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SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY
THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHILE
AT THE LUNCHEON OFFERED BY HER MAJESTY
QUEEN BEATRICE OF THE NETHERLANDS

Your Majesty,

It is a great honour for me to be present here on behalf of the Chilean people, next to a sovereign that has identified her work with the democratic values and the defence of human rights.

Your work has been an example of irreversible commitment with the developing countries, inspired in an international devotion and a spirit of tolerance that have become a symbol respected by all nations.

Heiress of the legacy left by the sovereigns Wilhemina and Juliana, whose reigns are remembered with admiration, Your Majesty summarizes the traditions of the industrious and talented Dutch people. At the same time, you express a clear projection of modernity revested by a permanent concern for the problems that will overwhelm humanity in the near future and that are already becoming visible with crudeness. Among them reveals the struggle for reverting the deterioration of the environment and preserving the more and more precarious ecological equilibrium. Sharing this concern, Chile has also committed itself to this task, as it is revealed by the joint efforts to keep the Antarctica as a zone free of the threats degrading today the ecosystem in so many points of our world.

The traditionally close friendship between the Netherlands and Chile has been strengthened in the last years because, in moments of acute pain for Chile, the Netherlands opened its doors to thousands of Chileans who had to abandon our country. The disinterested help that his nation gave to the cause of Chilean democracy during the authoritarian regime is highly appreciated by my country.

In its name, let me express our thankfulness.

Seen from Latin America, the Netherlands has always called our attention because of its deeply rooted sense of community. Those who have studied this sense tell us that said common sensibility which turned this land into a social, political and economic unit was the result of a fruitful conjunction of the challenges posed by history and the constraints imposed by geography.

Historically, today's Netherland is a consequence of an inexhaustible struggle for freedom. Geographically, it is the result of the constant effort to overcome a difficult and obstinate nature.

In this sense Chile is similar to the Netherlands.

We Chileans are also sons of a historical experience marked by the libertarian symbol and a geographical area characterized by a nature that obliges us to appease our nerves and improve ourselves without dismay. It is not a coincidence that a chronicler called Chile the "Spanish American Flanders" and described its landscape as a "stravagant geography".

We Latin Americans also admire the remarkable stability of the Dutch society, founded in the value awarded to the quality of citizen and the dignified standard of living of its country.

In Chile, the institutional crisis that provoked the destruction of our democracy had, among its causes, the loss of our sense of citizen and, also the difficulty to reach an equitable socio-economic condition for large areas of our population.

Today, we Chileans are determined to consolidate the democracy that we have reestablished with a great effort. We are doing so based on values whose applicability in the past gave us stability and prestige, the respect for individuals and the full force of their natural rights, the compliance with the legal system by all individuals, the respect for our differences and the search for general consensus on the main national challenges.

With this spirit, we are trying to overcome the serious wounds of the past based on truth and justice and moved by a deep wish of reconciliation.

We are aware that in order that this common sensibility may

be consolidated and stable an economic development is required. To this end we are developing a strategy of growth within the framework of the requirements and challenges of world economy and of freedom of trade. And we are carrying this out with a great effort of social justice, aimed at ensuring to our people fair standards of feeding, housing and employment in order to overcome for once and for all the poverty of many of our fellow-citizens.

We firmly believe that the principles of democracy, economic development and social justice are all directly related.

We know that the harmonization thereof depends, in first place, on our own effort. But we also need the support and reliance of the developed countries, among whom the Netherlands has a privileged place. Thus we congratulate ourselves on the excellent disposition we have encountered here to execute joint projects. We know that the Netherlands is our ally, not only in connection with the standing defense of the essential human values, but also with the social, political and economic objectives that inspire us.

Your Majesty,

With the hope put on our ties of friendship, in the name of the Chilean people I wish to reiterate our deepest admiration and gratefulness to the people of the Netherlands.

Thank you very much.