

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
Sent: Saturday, February 27, 2010 7:57 AM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Earthquake in Chile

Fyi

----- Original Message -----

From: Kelly, Craig A
To: Valenzuela, Arturo A; Abedin, Huma; Bennett, Virginia L; Sullivan, Jacob J; Simons, Paul E (Santiago); McMullen, Christopher J; Mills, Cheryl D
Cc: Gonzalez, Juan S; Reynoso, Julissa; Jacobson, Roberta S
Sent: Sat Feb 27 07:30:15 2010
Subject: Re: Earthquake in Chile

Chilean press now saying 78 deaths so far.

----- Original Message -----

From: Valenzuela, Arturo A
To: Abedin, Huma; Bennett, Virginia L; Sullivan, Jacob J; Simons, Paul E (Santiago); Kelly, Craig A; McMullen, Christopher J; Mills, Cheryl D
Cc: Gonzalez, Juan S; Reynoso, Julissa; Jacobson, Roberta S
Sent: Sat Feb 27 05:45:36 2010
Subject: Earthquake in Chile

Paul Simons called me shortly after earthquake hit Chile (8.5 Richter-- stronger than Haiti). He was going to reach out to advance team. Marriott Hotel fine. Event frightening because of intensity of tremor. Epicenter near Concepcion-- third largest city in Chile about 400 miles south of Santiago (city of Cauquenes--- hardest hit).

Just heard Bachelet on TV-- casualties so far 16-- though because communications down and it is still dark information is preliminary. Some concern over risk of Tsunami though Navy deems unlikely. Fortunately, there is no collapse of dams. Considerable damage to highway bridges and infrastructure---that will affect traffic-- in Talca hospital evacuated for precautionary reasons. President declared zones of Maule and Bio Bio disaster areas.

Significant loss of life and damage unlikely because Chile suffered devastating earthquakes in 1939 and 1960 (the strongest in recorded history) in same area so most old construction is gone. Chile has strong construction codes and state of the art anti-earthquake standards. Also Chile has excellent first responder capacity. One concern of course are aftershocks. In 1960 (May 21) a second earthquake occurred day after that caused a Tsunami in Japan. Will have to evaluate whether trip to Chile should proceed. Precisely because of tragedy this may not be time to cancel - provided Chilean side can handle and are anxious for trip to proceed. Suspect that that will be the case. Should evaluate in morning after dust settles.

Arturo