

Proposed statement by H.E. Michelle Bachelet Jeria, President of the Republic, on the occasion of her participation in the United Nations Climate Summit

New York, 23 September 2014

I thank and congratulate the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, for convening this Climate Summit.

Chile influences climate change only marginally and today, after several decades of economic expansion, accounts for only 0.25 per cent of global emissions. But this is no excuse for inaction on our part.

And we wish here to reaffirm our willingness to be part of the solution of this global problem.

Firstly because climate change must be tackled by all of us: Chile has always shown a willingness to adopt a multilateral approach to global problems, because both rights and obligations are shared.

Secondly because global warming has serious consequences for the entire world and Chile, like Latin America, is no exception.

We must work together within the region to present a united front, to share good practices and to coordinate joint activities.

My country meets seven of the nine vulnerability criteria listed in the United Nations Convention on Climate Change, as shown in phenomena which we can witness daily. Our population is suffering from an eight-year drought, which affects our agrarian sector, consumers and our export activity.

Another significant example is the fact that our glaciers have shrunk. This not only reduces our water reserves but also adversely affects rain and thaw cycles, increasing the likelihood of flooding.

In addition, our rich biodiversity is being seriously affected. About 900 native Chilean species are endangered – several of them by the twofold effect of drought and recurrent flooding.

While the effects of climate change on the environment are clear, it is its social dimension that should be the focus of our attention. As in times of natural disaster, the worst affected are always those who are the least equipped, for example, to face flooding or adapt to the shortage of sources of energy or water.

Thus climate change exacerbates inequalities and multiplies threats. And it is our duty to face this problem and its consequences. Equity and justice must be the central

pillars of our climate activities, particularly now that we are to negotiate a new universal regime to deal with this issue.

By climate justice, we mean a linkage between human rights and sustainable development, in a people-centred approach.

Decision-making must consider the rights of the weakest, sharing the burdens and benefits derived from climate change fairly and equitably. This commitment must also extend to future generations, with investments here and now in scientific development and in new ways to manage the planet's resources.

Accordingly, the new climate regime must attach equal importance to adaptation and mitigation. Through adaptation, we can meet the needs of those who today suffer from drought, deforestation and water and air pollution. Through mitigation, we can accelerate the shift to sustainable development.

This is a political and moral duty that we cannot shirk.

Today I wish to reaffirm Chile's voluntary commitment to reduce its projected emissions by 20 per cent by 2020, with the necessary international support.

This is an ambitious target, involving all sectors of the economy. For this purpose, we have embarked on an exercise of economic modelling (MAPS – Mitigation Action Plans and Scenarios), in which the public and private sectors, academia and civil society have projected future emission levels in order to analyze what measures and scenarios could be used to achieve this target. The goal is to proceed to the extent permitted by our national capacities and to lay the foundations for a low-carbon development strategy.

In these initial months of my Government's mandate, we have adopted various measures to this end. Allow me to explain briefly what we are doing.

We launched an Energy Agenda to move towards a mix that is more diverse, safer and cleaner. Its goals include the creation of a legal framework to make energy efficiency a State policy, as well as a commitment to ensure that by 2025 renewable non-conventional energies provide 20 per cent of our electricity. This year over 1,000 megawatts of renewable non-conventional energies will be incorporated in our energy mix.

As part of a tax reform that we have just adopted, we introduced a tax on CO₂ emissions from fixed sources with a generation capacity higher than 50 megawatts. This is a ground-breaking mechanism in our region. In addition, with the support of the World Bank's Partnership for Market Readiness, we shall be evaluating other carbon pricing mechanisms that the country may need in the future.

We have been promoting a new National Climate Change Policy, which is cross-cutting and inclusive and will provide a framework for consolidating a National Adaptation Plan with sectoral targets. And we have adopted strategies for the agriculture and livestock sector and for biodiversity. In the coming years, we shall focus on seven other sectors, including energy, urban development, fisheries and health.

Bearing in mind our commitments under the Convention, we are working on our greenhouse gas inventories and shall meet the deadline for our biennial update report, which will include information both on our inventories and on the mitigation measures that we are implementing. This is a specific contribution by Chile to transparency of action, which will be one of the pillars of the future climate regime.

We cannot forget our forests and their huge ability to serve as a sink of greenhouse gases.

Chile has increased its forest cover, which is a source of satisfaction for us. With its own resources, my country plans to recover about 100,000 hectares of degraded soil over the next 20 years, with an investment of nearly \$US 250 million. However, this is only a fraction of what we could do with more sources of financing. With international support, Chile could double that area of forestation with native species and we could recover one million hectares of native forest under management towards 2035, meaning an emissions capture of approximately 200 million tons of CO₂.

For all these reasons, we are reforming the Council of Ministers for Sustainability and giving it additional authority in the area of climate change. In this way, the measures that we are taking will be validated by a broad institutional and political framework.

Like Chile, several Latin American countries have made voluntary emission reduction commitments. It would perhaps be advisable for these voluntary commitments to be subject to some accountability mechanism. This would help to ensure compliance and set an example for those countries which are lagging behind.

I wish to express our firm and categorical conviction that any agreement we may reach should have input from all countries. It should be based on:

- Focus on human dignity and the right to development from a sustainable viewpoint;
- The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, stressing that those with the greatest capacity should take the lead;
- The need to create open and participatory decision-making procedures involving civil society;
- Gender mainstreaming;
- And the transforming power of education, both as regards awareness of the phenomenon and as regards the introduction of more sustainable production and consumption patterns.

The challenge of climate change confronts us with a twofold task.

In the first place, we must understand the need to give priority to topics related to the phenomenon and adopt specific policies to tackle it. In the second place, we must realize that in the future we shall be judged not only by the growth achieved and the resulting social projections but also by the way we will have faced up to this challenge.

We know what we have to do and now we must suit our actions to our words. This is the course on which Chile has embarked.

Thank you.