



REPUBLIC OF CHILE
CONSULATE-GENERAL IN MELBOURNE

INFORMATION ON CHILE EARTHQUAKES DEVELOPMENTS as 5th March 2010

CAMPAIGN "Australia Helps with School and Health" targets US\$ 5 million

The Consul General of Chile has been invited to attend a Special Parliament Motion of Condolences on Chile on 9 March 2010 at 14.00 pm.

We would like to stress that the magnitude of the disaster is such that has all but obliterated nearly 1,000 kms stretch of the territory, representing some 25% of the continental coastline and inner countryside. The increasing death toll, however, seems lesser than similar or less severe catastrophes worldwide because Chileans are more familiar for this type of disasters, quickly moving to safer and higher grounds to avoid landslides and tsunamis. This positive element in tragedy increases the need to reconstruct at the earliest the means for the mostly living population to rebuild their lives and production means.

Campaigns have flourished in Victoria to collect funds both from the Chilean community as well as from some 20 other ethnic and national communities of the State. There is a youth-organized main event taking place in Fitzroy Town Hall this Sunday 7 and a mega event planned for end of March. The business community has come up with a number of individual efforts and functions which have been entrusted to be coordinated by the Australia-Chile Chamber of Commerce -Vicepresidency of Victoria, Mr. Miguel Belmar- and there is a special event to be arranged with the cooperation of Invest Victoria on 26 March 2010. Many institutions such as hospitals, faith-related groupings, universities, industries and services sector enterprises are pledging help and support. The main difficulty is to harmonize these many offers in a fruitful and tangible a manner.

In the meantime, a number of hospital beds and medical equipment has been pledged by different parties. Events and fund raising, with regards to the responsibilities of this Consulate General that stretches beyond Victoria to Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia, are well in motion in those States as well.

Many social institutions and members of clubs have offered assistance, as well as the Melbourne Town Hall, Footscray Town Hall and Fitzroy Town Hall. The Red Cross of Australia has set a people tracing service. We are helping the community in search for a free venue for a Mega event in Center Melbourne to gather over 4,000 people, where dozens of artists and groups have pledged to participate from Hip-Hop to Latin music and traditional dances; while writing this, we have received the additional pledge of help from South Project-Kultour. Myers Music Bowl and Melbourne Park have been considered as possibilities but help is needed to secure any such place.

In coordination with the Embassy of Chile to Australia, and listening to the numerous suggestions from the communities and private sectors, the MAIN TARGET of the donations received in the official special accounts opened for fund- raising activities have been set to *reconstruct as many schools and policlinics in the most devastated areas as the funds may allow*, including its functioning equipment. The campaign has been suggested to be called "Communities of Australia Help with Schools and Health". The community suggested that the minimal target in money is to equal the initial donation that the Government of Australia has recently announced: US\$ 5 million.



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This information is by no means exhaustive and is varying by the hour, but it reflects the immense feelings of friendship of the Victorian community and beyond. We have all faith that the target could be reached and even surpassed if we could manage to harmonize and impulse the enormous will and sympathy this tragedy has arise. And in the future, Australians will have a special tangible contribution with the affected communities in Chile, an everlasting bond related to their good health and their learning for a brighter future.

With best regards and profound gratitude



Melbourne, 5th March 2010

Diego Velasco-von Pilgrimm
Cónsul-General de Chile in Melbourne