



**Official Name: Republic of Chile**



**PROFILE**

**Geography**

Area: 756,945 sq. km. (302,778 sq. mi.); nearly twice the size of California.

Cities: *Capital*--Santiago (metropolitan area est. 6.25 million). *Other cities*--Concepcion-Talcahuano (840,000), Viña del Mar-Valparaiso (800,000), Antofagasta (245,000), Temuco (230,000).

Terrain: Desert in north; fertile central valley; volcanoes and lakes toward the south, giving way to rugged and complex coastline; Andes Mountains on the eastern border.

Climate: Arid in north, Mediterranean in the central portion, cool and damp in south.

## **People**

Nationality: *Noun and adjective*--Chilean(s).

Population (2009): 16.6 million.

Annual population growth rate: 0.881%.

Ethnic groups: Spanish-Native-American (mestizo), European, Native-American.

Religions: Roman Catholic 70%, Evangelical 15.1%, Jehovah's Witness 1.1%, other Christian 1%, other 4.6%, none 8.3%.

Language: Spanish.

Education: *Years compulsory*--12. *Attendance*--3 million. *Adult literacy rate*--96%.

Health: *Infant mortality rate*--8.9/1,000. *Life expectancy*--71 yrs. for men, 78 for women.

Work force (6.94 million); employed 6.45 million: *Community, social and individual services*--26%; *industry*--14.4%; *commerce*--17.6%; *agriculture, forestry, and fishing*--13.9%; *construction*--7.1%; *financial services*--7.5%; *transportation and communication*--8.0%; *electricity, gas and water*--0.5%; *mining*--1.2%.

## **Government**

Type: Republic.

Independence: September 18, 1810.

Constitution: Promulgated September 11, 1980; effective March 11, 1981; amended in 1989, 1993, 1997, and 2005.

Branches: *Executive*--president. *Legislative*--bicameral legislature. *Judicial*--Constitutional Tribunal, Supreme Court, court of appeals, military courts.

Administrative subdivisions: 14 numbered regions including two numbered and made operative October 8, 2007--Region XIV Los Rios and Region XV Arica--and the Santiago metropolitan region, administered by appointed "intendentes." Regions are divided into provinces, administered by appointed governors; provinces are divided into municipalities administered by elected mayors.

Political parties: Major parties are grouped into two large coalitions: 1) the center-left "Concertacion", which includes the Christian Democrat Party, the Socialist Party, the Party for Democracy, and the Radical Social Democratic Party; and 2) the center-right "Alliance for Chile" (or "Alianza"), which includes the National Renewal Party and the Independent Democratic Union. The Communist Party joined the Humanistic Party and a number of smaller parties to form the "Together We Can" coalition in 2004. A new center-left party, "Chile-First," was established in October 2007.

Suffrage: Universal at 18, including foreigners legally resident for more than 5 years.

## **Economy (2009)**

GDP (official exchange rate): \$150.4 billion.

Annual real growth rate: -1.5%.

Per capita GDP (purchasing power parity): \$14,700.

Forestry, agriculture, and fisheries (6% of GDP): *Products*--fruits, wheat, potatoes, corn, sugar beets, onions, beans, livestock, fish.

Commerce (8% of GDP): Sales, restaurants, hotels.

Manufacturing (17% of GDP): *Types*--mineral refining, metal manufacturing, food processing, fish processing, paper and wood products, finished textiles.

Electricity, gas, and water: 3% of GDP.

Transportation and communication: 7% of GDP.

Construction: 8% of GDP.

Financial services (12% of GDP): Insurance, leasing, consulting.

Mining (13% of GDP): Copper, iron ore, nitrates, precious metals, and molybdenum.

Trade: *Exports*--\$57.61 billion: copper, fruits and nuts, fish and seafood, and wood products. *Major markets*--U.S., Japan, China, Netherlands, South Korea, Brazil, Italy, Mexico. *Imports*--\$40.91 billion: fuels, heavy industrial machinery, motor vehicles, electrical machinery, plastic. *Major suppliers*--U.S., China, Brazil, Argentina, South Korea.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

The northern Chilean desert contains great mineral wealth, principally copper. The relatively small central area dominates the country in terms of population and agricultural resources. This area also is the cultural and political center from which Chile expanded in the late 19th century, when it incorporated its northern and southern regions. Southern Chile is rich in forests and grazing lands and features a string of volcanoes and lakes. The southern coast is a labyrinth of fjords, inlets, canals, twisting peninsulas, and islands. The Andes Mountains are located on the eastern border.

## **PEOPLE**

About 85% of Chile's population lives in urban areas, with 40% living in greater Santiago. Most have Spanish ancestry. A small, yet influential number of Irish and English immigrants came to Chile during the colonial period. German immigration began in 1848 and lasted for 90 years; the southern provinces of Valdivia, Llanquihue, and Osorno show a strong German influence. Other significant immigrant groups are Italian, Croatian, Basque, and Palestinian. About 800,000 Native Americans, mostly of the Mapuche tribe, reside in the south-central area. The Aymara and Diaguita groups can be found mainly in Chile's northern desert valleys.

## **HISTORY**

About 10,000 years ago, migrating Indians settled in fertile valleys and along the coast of what is now Chile. The Incas briefly extended their empire into what is now northern Chile, but the area's barrenness prevented extensive settlement. The first Europeans to arrive in Chile were Diego de Almagro and his band of Spanish conquistadors, who came from Peru seeking gold in 1535. The Spanish encountered hundreds of thousands of Indians from various cultures in the area that modern Chile now occupies. These cultures supported themselves principally through slash-and-burn agriculture and hunting. The conquest of Chile began in earnest in 1540 and was carried out by Pedro de Valdivia, one of Francisco Pizarro's lieutenants, who founded the city of Santiago on February 12, 1541. Although the Spanish did not find the extensive gold and silver they sought, they recognized the agricultural potential of Chile's central valley, and Chile became part of the Viceroyalty of Peru.

The drive for independence from Spain was precipitated by usurpation of the Spanish throne by Napoleon's brother Joseph in 1808. A national junta in the name of Ferdinand--heir to the deposed king--was formed on September 18, 1810. The junta proclaimed Chile an autonomous republic within the Spanish monarchy. A movement for total independence soon won a wide following. Spanish attempts to reimpose arbitrary rule during what was called the "Reconquista" led to a prolonged struggle.

Intermittent warfare continued until 1817, when an army led by Bernardo O'Higgins, Chile's most renowned patriot, and José de San Martín, hero of Argentine independence, crossed the Andes into Chile and defeated the royalists. On February 12, 1818,

Chile was proclaimed an independent republic under O'Higgins' leadership. The political revolt brought little social change, however, and 19th century Chilean society preserved the essence of the stratified colonial social structure, which was greatly influenced by family politics and the Roman Catholic Church. A strong presidency eventually emerged, but wealthy landowners remained extremely powerful. Toward the end of the 19th century, the government in Santiago consolidated its position in the south by suppressing the Mapuche Indians. In 1881, it signed a treaty with Argentina confirming Chilean sovereignty over the Strait of Magellan. As a result of the War of the Pacific with Peru and Bolivia (1879-83), Chile expanded its territory northward by almost one-third and acquired valuable nitrate deposits, the exploitation of which led to an era of national affluence. Chile established a parliamentary democracy in the late 19th century, but degenerated into a system protecting the interests of the ruling oligarchy. By the 1920s, the emerging middle and working classes were powerful enough to elect a reformist president, whose program was frustrated by a conservative congress. In the 1920s, Marxist groups with strong popular support arose.

Continuing political and economic instability resulted with the rule of the quasi-dictatorial Gen. Carlos Ibanez (1924-32). When constitutional rule was restored in 1932, a strong middle-class party, the Radicals, emerged. It became the key force in coalition governments for the next 20 years. During the period of Radical Party dominance (1932-52), the state increased its role in the economy.

The 1964 presidential election of Christian Democrat Eduardo Frei-Montalva by an absolute majority initiated a period of major reform. Under the slogan "Revolution in Liberty," the Frei administration embarked on far-reaching social and economic programs, particularly in education, housing, and agrarian reform, including rural unionization of agricultural workers. By 1967, however, Frei encountered increasing opposition from leftists, who charged that his reforms were inadequate, and from conservatives, who found them excessive. At the end of his term, Frei had accomplished many noteworthy objectives, but he had not fully achieved his party's ambitious goals. In 1970, Senator Salvador Allende, a Marxist and member of Chile's Socialist Party, who headed the "Popular Unity" (UP) coalition of socialists, communists, radicals, and dissident Christian Democrats, won a plurality of votes in a three-way contest and was named President by the Chilean Congress. His program included the nationalization of private industries and banks, massive land expropriation, and collectivization. Allende's program also included the nationalization of U.S. interests in Chile's major copper mines.

Elected with only 36% of the vote and by a plurality of only 36,000 votes, Allende never enjoyed majority support in the Chilean Congress or broad popular support. Domestic production declined; severe shortages of consumer goods, food, and manufactured products were widespread; and inflation reached 1,000% per annum. Mass demonstrations, recurring strikes, violence by both government supporters and opponents, and widespread rural unrest ensued in response to the general deterioration of the economy. By 1973, Chilean society had split into two hostile camps.

A military coup overthrew Allende on September 11, 1973. As the armed forces bombarded the presidential palace, Allende reportedly committed suicide. A military government, led by General Augusto Pinochet, took over control of the country. The first years of the regime in particular were marked by serious human rights violations. A new Constitution was approved by a plebiscite on September 11, 1980, and General Pinochet became President of the Republic for an 8-year term. In its later years, the regime gradually permitted greater freedom of assembly, speech, and association, to include trade union activity. In contrast to its authoritarian political rule, the military government pursued decidedly laissez-faire economic policies. During its 16 years in power, Chile moved away from economic statism toward a largely free market economy that fostered an increase in domestic and foreign private investment. In a plebiscite on October 5, 1988, General Pinochet was denied a second 8-year term as president. Chileans voted for elections to choose a new president and the majority of members of a two-chamber congress. On December 14, 1989, Christian Democrat Patricio Aylwin, the candidate of a coalition of 17 political parties called the

Concertacion, was elected president. Aylwin served from 1990 to 1994 and was succeeded by another Christian Democrat, Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle (son of Frei-Montalva), leading the same coalition, for a 6-year term. Ricardo Lagos Escobar of the Socialist Party and the Party for Democracy led the Concertacion to a narrower victory in the 2000 presidential elections. His term ended on March 11, 2006, when President Michelle Bachelet Jeria, of the Socialist Party, took office.

In 2010, Alianza coalition candidate Sebastian Piñera's inauguration marked the first time the Concertacion has not held the presidency since the return to democracy in 1990. President Piñera's inauguration came less than two weeks after a devastating earthquake. The magnitude 8.8 earthquake that struck Chile in February 2010 was one of the top ten strongest earthquakes on record. The earthquake was felt throughout the central part of Chile, home to 75% of the population. The earthquake and subsequent tsunami caused considerable damage in the two regions nearest the epicenter about 70 miles from Concepcion (200 miles southwest of Santiago).

### **GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS**

Chile's Constitution was approved in a September 1980 national plebiscite. It entered into force in March 1981. After Pinochet's defeat in the 1988 plebiscite, the Constitution was amended to ease provisions for future amendments to the Constitution. In September 2005, President Ricardo Lagos signed into law several constitutional amendments passed by Congress. These include eliminating the positions of appointed senators and senators for life, granting the President authority to remove the commanders-in-chief of the armed forces, and reducing the presidential term from six to four years.

Presidential and congressional elections were held December 2009. In the first round of presidential elections, none of the three presidential candidates won more than 50% of the vote. As a result, the top two vote-getters--center-left Concertacion coalition's Eduardo Frei and center-right Alianza coalition's Sebastian Piñera--competed in a run-off election on January 17, 2010, which Sebastian Piñera won. This was Chile's fifth presidential election since the end of the Pinochet era. All five have been judged free and fair. The President is constitutionally barred from serving consecutive terms. President Piñera and the new members of Congress took office on March 11, 2010.

Chile has a bicameral Congress, which meets in the port city of Valparaiso, about 140 kilometers (84 mi.) west of the capital, Santiago. Deputies are elected every 4 years, and Senators serve 8-year terms. Chile's congressional elections are governed by a unique binomial system that rewards coalition slates. Each coalition can run two candidates for the two Senate and two Deputy seats apportioned to each electoral district. Historically, the two largest coalitions (Concertacion and Alianza) split most of the seats in a district. Only if the leading coalition ticket out-polls the second-place coalition by a margin of more than 2-to-1 does the winning coalition gain both seats.

All 120 Chamber of Deputies seats were up for election during December 13, 2009 congressional elections and Alianza won 58, with Concertación taking 54, Communists and Independent Regionalist Party each winning three, and independents winning two. In the Senate, where half of the 38 seats were up for election, Concertación regained a slim majority and has 19 seats to Alianza's 17, with independents holding the remaining two.

Chile's judiciary is independent and includes a court of appeal, a system of military courts, a constitutional tribunal, and the Supreme Court. In June 2005, Chile completed a nation-wide overhaul of its criminal justice system. The reform has replaced inquisitorial proceedings with an adversarial system, similar to that of the United States.

### **Principal Government Officials**

President--Sebastian PIÑERA  
Minister of Interior--Rodrigo HINZPETER  
Minister of Foreign Affairs--Alfredo MORENO  
Ambassador to the United States--Roberto Matus, Charge d'Affaires  
Ambassador to the Organization of American States (OAS)--Dario PAYA  
Ambassador to the United Nations--vacant

Chile maintains an **embassy** in the United States at 1732 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20036; tel: 202-785-1746, fax: 202-659-9624, email: [embassy@embassyofchile.org](mailto:embassy@embassyofchile.org).

## **DEFENSE**

Chile's Armed Forces are subject to civilian control exercised by the President through the Minister of Defense. The President appoints to four-year terms and has the authority to remove the commanders-in-chief of the armed forces. Legislation has been introduced to the Chilean Congress to restructure and strengthen the Defense Ministry and to create a Joint Staff.

### **Army**

The commander-in-chief of the Chilean Army is General Oscar Izurieta Ferrer. The Chilean Army is 45,000 strong and is organized with an Army headquarters in Santiago, seven divisions throughout its territory, an Air Brigade in Rancagua, and a Special Forces Command in Colina. The Chilean Army is undergoing a modernization process that will transform it from a territorial-based organization to a deployable, capability-based organization. The Chilean Army is one of the most professional and technologically advanced armies in Latin America.

### **Navy**

Admiral Edmundo González Robles directs the 23,000-person Navy, including 2,500 Marines. Of the fleet of over 85 surface vessels, only eight are operational major combatants (frigates). The eight frigates are based in Valparaiso. The Navy operates its own aircraft for transport and patrol; there are no Navy fighter or bomber aircraft. The Navy also operates four submarines based in Talcahuano. The Chilean Navy Coast Guard is responsible for environmental protection of the sea and search and rescue responsibility of an area over 26.4 million square kilometers.

### **Air Force (FACH)**

Gen. Ricardo Ortega Perrier heads a force of 12,500. Air assets are distributed among five air brigades headquartered in Iquique, Antofagasta, Santiago, Puerto Montt, and Punta Arenas. The Air Force also operates an airbase on King George Island, Antarctica and at Quintero, near Valparaiso. The FACH has one of the most capable air forces in Latin America with 10 Block 50 F-16s, all purchased new from the U.S., and 18 reconditioned Block 15 F-16s from the Netherlands. The FACH is currently in the process of purchasing 18 additional Dutch F-16s.

### **Carabineros**

After the military coup in September 1973, the Chilean national police (Carabineros) were incorporated into the Defense Ministry. With the return of democratic government, the police were placed under the operational control of the Interior Ministry but remained under the nominal control of the Defense Ministry. Gen. Eduardo Gordon is the head of the national police force of 30,000 men and women who are responsible for law enforcement, traffic management, narcotics suppression, border control, and counterterrorism throughout Chile.

## **ECONOMY**

Chile has pursued sound economic policies for nearly three decades. Chile's government has received high marks from economists and its citizens for its countercyclical spending in 2009 (financed largely from saved copper revenues) to offset the effects of the global economic crisis. The government's role in the economy is mostly limited to regulation, although the state continues to operate copper giant CODELCO and a few other enterprises (there is one state-run bank). Chile is strongly committed to free trade and has welcomed large amounts of foreign investment. Chile has signed trade agreements with 59 countries, including a free trade agreement (FTA) with the United States, which was signed in 2003 and implemented in January 2004. A new FTA with Australia went into effect in early 2009, and Chile concluded an FTA with Turkey in mid-2009.

At present, the consensus among Chilean economists is that Chile has passed through the worst of its recession resulting from the global economic downturn. Economic growth in 2009 was -1.5%, though a return to moderate growth is forecast for 2010 (3.4%). Unemployment remains a concern, reaching almost 11% in mid-2009. Many international observers place some of the blame for Chile's consistently high unemployment rate on complicated and restrictive labor laws. Wages have risen faster than inflation as a result of higher productivity, boosting national living standards. The percentage of Chileans with incomes below the poverty line--defined as twice the cost of satisfying a family of four's minimal nutritional needs--fell from 46% in 1987 to around 18% by 2005.

Chile's independent Central Bank currently pursues an inflation target of 3%. However, in 2007, inflation inched towards 8%--the first time inflation had exceeded 5% since 1998. In 2008, inflation increased further, hitting a high of 9.9% in October 2008, before moving lower again at the end of the year. In recent years, the Chilean peso's rapid appreciation against the U.S. dollar had helped dampen inflation. However, as the global financial crisis accelerated toward the end of 2008, the Chilean peso depreciated significantly against the U.S. dollar. Most wage settlements and loans are indexed, reducing inflation's volatility. Under the compulsory private pension system, most formal sector employees pay 10% of their salaries into privately managed funds.

Beyond its general economic and political stability, the government also has encouraged the use of Chile as an "investment platform" for multinational corporations planning to operate in the region, but this will have limited value given the developing business climate in Chile itself. Chile's approach to foreign direct investment is codified in the country's Foreign Investment Law, which gives foreign investors the same treatment as Chileans. Registration is simple and transparent, and foreign investors are guaranteed access to the official foreign exchange market to repatriate their profits and capital. Net foreign direct investment in Chile in 2008 was \$12.1 billion, up 64% over 2007.

While Chile and the European Union (EU) have signed a double taxation treaty, no such agreement exists between the U.S. and Chile. The lack of such a treaty is due largely to concern over existing bank secrecy laws in Chile. The Chilean Government has proposed legislation that would reform bank secrecy and bring national standards in line with those mandated by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), to which Chile formally applied for membership in 1995. In 2007, the OECD approved a "roadmap to accession" for Chile and in 2009 invited Chile to accede as its 31st member, making it the second country in Latin America (after Mexico) to do so.

The Chilean Government estimates the cost of the February 27, 2010 earthquake will be almost \$30 billion. The government will spend an additional \$1 billion on emergency relief measures. Public sector damage (e.g., hospital and schools) will amount to \$9 billion, which the Piñera administration plans to address by spending about \$2 billion per year over the next four years.

## **Foreign Trade**

Successive Chilean governments have actively pursued trade-liberalizing agreements. The United States and Chile signed a comprehensive trade agreement in June 2003 that will lead to completely duty-free bilateral trade within 12 years. The U.S.-Chile FTA entered into force January 1, 2004 following approval by the U.S. and Chilean congresses. The bilateral FTA has greatly expanded U.S.-Chilean trade ties, with total bilateral trade jumping by over 200% during the FTA's first five years.

In January 8, 2007, Chile was placed on the U.S. Trade Representative's Priority Watch List due to its poor record on protecting intellectual property rights. Chile is only the second U.S. FTA partner ever to be placed on the Priority Watch List. Chile has a poor record of protecting copyrighted music, films, and software. Combined with this is its institutional structure allowing local companies to produce and market pharmaceutical generics that violate existing patents.

Chile's overall trade profile has traditionally been dependent upon copper exports. The state-owned firm CODELCO is the world's largest copper-producing company, with recorded copper reserves of 200 years. Chile has made an effort to expand nontraditional exports. The most important non-mineral exports are forestry and wood products, fresh fruit and processed food, fishmeal and seafood, and wine. In 2008 total exports were \$66.4 billion, down slightly from 2007 (\$67.6 billion), while imports increased from \$44.0 billion in 2007 to \$57.6 billion in 2008, driven in large part by higher petroleum prices. In 2008, China was Chile's largest export market, followed by the United States, Japan, the Netherlands, and Brazil. Chile's most important sources of imports are the United States, China, Brazil, Argentina, and South Korea.

### **Finance**

Chile's financial sector has grown quickly in recent years, with a banking reform law approved in 1997 that broadened the scope of permissible foreign activity for Chilean banks. The Chilean Government implemented a further liberalization of capital markets in 2001, and there is pending legislation proposing additional liberalization. Over the last 10 years, Chileans have enjoyed the introduction of new financial tools such as home equity loans, currency futures and options, factoring, leasing, and debit cards. The introduction of these new products has also been accompanied by an increased use of traditional instruments such as loans and credit cards. The global financial crisis affected liquidity in the Chilean banking system, making it harder for some companies to maintain access to capital. Chile's private pension system, with assets worth roughly \$70 billion at the end of 2008, has been an important source of investment capital for financial markets. Chile maintains one of the best credit ratings (S&P A+) in Latin America. There are three main ways for Chilean firms to raise funds abroad: bank loans, issuance of bonds, and the selling of stocks on U.S. markets through American Depository Receipts (ADRs). Nearly all of the funds raised through these means go to finance domestic Chilean investment.

High domestic savings and investment rates helped propel Chile's economy to average growth rates of almost 8% during the 1990s. The privatized national pension system (AFP) has encouraged domestic investment and contributed to high gross domestic savings rates, almost 26% of GDP in 2007. However, the AFP is not without its critics, who cite low participation rates (only 55% of the working population is covered), with groups such as the self-employed outside the system. There has also been criticism of the inefficiency and high costs due to a lack of competition among pension funds. The Bachelet administration planned to reform the AFP during its last year in office.

The government is required by law to run a fiscal surplus of at least 1% of GDP; however, this rule was changed to 0.5% of GDP in 2008, and waived for 2009, given the pressures from the global economic crisis. In 2008, the Government of Chile ran a surplus of \$11.3 billion, equal to almost 8% of GDP. The Government of Chile continues to pay down its foreign debt, with public debt only 2.25% of GDP at the end of 2007.



## **Energy and Environment**

Chile is facing a series of energy and environmental policy challenges, including how to supply the projected additional 12,000 MW of electricity it needs over the next 10 years with appropriate concern for climate change impacts. Chile-U.S. collaboration in these areas includes projects under the Environment and Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA) announced at the April 2009 Summit of the Americas and a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on clean energy and energy efficiency cooperation signed during the June 2009 U.S. visit of President Bachelet. Cooperation on energy issues bolsters our partnership in key areas, including actively promoting the use of U.S. renewable energy technologies (solar, wind, and geothermal), science and technology (S&T), innovation, education, and ways to address greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.

U.S.-Chile collaboration on the environment focuses on issues identified in the U.S.-Chile Free Trade Agreement environment chapter and environmental cooperation agreement, e.g., sustainable development, air pollution, energy efficiency, conservation and wildlife management, marine protected areas, environmental law enforcement, and agricultural best practices. In 2008, Chile's premier national park, Torres del Paine, and the U.S. Yosemite National Park signed a sister park agreement to promote information and expert exchanges; in April 2009, Santiago's Parque Metropolitano and San Francisco's Golden Gate Park also became sister parks.

## **FOREIGN RELATIONS**

Since its return to democracy in 1990, Chile has been an active participant in the international political arena. Chile completed a two-year non-permanent position on the UN Security Council in January 2005. Jose Miguel Insulza, a Chilean national, was elected Secretary General of the Organization of American States in May 2005. Chile served as a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors in 2007-2008, and as the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) president pro tempore until August 2009. The country is an active member of the UN family of agencies and participates in UN peacekeeping activities; Chile currently has over 500 peacekeepers in Haiti. Chile hosted the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit and related meetings in 2004. It hosted the Ibero-American Summit in November 2007 and the Progressive Governance Network in March 2009. An associate member of Mercosur, a full member of APEC, a member of the Arco del Pacifico, and a member of the Pathways to Prosperity, Chile has been an important actor on international economic issues and hemispheric free trade. Chile hosted the Americas Competitiveness Forum in September 2009.

The Chilean Government has diplomatic relations with most countries. It settled its territorial disputes with Argentina during the 1990s. Chile and Bolivia severed diplomatic ties in 1978 over Bolivia's desire to reacquire territory it lost to Chile in 1879-83 War of the Pacific. The two countries maintain consular relations and are represented at the Consul General level. In January 2008, Peru submitted a case to the International Court of Justice in The Hague asking for a decision on a new maritime border with Chile. Chile acceded to the International Criminal Court in June 2009.

In May 2008, President Bachelet announced government plans to significantly increase scholarships for Chileans to study abroad. The new Government of Chile scholarship program was launched with a goal of sending over 1,000 students/scholars overseas in 2008 and 2,500 in 2009. Program leaders estimated that approximately one-third might choose to study in the U.S.

## **U.S.-CHILEAN RELATIONS**

Relations between the United States and Chile have reached historic highs in recent years. The U.S. Government applauded the rebirth of democratic practices in Chile in the late 1980s and early 1990s and sees the maintenance of a vibrant democracy and a healthy and sustainable economy as among the most important U.S. interests in Chile. Besides the landmark U.S.-Chile FTA, the two governments consult frequently on issues of mutual concern, including in the areas of multilateral diplomacy, security,

culture, and science.

In June 2008, President Michelle Bachelet and Californian Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger launched the Chile-California Partnership for the 21st Century. The partnership fosters collaboration between individuals, government, and the private sector in areas such as agriculture, energy efficiency, environmental resource management, and education.

The U.S. Chile Equal Opportunities Scholarship Program, inaugurated in 2007, was established to sponsor English and academic studies for Chilean PhD students who come from disadvantaged and rural areas that have not traditionally had access to English language schools or study abroad opportunities. The program has been quite successful, becoming a model for other international scholarships programs with Chile.

The U.S. Government and the Government of Chile have frequent high-level interaction. President Bachelet met with President Barack Obama at the Summit of the Americas in April 2009 and traveled to Washington for another visit in June 2009. Vice President Joseph Biden traveled to Chile in March 2009 to participate in meetings of the Progressive Governance Network and hold bilateral talks with President Bachelet. On March 2, 2010, in the wake of the February 27 earthquake, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Chile to extend the sympathy and solidarity of the American people. She also brought with her the first of the supplies and assistance sent by the U.S. Government in support of Chile's relief efforts.

#### **U.S. Embassy Functions**

In addition to working closely with Chilean Government officials to strengthen our bilateral relationship, the U.S. Embassy in Santiago provides a wide range of services to U.S. citizens and businesses in Chile. (Please see the embassy's [home page](#) for details of these services.) The Embassy also is the locus for a number of American community activities in the Santiago area.

The Public Affairs Section cooperates with universities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on a variety of programs of bilateral interest. Of special note are extensive U.S. Speaker, International Visitor, and Fulbright academic exchange programs. Themes of particular interest include energy and environmental issues, trade, intellectual property rights, international security, democratic governance in the region, educational quality, law enforcement, and the teaching of English. The Public Affairs Section works daily with Chilean media, which has a keen interest in bilateral and regional relations. It also assists visiting foreign media, including U.S. journalists, and is regularly involved in press events for high-level visitors. The Public Affairs Section, largely through the Information Resource Center, disseminates information about U.S. policies, society, and culture.

Attachés at the Embassy from the Foreign Commercial Service, Foreign Agricultural Service, and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) work closely with the hundreds of U.S. companies who export to or maintain offices in Chile. These officers provide information on Chilean trade and industry regulations and administer several programs intended to support U.S. companies' sales in Chile.

The Consular Section of the Embassy provides vital services to the more than 10,000 U.S. citizens residing in Chile. It assists Americans who wish to vote in U.S. elections while abroad, provides U.S. tax information, and facilitates government benefits/social security payments. Besides those U.S. citizens resident in Chile, about 170,000 U.S. citizens visit Chile annually. The Consular Section offers passport and emergency services to U.S. tourists during their stay in Chile. It also issued about 66,000 visitor visas in FY 2008 to Chilean citizens who planned to travel to the United States.

The Consular Section carefully monitors three email accounts and responds to questions:

Non-immigrant visa questions - [Santiagovisa@state.gov](mailto:Santiagovisa@state.gov)

Immigrant visa and U.S. residency questions - [santiagoimmigration@state.gov](mailto:santiagoimmigration@state.gov)

Questions about American Citizen Services - [santiagoamcit@state.gov](mailto:santiagoamcit@state.gov).

#### **Principal U.S. Embassy Officials**

Ambassador--**Paul E. Simons**

Deputy Chief of Mission--Carol Urban

Public Affairs Counselor--Laurie B. Weitzenkorn

Economic and Political Counselor--David Edwards

Management Counselor--vacant

Commercial Counselor--Mitchell G. Larsen

Consul General--Christian Bendsen

Senior Defense Officer--Captain Richard W. Goodwyn, USN

Agricultural Counselor--Joseph López

APHIS Attaché--George Ball

Legal Attaché--Stanley Stoy

Drug Enforcement Administration--Sean Waite

The U.S. Embassy and Consulate in Santiago are located at 2800 Andres Bello Avenue, Las Condes, (tel. 562-330-3000; fax: 562-330-3710; website: <http://chile.usembassy.gov>). The mailing address is 2800 Andres Bello Avenue, Las Condes, Santiago, Chile. The Embassy Facebook link provides useful information to U.S. and Chilean youths interested in overseas education opportunities: [www.facebook.com/usdos.chile](http://www.facebook.com/usdos.chile)

#### **Other Contact Information**

American Chamber of Commerce in Chile

Avenida Presidente Kennedy 5735, Oficina 201

Torre Poniente, Las Condes

Santiago

Tel: 562-290-9700

Fax: 562-212-2620

Email: [amcham@amchamchile.cl](mailto:amcham@amchamchile.cl)

Website: <http://www.amchamchile.cl> (Spanish)

<http://www.amchamchile.cl/english> (English)

Comite de Inversiones Extranjeras (Foreign Investment Committee)

Andres Culagovski, Acting Executive Vice President

Teatinos 120, P. 10; Santiago, Chile

Tel: 562-698-4254

Fax: 562-698-9476

Website: <http://www.foreigninvestment.cl>

U.S. Department of Commerce

Trade Information Center

International Trade Administration  
14th and Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20230  
Tel: 800-USA-TRADE  
Fax: 202-482-4726  
Website: <http://trade.gov>

Additional information regarding U.S. and U.S.-Chile trade can be found at the following websites: <http://www.export.gov/> and <http://www.buyusa.gov/chile/en/>.

#### TRAVEL AND BUSINESS INFORMATION

The U.S. Department of State's Consular Information Program advises Americans traveling and residing abroad through Country Specific Information, Travel Alerts, and Travel Warnings. **Country Specific Information** exists for all countries and includes information on entry and exit requirements, currency regulations, health conditions, safety and security, crime, political disturbances, and the addresses of the U.S. embassies and consulates abroad. **Travel Alerts** are issued to disseminate information quickly about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term conditions overseas that pose significant risks to the security of American travelers. **Travel Warnings** are issued when the State Department recommends that Americans avoid travel to a certain country because the situation is dangerous or unstable.

For the latest security information, Americans living and traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs Internet web site at <http://www.travel.state.gov>, where the current **Worldwide Caution**, **Travel Alerts**, and **Travel Warnings** can be found. **Consular Affairs Publications**, which contain information on obtaining passports and planning a safe trip abroad, are also available at <http://www.travel.state.gov>. For additional information on international travel, see <http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Travel/International.shtml>.

The Department of State encourages all U.S. citizens traveling or residing abroad to register via the **State Department's travel registration** website or at the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate abroad. Registration will make your presence and whereabouts known in case it is necessary to contact you in an emergency and will enable you to receive up-to-date information on security conditions.

Emergency information concerning Americans traveling abroad may be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the U.S. and Canada or the regular toll line 1-202-501-4444 for callers outside the U.S. and Canada.

The **National Passport Information Center** (NPIC) is the U.S. Department of State's single, centralized public contact center for U.S. passport information. Telephone: 1-877-4-USA-PPT (1-877-487-2778); TDD/TTY: 1-888-874-7793. Passport information is available 24 hours, 7 days a week. You may speak with a representative Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., Eastern Time, excluding federal holidays.

Travelers can check the latest health information with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia. A hotline at 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636) and a web site at <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx> give the most recent health advisories, immunization recommendations or requirements, and advice on food and drinking water safety for regions and countries. The CDC publication "Health Information for International Travel" can be found at <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/contentYellowBook.aspx>.

### **Further Electronic Information**

**Department of State Web Site.** Available on the Internet at <http://www.state.gov>, the Department of State web site provides timely, global access to official U.S. foreign policy information, including **Background Notes** and **daily press briefings** along with the directory of **key officers** of Foreign Service posts and more. The Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) provides security information and regional news that impact U.S. companies working abroad through its website <http://www.osac.gov>

**Export.gov** provides a portal to all export-related assistance and market information offered by the federal government and provides trade leads, free export counseling, help with the export process, and more.

**STAT-USA/Internet**, a service of the U.S. Department of Commerce, provides authoritative economic, business, and international trade information from the Federal government. The site includes current and historical trade-related releases, international market research, trade opportunities, and country analysis and provides access to the **National Trade Data Bank**.

