



Press Department

SPEECH BY HER EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, MICHELLE BACHELET, FOLLOWING THE SIGNING OF THE "AGREEMENT ON THE TERMS OF ACCESSION BY THE REPUBLIC OF CHILE TO THE OECD CONVENTION"

Santiago, Chile, 11 January 2010

Ladies and Gentlemen, friends:

Firstly, I would like once again to welcome the Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Angel Gurría, to Chile, and to express to you and the entire international community the legitimate and genuine happiness felt by the Chilean people at the signing of this historic Agreement, which will allow our country to enter into the forum of the world's most developed democracies as a full member.

The "legitimate and genuine happiness" of which I speak is also matched by a sense of satisfaction and pride because this Agreement, although simply the first step on a path of collaboration between Chile and OECD Member countries, is also a ringing endorsement of all the progress we have made as a country during these years of freedom and democracy for all Chilean people.

What has happened over the last 20 years is historic. Chile has shaken off under-development and is well on the way to achieving developed nation status in a few years' time.

But joining the OECD is much more than recognition. In particular, as Angel Gurría noted, it is the first step on a new journey into the future which will open up major new opportunities to move more quickly towards that long-desired development.

Membership of the OECD will help Chile make a qualitative leap forward in terms of public policies and State modernisation. As an OECD member, Chile will work with the world's most advanced economies in seeking solutions to our key economic, social, environmental and other challenges — challenges that are quintessentially global.

We will benefit from the exceptional co-operation and dialogue mechanisms available to us as full members of the OECD—an organisation that is well known for promoting active exchange of experiences and identifying best practices in nearly all areas of public policy.

The OECD is a forum of excellence, as Angel Gurría mentioned earlier, for examples for analysis and work on social policies, particularly educational policies, or on its advanced systems of health or social security networks. We have tremendous experience to share with OECD countries.

OECD countries are also leaders in terms of State modernisation policies, and this will help us move towards improving the quality and efficiency of the way we treat our citizens, the users of public services.

Accession to the OECD means moving towards a better country, a better quality of life and greater well-being for each and every one of our inhabitants; as Angel Gurría also mentioned.

OECD Member countries are leaders in innovation policies, in ways in which to link universities and research centres with business and promote productive public-private partnerships. Our membership will thus help us improve our competitiveness, our productivity and therefore growth in our economy and progress for all; and it will mean better conditions for small and medium-sized businesses, through easier access to credit and lower financing costs for each family's personal projects.

But that is not all; entry into the OECD will send a very powerful signal that Chile is a stable and reliable country. We believe this could attract greater foreign investment, but also, and most

importantly, financing under better conditions for entrepreneurs or local investors.

All of this will mean something which for us is essential: more employment, more jobs, and also, higher quality and better paid work— decent work, as our friend here from the ILO, Juan Somavia, would put it.

This international achievement will have very practical and highly positive consequences, not only for the Chilean economy, but also, most especially, for individuals, for families, and for Chilean workers.

But it is also worth noting that Chile's accession to the OECD is by no means fortuitous. It is the outcome of our ability to construct state policies—the capacity of our democracy to construct and renew major national accords, without which the country cannot progress.

It is for that reason I speak of a politics in the service of the people, involving not only the Government but also the Legislature whose job it is to ratify this proposal; the private sector and civil society also have their part to play.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and express my gratitude for the commitment and determination showed by Senators and Deputies in dealing with some very important draft laws, such as the one reforming corporate governance in CODELCO; the law establishing the criminal liability of firms that engage in corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing; the legislation that allows banking information to be exchanged for tax purposes; and the law regulating the corporate governance of private enterprises, all of which represent very important steps forward in terms of transparency and modernisation of the State.

Without the commitment and special effort made by the National Congress, we would not have been able to reach this Agreement. All of this increases the prestige of the function of politics and members of parliament. Thank you very much.

I would also in particular like to congratulate and thank the 150 or so Chilean civil servants in the different ministries and government agencies, who participated in the accession process, for the

commitment, seriousness and enthusiasm with which they approached this task.

The successful participation of these public servants in the demanding hearings organised by OECD committees has confirmed that our country has professionals of excellence in the public sector who are devoted to Chile's progress rather than to personal ends, as is often insinuated.

My friends, accession to the OECD does not mean that Chile ceases to be what it is: a Latin American country, a democratic country, and a progressive country.

Chile will bring to the OECD a vision of a southern country; a middle-income country, with particular experience of economic and social progress, in a framework of democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Nonetheless, I believe that by joining the Organisation we will be sending a signal to the world that Latin America has countries such as Mexico, Chile and several others that are moving steadfastly towards societies that are not only more democratic but also more developed and more inclusive. This progress by emerging Latin American countries will be one of the positive developments of the first few decades of the 21st century.

OECD membership does not mean that Chile is now considered a wealthy country. Instead it means that we wish to continue growing together, to continue including and involving the entire country in a national project.

Nor does it mean that Chile will change its successful international policy of multiple engagement, robust multilateralism and growing capacity to draw on international agreements to address the challenges of the globalised world.

On the contrary, we believe our accession to the OECD will enable us to consolidate our role as a country that bridges different worlds— a bridge between the developed and developing world, and particularly with our Latin America.

This will now be easier because the OECD today is a more open organisation and is more sensitive to the priorities of the developing world.

The OECD is not an exclusive and excluding club. Today it is increasingly inclusive, as Angel Gurría told us, and it intends to continue its process of enlargement through the accession of new Member countries and its Enhanced Engagement Strategy with emerging economies such as Brazil, China, India, Indonesia and South Africa.

This desire is not new; but I believe it has been confirmed during the global economic and financial crisis.

The OECD has endeavoured to provide responses and relevant solutions, both for developed countries and for emerging and developing nations, to tackle global challenges in the areas of international trade, the environment, investment, tax havens, the food crisis and development aid, among others.

We, and I personally, were given an example of the OECD's concern for the priorities of the developing world a few weeks ago during the recent Ibero-American summit held in Portugal, when Secretary-General Angel Gurría provided us with the 2010 version of the Latin American Economic Outlook, a report focused this time on migration, which is a key issue for many countries in our region.

We therefore consider it extremely important, in the future, for the OECD to be able to share and pass on its experiences to countries in the Latin American region; and Chile can contribute to this task as a channel for actions in that direction.

Now that this important phase has been concluded, I would once again to extend my thanks to the Secretary-General -I have already done so privately, and I want to do so publicly today-. We were recalling that, on your first visit here -that is to say during my Presidency, because you had already come here on other occasions-, we said that we would roll up our sleeves or *poner las pilas*, as we say in Chile- to achieve this during my term of

government. That was in 2007, and we did so; we did our utmost to ensure that this moment arrived.

But I also want to thank him for his vision and leadership, which were decisive for the success of Chile's accession process.

It is also right to recognise the hard work put in by countless experts and officials in the Secretariat, and I would like to give particular mention -because that is what should always be done-, to Mr. Nicola Bonucci — many thanks Nicola — and his team, who prepared reports and undertook missions and, as Minister Velasco recalled in the meeting earlier, while visiting Chile in January may be very pleasant, they always came during the winter when there are major difficulties, they worked intensively with our parliamentarians to overcome the latter's doubts and anxieties, and above all they provided expert opinion on each and every one of the 20 thematic areas included in the negotiations.

I would also like to take this opportunity to solemnly express, through the ambassadors here with us, to the ambassadors of OECD countries, our gratitude to the other 30 member countries of the Organisation, because the political support provided by your respective Governments, and the collaboration received by our technical teams, strongly influenced the course of the negotiations. Thank you very much.

Today is a day for celebration because admission to the OECD will provide a new, exceptional means of deepening, expanding, and enriching relations with your countries.

It is for this reason that I believe the country receives this positive news with joy; and, as Angel Gurría said, it also comes at a very auspicious moment as we have just started to commemorate the bicentenary of our Republic.

I would like to conclude my remarks by calling on all children of this land, our fatherland, to learn to value what we have built.

Because Chile today is not what it was 20 years ago, when joining this forum would have been unthinkable.

And because we have achieved this together, in freedom and democracy.

Thank you very much.

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Santiago, Chile, 11 January 2010.