

The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

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Joint Statement by President Barack Obama and President Sebastian Piñera on the occasion of President Obama's Visit to Santiago, Chile

The President of the Republic of Chile Sebastián Piñera and the President of the United States, Barack Obama, held a working meeting in which they discussed the main aspects of the bilateral relation between the two countries, as well as the principles and values upon which the U.S.-Chile partnership is based.

The Leaders committed to strengthen coordination on aspects of mutual interests in multilateral forums, reaffirming the commitment of both governments and people to the Rule of Law, democracy and full respect for human rights and fundamental liberties. In this latter regard, they noted their growing cooperation as members of the UN Human Rights Council, as reflected in their recent decision to co-sponsor a resolution creating a new special rapporteur on the human rights situation in Iran, and as members of the Community of Democracies where they have agreed to jointly support a new global fund to assist embattled civil society organizations. They also highlighted their joint commitment to combat trafficking in persons, as manifested by the Chilean legislature's recent decision to adopt essential legislation on this issue.

The Presidents exchanged their opinions on the diverse topics of the international agenda, with a special focus on new threats such as terrorism, transnational organized crime, drug trafficking, and nuclear proliferation. Likewise, they highlighted the important role of the international community in enhancing the capacity to respond to natural disasters, a threat for the development of nations. They expressed the solidarity of both countries toward the Japanese people after the tragic occurrences of the earthquake and tsunami on March 11.

In the regional sphere, they further underscored the relevance of regional integration, highlighting the Organization of American States as the main hemispheric forum, as well as the importance of strengthening the Inter-American Democratic Charter. They also reiterated their commitment to the reconstruction and democratic development in Haiti.

Noting that the United States and Chile can learn from each other regarding disaster preparedness, mitigation, and response, the Presidents highlighted a Memorandum of Understanding between the Oficina Nacional de Emergencia (ONEMI) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) signed in connection with President Obama's visit. They also underscored the importance of the Council of Defense Ministers of the Americas initiative to enhance coordination among militaries in the Americas in support of civilian response to disasters.

The Presidents welcomed the launch of the U.S.-Chile Energy Business Council, a new energy partnership focused on clean energy infrastructure to advance clean energy development, identify business and investment opportunities in both countries, and pursue collaboration on energy infrastructure resiliency, technology innovation, and incorporation of energy efficiency and renewables in industry, transportation, building and public sectors. One of the priorities of this partnership will be to work on preparedness and mitigation of the effects of natural disasters on energy infrastructure.

Both Presidents reiterated their belief that a more efficient use of energy, and the use of cleaner and renewable sources and technology are fundamental elements for energy security, which contributes to sustainable economic growth and the protection of the environment. They valued the joint efforts made by both countries in this area, and decided to deepen cooperation on clean energy, energy security, economic growth, and climate change. They committed to work together this year toward a successful outcome in Durban and to implement the Cancun agreements, including on transparency, adaptation, technology, finance, and forest protection.

In support of the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA), the leaders launched a new Andean Glacier Monitoring and Research Center, a regional research network for glacier monitoring and modeling. In support of environmental cooperation on natural reserves and ecotourism, they noted the recently signed Agreement twinning the protected Marine Coastal Area Francisco Coloane in Chile and the Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve in Alaska, with the purpose of intensifying the collaboration and mutual support for their protection and conservation.

Likewise, the Presidents welcomed the recent signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on the peaceful use of the nuclear energy. This agreement will encourage the development of nuclear expertise and professionals in Chile and advance bilateral cooperation on nuclear safety, security, and safeguards in line with the highest international standards. Both Presidents recalled the commitments made during the April 2010 Washington Nuclear Security Summit, and President Obama welcomed Chile's commitment to host a regional meeting to promote the Summit's agenda.

Both Presidents underscored that in the seven years since the U.S.-Chile Free Trade Agreement (FTA) first entered into force, not only have the conditions of exchange of goods and services improved, but also new business opportunities have been formed, leading to the diversification of products and a greater access for agricultural products. They also showed satisfaction that the bilateral trade has doubled since 2004, and they welcomed the commitment to full implementation of the FTA, including achieving significant progress on intellectual property in 2011. They also welcomed the commitment to continue the discussions on specific proposals for deepening the trade relationship. The Presidents also noted the economic opportunities the Trans Pacific Partnership Free Trade Agreement presents for Chile and the United States and the importance of negotiating a high standard, comprehensive agreement as rapidly as possible.

With the objective to continue to promote trade as the main driving force behind economic development and employment creation for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, both Heads of State supported the formation of an alliance between the Dirección de Promoción de Exportaciones (PROCHILE) and the International Trade Administration to establish a system of cooperation and exchange, as a way to train business representatives and government employees in both countries.

In the sphere of education, both Presidents expressed their interest in expanding the already existing bilateral programs in English education. The government of the United States will work with the government of Chile to support initiatives such as Inglés Abre Puertas (English Opens Doors), among others, by providing education experts from the United State to work with Chilean educators to enhance English language programs in Chilean public schools.

Additionally, both Presidents noted the importance of innovation and entrepreneurship as the driving force for increased productivity and competitiveness. They recognized and discussed the new programs Start-up Chile and Start-up America, as well as to continue promoting collaboration between universities and through agreements exchanges and joint research programs.

Both Heads of State highlighted the effective collaboration in the fields of astronomy and astro-engineering which will allow the operation of the LSST and ALMA telescopes in the northern Chile, involving an investment of 1.5 billion dollars, with a close collaboration between public and private academic and research institutions in both countries.

In the sphere of regional cooperation, the Heads of State underscored the joint efforts of both countries in terms of institutional development of the States. They highlighted the recent signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Agencia Chilena de Cooperación Internacional (AGCI) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which will establish the means of joint cooperation to promote the development of less developed countries in the region.

President Obama commended Chile for its valuable contributions to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. The Presidents also noted the importance of supporting regional efforts to confront transnational organized crime and President Obama welcomed Chile's offer to provide training on combating public corruption and to strengthen public security in the region.

The Leaders also noted the Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation on cultural matters between the Dirección de Bibliotecas Archivos y Museos (DIBAM) and the Smithsonian Institution.

Finally, President Barack Obama thanked President Sebastian Piñera for the warm welcome that he and his family received during their visit to Chile, as well for as the affection and friendship of the Chilean people.

See <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/03/21/joint-statement-president-barack-obama-and-president-sebastian-pi-era-oc>