



# CHILENEWS

No. 11 – April 16, 2001

## **Did you know?**

The Museum of Pre-Columbian Art, founded in 1981, houses artifacts from the all different American cultures, and some are over 5,000 years old. Recently restored, the Museum owns 729 historically valuable and beautiful artifacts.

*The greenish-brown turca, a native Chilean bird, sings when it mates and can be heard several yards away. However, it carefully hides its nests on the ground, filling them with soft damp grass.*

Waves over 30 feet high and 120 m.p.h. winds are common in the Sea of Drake. Located in the southernmost tip of Chile, it is a training site for the Chilean Navy.

## ***The Bottom Line***

7.4% was the increase in output achieved in the third quarter of 2000.

## ***No more Death Penalty***

By a vast majority, the House of Representatives abolished the death penalty, replacing it with effective life sentences. Thus, condemned prisoners must spend at least 40 years in jail. Only the Supreme Court may grant freedom once the sentence has been served.

The death penalty has not been applied in Chile for 20 years. The President was authorized to pardon prisoners condemned to death. In the two previous administrations, President Patricio Aylwin and President Eduardo Frei granted pardons. The last execution was carried out in 1985, during the government of Augusto Pinochet. In total, since the law became effective in 1875, 57 individuals were put to death by a firing squad.

The Minister of Justice, José Antonio Gómez, emphasized the importance of having eliminated an “irrational and inhuman law.”

## ***Presidential Trip***

On April 16, President Ricardo Lagos began his first official trip in 2001. During the eight-day tour he will visit four capital cities in America and Europe, meeting with Heads of State, Ministers and other authorities on both continents.

The main point of the visit to Washington, D.C. is a meeting with President George Bush. The items on the agenda include: the significance of the Free Trade Agreement – currently being negotiated by both countries – for Chile, the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), the global economy, the situation in Latin America and hemispheric relations.

On April 18, he will meet in Paris with the Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin; the Mayor of Paris, Bertrand Delanoë; the President of the National Assembly, Reymond Forni; and on April 19 with President Jacques Chirac; Cabinet Ministers and other prominent figures from the political, cultural, academic and scientific world. Talks will center on Chile's interest in developing a Framework Cooperation Agreement with the European Union on political and economic matters. It will also express Chile's commitment to building a more democratic, egalitarian and open society.

## Tips

According to a World Bank survey of 73 countries, that was analyzed by the IDB, Chile is the country that poses the least obstacles to foreign investment and to the establishment of firms, in matters ranging from access to financing and street violence.

Chile and Brazil signed an Agreement on Double Taxation. The aim is to avoid double taxation that discourages investment and to prevent tax evasion.

Lloyd's of London announced that it will begin procedures to start operating in Chile after receiving permission from the Chilean Superintendency of Securities and Insurance to underwrite reinsurance contracts directly with national firms.

Fruit exports grew by 10% in March 2001 compared to March 2000, an increase equal to 919 tons.

President Lagos will then fly to Quebec, Canada, to participate in the Third Summit of the Americas on April 20-21. He will also hold meetings with the Presidents of Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and Bolivia, and the Prime Minister of Canada. He will insist that, together with efforts to advance towards a FTAA, progress is essential in other key areas, such as education and the eradication of poverty.

The Dominican Republic will be the last stop on this trip, on April 23. Together with the Dominican President, Hipólito Mejía, President Lagos will inaugurate the Fourth International Book Fair to which Chile has been invited as Country Guest of Honor.

## *Jiang Zemin in Chile*

Chinese President Jiang Zemin made a three-day visit to Chile. This was his first stop on a tour of six Latin America countries. Symbolically, he chose to begin in Chile, a country that aspires to be the gateway for Asian countries to the region.

During his visit, he signed three bilateral agreements with President Lagos. The agreements include cooperation for rural development, protection and recovery of cultural assets, and seismologic cooperation. These issues are important to strengthen the bonds between both countries. In 2000, bilateral trade between China and Chile ran over two billion dollars.

In the only speech he made during his tour, delivered at the Economic Commission for Latin America (Eclac), President Jiang proposed having China and Latin America join forces to achieve a “new, fair and reasonable international order, in political and economic terms.”

## *Chile and the International Scene*

Chile will participate in 23 international events in 2001 so as to inform the public on its multiple products available for export.

This will be undertaken as a joint “country team” with the private sector. The State will fund 30 percent of the costs and provide the necessary infrastructure and logistics. Around 600 small and medium sized Chilean companies will attend.

In Verona (Italy), Chile participated for the seventh time at Vitality, one of the three most important international trade fairs for promoting wine. Wines from 13 Chilean wineries, showing new brands and varieties, were available at the 160 square foot stand.

## Quotes from President Lagos

“I am a person who believes in hand-shakes and in face-to-face conversation as an irreplaceable form of human communication. A meeting and a few words can open up unsuspected spaces for Chile’s relations with the rest of the world.”

Before embarking on his tour to Washington D.C., Paris, and Quebec.  
13 de abril

“We shall never share a common view of the past because there were different outlooks. However, based on these different approaches, there is a common understanding of never allowing such things to happen again. And that is, I believe, the lesson we can draw from all those situations. Nevermore violence as the means for political action, nevermore the destruction of the rule of law; nevermore horrors committed allegedly to protect a higher interest.”

At the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the delivery of the Report by the Truth and Reconciliation Committee.  
April 9

“My duty as a President is to seek reconciliation among Chileans. There comes a time when one must cease looking to the past and start looking to the future. Truth, justice, reconciliation and forgiveness exist. Everything is inside each one of us. This decision cannot be made by decree.”

Interview granted to the French newspaper *Libération*. April 12

It will also be present at the Comdex Fair – a high technology event that will take place on November 12-16 in the U.S., at the Cannes Film Festival and at the China Fisheries Sea Products, among other international meetings.

## *Poems by Vicente Huidobro in Madrid*

His “Salle XIV. Painted Poems by Vicente Huidobro” will open on April 17 in Madrid at the Spanish National Museum “Centro de Arte Reina Sofía”. Twelve of the thirteen poems in the “Salle XIV” series will be exhibited. They were originally shown in Paris by the Chilean poet in 1922. The exhibition also includes letters and creations by other authors who were close to Huidobro, such as Delaunay, Picasso and Miró. Deemed to be much too daring at the time, the original exhibit was shut down after three days.

The organizers have taken on the titanic challenge of gathering the original poems, which had either been lost or were in the hands of private collectors. After Madrid, the exhibition will travel to Chicago, New York and Santiago. It rescues part of the graphic and literary proposal through which the inventor of “Creationism” renewed and changed the meaning of poetry.

Irreverent, outlandish, avant-garde and an adventurer, an innovator in letters. A creator, he reinvented verse so that, like a key, it would open a thousand doors. This was Vicente Huidobro, the poet.

## *Phantoms in the Desert*

Northern Chile harbors the only natural deposits of sodium nitrate (saltpeter) in the world. From the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century up to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century the area lived through a genuine “white gold fever”. Saltpeter profits allowed the Chilean State to build impressive engineering works throughout Chile.

Hoping for a better life, thousands of Chileans emigrated to the inhospitable desert and lived in settlements that flourished near the saltpeter works. Life there had its own traits; for instance, the “*pulpería*” was a general store at which payment was made in tokens. Public squares had a gazebo where the town’s musicians played every Sunday. The local theaters received some of the most outstanding performers of the time, especially opera singers.

Now they are ghost towns. María Elena, only one of the many saltpeter works, is still inhabited. Thanks to a series being filmed there by the National Television Broadcasting station, Humberstone, one of the most important offices, has revived and is recovering the glitter of the past in its renewed facilities.

## Overheard

“Chile has occupied a leading position among Latin American nations in terms of trade liberalization. It has also helped govern the hemisphere and has shown the world that it is a free nation that has recovered its democracy and is undergoing a transition to becoming a mature and developed economy.”

Robert Zoellick, United States Trade Representative. In a speech delivered to the Chilean-American-Chamber of Commerce, April 4

“We would like relations between New Zealand and Chile to be closer and deeper. Since both countries produce similar products, some people think that this turns us into competitors, but we believe that this makes us even better associates.”

Philip Goff, New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Justice. Santiago, March 30

## Q & A

### Chile's Administrative Structure

#### What is Chile's administrative division?

Thirteen regions, numbered from North to South form the basis for state administration. They were established according to their similar socio-economic and cultural interests in a geographic area. The capital city, also known as the Metropolitan Region, is located in the Thirteenth Region.

Each region is divided into provinces, defined according to geographic proximity and a common and characteristic productive destiny. There are 51 provinces in Chile which are subdivided into Municipalities. A total of 341 municipalities exist to provide public services, satisfy local needs and encourage community involvement and organization.

#### Who is responsible for these territorial units?

In each region, administration is conducted by a regional government, formed by the regional governors (intendentes) and the Regional Council. Each intendente is appointed by the President of the Republic as the President's direct and natural representative. The intendente presides over the Regional Council.

Each province is headed by a Governor, also appointed by the President of the Republic. Municipalities are headed by a Mayor, advised by a Community Council. All these officials are elected every four years by popular vote.

#### Are there any administrative changes in sight?

More than changes, the administration of President Ricardo Lagos is promoting a strong process of decentralization. The aim is, ultimately, to give new thrust to Chile's development by transferring decision-making power and resources from the central government to representatives of civil society and citizens on a regional and municipal level. This will enable them to undertake the economic, social and cultural management of their respective areas.

## Agenda

- 📅 April 16: Meeting of Presidents Ricardo Lagos and George Bush. The White House, Washington, D.C.
- 📅 April 18-19: Visit by President Lagos to France
- 📅 April 20-21: Third Summit of the Americas. Quebec
- 📅 April 23: President Lagos inaugurates the Fourth International Book Fair. Santo Domingo
- 📅 April 16-20: Thirteenth Meeting of the Working Group on Trade Promotion. Asia-Pacific Economic Forum (APEC). Santiago

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