Shared Struggle, Collective Identity: The Rhetoric of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's 7th March Speech and Gabriel Boric's Inaugural Address

Intro: The importance of the mobilization of identity in political discourse.

In the past fifty years or more, the nations of the Global South have seen various geopolitical shifts. Within this shift, the rhetoric employed by political leaders played a crucial role in shaping national identity and assembling the greater population to a collective goal. To support this claim, the paper delves into the articulated analysis of specific speeches delivered by two prominent leaders from two varying locations of the broader Global South. The first speech in conversation is the historic 7th March Speech of 1971, by the founding father of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The following speech is the visionary inauguration speech delivered by President Gabriel Boric of Chile in 2022. Despite the speeches being given in 1971 and 2022, we find parallels in the discourse which center each. We argue that shared struggle is invoked to embrace a collective identity which helps propel change.

Context

Bangladesh as a country gained its independence through a series of struggles and movements. The country's liberation is an event that is still vivid in the minds of many Bengalis. It stands as a poignant chapter in the country's history. The call for liberation emerged from the deep-rooted socio-political disparities between East and West Pakistan. The disparities were further heightened by cultural and linguistic differences. Conflicts gained prominence when the Pakistani government refused to acknowledge the electoral victory of the political party Awami League, led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Awami League was a prominent East Pakistan-based party, and the majority of West Pakistani leaders would never allow a Bengali-speaking Sheikh

Mujibur Rahman to lead the country. In response to this, the people of East Pakistan rose in defiance against the oppressive regime.

On the 7th of March 1971, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivered the historic speech which is still revered across every corner of Bangladesh. This was the pivotal moment that led up to Bangladesh's liberation war. UNESCO referred to the speech through the lines of, "An effective speech that declared the independence of Bangladesh" (UNESCO 2017). The speech was delivered at the Racecourse Ground in Dhaka after Awami League's immense victory in the election of 1970. The speech addressed an immensely enthusiastic crowd of two million supporters gathered to hear Rahman's response to the regime of West Pakistan.

It is important to note that Bangabandhu's speech was delivered at a time when there was a dominant influence of West Pakistan's political and military establishment in East Pakistan. Therefore, the deliverance of this speech in itself was frowned upon by West Pakistan's government. The Pakistani government did not permit the live broadcast of the speech. However, AHM Salahuddin, the chairman of Pakistan International Film Corporation at the time made arrangements to record the video and audio of the historic speech (Shafique 2022). The copies were later sent to Mujib's family as well as India, who eventually distributed 3000 copies throughout the world. This historic speech is a seminal moment in Bangladesh's history. The predominant discourse revolves around the struggle for independence and the assertion of Bengali identity, at a time when East Pakistanis felt marginalized by the West. The speech effectively declared Bangladesh's independence by listing down ethnic, linguistic, cultural, political, and socio-economic suppression imposed on the Bengali people.

Chile is a democratic republic located in South America. The country has a history of political stability compared to some of its neighbors, with a tradition of peaceful transitions of

power through democratic elections (*BBC News* 2012). Chile's political system consists of a President and a multi-party framework, with various political parties representing different ideologies. Amidst this narrative of stability, lies the legacy of the oppressive Pinochet dictatorship, which has left an enduring impact on the nation's collective memory.

Socially, Chile is characterized by its diverse population, including indigenous communities such as the Mapuche, and a mix of European and indigenous cultural influences. The country exhibits divisions along various lines, including age, political party affiliation, and social class. Its struggle with stark inequality is paramount, particularly regarding access to education, healthcare, housing, and wealth distribution. There have been significant social movements active in Chilean society supporting a range of causes, such as social justice, gender equality, and indigenous rights.

Major events that preempted the speech include the aftermath of the Social Uprising of 2019, demands for constitutional reform, and the emergence of a new political generation represented by Boric's presidency. His candidacy resonated with many Chileans disillusioned with the traditional political establishment and seeking fresh leadership and ideas, converting him into the youngest-ever president of the country with a more progressive and inclusive vision for the country's future (Funk 2021).

Thus, Boric's election as president in 2021 marked a significant turning point for the country. His passionate inauguration speech on the night of March 11, 2022, to the public offered insights into his vision for addressing the urgent problems facing Chilean society. The speech was delivered in Santiago, the capital city, at the Palacio de La Moneda, the presidential residence and workplace. The speech was broadcast live on a number of media platforms,

including television, radio, and online streaming services, allowing people across the country and abroad to witness the event. His speech of 3156 words lasted half an hour.

In his inaugural address, President Gabriel Boric of Chile articulated a blueprint aimed at driving changes and progress for a stronger Chile. Central to this visionary plan was the deliberate effort to forge a united Chilean identity, as evidenced by the compelling themes mobilized throughout his speech. By embracing the power of collective identity, President Boric sets the stage for a new era of shared purpose, solidarity, and inclusivity in Chilean society.

In analyzing the speech, it becomes evident that the discourse is rooted in navigating the complex landscape of Chilean identity politics where several categories arise as being relevant. Boric addresses historical legacies, contemporary challenges, and aspirations for the future, creating a narrative that seeks to unite the Chilean people under a shared vision of progress and social justice.

These two countries are perfect for this analysis because they evaluate the idea of how leaders from two contrasting economic and historical situations can utilize similar tactics for similar goals. During the delivery of these two speeches Bangladesh and Chile are present in key moments and on the brink of radical change. Bangladesh is about to usher in a new country, and Chile ushering in a new political generation and hopes for a new constitution. Yet, similar linguistic and tactical choices are numerous.

Findings

The predominant discourse of national identity identified in each speech is unity. Tables 1 and 2, presented in the appendix that indicates the different categories and the count of their use throughout the speech, demonstrate that terms associated with unity are the most frequently mentioned throughout the speeches. Boric and Mujibur Rahman utilize various terms to

positively rally the people of their nations together in the face of struggle, invoking pride in the country and a collective purpose toward change.

The first inclination towards unity is through the usage of certain pronouns. The general aim for the usage of pronouns is to avoid repetition. However, in political discourses, it often plays a key role by emphasizing the sense of self-responsibility. It also works to showcase a theme of inclusiveness, solidarity, and unity within the speakers and the listeners. Pronouns are often a means through which one understands the speaker's social standing, attitude, and interpersonal communication strategies. Therefore, an individual will often use a variety of personal pronouns to bring the audience in his favor as well as to express their views and beliefs. As seen through Tables 1 and 3, the 7th March speech showed a rigorous use of personal pronouns. These pronouns were mainly "we", "I' and "our". As a cohort, these pronouns appeared about 62 times. Through these he expressed the sense of self-responsibility he felt toward the country. In various parts of the speech, Mujib employed the use of "I" to relay his duty as well as personal sentiments towards the political mission. For instance, this can be seen in the lines, "Today I met President Yahya Khan" or "I don't want Prime Ministership". Furthermore, "We" and "our" are connotated more towards the themes of inclusivity, community, and unity. Through these pronouns, he exerts the meaning that Sheikh Mujib and the people of Bangladesh are one cohort. Therefore, reeling in a sense of emotional relevance from the audience. Hence, the use of such pronouns brings the audience and the speaker closer in proximity. It sums up the idea that mutual suffrage and struggle is a mutual burden taken by all Bengali citizens to liberate the country and themselves.

Similarly, beyond merely being its category, unity permeates through the other discursive categories employed by Boric. Whether addressing historical injustices, social inequalities, or the

need for democratic participation, unity serves as the underlying principle guiding Boric's vision for Chile's future. This is represented through Boric's use of "we" and "our" as well, these two words are used 99 and 44 times respectively. They are the most commonly said words and contribute to the category of unity, accounting for about 67% of the discourse employed in the speech.

According to the raw count table, there were a total of 36 occurrences of words such as "must", "can" and "will". The strategic usage of these words throughout the speech conveyed a sense of determination, certainty, and within the Bengali people's struggle for independence. Precisely, the term "must" conveyed a sense of urgency. It urged the viewers to take precisive action in pursuit of their goals. This sense of urgency can be seen in the line, "You must prepare yourselves now". As well as "I say that my directives must be followed", which also showcases a sense of authority and power that Mujib held among the Bengali people.

Furthermore, another feature both the leaders are seen incorporating is the use of certain endearments to refer to the greater audience. These are terms that instill a sense of unity among the people. In Mujib's speech, the term "the people", especially "brother" is mentioned over 15 times. This wording is a powerful rhetorical device meant to foster unity, solidarity, and shared identity among the Bengali people. Mujib refers to his audience as "my brother", emphasizing the familial bond that transcends all superficial differences. The use of familial language not only reflects a narrative of solidarity and resistance against oppression but also the idea that all Bengalis are of the same discourse community. A community bound together by shared heritage and aspirations. Therefore, the end goal of this tactical decision is to instill cooperation, camaraderie, belonging, and a sense of purpose among the thousands of listeners.

Again, in Boric's speech a similar trend is evident. Boric builds toward a collective identity by emphasizing the connection between the people. As a part of the category unity, "us", "people" and "compatriots" are said 28, 39, and 7 times respectively.

His primary goal was not to criticize the West entirely but to urge the Bengali people to prepare for the struggle that was coming. On that account, "struggle" and "cry" made an appearance of 14 times. The term struggle specifically served as a central motif throughout the speech. It symbolized the collective efforts and sacrifices made by the Bengalis in their fight against oppression.

Conclusion

The analysis of speeches made by political leaders Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and President Gabriel Boric has provided vital perceptions into the dynamics of politicization and identity construction within the Global South. This paper aimed to explore the various strategies adopted by leaders to invoke shared struggles to foster unity and advocate for change. Through the articulate analysis of Rahman's 7th March speech and Boric's inaugural speech, this study has done exactly so. It has established the idea of rhetoric in mobilizing populations towards a collection gain.

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Appendix

Table 1. Raw Count (Bangladesh)

Speech	Raw Count
we/our/I	62
must/can/will	36
Brother/the people	21
Bangladesh	1
Awami League	3
Yahya Khan	5
West Pakistan	4
East Pakistan	0
They	7
Struggle/cry	14
Joy Bangla	1
Bengali	9
Total	163

Table 2. Raw Count (Chile)

Word/Category	Count
Diversity Diverse - 1 Mapuche - 2 Indigenous - 2	5
Family Family - 3 Families - 5 Children - 6	14
Memory History - 7 Past - 3 Forget - 3 Forgotten - 2 Again - 12 Repeated - 2 Suffered/Suffering-2	31
Unity Together - 14	266

Collective/Collectively - 3 Society - 7 Unity/Unites- 2 Us - 28 All - 23 We - 99 Our - 44 People/Peoples - 39 Compatriots - 7	
<u>Change</u> Change/Changes - 4 Vision - 3 Process - 5	12
<u>Inequality and Social Issues</u> Wealth - 3 Economy - 2 Equal/Equality - 2 Inequality/Inequalities - 2 Education - 3 Health - 4 Poverty - 2	26

Crime - 2 Social - 6	
<u>Challenges</u> Difficult/Difficulties - 4 Problem/Problems - 3 Challenges/Challenging - 5	12
<u>Dignity</u> Dignified/Dignity - 8	8
<u>Human Rights</u> Human Rights - 3 Fair/Fairly/Fairer - 3 Rights - 3	9
<u>Constitution</u> Constitution/Constitutional - 7	7
<u>Democracy</u> Democratic - 2 Democracy - 3	5
Total	395

*Note: Each category consists of the terms listed under it. The count for those words is shown next to them, which add together to form the total number count for the category indicated by the right column

Table 3. Valence (Bangladesh)

Speech	Valence Count
we/our	+++++
must/can/will	+++++
Brother/ the people	+++++
Bangladesh	+
Awami League	+
Yahya Khan	-
West Pakistan	-
East Pakistan	
They	- -
Struggle/Cry	- - -
Joy Bangla	+
Bengali	++

*Note: 1 symbol = 1-5%; 2 symbols = 5:"7%; 3 symbols = 8-10%; 4 symbols = 11-15%; 5 symbols = 15%+

Table 4. Valence (Chile)

Category	Valence
Diversity	+
Family	+
Memory	+ -
Unity	+ + + + +
Change	+
Inequality and Social Issues	+ -
Challenges	-
Dignity	+
Human Rights	+
Constitution	+
Democracy	+

*Note: 1 symbol = 1-5%; 2 symbols = 5:"7%; 3 symbols = 8-10%; 4 symbols = 11-15%; 5 symbols = 15%+. These categories represent the ones established with their corresponding words in Table 1.

Speech Transcript (Bangladesh)

My dear brothers . . .

I have come before you today with a heavy heart.

All of you know how hard we have tried. But it is a matter of sadness that the streets of Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Rangpur, and Rajshahi are today being spattered with the blood of my brothers, and the cry we hear from the Bengali people is a cry for freedom a cry for survival, a cry for our rights.

You are the ones who brought about an Awami League victory so you could see a constitutional government restored. The hope was that the elected representatives of the people, sitting in the National Assembly, would formulate a constitution that would assure the people of their economic, political, and cultural emancipation. But now, with great sadness in my heart, I look back on the past 23 years of our history and see nothing but a history of the shedding of the blood of the Bengali people. Ours has been a history of continual lamentation, repeated bloodshed, and innocent tears.

We gave blood in 1952, we won a mandate in 1954. But we were still not allowed to take up the reins of this country. In 1958, Ayub Khan clamped Martial Law on our people and enslaved us for the next 10 years. In 1966, during the Six-Point Movement of the masses, many were young men and women whose lives were stilled by government bullets.

After the downfall of Ayub, Mr. Yahya Khan took over with the promise that he would restore constitutional rule, he would restore democracy and return power to the people.

We agreed. But you all know of the events that took place after that I ask you, are we the ones to blame?

As you know, I have been in contract with President Yahya Khan. As leader of the majority party in the National Assembly, I asked him to set February 15 as the day for its opening session. He did not accede to the request I made as leader of the majority party. Instead, he went along with

the delay requested by the minority leader Mr. Bhutto, and announced that the Assembly would be convened on the 3rd of March.

We accepted that and agreed to join the deliberations. I even went to the extent of saying that we, despite our majority, would still listen to any sound ideas from the minority, even if it were a lone voice. I committed myself to the support of anything to bolster the restoration of a constitutional government. When Mr. Bhutto came to Dhaka, we met. We talked. He left, a sign that the doors to negotiation were still open. Moulana Noorani and Moulana Mufti were among those West Pakistan parliamentarians who visited Dhaka and talked with me about an agreement on a constitutional framework.

I made it clear that could not agree to any deviation from the Six Points. That right rested with the people. Come, I said, let us sit down and resolve matters. But Bhutto retorted that he would not allow himself to become hostage on two fronts. He predicted that if any West Pakistani members of Parliament were to come to Dhaka, the Assembly would be turned into a slaughterhouse. He added that if anyone were to participate in such a session, a countrywide agitation would be launched from Peshawar to Karachi and every business would be shut down in protest.

I assured him that the Assembly would be convened and despite the dire threats, West Pakistani leaders did come down to Dhaka. But suddenly, on March I, the session was canceled.

There was an immediate outcry against this move by the people. I called for a hartal as a peaceful form of protest and the masses took to the streets in response. And what did we get as a response?

He turned his guns on my helpless people, a people with no arms to defend themselves. These were the same arms that had been purchased with our own money to protect us from external enemies. But it is my people who are being fired upon today. In the past, too, each time we the numerically larger segment of Pakistan’s population tried to assert our rights and control our destiny, they conspired against us and pounced upon us.

I have asked them this before: How can you make your own brothers the target of your bullets?

Now Yahya Khan says that I had agreed to a Round Table Conference on the 10th. Let me point out that is not true.

I had said, Mr. Yahya Khan, you are the President of this country. Come to Dhaka, come and see how our poor Bengali people have been mown down by your bullets, how the laps of our mothers and sisters have been robbed and left empty and bereft, how my helpless people have been slaughtered. Come, I said, come and see for self and then be the judge and decide. That is what I told him.

Earlier, I had told him there would be no Round Table Conference. What Round Table Conference, whose Round Table Conference? You expect me to sit at a Round Table Conference with the very same people who have emptied the laps of my mothers and my sisters?

On the 3rd, at the Paltan, I called for a non-cooperation movement and the shutdown of offices, courts, and revenue collection. You gave me full support. Then suddenly, without consulting me or even informing us, he met with one individual for five hours and then made a speech in which he threw all the blame on me, and laid all the fault at the door of the Bengali people!

The deadlock was created by Bhutto, yet the Bengalis are the ones facing the bullets! We face their guns, yet it's our fault. We are the ones being bitten by their bullets- and it's still our fault!

So, the struggle this time is a struggle for emancipation, the struggle this time is a struggle for independence! Brothers, they have now called the Assembly to assassin on March 25, with the streets not yet dry of the blood of my brothers. You have called the Assembly, but you must first agree to meet my demands. Martial Law must be withdrawn; the soldiers must return to their barracks; the murderers of my people must be redressed. And …. Power must be handed over to the elected representatives of the people.

Only then will we consider if we can take part in the National Assembly or not! Before these demands are met, there can be no question of our participation in this session of the Assembly. That is one right not given to me as part of my mandate from the masses.

As I told them earlier, Mujibur Rahman refuses to walk to the Assembly trading upon the fresh stains of his brothers' blood! Do you, my brothers, have complete faith in me….? …. Let me tell you that the Prime Ministership is not what I seek. What I want is justice and the rights of the people of this land. They tempted me with the Prime Ministership but they failed to buy me over. Nor did they succeed in hanging me on the gallows, for you rescued me with your blood from the so-called conspiracy case. That day, right here at this racecourse, I had pledged to you that I would pay for this blood debt with my own blood. Do you remember? I am ready today to fulfill that promise!

I now declare the closure of all the courts, offices, and educational institutions for an indefinite period of time. No one will report to their offices- that is my instruction to you.

So that the poor are not inconvenienced, rickshaws, trains, and other transport will ply normally-except serving any needs of the armed forces. If the army does not respect this, I shall not be responsible for the consequences.

The Secretariat, Supreme Court, High Court, Judge's Courts, and government and semi-government offices shall remain shut. Only banks may open for two hours daily for business transactions. But no money shall be transmitted from East to West Pakistan. The Bengali people must stay calm during these times. Telegraph and telephone communications will be confined within Bangladesh.

The people of this land are facing elimination, so be on guard. If need be, we will bring everything to a total standstill……. Collect your salaries on time. If the salaries are held up, if a single bullet is fired upon us henceforth if the murder of my people does not cease, I call upon you to turn every home into a fortress against their onslaught. Use whatever you can put your hands on to confront this enemy. Every last road must be blocked. We will deprive them of food, we will deprive them of water. Even if I am not around to give you the orders, and if my associates are also not to be found, I ask you to continue your movement unabated.

I say to them again, you are my brothers, return now to the barracks where you belong and no one will bear any hostility toward you. Only do not attempt to aim any more bullets at our hearts: It will not do any good! ….. And the seven million people of this land will not be cowed down

by you or accept suppression anymore. The Bengali people have learned how to die for a cause and you will not be able to bring them under your yoke of suppression!

To assist the families of the martyred and the injured, the Awami League has set up committees that will do all they can. Please donate whatever you can. Also, employers must give full pay to the workers who participated in the seven days of hartal or were not able to work because of curfews. To all government employees, I say that my directives must be followed. I had better not see any of you attending your offices. From today, until this land has been freed, no taxes will be paid to the government anymore. As of now, the stop. Leave everything to me. I know how to organize the movement. But be very careful. Keep in mind that the enemy has infiltrated our ranks to engage in the work of provocateurs. Whether Bengali or non-Bengali, Hindu or Muslim, all are our brothers and it is our responsibility to ensure their safety.
I also ask you to stop listening to radio, television, and the press if these media do not report news of our movement. To them, I say, "You are our brothers. I beseech you to not turn this country into a living hell. Will you not have to show your face and confront your conscience someday?

If we can peaceably settle our differences there is still hope that we can co-exist as brothers. Otherwise, there is no hope. If you choose the other path, we may never come to face one another again. For now, I have just one thing to ask of you: Give up any thoughts of enslaving this country under military rule again!" I ask my people to immediately set up committees under the leadership of the Awami League to carry on our struggle in every neighborhood, village, union, and subdivision of this land.

You must prepare yourselves now with what little you have for the struggle ahead.

Since we have given blood, we will give more of it. But, Insha'Allah, we will free the people of this land!

The struggle this time is for emancipation! The struggle this time is for independence!

Be ready. We cannot afford to lose our momentum. Keep the movement and the struggle alive because if we fall back they will come down hard upon us.

Be disciplined. No nation’s movement can be victorious without discipline.

Joy Bangla!

Speech Transcript (Chile)

People of Chile: this afternoon, for the first time, I am speaking to you as President of the Republic, President of all of us who live in this country that we love so much—a country which has suffered greatly, and which has given us so much joy.

Thank you to all of you for giving me this honour, and to those of you who are watching us in your homes throughout our country. Thank you also to my family, to our cabinet, our teams, and also, personally, to Irina.

This Chile, made of diverse peoples and nations, located on a continental ledge between imposing mountain ranges and the magical ocean, between the desert and the Antarctic ice, is enriched and transformed by the work of its people.

It is this Chile that in just a handful of years has gone through earthquakes, catastrophes, crises, upheavals, a world pandemic, and human rights violations that will never again be repeated in our country. But it is in this Chile in which we always dust ourselves off, wipe away our tears, smile together, roll up our sleeves, and keep going. Chilean people—we always keep going.

The emotion I felt today as I crossed the Plaza de la Constitución and entered this Palacio de La Moneda is profound, and I need to share it with you. You are a part of this process; the people of Chile are the protagonists of this process. We would not be here without your mobilisation.

And I want you to know that we are not here just to fill positions and take solace among ourselves, but to commit ourselves, body and soul, to improving life in our country.

I want to tell you, compatriots, that I have seen your faces as I travelled through our country: the faces of the elderly whose pensions are not enough to live on because some have decided to make a business out of welfare; the faces of those who fall ill and whose families have no means to afford their treatment.

Those of the students in debt, those of the peasants without water because of drought and theft. Those of the women who care for their children with ASD, who I meet in every part of Chile. Their bedridden family members, their helpless babies. Those of the families who continue to search for their disappeared ones, for whom we will not stop searching.

Those of the gender non-conforming, who have been discriminated against and excluded for so long. Those of the artists who cannot make a living from their work, because culture is not sufficiently valued in our country. Those of the social leaders who fight for the right to dignified housing in the poblaciones [shanty towns] of Chile. Those of the indigenous peoples dispossessed of their land, but never of their history.

The faces of the stifled middle class, the faces of the children of the SENAME [National Youth Care Service]; the faces of the most isolated areas of our country like the Magallanes, where I come from; the faces of those who live in forgotten poverty.

Our commitment is to you.

Today we begin a period of great challenges and immense responsibility. But we are not starting from zero. Chile has a long history, and today, this day, makes us part of it.

To begin my mandate as Constitutional President of the Republic of Chile is to become part of a history that exceeds us all, but which at the same time gives shape, sense, and direction to our vision.

Thousands of people have passed through here before us—those who made possible the expansion of public education, the progressive recognition of women and gender non-conforming people in the country and at home, the democratisation of the country, the recognition of social rights.

Through here, the place from where I speak to you today, passed Balmaceda and his Chilean dignity, Pedro Aguirre Cerda, and his ‘to govern is to educate’ quote from Valentín Letelier.

Through here passed Eduardo Frei Montalva and the popular promotion policies, comrade Salvador Allende and the nationalisation of copper, Patricio Aylwin and the return to democracy, Michelle Bachelet opening unexplored roads with social provision policies.

Here, we also hear the echoes of those who have anonymously stood up against oppression, defended human rights, demanded truth, justice, reparation, and guarantees of non-repetition.

Around here resounds the feminist clamour and the struggle for equality. Some will also remember the 1,800 hours of running around La Moneda for education.

But these walls have also been witness to the horrors of past violence and oppression—horrors we have not forgotten, and will not forget. Where we speak today, yesterday, rockets came through. That can never again be repeated in our history.

This palace, this square, this city, this country, all have a history, and it is to that history that we also owe a debt. Today is an important day on the difficult road of change on which the people have decided to embark, importantly, in unity. And the days when, together with many of those present here and watching at home, we marched together for a dignified future come to my mind and to my heart.

Where were we marching to, compatriots? Where were we marching to?

This government will not be the end of that march. We are going to continue walking, and the road will undoubtedly be long and difficult—but today, the dreams of millions of people are here pushing us, giving us the strength of purpose to bring the changes that society demands safely into harbour.

Chilean people: my dream is that when we finish our mandate—and I speak in the plural, because this is not something individual; this is not about me, this is about the mandate that the people have given us for this collective project—we are able to look at our children, our sisters, our parents, our neighbours, our grandparents, and feel that there is a country that protects us, welcomes us, cares for us, guarantees us rights, and fairly retributes the contributions and sacrifices that each one of you make for the development of our society.

I would like, compatriots, for the people of Puchuncaví and Coronel to look to the future and know that their children will not grow up surrounded by contamination—something so basic. I would like the workers of Lota to no longer continue living in poverty.

I would like the communities of seaweed-harvesters and artisanal fishermen in the province of Cardenal Caro to be able to continue carrying out their traditional activities, and the children of Alto Hospicio to know that they too will be able to access dignified housing.

I would like the residents of Antofagasta, of Maipú, of Hualpén, to feel peace of mind when they return from work and have time to live with their families. That is why, as we have committed ourselves to, we will promote the forty-hour week.

I would like the young people of Juan Fernández, that isolated place, that island, to have a decent school to study in.

We know that achieving our goals will not be easy, that we will face external and internal crises, that we will make mistakes, and that we will have to make amends for those mistakes with humility, always listening to those who think differently, and supporting ourselves on the people of Chile.

I want to tell you that we are going to live through challenging and tremendously complex times. The pandemic continues its course, with a toll of pain and loss of life that will be with us for a long time. Surely all of you know someone who has left us as a result of the pandemic.

Let's think, for a second, about those who have left us. Let's think about the pain that each family feels for those who have left and will not return. We have to embrace each other as a society, love each other again, smile again. This is beyond speeches, and beyond what is written: how important, how different it is, when, as a people, we love each other, take care of each other, trust each other, support each other. We ask our neighbour how they are doing, we support the worker next to us, we appreciate each other, we move forward together. That is what we have to build, compatriots.

We also know that the economy is still suffering and that the country needs to get back on its feet, and to grow and distribute the fruits of that growth in a fair manner. When there is no distribution of wealth, when wealth is concentrated in the hands of just a few, the result is very hard. We need to redistribute the wealth produced by the Chilean people, produced by those who live in our country.

Besides all of these difficulties, we know we have, additionally, an international context marked by violence in many parts of the world, and today, also by war. In this, I want to be very clear: Chile, our country, will always promote respect for human rights, everywhere, and regardless of the colour of the government that violates them.

From Chile, in our Latin America—because we are profoundly Latin American, and it is time to stop looking at our neighbouring countries from a distance—we will make efforts to ensure that the voice of the South is once again heard in a changing world.

The challenges are so many: the climate emergency, migration, economic globalisation, the energy crisis, the permanent violence against women and LGBT+ people. We must work together with our sibling peoples, as we discussed today with presidents from other countries. Let us never again look down on each other, and never again look at each other with mistrust—let us instead work jointly in Latin America to move forward together.

We will practice, compatriots, political autonomy at an international level, without ever subordinating ourselves to any power, and always pursuing coordination and cooperation between peoples.

I want you to know that, as President of Chile, our Cabinet and our teams will not ignore problems. We will explain; we will talk with you about the reasons for our decisions, so that you too can be a part of the solutions. This requires changing the relationship we have with the authorities. The authorities cannot be unreachable—we want ministers on the ground, in the street, with the people. We do not want to make visits to the regions that only last a couple of hours to inaugurate a project, and that's it. We want to listen, not be in hiding.

For that, it is important that there is also reciprocity. What do I mean by that? That the relationship with the authorities should not be one of consumers; that we should work together and be citizens, and that this should be the government of the people, which you feel is your own—the government of all Chilean people.

For that, we are all going to need each other, government and opposition, institutions and civil society, social movements. Our government, whose political base is Apruebo Dignidad; I also salute our comrades who have worked so hard for this, and the parties of Convergencia Progresista.

I want you to know that this government does not end with its supporters. I will be the President of all Chilean people, and I will always listen to constructive criticism and proposals from those who think differently to us—who will always be guaranteed the freedom and right to dissent.

As I have said more than once, quoting words born in the heat of mobilisations in a school occupation in a población, far away, in a lost region (because from the mobilisations [of the people] we come): today we are here, but we do not forget where we come from.

We are going slowly because we are going far, and we are not going alone, but with all of you: men, women, boys and girls who are with us today in this square; through your screens in your homes; maybe on your mobile phones, on the bus; or those who are following us from abroad and longing for their beloved Chile—it is essential, as I have said, that you are an active part of this process, because we cannot do this alone.

From here, I would like to make a call to all of you to join each other in this task. Let us walk together the road of hope, and let us all build the change towards a country that is dignified and just. Dignity—what a beautiful word. We will build it step by step with the wisdom of those who know that the changes that last are those based on accumulated knowledge, and supported by large majorities.

We will pay special attention, as I have pointed out, to the effects that the pandemic has had on the health system, on the workers who have protected and cared for us, on the waiting lists that generate so much anguish within families.

We are going to continue the successful vaccination strategy of the last government, always making health the first priority. We will also implement a specific strategy to deal with the consequences of mental health issues, because mental health matters too.

We are going to focus, specifically, on education, where there has been a huge gap as a result of the need to close schools. We have to reopen schools so that our children can meet again, ensuring, of course, all the safety measures to make this possible.

We are going to implement the consolidation of our economy, for a recovery that does not reproduce structural inequalities. We need growth that is sustainable, without sacrifice zones—and for this, the state is also responsible.

We want the small and medium-sized enterprises that generate value to grow again. We want to put an end to the abuses that have happened so unjustly, and have so justly outraged our people, and we want to follow up on the good past ideas of dignified employment.

We also recognise that millions of Chilean people live with fear today, and we cannot look the other way. We are going to tackle the problem of crime by tackling the social inequality that is at its root, and by reforming the police to ensure a presence in the places that most need it, to increase the effectiveness of investigations, and to focus on the criminal and drug trafficking

organisations that destroy our neighbourhoods. I have a message for those who have made crime commonplace and who believe they can live with impunity: we will confront them with the community.

We also need to repair the wounds left by the social uprising. That is why, yesterday, we withdrew the lawsuits made on the basis of the state's Internal Security Law [against political prisoners after the 2019 uprising], because we are convinced that, as the people of Chile, we need to come together again. We will work intensely on this; we have talked about this with the families of the prisoners, too.

We also know, compatriots, that we will face great challenges in the North and in the South. In the North, because of the migratory crisis, we will retake control of our borders and work together with our sibling countries to collectively address the challenges caused by the exodus of thousands of human beings. Please, let us never forget that we are human beings.

I want to say to the people of Colchane, of Iquique, of Antofagasta, of San Pedro, that they will not be alone; the people of Arica, as well.

We also have a problem in the South. In the past, it was talked about as the pacification of Araucanía—a crass and unfair term. Later, some people called it the Mapuche conflict. It is not the Mapuche conflict: it is the conflict between the Chilean state and a people who have the right to exist. There, the solution is not and will not be violence.

We will work tirelessly to rebuild trust after so many decades of abuse and dispossession. The recognition of existence of a people, with all that this implies, will be our objective, and the path will be dialogue, peace, rights, and empathy with all the victims—yes, all the victims. Let us cultivate reciprocity, let us not see each other as enemies. We must come together again.

In this first year of government, we have also given ourselves the task of supporting the constitutional process for which we have fought so hard. We are going to wholeheartedly support the work of the Convention. We need a Constitution that unites us, that we feel is our own; a Constitution that, unlike the one imposed by blood, fire, and fraud by the dictatorship, is born in democracy, on a basis of parity, with the participation of the indigenous peoples; a Constitution that is for the present and for the future; a Constitution that is for all of us, and not just for a few.

I invite you to listen to each other in good faith, without caricatures. Let us take this seriously, on all sides. I say it to ourselves, too: let us listen in good faith, so that the exit plebiscite [for the new constitution] can be a meeting point, not a point of division, and so that we can sign here, together with the people, for the first time in the history of Chile, a democratic, equal Constitution, with the participation of all our peoples.

Chilean people: the world is watching us. I am sure that they are watching what is happening in Chile with hope.

We have the opportunity to humbly contribute to the construction of a fairer society, and I am sure that we will live up to this democratic process that was decided by an immense people's majority. Let us replicate this result.

Dear inhabitants of our land: I assume today with humility, and with awareness of the difficulties, the mandate that you have entrusted to me. I do so with the conviction that only in the collective construction of a more dignified society can we found a better life for all. In Chile, no one is superfluous. Democracy is built by all of us together, and the life that we dream of can only be born from coexistence, dialogue, democracy, and collaboration, and not from exclusion.

I know that in four more years the people of Chile will judge us by our deeds and not by our words, and that, as an old poet said, the adjective, when it does not give life, kills. Today it was necessary to speak; tomorrow we must all get to work together.

As Salvador Allende predicted almost fifty years ago, we are here once again, compatriots, opening the great avenues through which the free man and the free woman can walk, to build a better society.

We keep going. Long live Chile!