire full time specialists in hospitals to shorten waiting lists.**
- **The President called for a serious discussion regarding subsidies for public transport that will allow the tariff in the Metropolitan Region to remain unchanged and make reductions possible for adult and student fares in regions.**
- **Regarding the day after pill and its availability, the President stated that each Mayor will be the person who “decides for the people or lets people decide for themselves. Let the nation judge”.**

The President of the Republic, Michelle Bachelet, delivered a complete summary of the progress made in the first half of her mandate in her third Message to the Nation, in which the Chief of State outlined an ambitious development agenda looking toward the nation’s bicentenary. “We will continue to work enthusiastically until the last day of my government because I know we can try for more and that on March 10 2010, in full celebration of our bicentenary, Chile will be a better nation for all its citizens”, the President stated.

The Nation’s Leader recalled that in her first Presidential Message she defined her government as a period that will lay the foundations of a new era, setting the bases of a new development policy, a social protection system, improved quality of life and a more inclusive, citizen

orientated democracy. Regarding this the President stressed, “At the halfway point of the government, we have advanced more than halfway on the promised task”.

The President valued that today in Chile a language of social protection has been installed and called on all sectors to work together “putting the general interest of the nation before our legitimate personal visions”. The President assured that “only a country united behind tremendous tasks can propose and achieve the changes of the dimension of the Pension Reform plan or the agreement reached this year on education”.

## **OUR PROGRESS TOWARD DEVELOPMENT**

- In June, legislation will be sent to Congress to grant the extraordinary bonus of \$20.000 pesos for 1.5 million pensioners. The President reiterated that the government will stand by families that have experienced the impact of the increases in fuel and food.
- The President committed to legislation that reduces tariffs for machinery and equipment that is not produced in Chile to zero. This measure, with an annual cost of US\$ 106 million, increases the competitiveness of companies, strengthens investment and supports the exchange rate.

### **Innovation:**

Action will be taken in three key areas: training, scientific knowledge and entrepreneurship.

- The Human Capital Bicentennial Fund will be created, investing 6 billion dollars abroad that will finance the ambitious scholarship program.
- The number of Chilean youth undertaking post-graduate studies abroad will be increased. In 2007, 500 scholarships were granted. By the year 2009, the number is expected to rise to 2,500. In this way, in the next decade we will have more than 30,000 people trained in various disciplines with the highest standards of advanced countries.
- In 2009, 35,000 scholarships for technical higher education will be offered, directed at the poorest 60% of the population.
- By 2010, 2,000 positions to study abroad will be created for young people with technical training. This year the first 150 technicians will perfect their training overseas.
- A scholarship for overseas language courses will be created. This will prepare students for future post-graduate studies.
- Over the next two years, a program designed to improve scientific equipment in priority areas will receive US\$ 30 million.
- A program will be created to attract expert scientists from abroad. In two years there will be over 100 world-class scientists installed in regional universities.

### **Energy:**

The President reiterated the government’s policy on this issue, aimed at assuring supply, diversifying our energy network and optimizing energy saving and efficiency. The President reminded the nation that there are currently additional investment projects in energy of almost 21 billion dollars. The President called for the legislation that creates the Energy Ministry to be passed by Congress. The Chief of State also announced:

- From 2009, 10,000 new social housing project homes will incorporate improved insulation standards.
- A subsidy for the purchase of efficient electric motors by small and medium sized enterprises will be granted. This will facilitate important energy savings in the agricultural and industrial sectors.

#### **Infrastructure:**

- This year investment in infrastructure designed to aid competitiveness will be increased by 60%, including investments in roads, ports, airports and irrigation works.
- In 2008, tenders will be called for projects totaling US\$ 1.275 billion. “The will of my government is to give public-private investment in infrastructure the necessary impetus”.
- The construction of 720 kilometers of fiber-optic networks will take the Internet and telecommunications to rural zones.
- In 2009, a finance plan for the digital connectivity of 35 communes will be launched.

#### **Environment:**

- On June 5, legislation will be presented to the Congress that creates the Environment Ministry and the Environment Superintendent
- Together with reiterating Chile’s rejection of the capture and death of whales for scientific purposes, the President announced that legislation will be sent to Congress that declares Chile to be “territory free” of the hunting of cetaceans formally declaring them “natural monuments”.

### **A MORE PROSPEROUS AND FAIRER NATION**

- The Chief of State highlighted that the “Pension System Reform is a historic achievement”, that will allow us to end “the indigence and poverty effecting senior citizens”. The President acknowledged the work of the Congress on this issue.
- With this reform, senior citizens (husband and wife) who today live on an assistance pension of \$48,000 pesos per month will receive, from July 2008, a pension of \$60,000 pesos for him and a further \$60,000 for her (\$120,000 pesos per month as a household income). From July 2009, this will automatically increase to \$150,000 pesos per month. .
- The President also highlighted the progress of the *Chile Crece Contigo* (Chile Grows with You) program and announced that in order to strengthen the inter-sectorial focus of infancy protection involved in this initiative; legislation will be sent to Congress in the second semester of this year to make the program permanent.

#### **Education:**

- “The PSU (university entrance exam) will be free for all students of public and subsidized private schools”.
- Regarding technology, the President stated her desire that each boy and girl have a personal computer. The Chief of State announced that in March 2009, computers will be given to boys and girls belonging to the most vulnerable 40% of the population that start seventh grade that year and are in the top 30% of their class. “We are talking about more than

30,000 computers for personal use, that the students will take home and use with their siblings and friends”, the President explained.

- Throughout 2009, a mobile laboratory will be implemented for children in third grade of all the municipal schools in the country.
- In July, the Ministry of Education will announce an encouragement and consolidation program for public education. There is also a program designed to improve the infrastructure of the traditional state schools in the Metropolitan Region as well as other regions of the nation.
- The base of a new teaching degree will be created in conjunction with teachers that will culminate in the accreditation of pedagogy degrees offered by universities. Computers will also be given to outstanding teachers and to teachers involved in the *Red Maestros de Maestros* (Teacher’s Teachers Network). Scholarships available to teachers for further study in Chile and abroad will be increased.
- In higher education, special programs will be developed in the Humanities areas of public universities to revitalize the study of philosophy, art and all the social sciences. The President stated that the continuance of scholarships and loans will be guaranteed so that those who received scholarships in secondary school will maintain them in higher education. The President revealed that \$ 190 billion pesos has been budgeted for student aid this year.

#### **Health:**

- The President announced an investment of “\$US 600 million over the next two years. This means that under this administration more will have been invested in health than in the last decade”.
- The President reiterated the importance of having more specialists. 500 full time specialists will be hired in hospitals to shorten waiting lists, 400 doctors will be trained in different specialties and over the next two years a program will be financed that produce over a thousand medical specialists.

#### **Labor and Equity:**

- The Chief of State announced that at the end of this year the legislation creating the labor subsidy, a proposal formulated by the Equity Council, will be sent to Congress
- The President also announced, “In July, I will send legislation to the National Congress that introduces reforms to Unemployment Insurance, to increase its benefits and extend its coverage to more workers”.
- In order to assure collective workers rights and encourage more collective bargaining inside companies, the President indicated that, “we propose that having a union representative in a company, limits to some degree the formation of parallel negotiating groups”.
- In order to strengthen unions, the President announced the creation of a National Union School.

### **MORE PROSPERITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IS ALSO IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE**

- The Chief of State announced that by 2010 there will be housing solutions for the 20,000 families that today live in camps throughout the country.
- This year the first 735 subsidies for senior citizens will be granted, which include special care of the person that aids them.
- Next month legislation will be sent to Congress in order to assure that waste removal companies meet their labor and pension obligations and those companies that provide better conditions for their workers will be evaluated more favorably when considering tenders.
- The Clean Commune Plan will be implemented; the responsibility for this project rests with the Environment Minister and the Undersecretary of Regional Development.
- A policy of Environmentally Friendly Public Purchases will be created, including paper recycling in public offices and incentives for the use of biodegradable products.
- 480 kilometers of streets and lanes will be built this year through the Participative Paving Program. Furthermore, no contribution will be required by residents or municipalities of the poorest 50 communes associated to this plan.

### **Transport:**

- The President emphasized the relevance of a high-level discussion of the legislation that proposes a National Subsidy of Public Transport throughout the country. “The transport in the great cities is and must be seen as a public utility service”.
- The Chief of State added, “A permanent subsidy of public transport is a fairness imperative. In regions, we hope that it allows reductions in adult and student fares. With the resources destined to regions, the contribution to rural transport will be increased. In the case of the Metropolitan Region, the legislation will ensure that the fare does not rise in 2008”.

### **Sport:**

- The President highlighted that the most important investment in sporting infrastructure since the 1962 World Cup is currently underway. This will continue over the next two years creating a network of stadiums and sporting complexes for the Bicentenary, in order to renovate sporting infrastructure throughout the country, for all sports not only soccer.

### **Citizen Safety and Justice:**

- The President announced the construction of ten new high-standard centers over the next two years, which will facilitate the implementation of the Juvenile Criminal Responsibility Law.
- Regarding family justice, the President highlighted the legislation presented to Congress that reinforces the current Family Courts with 95 new judges and more than 600 new administrative staff.
- The President valued the supply of resources and equipment to the Police Force, stating that this year we will invest an additional US\$ 20 million in equipment for the protection of police officers.

## **A MODERN STATE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND EQUITY**

- The President reaffirmed the country’s need to have “a better State, the most transparent possible, with the best people, for the great tasks that we have ahead”, and emphasized that “corruption does not have a political color and that it is the duty of all to fight it”

- The President confirmed the priority given by the Government to the agendas of State modernization and transparency and probity, and considered that “today, the country is unquestionably more transparent than yesterday”, due to fact that the regulatory mechanisms in the public administration have been developed as never before in our history.

## **A MORE INCLUSIVE AND CITIZEN BASED DEMOCRACY**

- The President highlighted that “the quality of politics is a key concern for Chile’s progress” and stressed, “We need politics to recover its prestige in the eyes of the citizens”. For this reason, the Chief of State insisted that in this municipal election year the quality of the political debate be raised.
- Within this framework, the President qualified the initiatives that modify the Political Parties Law and the legislation containing automatic voter registration as priorities. The President reaffirmed the importance of establishing voluntary voting and granting the right to vote to Chileans living abroad.
- The President also supported the reform of the binominal electoral system as a necessary step in order to put an end to exclusion and to encourage the participation of women in politics. “Take a glance around, a chamber full of men, however at the front a woman. This shows that we are able to win elections when we have the opportunity to compete”.
- Finally, the President highlighted the necessity of political reforms that are designed to reinforce political accountability. “If the State designates resources to political campaigns, it has the right to demand maximum transparency and accountability”, the President stated. Explaining that, “we have proposed norms to avoid the misuse of public resources in electoral campaigns and norms to better regulate the relation between politics and money”.
- On this last issue, the President indicated that, “it is not good nor has it ever been good, for economic power to be confused with political power because private interests can distort general public interests”.

### **The day after pill:**

- The Chief of State considered that her constitutional obligation is to guarantee good communal living and mutual respect among all Chilean and underlined that, “I will ensure that equity reaches as far as my powers allow”. La
- “The medicine will be at the disposition of those interested in each municipality. Each Mayor will be the person who decides if it is made available to the public. That is to say, the Mayors can either decide for the people or let the people themselves decide. Let the country judge”.

### **Decentralization:**

- The increased financial support we have made to the Common Municipal Fund will continue.
- For smaller municipalities, the Regional Local Investment Fund will be increased by \$2 billion pesos.

### **Human Rights:**

- The President called on Congress to quickly approve the legislation that creates the Human Rights Institute, pointing out that having “an institute dedicated to protecting human rights and preventing their abuses is good for the country”.
- The Chief of State also expects the “Congress to continue working on the dispatch of interpretive legislation regarding the Criminal Code in order to make it conform to international human rights norms. The State cannot extinguish the criminal responsibility of the authors of war crimes or crimes against humanity by the application of an amnesty or pardon

### **Women:**

- The Nation’s Leader highlighted that, “Women are no longer a sector of public policy. Female perspectives are transversely present in all policies, in health, in social security, in entrepreneurship, in education, in all sectors”.
- As an example the President mentioned that the 25 Shelters for victims of domestic violence have saved almost 400 lives. “My commitment is to protect women. We will prevent violence. We will toughen the laws. We will punish the cowardly acts of the abusers. In Chile, the right of every woman to live safely will be respected!”

### **Culture:**

- The President announced that in the coming months legislation will be sent to the National Congress that creates the Heritage Institute. This requires modern and efficient institutionality for its administration and conservation.
- To promote reading among the population, in 2008 a special program of mini-libraries for childcare centers will be developed in order to develop the habit of reading from the earliest possible age. Also a literature suitcase (containing a selection of fiction and non-fiction works) will be given to families together with the keys to their new social housing project homes.

## **COUNTRY IMAGE AND A NEW ERA IN FOREIGN POLICY**

- The promotion of Chile’s international image will be strengthened. The budget for this task will reach US\$ 40 million in 2009. The President highlighted that, “we will have increased the resources available for this purpose by more than ten fold in less than three years”.
- The President also stated that in order to best face the challenges that the international context imposes, “I will send legislation to Congress, within ninety days, which will modernize the Ministry of Foreign Affairs”.

Valparaíso, 21 May 2008.