

**Xinhua. 2012. "Interview: Developing ties with China strategically significant for Chile, says former president". Xinhua, June 25**

SANTIAGO, June 25 (Xinhua) -- Developing relations with China has strategic significance for Chile against the backdrop of the euro zone debt crisis and a sagging U.S. economy, former Chilean president Eduardo Frei has said.

Frei made the remarks Sunday while speaking to Xinhua ahead of Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's official visit to Chile on Monday and Tuesday.

Frei, now a senator, headed a Chilean Senate delegation to China in April. Recalling the visit, Frei said the Chinese economy is energetic everywhere, the consumer market is booming and that provides large trade opportunities for Chile.

Frei, who was Chilean president from 1994 to 2000, led his country into APEC in the first year of his presidency, which was mocked by many people at that time.

But this year, trade volume between Chile and China is expected to reach 35 billion U.S. dollars, accounting for a quarter of Chile's foreign trade.

Chile is always a pioneer in advancing economic ties with China among Latin American countries, Frei said.

Chile is the first South American state that set up diplomatic ties with China, the first Latin American country to reach bilateral accord with China on China's entry into the WTO, to recognize China's full market economy status and to sign an FTA with China.

As for the status quo that copper has become the bulk of China-Chile trade, Frei said chicken, pork, and blueberries have found a larger market in China after checking and quarantine barriers were removed over the last two years. He hopes that more beef and milk products from Chile could be exported to China.

Frei believes that ties between Chile and China have become increasingly mature. He said political mutual trust has continued to deepen and the government departments of the two countries have laid out favorable blueprints for companies from both countries to explore further cooperation.

He hopes that with the growing trade between the two countries, two-way investment could be promoted and relevant agreements on encouraging and protecting investment could be signed as soon as possible. Enditem