



Chile Willing to Negotiate Bolivia's Access to the Sea



Santiago de Chile, October 12 (teleSUR-RHC)-- The Chilean government said Sunday it is willing to negotiate "better access to the sea" for Bolivia, but won't discuss the issue of Bolivia's sovereignty over it.

The statement was made Sunday by Chilean Foreign Minister Heraldo Muñoz, who said that "discussing sovereignty again would get into the mindset of the 19th century and discuss everything that was settled by the Treaty and we also have to consider the losses Bolivia had with all its neighbors and I think that is irrelevant to a relationship of mutual respect and mutual benefit."

He stressed Chile "has always been willing to improve Bolivia's access to the sea," adding that Bolivia "already has access to the Pacific beyond what was proposed in the 1904 Treaty," due to special terms granted to Bolivia by Chile, such as the concession of nearly four hectares in Arica for the Sica Sica-Arica pipeline.

For the Chilean foreign minister, it would be appropriate to discuss how to improve these concessions and access, and find "imaginative" solutions that do not deal with handing over to Bolivia the sovereignty of Chilean land. Bolivian President Evo Morales has continued to call for a "fair and sovereign access to the sea" in the maritime dispute.

Munoz's statements come two and a half weeks after the International Court of Ju



stice in The Hague ruled that it would hear Bolivia's claim demanding access to the Pacific Ocean.

Bolivia brought its claim against Chile to the ICJ in 2013, based on almost a century's worth of diplomatic and historical documents in which Santiago committed to resolve the issue of Bolivia's access to the sea. The coastal territory was taken from Bolivia in The War of the Pacific (1879-1883) between the two countries, and Peru.

Despite the court ruling that it would hear Bolivia's claim, and calls by Morales for dialogue between Chile and Bolivia, the Chilean foreign minister insisted Sunday that this could not be achieved, because the lawsuit brought before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague has separated the two countries and eliminated the "sympathy" that existed.

In late September, Evo Morales told the 70th General Assembly of the United Nations Organization (UNGA) that "sooner or later" his country would peacefully return to the sea, with the support of the world and in dialogue with Chile.