

## CHILE - An Earthquake Shakes the Latin American Soul

📅 March 19, 2010 / 👤 By Arturo Garcia Rosa , Graciana Garcia Iribarne

With its stable economy, Chile is regarded as a model nation in Latin America, earning the respect of other countries in the region. Known as the Switzerland of Latin America, this small nation lacks some of the resources of larger nations; however, its people have consistently demonstrated the energy and motivation to build a nation that is respected worldwide and to honor every day with the continuous effort to create a better world.

For Chileans, the morning of Saturday, February 27, 2010, will be hard to forget. The nation awoke that Saturday to distressing news. A devastating earthquake, magnitude 8.8 on the Richter scale, had ravaged areas of Chile, tearing apart the fabric of the nation's reality.

Even for non-Chileans who have had the opportunity to visit this country and observe its people, the pain is deep, almost as great as the pain Chile's ±17 million inhabitants are experiencing. But those of our Chilean brethren living in areas closest to the epicenter must overcome their grief and cope with the reality of this huge natural disaster; they must now focus on the day-to-day demands of rebuilding. Our obligation is to reflect upon ways to contribute efficiently to a commitment to Chile – the reconstruction of a piece of our planet.

The Haiti earthquake on January 12th (7.3 on the Richter scale), the torrential rain in Aguas Calientes (Machu Picchu) during January, and the 8.8 earthquake and subsequent tsunami in Chile have caused havoc in several regions of Latin America.

Even while aftershocks of over 6 on the Richter scale continued to jolt Chile three weeks after the big tremor, the nation began taking its first steps in the long, slow route to recovery. This journey is imperative for those inhabitants who have lost beloved members of their family, along with their homes, and who currently are without hope for the future.

It is the duty of us all who have the means to do so to contribute to the titanic task of restoring hope to those who believe they have lost everything; to support the reconstruction of a country that demonstrates much strength, talent, and creativity; and to show that *"honrar la vida no es permanecer y transcurrir... que Merecer la vida es erguirse vertical, más allá del mal, de las caídas. Es igual que darle a la verdad y a nuestra propia libertad, la Bienvenida ..."*<sup>1</sup> ("Honoring life is not just remaining and passing by... Deserving life means arising straight, beyond evil and falls. It means welcoming truth and our own freedom...")

All of us who make HVS possible around the world are together with the Chilean people. We care deeply about what happened to them and commit ourselves to supporting the long reconstruction process. This process will demonstrate to the world the capability of a small country with the conviction that a grander destiny is reached by the day-to-day efforts of its people.

### Summary

The morning of Saturday, February 27, 2010, will be hard to forget. A massive earthquake, magnitude 8.8 on the Richter scale, ravaged areas of this small nation.

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<sup>1</sup> Eladia Blázquez, Argentinean poet, 1931-2005