

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS, MR NTOPILE
KGANYAGO, MP, DELIVERS A SPEECH DURING THE
OCCASION TO MARK THE CELEBRATIONS OF CHILE'S
196TH INDEPENDENCE DAY ANNIVERSARY.**

DATE: 18 September 2006

VENUE: Ambassador's Residence, Tshwane, Gauteng

- **Your Excellency, Mr Claudio Herrera, The
Ambassador of Chile**
- **Your Other Excellencies in attendance**
- **Our Chilean friends**
- **Distinguished Guests**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is a great honour to be invited to the celebration of the Chilean Independence Day. The history of both Chile and South Africa teaches us to cherish the ideals of freedom and to embrace sovereignty as an end-state in any country's quest for self-determination. On this day we need to pay homage to the pioneers of the struggle in both countries who often were prepared to lay down their lives as on ultimate

sacrifice to attain national pride and dignity for their compatriots and future generations.

As one of the youngest countries to be admitted into a community of free nations, South Africa looks up to established democracies like Chile to learn to treasure its political heritage. Since 1994, South Africa has extended a hand of friendship to the world, always expressing willingness and readiness to cooperate and join the battle against poverty, underdevelopment, aggression and any form of oppression. We thank the people of Chile for reaching out. The relationship has yielded a number of bilateral engagements between the two countries.

In testimony to this maturing relationship, the President of South Africa, Mr Thabo Mbeki, has visited Chile twice in less than 18 months, his last visit being a very special one because, I am informed, he was the only President of a region from outside Latin America who was present on 11 March 2006 during the occasion to mark the inauguration of President Michelle Bachelet, the first woman ever to be democratically elected President of the Republic of Chile. President Mbeki's passion to promote the cause of women is

well-known, because the empowerment of women is the beginning of a real effort to address poverty and underdevelopment.

South Africa and Chile can do a lot together towards poverty alleviation and social development as evidenced by no less than 10 missions undertaken between these two countries in the past year alone. About 15 women from the South African Women in Development, accompanied by Mrs. Zanele Mbeki are going to visit Chile from 20 to 25 September 2006, among others, to learn about good practices in the social network that Chile has established as part of grassroot development and alleviating poverty. The other area of cooperation is on the creation of human skills for effective service delivery to the people.

In this regard Chile has offered to assist South Africa with development programme on skills acquisition, in areas of good governance, industrial business, education and health management systems. As part of a twinning arrangement, the two provinces of South Africa, Mpumalanga and Eastern Cape will soon be sending their missions to visit Chile to gain first hand information on agriculture as means to fight

poverty, and social development improvement initiatives, respectively.

In turn, Chile has expressed keenness in exploring possible joint ventures in infrastructure development projects in support of NEPAD. This should also benefit South Africa's preparations to host the 2010 World Cup Soccer Tournament. Chile hosted the tournament in 1962 and we believe that the experience is still freshly perched on the minds of the Chileans and we certainly hope to draw on from their lessons.

Other cultural exchanges between the two countries involve South African assistance to Chile to establish thematic museums and heritage sites in Chile. Also South Africa is assisting with the installation of Chile's first ever botanical garden in Santiago and all of this is done with the technical support and expertise of the Kirstenbosch Gardens in Cape Town. The garden will be inaugurated in October when the first South African Tree will be planted. This will be symbolic of the growing and sprouting relationship between the two nations.

We like to thank the people of Chile for choosing South Africa to work with their tourism industry. As a sign of confidence in us, Chile has decided to send their people to South Africa to learn English as Chile's second language despite ours being a multilingual country with more than twenty languages of which eleven are official.

We look forward to future occasions to cement this relationship and want to take this opportunity, on behalf of South Africans, to wish the people of Chile well in the celebration of the 196th Anniversary of their Independence.

I THANK YOU.