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Press Release

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CHILE'S PEACEFUL TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY IS MUCH ADMIRER,
SECRETARY-GENERAL SAYS AT LUNCHEON GIVEN IN HIS HONOUR

The following is the text of a toast made by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali at a luncheon in Santiago today, given in his honour by the President of Chile:

First, I must express my thanks to you for your kind and generous hospitality. Chile has, today, honoured me personally, and also the United Nations. You have done me a very special honour by making me your guest at the very beginning of your presidential mandate.

Second, I wish to offer you my personal congratulations on the assumption of that mandate, and my best wishes to you in the discharge of your functions. As you know, I was sorry that I could not join you personally on 11 March. But it is more than a compensation for me to be here so soon after your inauguration, as the first official guest of your Administration.

Third, I say another "thank you" for Chile's support of the United Nations. Chile has had a long and close relationship with the United Nations. You are, of course, host to one of our regional economic commissions. You have provided unstinting support for United Nations peace missions. Your United Nations Permanent Representative, Ambassador Juan Somavia, is a living testimony to Chile's commitment to multilateralism.

Chile finds no contradiction in a foreign policy which defends national interests, and at the same time is deeply involved in international fora. Chile's leadership role in the preparatory activities for the World Summit for Social Development is particularly appreciated.

Your country, your national community, were deeply affected by cold war rivalries. The peaceful transition to democracy, in an atmosphere of national reconciliation, has been much admired. I pay tribute to President Aylwin, whose wise leadership was instrumental in that process.

Today, you are moving forward to consolidate your democracy. Your economy is dynamic. The skill of your political leaders has been evident.

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The achievement of the democratic Government, in removing at least 1 million people from the ranks of the poor, is greatly admired internationally. The democratic vote of the people endorsed those policies.

Chile has provided a clear demonstration of the link between peace, democracy and development. As we move towards a world which is no longer divided into two armed camps, it is being understood that peace, democracy and development provide the only sure basis for lasting international peace and security. The moral and political authority of your country both confirms and enhances Chile's role as an active Member State of the United Nations.

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