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Secrétaire exécutive

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MESSAGE TO PARTIES AND OBSERVER ORGANIZATIONS

Dates of the United Nations Climate Change sessions COP 25/CMP 15/CMA 2

I have the pleasure to inform that the Bureau of the COP has decided that the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 25), fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 15) and the second session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 2) will be held from **2 to 13 December 2019**, in Chile.

The sessions will be preceded by preparatory meetings from 26 November to 1 December 2019.

In taking this decision, the COP Bureau thanked the Government of Chile for the flexibility with regards to providing an alternative date for the conference in order to build consensus and fully acknowledged the logistical challenges for the host country as well as for delegates that would result from the decision taken. Bureau members reiterated their support to, and full confidence in, the COP25 President-designate to deliver a successful conference.

A copy of the statement from the Government of Chile addressed to the Bureau of the COP regarding the implications of holding the conference in December, is attached to this message.

Distribution: To Parties and observer States to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change through their national focal points and diplomatic missions accredited to the Federal Republic of Germany, as well as to United Nations Organizations and Admitted Observer Organizations



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The UNFCCC secretariat will now intensify its engagement with the Government of Chile, both substantively and logistically to organize the Conference efficiently and as expeditiously as possible.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed by)

Patricia Espinosa

04th March 2019

Dear Bureau members,

I have the pleasure to send a few lines to thank you for the positive engagement we had in the last Bureau meeting, and especially in the case of many of you that had to rearrange schedules or accommodate your participation during travelling schedules.

I want to express to you my personal appreciation for these demonstrations of commitment and for your willingness to achieve a prompt decision in the matter at hand. As the COP President indicated, I feel that we are very close to reach a decision.

With this in mind, I would like to provide you with some additional information, relevant data and possible implications of the proposals discussed so you can take an informed decision in order to have a successful COP.

You all know that Chile stepped-in to offer to host the COP after the previous offer was withdrawn during Katowice. That means that Chile has not had the opportunity to plan for the COP with years in advance, like most hosts do. Chile has had to start planning at a very short notice and with a limited number of options available, which make more difficult to come up with alternatives of dates for COP25 that can suit everybody and specially that can assure a successful COP in terms of logistic and accommodation for all delegations.

As a result, as I mentioned before, we proposed January because this is the best option available to hold a successful COP. I know you know that it's not a matter of lack of flexibility on our part; other suitable venues are simply not available because they were booked long before Chile had had to step-in and offered to host COP 25.

Nevertheless and because some Bureau members have expressed concerns with these dates, we have continue looking for options and identified a December option. But it is important that the Bureau is fully aware that this option entails important challenges that may create significant problems for delegates, including long commuting time and expensive accommodations.

These are important considerations for the Bureau to have in mind for which allow me to provide details:

1) January 5th to January 21st 2020

January is a holiday month in Chile, which makes Santiago considerably less congested to receive Parties delegations, particularly with regards to transportation. It is worth noting that Santiago is a capital city of over 7 million people, which corresponds to 40% of the national population, and traffic at peak hours remains a challenge. Santiago is a large and

very widespread city (641 km²) as well so distances can be considerable. As a result, people living in Santiago can spend one to two hours in the morning every day to get to their work places.

In this regard, the January option is better because:

- Low traffic congestion: The school year is over so many people take summer holidays this month which reduces traffic congestion considerably. As an example of this, the Metro system in the city transports 2.6 million people every day. This figure drops significantly in January, particularly at peak hours, because many people are on vacation.
- More and cheaper accommodation: Because it's vacation season, more accommodation is available in January, when business trips are reduced. As a result, prices also tend to be lower.
- Good services: Despite the lower influx of people, Santiago maintains intact its services industry, which would be an important asset that will contribute to a positive delegate's stay.
- No overlap with most other holidays: The dates suggested in January are in full consideration of the Lunar New Year and the Western New Year, with no overlapping with these festivities. Regarding the Orthodox Christmas (for those that follow the 'old' Julian calendar), we are available to explore alternative arrangements, as suggested.

2) November 25th to December 13st of 2020:

The end of November - December is a highly congested period in Santiago. Schools, Colleges and Universities, both public and private, close their academic year within the first two weeks of December. This period coincides too with the University Admission Test taken every year by 300,000 Chilean students.

December is also the finance closure month for all companies in the private and public sector, which makes it a month of particularly intense working activity.

The close vicinity to the celebrations of the end of the year (Christmas and New Year) is also an additional stressor for the city since many families and companies start their preparations in advance.

As the result of all these activities, there are significant challenges associated to the December option:

- Highly congested traffic: The transportation system in December is at full capacity and congestion reaches record levels. Average commuting to the proposed venue could take two to three hours easily roundtrip.

- More expensive and/or limited accommodation: The usual hotel demand in this period makes it difficult to get accommodation in the volumes required for the COP. It is high season so prices are indeed higher. Conference centers and venues are frequently fully booked.
- COP organized in two separate venues: The only existing venue in Santiago that has the minimum requirements to hold the COP is “Espacio Riesco”, a privately-owned venue. This is the venue booked for APEC in November 2019, and it is booked in December 2019 for other private events and therefore unavailable for the COP in December.

In this case, if December was the option chosen, we might need to consider other options such as organizing COP25 in two separate venues. Therefore in addition to transfer time between hotels and venue, in the case of December, as we may need two venues, we will have additional time required to go from one venue to another, considering Santiago extension, this is estimated in 1 additional hour per transfer.

As I mentioned during our call, if despite all the reasons explained above, Bureau members consider it better to organize COP25 in December 2019, we will do it. Chile will make the effort and will organize the COP as per the decision by the Bureau. However, it is crucial that Bureau members are fully aware of the challenges – which at previous COPs have created considerable problems for some delegates – and understand that despite our best efforts, we may not be in a position to provide acceptable solutions because the conditions of the city are just beyond our control.

While you consider the above elements, my team and I remain on stand-by waiting for the list of countries the Bureau agreed to provide me with so that I can continue reaching out to those that have expressed concerns and consult with them the best possible solutions to the problems they may still have.

I remain confident of your decision, as I know you share with me the commitment for a successful COP25. This will depend on our collective creativity to identify solutions that are ambitious and fair and based on compromises by everybody for the good of everybody.

Allow me to finish by reiterating that you can fully count on the Chilean COP Presidency to fulfil our role and fully support your decision.

Thank you.

Carolina Schmidt
Ministra de Medio Ambiente
& COP25 President-designate
Gobierno de Chile