Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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On March 10, a team of six volunteers flew to Santiago, capital of Chile, to see how Tzu Chi Foundation could help the victims of the devastating earthquake that shook the country at the end of February. It was the first time that members of the foundation on a relief mission have set foot in Chile.

On February 27, an earthquake measuring 8.8 on the Richter scale occurred of the coast of the Maule region of Chile, leaving more than 500 people dead; many more have been reported missing. It also damaged more than 500,000 homes and forced thousands of people to sleep in the open. It was so powerful that it moved the entire city of Concepcion, Chile's second largest city, by 3.04 metres to the west. It was the strongest earthquake to hit Chile since the 9.5 Valdivia earthquake in 1960.

Survey the need

The six volunteers flew from the Argentine capital of Buenos Aires to Santiago, where they met officials of the government. Then they embarked on a journey of nine hours to Concepcion, the city worst hit by the quake, to survey the damage at the epicenter. Thanks to the introduction of local overseas businessmen, they met the city's mayor to discuss how they could join the relief effort and help the affected people. One volunteer said that they will need blankets and tents. Following this initial contact, the volunteers will make a detailed survey of the requirements of the survivors, before taking the next step.

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