

'Relentless reality of climate change' transforming long-held notions about development, Chile tells UN

20 September 2017 – Catastrophes such as the most recent devastating earthquake in Mexico and the successive hurricanes that have hit the Latin American and Caribbean region “remind us that we are at a key moment in human history in which the notion of development that has prevailed until now has been shaken by the relentless reality of climate change,” the President of Chile told the United Nations General Assembly today.

“We can close our eyes and deny a reality whose devastating effects will become more frequent and intense, or assume our responsibility,” Michelle Bachelet said in her address to the Assembly’s annual general debate, where she reiterated the need to join the fight against climate change, because in fact: “there is no space for denial.”

She went on to say that the biggest strength of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development was that all the people of the world must implement it together. In that regard, Chile had established a green tax on carbon emissions in its energy sector and had moved from 6.3 to 17 per cent renewable energy. It is also active in pushing forth ocean initiatives. Some 8 million tons of plastic reached the sea each year, enormously impacting the world’s oceans.

Prohibiting the use of plastic bags in coastal cities is critical to protecting the ocean, going on to outline various initiatives Chile has undertaken to protect its biodiversity. Sustainable development is not “an impossible dream to finance,” Ms. Bachelet stressed.

Describing some challenges currently facing her country, both in the political and business world, she underscored efforts which were particularly focused on making both sectors more inclusive, including through the establishment of a quota to include women in Government.

On Venezuela, she called for concrete results regarding the full restoration of democracy. She also expressed concern for the conflicts in the Middle East and some parts in Africa, and the increasing tension on the Korean Peninsula. It is essential to resolve all those challenges through diplomacy, she stressed, adding that “it is possible to completely eliminate nuclear weapons.”

[Full statement \(in Spanish\) available here](#)