

Press release: UK-Chile Joint Statement, Santiago, 23 May 2018

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson and Foreign Minister of Chile Roberto Ampuero met today (23 May) in Santiago for a High-Level Political Dialogue to set the agenda for the next four years – with a clear emphasis on increasing bilateral trade – and issued the following Joint Statement.

Foreign Secretary Johnson and Foreign Minister Ampuero reaffirmed the historic friendship and partnership that exists between Chile and the UK. They took the opportunity to commemorate the 53rd Anniversary of the visit to the UK by the then President Eduardo Frei Montalva in 1965 and the 50th Anniversary of the State Visit to Chile of HM The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh in 1968.

Both Ministers acknowledged the enormous potential to increase bilateral trade and agreed to take steps to capitalise on these opportunities.

Bilateral Relations

Foreign Secretary Johnson emphasised that the UK will continue to be a globally-orientated outward looking country after its departure from the EU. The UK would look to Chile as a natural partner given the shared commitment to free trade and free enterprise as a means to increase trade and other commercial links. He recognised that Chile was a world leader in free trade having signed 26 Free Trade Agreements with 64 countries.

Both Ministers agreed that a priority was maintaining our existing preferential trading arrangements to avoid any disruption when the UK leaves the EU. They stated the commitment of both parties to maintain – at a minimum – the current terms of trade within the EU-Chile Association Agreement. Likewise, they reiterated the importance of concluding ongoing bilateral talks ensuring the continuity of bilateral trade – when the UK leaves the EU – before the end of 2018.

Minister Johnson confirmed the United Kingdom's continuing support for the modernisation of Chile's Association Agreement with the European Union.

Both Ministers identified cyber security as a field of cooperation that warrants further bilateral development. They agreed to explore mechanisms in the short term – such as an MoU or other mechanisms – to develop joint working in this area.

Bilateral trade and investment

Foreign Secretary Johnson and Foreign Minister Ampuero noted that Chile is the UK's third largest export market in Latin America after Brazil and Mexico and the UK is the sixth largest foreign direct investor in Chile.

Foreign Secretary Johnson and Foreign Minister Ampuero looked forward to the next Chile Day in London 5th -7th September 2018. Finance Minister Larraín would lead a large Chilean business delegation and meet with Government Ministers in London. Investment flows and development of the capital markets were important to both countries; as were tackling corruption, building 'business of trust', and exploring new areas such as green finance, fintech and cybersecurity.

Foreign Minister Ampuero highlighted the importance of mining to Chile's economy. Foreign Minister Johnson confirmed that British business was well placed to help provide equipment, expertise and technology to help the transformation of the mining industry, including in Lithium. With this in mind, both parties agreed to work together to increase mining sector links.

Global Challenges

Both Foreign Secretaries strongly support the respect for international law and condemn the use of chemical weapons under any circumstances. They agreed on the importance of re-establishing the taboo of Chemical Weapons use under any circumstance.

Foreign Secretary Johnson welcomed Chile's role on the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the statement on 18 April in support of the OPCW findings on the use of nerve agent in Salisbury.

Foreign Secretary Johnson welcomed President Piñera's statement denouncing Syria's use of chemical weapons and reiterated the need to strengthen international rule of law regarding this matter. Foreign Secretary Johnson thanked Foreign Minister Ampuero for Chile's support to hold a Special Conference of States Parties in June 2018 with a view to strengthening international mechanisms for responding to violations of the Chemical Weapons Charter.

Foreign Secretary Johnson and Foreign Minister Ampuero stated that the elections in Venezuela on 20th May were illegal, which is clear evidence of the infringement of democratic rule of law in Venezuela. Such elections did not have independent international observers or the necessary assurances for them to be accepted as a free, fair, transparent and democratic process. Foreign Secretary Johnson offered Chile the UK's full support in regional efforts to bring about a peaceful return to democracy in Venezuela.

Regional Cooperation

Foreign Minister Ampuero welcomed the steps taken by Argentina and the United Kingdom aimed at re-setting their bilateral relations regarding the Islands of the South Atlantic following the Joint Statement in 2016, particularly those linked to humanitarian actions and the ones seeking to regularise the air link between the Islands and the continent. Chile fully supports this sort of initiative.

Foreign Secretary Johnson expressed his support for the Pacific Alliance. The UK will continue its engagement as an active Observer – looking to explore how this relationship could be strengthened in the future – and looked forward to the Alliance’s further progress, in particular conclusion of the current negotiations with the Associate Member States.

Likewise, Foreign Secretary Johnson congratulated Foreign Minister Ampuero on the new Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), signed in Santiago in March 2018; and looked forward to Chile’s hosting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit in October 2019.

Defence

Foreign Secretary Johnson and Foreign Minister Ampuero reiterated the importance of defence relations between the two countries, with naval links going back over 200 years from the arrival to Chile of Lord Cochrane in 1818. The MOD and the Chilean Defence Ministry will continue their strategic defence dialogue, sharing best practice and identifying opportunities for future coordination and collaboration.

United Nations Reform

Both Ministers emphasised that the United Nations should deepen its process of reform and highlighted the importance of increased transparency and efficiency.

Education

Both Ministers agreed on the importance of a strong, inclusive and non-discriminatory education sector. Education is an essential tool in tackling gender inequality. They noted that the UK remains the top destination for ‘Becas Chile’ Masters and PhD students.

Foreign Minister Ampuero highlighted President Piñera’s priorities and expressed his willingness for the UK to be a relevant partner in this process -especially in areas such as investments, innovation, digital revolution, and education improvement, among others. The launch of the “Computer Coding” project carried out by the Ministry of Education and the British Council is an excellent step towards such an end. Within this context, Minister Ampuero expressed Chile’s willingness to work more closely with the British Council.

Foreign Secretary Johnson and Foreign Minister Ampuero expressed their interest in fostering collaboration in education, science and innovation, to ensure our young people can make the most of the opportunities that living and working in our connected and globalised world can offer. The UK and Chile will engage in policy dialogue and share experience on topics of mutual interest, including the effective introduction of computing and coding in the classroom, and equipping teachers to improve pupil participation and performance, particularly in STEM subjects and particularly for girls. Both governments anticipate that dialogue will lead to robust partnerships paving the way for young people from both countries to pursue more educational and

professional opportunities.

Science, Innovation and Environmental issues

Foreign Secretary Johnson congratulated Foreign Minister Ampuero on Chile's leadership in the region on environmental issues and noted that the UK looked forward to continuing our excellent bilateral cooperation in areas such as science and innovation, protection of the ocean, reducing emissions and building smarter cities.

Foreign Secretary Johnson and Foreign Minister Ampuero agreed upon the importance of continuing scientific and logistical collaboration in Antarctica, building on the agreement between BAS (British Antarctic Survey) and the Chilean Antarctic Institute (INACH) signed during the 2012 visit of President Piñera to London.

Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT)

Foreign Secretary Johnson highlighted the UK's commitment to tackling IWT and was interested to hear of Chile's initiatives on marine protected areas and wider conservation issues. Foreign Minister Ampuero confirmed that he would make his colleagues aware of Chile's invitation to attend the IWT conference in London in October 2018.

Both countries look forward to continue strengthening cooperation in all these areas in the future and commit to a periodic follow-up.