

Foundation Conducts First Major Distribution in Chile

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The foundation conducted its first major distribution of aid in Chile, following the terrible earthquake on February 27; it provided food and blankets to 2,500 families, a total of more than 5,000 people. It is the first relief operation by Tzu Chi in this South American country.

The distribution took place on March 27 and 28 in three districts in southern Chile that were badly affected by the quake – Dichato, Tumbes and Cobquecura. The goods were distributed by more than 100 people, including 72 volunteers from Brazil, Paraguay, Argentine, Bolivia, the United States and Taiwan, as well as local volunteers, including Taiwan business people resident in Chile. On the 27th, at Dichato and Tumbes, the volunteers gave out 1,326 boxes of supplies, including cooking oil, sugar, salt, flour, noodles, milk powder and 2,676 blankets, to 5,324 people. The next day, they distributed the supplies to 1,000 families at Cobquecura.

Before the distribution, a volunteer from Argentina, Hong Liangdai, read in Spanish a letter from [Master Cheng Yen](#), expressing her love and condolences to the recipients. As she was reading it, Hong was moved to tears, as were the members of the audience. The volunteers did a performance of sign language and prayed with the survivors for them to overcome the disaster and rebuild their homes. They promised to work together with them on this journey. When the volunteers reached the fishing village of Tumbes in the afternoon, they were greeted with placards and banners of welcome.

Members of the Chilean army helped in the distribution, in carrying the boxes and using their trucks to deliver them to the tents where the survivors live. Earlier, the air force had lent planes to deliver the aid, to ensure that it arrived as quickly as possible.

The preparation of the boxes was a major operation. Volunteers had to pack 2,500 boxes in time for the distribution in the three venues. For reasons of speed, they purchased locally all the goods and cardboard boxes, each marked with 'Tzu Chi Foundation' in Spanish. Taiwanese people living in Chile played an important role. One of them, Xie Zhenxiang, provided his warehouse to pack and store the aid. Another, Yang Yahui, an entrepreneur who runs a food processing factory, helped to organize the purchase and bore in mind the principles of Tzu Chi's disaster relief. "When the goods arrived, some were damaged and had to be bought again," he said. "Master Cheng Yen says that we need to give the best we have. Sister Hong kept reminding me that we have to respect the disaster victims."

The weekend before the distribution, the volunteers gathered together for the packing. One was Wu Huilan, she packed for five hours without interruption. "The boxes are heavy," she said. "There is a five-kilo pack of flour, a four-kilo pack of noodles, a liter of cooking oil, 800 grams of milk power, a kilo of salt and three kilos of sugar. Packing is a form of exercise." A local doctor, Yang Chuangrong, came with this wife to help with the packing straight after he finished work. In just over five hours, the 28 volunteers packed over 1,600 boxes, 60 per cent of the total. "We

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have packed over 1,600 boxes tonight,” said volunteer Zhu Wenzhang. “It is the united effort of everyone. We are not tired yet and would like to pack some more.”

[Life Wisdom](#) : [Respect and Love in Chile Quake Relief](#)