

to Santiago, via Miami, New York or Sao Paulo. Return air fares range from roughly C \$4,500 for business class to about C \$3,000 for economy, although cheaper excursion fares are often available. The other main disadvantage is that Chile has a relatively small overall market and a particularly small one for most consumer goods. The average income is not only very low, but also badly distributed. This makes the upper classes at least as affluent as their counterparts in Mexico, but in Chile's case there are less than 3 million of them versus the 20 million in Mexico.

The good news is that Chile's economic successes are being used to improve this situation. Real per capita income is growing at about 4.5 percent per year, while it has fallen in several other countries in the region. Government social programs are pouring large amounts of money into the poorest regions of the country and the poverty rate has fallen steadily. Educational, medical, health and safety and housing programs have become the most advanced on the continent. In addition, Chile's ultra-modern telecommunications system compensates for distance to some extent. In particular, electronic mail (e-mail) is reliable and widely used. Thus, in spite of its problems, Chile is leading other countries in the region both economically and technologically, and is increasingly seen as a model that can be applied elsewhere. Canadian companies that partner with Chile and participate in its further development will find open doors throughout the continent.