

CHILE

MISION PERMANENTE ANTE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS

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**STATEMENT BY H.E. THE PRESIDENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF CHILE
DOCTOR MICHELLE BACHELET
IN THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE
61ST PERIOD OF SESSIONS OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

New York, September 20th, 2006

Madam President, Mr. Secretary General, representatives of the countries of the world,

I have the honor to congratulate you and the other members of the Board for your election. We express our readiness to cooperate in the tasks we have before us.

In the same manner, we are grateful for the acclaimed work of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, whose mandate will soon conclude, demonstrating a keen political eye in the leadership of the United Nations, in one of the most difficult moments in its history.

I come before this United Nations General Assembly as the first woman to be elected President of Chile.

A country that has learned from its history. We Chileans are living through difficult times; the Assembly knows this. The learning curve was difficult, but fertile. From pain, hope was born. Major dissent gave way to major consensus.

I come from a country where today the rule of law prevails, where the rights of persons are respected and promoted. A democracy that is experiencing economic growth and that in the past 16 years has helped millions of Chileans out of poverty. Chile is integrated with its neighbors and in the region looking at the world.

My presence before this Assembly is symbolic of this Chile; the Chile that is unafraid to look back at the past and united in building its own future.

We can say with pride that today Chile is more free and more fair. As a society we have granted the basic dignity and respect that every citizen deserves.

Madam President,

The world looks different from the far distant south and this is the viewpoint that my country wishes to bring. A viewpoint that is optimistic about the opportunities of globalization but cautious about its risks. We can and must steer the course of the planet. Humans cannot and must not avoid being the instrument of their own advancement.

We wish to reaffirm our commitment to international law and institutions. Only through them shall we be able to build this fairer and more integrated world of which we dream, where large and small coexist in peace and harmony.

The United Nations, Madam President, is a special instrument in this construction. A year ago, we agreed on a programme for the reform of our Organization, based on development, security and human rights. This has been called the millennium of hope. Let us make this hope a reality, and let us do so from here, from this forum.

Development is a responsibility shared by all members of the international community, including the developed countries. Its attainment requires imagination and political willingness to consolidate the world alliance endorsed by the Millennium Declaration.

All this presupposes a more open, transparent and fair commercial and financial system. To our developed friends, I say this: opening your markets to products from the South is a

requirement of justice. This will represent a huge step forward towards the elimination of poverty. And so let us redouble our efforts to bring the Doha Round to a successful conclusion and make progress in integration processes at the regional level.

As an early supporter of the idea of President Lula of Brazil, Chile joined with other countries in the Initiative of Action Against Hunger and Poverty. In Chile, we have introduced a solidarity tax of two dollars on international airline tickets and these funds will finance the International Drug Purchase Facility (UNITAID) project, which will provide quality drugs to millions of people in developing countries suffering from malaria, tuberculosis and AIDS.

Madam President,

The most serious failure of the 2005 Summit was its silence on the multilateral disarmament agenda. Chile bases its multilateral foreign policy on the principle that collective security is indivisible. We all have a share of responsibility to preserve peace and international security that cannot be delegated. For this reason, Chile has joined in efforts to revitalize the disarmament agenda and move towards prohibition of the use of fissile material for military purposes.

The security of States is linked to the security of the human beings making up those States, because it allows the exercise of freedom. United Nations should develop the concept of human security.

Terrorism negates these freedoms and runs counter to the values that we share. Accordingly, we support the advance of United Nations reform in the area of counter-terrorism. But terrorism must be combated in democracy. Whenever we restrict constitutional guarantees and yield to the temptation to employ illegal methods to fight terrorism, we are handing a victory to its proponents, because only then do they succeed in threatening the spirit of our democracies.

In a spirit of solidarity, we are participating actively in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). Chile will continue to support the Haitian people and I appeal from this rostrum for all donor countries to provide the economic and financial assistance already pledged.

The creation of the Peacebuilding Commission is undoubtedly one of the most outstanding achievements of the 2005 Summit. Chile has joined enthusiastically in the work of the Commission and will endeavour to ensure that its results live up to the hopes placed in it by the nations.

My country deplores the serious crisis affecting the Middle East and strongly condemns any armed action targeting innocent civilians. Self-defence may be exercised only within the framework of proportionality and containment outlined in international humanitarian law. The delay in the Security Council's call for a cease fire in Lebanon is inconsistent with the letter and spirit of the Charter. The credibility of the Organization requires that all stakeholders do their duty without discrimination and without subordinating collective security to their individual interests.

Chile supports the deployment and expansion of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and will continue to respond to the appeal to meet the urgent humanitarian needs in Lebanon and Palestine.

We urge full implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), which calls on the international community to cooperate in a full cessation of hostilities in the Middle East, to restore Lebanon's sovereignty over its territory and to guarantee the security of Israel.

Madam President, friends,

The promotion and defence of human rights and democracy are the cornerstone of Chile's foreign policy. As I said at the outset, we have learned a great deal from our own history.

Exactly 30 years ago, the General Assembly received terrible news: Orlando Letelier, the former Foreign Minister and Defence Minister of President Allende, had been brutally murdered on the street in Washington D.C. The delegates were moved by that crime and today I remember it with emotion to illustrate how we have learned the lessons of the past.

Nothing justifies the violation of human rights. Chile rejects impunity. I assure you all of our commitment and enthusiasm to participate in the initiatives designed to promote human rights and democracy. We therefore welcome the launching of the United Nations Democracy Fund and the creation of the Human Rights Council. We especially value the adoption by consensus of the International Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Forced Disappearance.

The promotion of human rights does not contradict the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States. Chile has been and will be in the front line of the diplomatic trenches in the defence of human rights.

Madam President,

This General Assembly must continue United Nations reform. It must revitalize the General Assembly, reform the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council and modernize the management of the Secretariat and the administrative procedures of our Organization.

Allow me, Madam President, to reaffirm our hope in the United Nations.

As a woman, a physician and the political leader of a developing country, today I ask that we should choose life, affirm justice, promote social justice and make this noble organization the common and renewed response to our peoples' dreams of peace, development and dignity.

Thank you.