

## Annex F

### CHILE - SANTIAGO

#### First Impressions

I flew to Santiago via London and Madrid. Every seat in the aircraft was occupied and with the brief stop over in Madrid the journey took nearly 15 hours. The food and in-flight movies were mediocre and sleep difficult.

As the sun rose we found ourselves flying over the Andes. It was an amazing sight. Being so close to the mountain tops made one realise just how high this range is. One could clearly see the jagged rocks and valleys falling away in different directions. The snow was very white and seemed to sparkle in the sun's rays. I recalled how, in 1972, an aircraft crossing the Andes crashed and disappeared. Everyone on board was thought to be dead, yet 72 days later, 16 emerged alive to tell their story.

As we descended towards Santiago the views were magnificent. The city nestled in a bowl and sprawled out from the lower slopes of the snow-capped mountains on the east towards the Pacific Ocean in the west. Having landed safely, I was relieved to stretch my legs.

The airport was modern but relatively small. On walking through the doors into the reception area I was immediately approached by a man offering a taxi. As his price was lower than that which I had been advised, I followed him to the rank outside. Here I was ushered into a mini bus and told to wait. Shortly afterwards three more people joined me.



#### Santiago Airport

One was an Italian man who had moved to Chile some years ago, the others were a Chilean couple returning from holiday in Europe. The Italian could not stop telling me how wonderful Chile and Santiago were. He was clearly a great convert and had no intention of returning to live in Italy. As he spoke I sensed that our other travel companions did not necessarily agree with everything he said. Having asked if they spoke English they opened up and suggested that the situation in Chile was not necessarily as wonderful as might first appear.

The road from the airport was an impressive highway that initially ran along side the main river. Then suddenly, we entered a long dual carriageway tunnel that eventually popped out into the sunshine in the heart of the city. It was an impressive piece of engineering and construction. Within a few more minutes I was outside my hotel.

Although it was still early in the morning, my room was available. It was the most palatial hotel room of my whole trip and included a bedroom, living room, bathroom and small kitchen area.

The view from my balcony was pleasant and overlooked nearby glass fronted office blocks and clean streets.



#### **View from hotel room**

Having unpacked, I once again set off to explore the city. The hotel reception staff provided me with a map, described the layout of the city and where I could catch the metro to the centre.

As I made my way to the metro station I was impressed by what had clearly been a major programme of urban development. Tall smart apartment blocks and more glass fronted office towers were connected by clean wide tree lined streets, manicured grass areas and gardens. The majority of the buildings had security guards, cameras and fences and many of the cars were expensive models and appeared relatively new. It was apparent that those who lived in this area were financially well off.

As I made my way to the metro station I was impressed by what had



Set to one side were a number of private tennis clubs and a golf course; once again the entrances off the main roads were manned by private security staff. I was already sensing a city that, in this area at least, there was an exclusion of those who did not belong.

#### **Modern luxury apartment blocks**

The entrance to the metro was again modern and clean. This particular section had only recently been completed. When compared to London's Underground, the fares were very cheap. Having indicated on the map to another private security guard where I wanted to go to, I was taken to a moving

The entrance to the metro was again modern and clean. This particular

staircase leading to a lower level. Here I found a wide open clean platform decorated with strong modern murals. It was undoubtedly impressive. Within a couple of minutes my train arrived. It was a very modern design.



Approximately every 50 feet the wide coaches were coupled together, but without doors inhibiting movement between them. In effect it was one long open carriage down which one could see and walk with ease. I studied the map on the carriage wall, compared it to the one I had been given by my hotel staff and worked out how many stops I had before I was to get off.

#### **Santiago's modern and clean Metro**

As I exited the metro station I entered a very different looking Santiago. This was the old city with its mix of historical buildings interspersed with yet more new office towers. Despite being a Sunday with the main shops closed, the streets were still busy. After two blocks I entered a pedestrian area with a street market selling thousands of second hand books. As far as I could tell, there were probably books for most people's interests and needs; all the stalls were doing a very good trade. Further on I came across other stalls selling curios, clothes, home-made jewellery, wooden carvings, pirated musical CDs, candy floss, pizzas and ice cream. The latter looked and tasted very similar to those found in Italy.

Eventually I arrived in the main square adjacent to the Cathedral. This was a wide open space with palm trees, a band stand, fountains and seats where



people sat talking and passing the time of day. It could easily have been in an older Spain. Surrounding the square were a number of small cafes and restaurants with people sitting under sun shades, enjoying morning coffee and other refreshments.

#### **Main Piazza**

I decided to do the same and to 'people watch'. Within a few minutes of my drink and snack being brought to me I was approached by small children begging for money and food. One small girl who I thought was probably about 3 years of age came and started

to climb up on another chair at my table. As she struggled to do so, a lady stepped forward and lifted her into the seat. When they recognised that I was not willing to give anything, the small child was lifted out of the seat and encouraged to try elsewhere. As I watched them I noticed that the lady was actually coaching a number of children to beg in this way. I suspected that given the opportunity they were also probably quite adept at pick people's pockets. In the end I did find myself giving way to one five year old who stood at my table pointing at my food and looking desperate. She very politely ate what I had offered and said thank you before moving on.

Unlike the area where my hotel was located, the poverty in the centre of the city was very apparent. An open air soup kitchen was running in the centre of the square and I saw many elderly men and women eating as though they had not done so for some time. Similarly, I saw beggars outside the Cathedral, one whose back was so deformed he could only lie on the ground with a paper cup into which people donated money.



From the square I set off exploring other areas, eventually walking through the grounds of a sight-seeing vantage point. From here, I was able to look in all directions across the city.

#### **Old and New**

Unfortunately there was a slight smog and distant visibility was not good. That said, the snow covered mountains provided a wonderful back drop.

Immediately in front of me were a mixture of old and new buildings, the new seeming out of place and incongruent. To the east I could see the outline of the new city that included the area of my hotel, whereas to the south and west the structures appeared lower and smaller. In a few days time I was to see why. It was the suburbs where most of the poor communities lived and where numerous light industries were established.

From here I wandered back towards the heart of the city, taking in the main Government and Parliamentary buildings, the Bank of Chile and other structures that epitomised the former regimes and power of the State.

#### **Parliament Buildings**



I was struck by the number of Police officers who were positioned strategically around this area and how, despite there being no fence, the public stayed back from the newly cleaned buildings. National flags flew over the buildings and there appeared to be an effort to promote a strong national identity.

Having walked for about three hours I decided it was time to catch up on lost sleep. As I exited the metro near my hotel and looked up again at the new high rise buildings, I recognised that Santiago is a city of extremes, driven by wide differences in wealth and poverty. I was now keen to see how this manifested itself in respect of society and youth crime.

### **Socio Economic Factors and Crime**

Unfortunately, some of the meetings that I had hoped for were not possible. I therefore found myself with more time than I anticipated and was able to explore and gain a greater feel for Santiago and its surrounding area, speaking to local people.



The following day I focussed upon what was clearly the upper to middle class suburbs and the new part of the city. Here I found more wide tree lined streets, high-rise apartment and office blocks with weed free manicured gardens, new hotels, tennis clubs, gymnasiums, shopping malls, cafes and restaurants.

#### **Modern protected apartment block**

Many of the balconies and roof tops of the apartment blocks had large colourful plants growing on them, some cascading down the side of the buildings, softening the otherwise square edges and walls. Those who lived in this district clearly enjoyed a very comfortable life style. How they paid for it all I was not sure. Chile's average salary

is 300,000 Chilean Peso per month (£288.00). That said, the per capita income in Chile is apparently the highest in Latin America.

During privatisation and the transfer of power large national assets such as copper mines, hydro projects, forestry and fishing were apparently given away and many individuals became extremely wealthy overnight.

In order to be part of the consumer society people are apparently willing to undertake any job. Consequently it was suggested to me that exploitation of employees is a real issue, particularly the low paid, low skilled and poorly educated groups. Of note, there is no differentiation in tax levels and employment contracts are not the norm.



It was however clear that the new city area provided considerable work opportunities. In addition to the large numbers of construction workers and building security guards, others were employed as domestic staff and janitors, shop assistants, bar staff and waiters.

#### **Apartment block under development**

There also appeared to be a small army of street cleaners and gardeners. I was later told that the majority of these low paid employees lived well outside this area and normally travelled in daily by bus or metro. In one of the newest areas to be developed, there has apparently been a conscious decision not to provide bus routes so as to exclude anybody who does not live there or who has not got a

private vehicle. Domestic staff and others who are employed in this area are compelled to walk the last part of their journey to and from work.

The shopping malls were very impressive. Well designed, spacious, air conditioned and bright with a massive range of consumer goods readily available. Eating areas with fast food cafes and more restaurants were plentiful and all appeared well priced.

#### **Shopping Mall**



This part of Santiago was very much a consumer society. I was told that those who can afford to use them take great pride in their Malls. Interestingly, credit and debit cards often provide overdraft and credit facilities of at least 3

times earnings, with as many as 3 in 10 Chilean's having debts of 10 times earnings.

### **Promoting Judicial Reform**

The following day I had my first official meeting. Travelling by taxi and foot I eventually arrived in another very pleasant suburb of the city. Many of the properties there were typically former large family houses and homes. Now, many had been converted into offices or flats.

The organisation I was to meet was called Paz Ciudadana, which translated means 'Peace of Citizens'. This is one of the leading NGOs in the country and was established in 1992. The original concept was to promote the reduction of violence in Chile. Its Trustees are extremely well connected and have considerable influence at various levels of both government and the wider society. Interestingly, 90% of its funding is provided by the private sector and banks. This is an intended policy designed to ensure that the organisation retains a level of independence from the state.

More recently the organisation has begun to promote a wider agenda, including innovative approaches by which public bodies can reduce offences such as kidnapping and organised crime. Following an initial period of gathering associated statistics and details concerning substance misuse and its relationship with crime, the organisation has led the way in trying to introduce judicial reform and increasing public awareness of prevention and rehabilitation.

As a result of this work, including research in Europe, the USA and Canada, drug treatment centres have now been established in Santiago and Valparaiso. In addition, 22 diversionary programmes have been introduced with links to the Police and Social Services.

Juvenile justice is a priority subject with the prevention of violence in schools being helped through new school training programmes for teachers. Although there is no agreed age of criminal responsibility, a new proposal is that it should be 14 years. This is currently being reviewed by a special expert committee and it is anticipated that a decision will be made within the next 12 months.

Importantly, staff at Paz Ciudadana have been promoting what is described as Social Crime Prevention. In a limited way, neighbourhood renewal is slowly being introduced. In addition, the Youth Justice Board model from England and Wales is also being considered. It was suggested to me that whilst politicians say the right things, they are slow to implement change – once again, where have I heard that before?

Despite the evidence provided from other countries, a 10 year programme of research has recently been started to establish the causes of crime in Chile. It is

as though the Government believes its causes are somehow unique and different from elsewhere! One can only hope that the process of introducing changes will not have to wait for the results of the research.

I was told that acquisitive crime is the most prevalent. Burglary represents 8% of crime, robbery 4% and car crime 25%. Chile's violence is the lowest in Latin America. That said, whilst much lower than places like Honduras, murder rates are on a par with the USA and 4 times greater than Western Europe.

## **Immigration and Poverty**

Some of the economic figures that I was given re-affirmed my earlier thoughts regarding wealth distribution. Apparently Chile has one of the worst rates in Latin America. Approximately 2-3 % of the wealthiest people produced 20% of the GDP. Similarly, because of the poverty, limited long-term employment opportunities and poor pay, the grey economy is equivalent to about 20%.



In the poorer suburbs housing is a serious issue. 200,000 people live in small shelter type accommodation and shanty towns with few services.

## **Rural Housing and Poverty**



Critically, teachers are often paid a minimum wage. As a consequence education standards and opportunities are falling.

Health is another concern. Middle and upper class earners are not eligible to access the State health system and must go private. Despite increasing levels of drug addiction, rehabilitation resources are very limited and only available if you can afford to pay. Of note, none exist for women or children less than 17/18 years of age and there are no real policies in place to deal with what is an increasing problem. As a consequence, in reality there is little opportunity to avoid the justice system.

Ethnic minorities represent 10% of the potential work force with over 200,000 Peruvians, Bolivians and other ethnic Indians now undertaking work previously

done by Chileans. Like Eastern Europe, the trafficking of children and illegal immigration is a serious problem, particularly from Bolivia.

Without work and accommodation, in recent years prostitution has risen by 130%. Other women become domestic servants working in the homes of those living in the new city area. Importantly, evidence suggests that these people are not yet involved in criminality. The majority of crime is committed by Chileans. However, I was told that many wealthy people fail to value work undertaken by the poorer immigrants. With the minimum wage set at £120 per month and salaries of £90 per month actually being paid, I fear it will not be long before the situation changes and basic human survival instincts lead to rapid change and more crime.

Approximately 25% of young people in poor areas drop out of school at 15 years of age and 35% of homes have single parent mothers. A staggering 50% of children are borne out of wedlock and although 70% of the people declare themselves as Catholics, only 20 % regularly attend mass. As a result of all this social deprivation, unemployment here is about 20% with cocaine, crack and alcohol being in high use, often leading to a continuing cycle of domestic violence and associated crime.

I visited two vineyards. Wine production is a rapidly growing industry and an important part of Chile's new economy. Many poor people from the suburbs work in the wine industry. Unfortunately, because of its seasonal nature, employment is short term and migrant workers often work for less pay than Chileans.

**Chilean Vineyard**



## **Prison and Probation Services**

Like many countries, crime is a topical subject attracting considerable media coverage all of which has promoted increasing fears, particularly in the poorer areas. As a result the Chilean Government has been advancing the headline of being 'Tough on Crime'. Of note however, there is increasing recognition that Chile's prison system is not delivering rehabilitation.

Out of a population of 15 million, Chile's prison population is currently 40,000; one of the highest in the world. Prison sentences are becoming longer and Chile is in the process of building more establishments; five this year in and around Santiago with at least one in each region. Conditions in the prisons are not good.

If the police and justice system was more efficient in their job that population would probably be doubled.

The Prison and Probation services come under the umbrella of the Gendarmeria. Approximately 97% of the budget goes to the Prison Service which employs 40,000 people.

The Probation Service is small with 22,000 people. Only 3% of convicted people are given Probation orders. Although increasing levels are being awarded, they are for shorter periods and currently under resourced and not particularly good.

A Youth Justice System does not formally exist. It is however seeing increasing attention with the introduction of Youth, Victim and Family Courts. Up to 13 years of age children are not deemed to be criminally responsible. Between 14 and 17 years they are generally referred to Youth Courts. Should a YP re-offend they are likely to be placed into what are described as Closed Institutions (these are not apparently Prisons). From 18 years they enter the adult system.

A small network of NGOs is endeavouring to work with these young people; however, they are not well supported or recognised by the Government or Justice System. Most of their previous financial aid stemmed from International Aid Foundations. In recent years this has reduced significantly resulting in increased dependency and competition for Government funding.

As part of the debate Paz Ciudadana has been attempting to promote the cost savings that arise from prevention and improved rehabilitation. A number of new social programmes for young people have been introduced, but few are related to crime and the quality is not particularly good.

The Ministry of Justice runs a state organisation called SEMANE with responsibilities towards the 'Rights of the Child' and work to reduce abuse and offending. It engages NGOs in the delivery of such work. Unfortunately few of the NGOs are working together and only 10 have the business and professional skills necessary to be truly effective.

Notwithstanding this somewhat depressing situation, I was interested to hear how the agenda of Young People (YP) is growing. Historically, the Government's reaction to YP has been to ignore them. However, over the last 4 years the National Youth Institute has promoted YP's rights. The movement started in the large University City of Concepción, a mining area and the second largest urban area in Chile. Subsequently, various elections have taken place in schools and colleges. In March and April last year there were a number of demonstrations when YP demanded increasing levels of education, general provision and respect. This movement gained support from parents and others. As a result, the Government is now recognising that YP are very much aware of the power

they have with their vote. It will be interesting to see how this manifests itself over the next few years.

## **Conclusion**

From my very brief visit to Santiago and its rural surrounds, Chile struck me as a geographically beautiful and diverse country facing an even greater journey of change than those I had visited in Eastern Europe. The political and nationalistic trappings of its past military dictatorship are still apparent, as are the extremes of wealth and poverty. Whilst undoubtedly on a different scale, I was left comparing Chile with some of the economic issues now facing China and the fears that it could implode.

Perhaps most concerning are the increasing levels of poverty, alcohol and substance misuse, as well as the very large prison population and the continuing dependency upon prisons as a means of reducing crime and re-offending.

Similarly, there is also an apparent failure to invest in education, an increasing level of personal debt, the migration of unskilled people from neighbouring countries, and a process of what appeared to be social exclusion. One can only hope that the new generation of young people will take increasing responsibility and promote the changes so urgently needed.