

**Xinhua. 2015. "Chilean FM upbeat about future ties with China". Xinhua, June 2**

SANTIAGO, June 1 (Xinhua) -- The visit to Chile by Chinese Premier Li Keqiang is bound to help build prosperous future ties between the two countries, said Chilean Foreign Minister Heraldo Munoz.

He hailed the various agreements signed during Li's visit to Chile, which was the last stop of the premier's four-nation Latin American tour that also included Brazil, Colombia, Peru.

"The Chile-China Joint Action Plan is key to implementing the strategic partnership defined in 2012, as well as to guide collaboration between various public and private entities," Munoz wrote in La Tercera daily.

"These ties will be the pillars of a new era for bilateral ties. They will focus on investments, particularly in areas crucial to Chile's development: infrastructure, maritime connections, education, innovation, energy and mining."

He said that 45 years ago, Chile was the first South American country to establish diplomatic ties with Beijing.

"In honor of this friendship, the visit of Chinese Premier Li Keqiang to our country marked a new milestone in the deepening of bilateral ties," he wrote.

Chile was the first country in the world to sign a free trade agreement with China in 2005, said Munoz, adding that the two countries will begin a process to upgrade the FTA to encompass more products.

"Chile has taken on a pioneering role in the region, by establishing itself as a financial platform for the internationalization of the renminbi. Among the agreements recently signed in this area, the currency swap and clearing agreement are particularly noteworthy."

The agreement reinforces Chile's status as a regional hub for operations involving the Chinese currency, he said.

Establishing its reputation as a financial center will bring Chile closer to its goal of becoming a bridge between Asia and Latin America, he said.

Munoz also noted that the two countries have decided to evaluate projects involving maritime corridors, ports, railways and energy worth over 28 billion dollars.

"These new projects will improve regional transportation and will provide a great boost to commerce in the region, as well as between Latin American countries and Asia-Pacific markets."

During Li's trip, it was also announced that Chinese tourists with valid visas for the United States and Canada will no longer need a separate visa to enter Chile. Furthermore, China and Chile will both eliminate fees for tourist visas starting from July 1, 2015.

"These concrete results proved that this visit would mark a more prosperous future for our countries," said the minister. Enditem