Chile Respects International Treaties in Solving Dispute with Bolivia

Santiago, April 16 (RHC) -- Chilean President Michelle Bachelet said in Santiago on Tuesday that her country will respect international treaties in dealing with the dispute with neighboring Bolivia, which handed over documents at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to support its claim in an ongoing sea access case against Chile.

"We respect international treaties, that issue is clear," Bachelet said in an interview with a local radio station before Bolivia presented the documents, adding that she was "waiting to find out in detail the content of the Bolivian brief" before her government makes public its official stance. Chile will have one year after the filing to respond to the claim.

Earlier in the day, Bolivian President Evo Morales personally submitted the brief of the case to the Hague-based court, seeking to force Chile into negotiations to grant landlocked Bolivia access to the Pacific Ocean.

"The Bolivian people hope that the historic wrong that took place will be repaired as soon as possible," Morales said at the Bolivian Embassy in the Netherlands. "We have come here to make an historic

demand -- for Bolivia to regain sovereign access to the sea."

The dispute dates back to the 1879 War of the Pacific, when Bolivia forfeited its access to the sea after losing some 400 km of coastline to neighboring Chile.

During Bachelet's first presidential term, Bolivia's demand for sea access via Chile was put on the bilateral agenda in 2006, but the conservative government of Sebastian Pinera, which preceded Bachelet's, rebuffed attempts to discuss a sea route through Chile.

One past proposal made by Bachelet was to grant Bolivia the right to establish port operations at a point along Chile's northern coast.

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