



**MISION PERMANENTE DE CHILE  
ANTE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS**  
1 Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza  
885 Second Avenue, 40° Piso, New York, NY 10017  
tel. (917) 322-6800 - fax (917) 322-6890

- Cotejar con texto leído -

INTERVENCIÓN DE

S.E. LA PRESIDENTA DE LA REPÚBLICA DE CHILE

SRA. MICHELLE BACHELET

CON OCASIÓN DEL DEBATE GENERAL DEL LXIV PERÍODO DE SESIONES DE LA  
ASAMBLEA GENERAL DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS

- Check against delivery -

STATEMENT BY

H.E. THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHILE

MS. MICHELLE BACHELET

ON THE OCCASION OF THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE LXIV SESSION OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

New York, 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2009

STATEMENT BY H.E. MICHELLE BACHELET AT THE SIXTY-FOURTH  
REGULAR SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

New York, 23 September 2009

Mr. President,

Your Excellencies,

For the past four years, I have been proud to represent my country in this Assembly, the world's foremost assembly, the forum in which the peoples have placed so many hopes.

Peace, human rights, international law, development – these are some of the causes promoted here, sometimes successfully and at other times with difficulty, but with progress.

This has been observed by the poorest in various regions; it has been observed by children and women; it has been observed by the persecuted, by those who suffer; it has been observed by men and women all over the globe.

It is true that the efforts have not sufficed to eradicate all the injustice, all the abuses or the sorrows of so many.

But it is also true that we have made considerable progress in six decades of international collaboration. The rule of law and the institutional framework have been strengthened, so that humanity today has the technical, legal and economic means to make much more progress in the struggle for a better world.

We cannot disappoint these hopes.

But at times this is what we seem to be doing.

The world is experiencing a serious economic crisis resulting from the inability of countries and of the international community to formulate clear and transparent rules on financial matters.

We are on the brink of a serious environmental crisis resulting from emissions of polluting gases and from the way the world has chosen to produce and obtain energy, as well as from the inability of countries to agree on standards and policies to prevent global warming.

More seriously, in the twenty-first century we see that more than a billion people are suffering from hunger, or one out of every six people all over the world, 50 million of them in Latin America. This is much more than a statistic: it is a child, it is a mother, dying in a poor county despite the opulence in which the developed countries are living. Trillions of dollars have been spent in recent months to rescue the financial system and revitalize the economy.

Yet the United Nations Food Programme will see its budget reduced by more than half this year. What a sad paradox! Less than 0.1 per cent of the financial rescue plans would end the food crisis affecting dozens of countries.

I should like this morning to raise my voice and urge that in this Assembly and at the forthcoming meetings of the Group of 20 and, in general, in all international forums this item should be put on the agenda.

Because it is not possible that, on the pretext of the economic crisis, countries should be reducing contributions for the fight against hunger, for the protection of the environment or for the promotion of development.

And it is ethically untenable that, while this is happening, the executives of the investment banks which were at the centre of the current crisis, gambling irresponsibly with financial assets, should today be back to business as usual and awarding themselves huge bonuses which simply reward excessive risk taking in their bets and they are even considering establishing companies to place their bonuses in tax havens.

The world simply cannot function in this way.

Resignation is not an option.

It is possible to construct fairer, realistic, sustainable and pragmatic models to ensure progressive advancement for all peoples.

This requires recognition that the economic crisis was not a casual occurrence or, still less, a cyclical event in the capitalist economy that will correct itself on its own, solely by operation of the invisible hand of the market.

What happened here is much more than a chance occurrence or a cycle.

What happened here is the crisis of a paradigm. Is the crisis of a certain kind of globalization.

Is the crisis of a conception of the State and the public sector in which the State is seen as the problem and not the solution.

In which it is thought that the more the economy is deregulated, the better it is.

In which there are misgivings about democratic discussion as to which goods should be public and should therefore enjoy efficient protection and government guarantees.

It is this extreme and dogmatic neo-liberalism that has unfortunately erupted into crisis, leaving in its wake a trail of hunger, unemployment and, above all, injustice.

And it is at times like this that action by the public sector has proved to be essential.

Thanks to the decisive action by States, it has been possible to avoid a widespread and fatal economic collapse with unsuspected political consequences, which could have been another Great Depression.

The whole dogma of laissez-faire has been forgotten when the time came for the State to save the international financial machinery and implement financial stimulus plans.

In some countries – including my own – government action proved crucial in mitigating effects and protecting the most vulnerable in crisis situations.

In my country, we were careful with commodity wealth some years ago and saved resources for more difficult times, resisting political pressure to spend this money but confident that this was the responsible thing to do.

We were proved to be right, and this has allowed us to offset the effects of the international crisis, while increasing social benefits for people, raising pensions, protecting workers, building hospitals, investing more than ever before in education and housing for those most in need.

Countries such as Chile learned the lessons of past crises and are facing this crisis with solid macroeconomic foundations, with much better capitalized banking systems, and with stricter and more effective regulations.

But this was not the case everywhere.

After the Asian crisis one decade ago, there was much talk about financial system reforms, better oversight mechanisms and early warning systems.

But none of this happened.  
Political laziness prevailed.

Private interests prevailed over the public good.

And this is why today reform cannot wait either domestically, with better regulations in the capital market, or abroad.

We hope that the forthcoming G-20 meeting will make progress in this direction because – I insist – resignation is not an option.

We know that at this stage neither rhetoric nor populism can be of help. There must be no flights of fancy and we must remain open to the opportunities that well-conducted globalization can provide.

We must find effective mechanisms to safeguard the public interest in the world of national and international finance.

We must find solutions to unlock a world trade agreement that will thwart protectionist designs.

And we must return multilateral dialogue to the centre of international policy, abandoning unilateralism.

While unbridled globalization in the financial sphere provoked the crisis we are experiencing, unilateral action and disdain for institutions resulted in conflicts that must not be repeated.

Military or economic might cannot be the norm in international relations. Institutions and the rule of law must prevail, since this is the only way to ensure peace and development.

Chile strongly supports the reform and strengthening of the United Nations. We support the Organization's recent efforts in the areas of human rights, development and climate change. We favour reform and enlargement of the Security Council. We welcome the important work being done by the Peacebuilding Commission to provide support from the outset to countries emerging from conflict, support that is comprehensive and not only military.

This is the logic that should prevail in all spheres. We want the United Nations to spearhead a new global social covenant, the Millennium Development Goals to be attained by 2015 and forceful and decisive involvement to mitigate climate change.

We have spoken about climate change at special meetings during this session. This morning I wish simply to sound the alarm.

Unless we coordinate efforts at the highest level, the forthcoming Copenhagen Conference will not attain its goal.

We risk failure in what is the most urgent cause to be taken up by the world at this time, while the scientific forecasts made by the Intergovernmental Panel in 2007 seem to fall short of the mark.

Climate change is not a theory; it is a tangible reality that we are witnessing in unusual storms, floods and droughts. My country, which is so close to Antarctica, is watching in amazement as melting of the glaciers and ice platforms on that continent accelerates at an inexorable pace.

The industrialized countries must adopt quantifiable goals for more ambitious emission reductions than those currently existing. If they assume their historical responsibility with deeds, and not only words, and if they undertake to provide the necessary technological and financial support, then the developing world will be able to make an even greater effort to meet this challenge.

We have the ability to correct the course of our future. Let us not use the economic crisis as an excuse for not reaching an agreement that our citizens are demanding.

Let us today ensure the future of our descendants. We have a huge responsibility. For this reason, let us lay the foundations this year, in Copenhagen, for a new economy that will allow the twenty-first century to be an era of progress.

Mr. President,

If there is one lesson that we can learn from the economic crisis and from the environmental crisis, it is that the quality of policy matters.

Neither the world nor the countries are governed on automatic pilot, trailing behind the market, trailing behind globalization, trailing behind social changes.

Policy of quality has a positive impact on the well-being of people.

The rule of law, civil liberties and respect for human rights are all prerequisites for a democracy of quality.

There is no longer any justification for violating the principle of liberty and democracy in the name of justice or equality. Procedural democracy is part of the ethical and political baggage of the international community in the twenty-first century.

And little by little we have started to reinforce this principle at the level of nations.

My Latin American region has been able gradually to build a single vision, which has enabled it, for example, to come rapidly to the aid of any threatened democracy, as was the case in Bolivia one year ago, or to strongly condemn democratic setbacks, such as occurred in Honduras a few months ago. For this reason, we wish today to reiterate our appeal for immediate acceptance of the San José Agreement promoted by the Organization of American States. Honduras deserves free and democratic elections, with the constitutional President leading this process.

Mr. President,

It is thus clear that policy is now more important than ever.

Let us make an effort to restore it to its rightful place, but of course with the quality that citizens deserve.

What has happened with the crisis, with the environment, with hunger, with conflicts, is the result of a lack of adequate leadership and political dialogue.

It is for us, as leaders of our countries, to change this situation.

It is within our power, firstly, not to resign ourselves to the market or to force and, secondly, to avoid demagoguery by trying to construct a fairer order for our peoples, through serious and responsible public policies, in an environment of full democracy and respect for human rights.

This can be the basis for a global social covenant, which the world is insistently demanding at this difficult time.

Mr. President, we must not fail the world.

Thank you.