

(E)

- check against delivery -

**REMARKS BY H.E. THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHILE,
MR. SEBASTIÁN PIÑERADURING
ON OCCASION OF THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE SIXTY-SIXTH SESSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

New York, 22 September 2011

**Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I should like to congratulate Mr. Ban Ki-moon on his recent re-election as Secretary-General and you, Mr. President, on your election to preside over this sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

In this Assembly a multiplicity of countries and ethnicities, cultures and languages, religions and creeds converge. All are increasingly linked and connected. Because over and above our legitimate differences, we all live on the same planet, breathe the same air and are warmed by the same sun. We all face the same future, we all share similar challenges and opportunities and we all have the same desire for peace, freedom, justice and prosperity for our peoples and nations.

Mr. President,

I come to this Assembly to express with humility, but also with conviction, what my country has to say to the international community. And also to listen, carefully and respectfully, to what the international community has to say to us. Because Chile, Mr. President, is and has always been a country that practices, defends and promotes of dialogue as the best mechanism of dispute settlement. Dialogue which, far from fearing difference and dissent, values them and thrives on them. Because the dialogue that Chile advocates is based on the intimate conviction that every nation, culture, tradition or creed has something to teach but also something to learn from others.

Distinguished delegates,

We face a new world, very different from the one which our parents and grandparents know, which emerged with great strength during the last decades. A new world, which is the offspring of the revolution of knowledge, technology and information, that has created and will continue to create opportunities for material and spiritual progress for thousands of millions of people all over the world – opportunities that could not have been imagined or dreamed of only a few years ago.

This new world presents us new risks, challenges and opportunities that exceed what each government can do on its own and that can only be addressed successfully if we act together. For example, financial crises, in addition to becoming more frequent, have increasing regional and global implications. The evils of modern society, such as terrorism, drug trafficking and organized crime now know no frontiers, territories or jurisdictions. And any attempt to deal effectively with global warming, natural catastrophes, health emergencies, hunger and extreme poverty will require much more concerted and effective action by the community of nations and international bodies, such as the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Group of 20, trade organizations and other global and regional bodies.

In consequence, we must urgently reposition ourselves and rethink the structures of each of these organizations, many of which emerged in the post-war period and don't respond to the realities, challenges, problems and opportunities of the present and future. Without a doubt we have achieved some progress, but it has been too slow and insufficient. We cannot pretend to lead this new world with old organizations.

Although this revolution of knowledge, technology and information is not the first that mankind has faced it is, without a doubt, the most far-reaching in terms of the magnitude and extension of the challenges and opportunities that it creates.

But like the revolutions of the past, such as that of metals, agriculture or the industrial revolution, this twenty-first century revolution will be very generous towards those countries which wish to embrace it, but indifferent and even cruel towards those which ignore it and let it pass by. Thus it will depend on us whether it is a factor of unity and progress and a bridge that shortens the distances between developed countries and emerging nations or, on the contrary, it becomes a new factor of division, a wall distancing even further the world of wealth from the world of poverty.

Certainly, the primary responsibility for rising up to greet this revolution that is already knocking at our doors lies with each of the countries and governments represented in this Assembly. In the case of the emerging countries, which include all those in Latin America including Chile, this signifies, in addition to a huge responsibility, a unique opportunity to re-identify with our past and, above all, with our future. Because it is clear that Latin America had everything to overcome poverty and achieve development. We have a large and fertile territory, abundant natural resources, two closely related languages and, most importantly, peoples which with solidarity and vigor that have demonstrated that they are able to overcome any obstacle placed in our way by nature or Providence. In addition, we have not had wars such as those which devastated Europe in the twentieth century, or ethnic or religious conflicts such as those which have affected other regions.

And yet for some reason we were not able to get on the bandwagon of the industrial revolution on time. And this is why even today we are still an under-developed continent, profoundly unequal and with almost one third of our population living in conditions of poverty.

However, together with States, the community of nations has a great responsibility to ensure that the bounties and benefits of this revolution of knowledge, technology and information effectively reach all the corners of the planet and do not ultimately favor some to the detriment of others.

And this integration, Mr. President, can be effective and efficient only if it promotes and expands that inexhaustible source of mankind's progress over the centuries, which has been and is freedom. Freedom understood as an integral concept that cannot be divided or compartmentalized. Freedom which in the political sphere requires us to take democracy and the defense of human rights to the farthest corner of the planet, as is happening at this very moment in much of the Middle East and in the north of Africa, in a process that our country will not tire of supporting. Freedom which, economically speaking, means encouraging creativity, entrepreneurship and innovation, the only truly inexhaustible resources which we possess, and demolishing all the obstacles that are preventing many emerging nations from competing on equal terms with the more developed countries. And freedom which, socially speaking, involves promoting peace and moving towards states that are ever more efficient and effective in the fight against poverty and the creation of real equality of opportunity for all.

My country, Chile, undoubtedly has made and will continue to make important contributions to each of these aspects.

As well as giving strong support to the cause of democracy and defense of human rights in all countries that require it, at the regional level Chile has been a tireless advocate of improvement of the Inter-American Democratic Charter and of the conclusion of a protocol of preventive protection of democracy within UNASUR. In addition, we have participated actively in the negotiations on the reform of the Security Council of the United Nations, which favors the increase of its permanent and non-permanent members in order to make it more representative of the new world order. Moreover, we have been active in the process of the review of its Human Rights Council, to which Chile has been recently re-elected.

In regard with economic issues, Chile has concluded free trade agreements with 58 countries, representing 80 per cent of the world population. But our commitment to free trade goes further. In addition, we have been strong supporters of the Doha Round of the World Trade Organization for the liberalization of world trade and shall continue to support all actions to provide timely and effective responses to international financial crises.

With regard to the promotion of world peace, we have recognized the Palestinian State and hope very soon to welcome it to this Organization, and we have resolutely supported all the international efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East that will allow Palestinians to have a free, sovereign and democratic State and Israel to have frontiers that are recognized, secure and respected. Only in this manner Palestinians and Israelis will be able to coexist and progress in peace and harmony.

As regards social welfare and efforts to combat poverty, hunger and pandemics, we are strengthening South-South and triangular cooperation; which does not mean that it can

substitute North-South cooperation, and we have implemented the establishment of a Chilean Fund to combat hunger and poverty in Africa and have given to the UNITAID Fund for the treatment of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis throughout the world. This year, we wish to go a step further by unilaterally reducing duty on imports from the poorest nations of Africa.

Chile also supports the launch of UN-Women, headed by our compatriot Michelle Bachelet, with the principal goal of ensuring that men and women have the same rights and opportunities.

But in this new century, the century of the society of knowledge, technology and information society, not even this will suffice. In addition to solid democracies, open and competitive economies and States effectively combating poverty and for greater equality of opportunity, we need to build new development pillars, investing in science and technology, promoting innovation and entrepreneurship, building flexible societies able to adapt to change and investing more and better in our human capital, which is undoubtedly the truly renewable and inexhaustible resource that we possess.

There is no doubt that the race for development and the future must be won in the classroom. Education is the mother of all battles and unfortunately, in many cases, also the main Achilles heel of emerging countries.

In recent weeks, thousands of young Chileans have gone out to demonstrate in favor of the noble, beautiful and legitimate cause of a quality education for all, which enables them to be players and not mere spectators of this society of knowledge and information.

Our Government shares this mission and has determined major investments in economic, human, professional and technical resources to move towards a substantive improvement in the quality, coverage, access and financing for pre-school, school, technical, university and post-graduate education in our country.

And we want to invite all the nations and governments of Latin America to join us in celebrating a strategic partnership that will allow us to ensure to all our children and young people, whatever the economic situation of the household into which they were born, with a quality education that allows them to fully realize themselves as people and develop all their talents.

Mr. President,

Yesterday the President of Bolivia referred to his country's claim to obtain sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean, through Chilean territory.

I wish to reiterate there are no territorial issues pending between Chile and Bolivia. They were settled once and for all by the 1904 Treaty of Peace and Friendship. This Treaty was validly negotiated more than 20 years after the conflict between the two countries had ended; approved by the parliaments and ratified by the Governments. As Bolivia has

recognized, the Treaty was the outcome of free and agreed negotiation and therefore, in accordance with international law, both Chile and Bolivia must respect and implement it.

Chile has fulfilled fully and in a timely manner all the clauses of the 1904 Treaty of Peace and Friendship. Moreover, the facilities that it has given to Bolivia go far beyond those envisaged in the United Nations Convention on Land-locked Countries.

Our country has always been and will always be willing to dialogue with Bolivia on the basis of full respect for international law and treaties and through direct dialogue with Bolivia Chile has the firm will and best disposition to ensure concrete, feasible and useful solutions to both countries.

**Mr. President,
Distinguished delegates,**

All of us here have the right and also the duty to speak and act in defense of the interests of our respective nations and peoples. But we cannot ignore the fact that, in order to be fruitful, this defense involves and requires work on the many things that unite us rather than on those which divide us. When all is said and done, whether we like it or not, the risks and storm clouds looming on the horizon, the challenges and opportunities that we shall encounter, and the responses and solutions that we shall have to implement are the same or are so interlinked that it is difficult to see where the responsibility of each Member of this Organization ends and where the responsibility of the others begins. And even though each one acting on its own can move faster, history unfailingly shows us that it is only when we act in unison that we can build on rock and go really far.

Thank you.