

II.3.2 Airports⁴

20. In this sector there are two State controlling agencies: The General Directorate of Civil Aeronautics and the Board of Civil Aeronautics. These agencies exert a strong control over the investments made in the sector.

21. In the most important airport in Chile --Comodoro Arturo Merino-- located in the capital of the country, important modernization and expansion works are reaching their completion. These works involve an investment of the order of US\$ 50 million.

II.3.3 Ports

22. Chile, due to its geographic characteristics, depends to an important degree on maritime transport. The Chilean port system is made up of 23 ports. Twelve of them are managed by the State (Emporchi) and 11 are privately managed. The largest ones are Valparaiso, San Antonio and Talcahuano.

23. Since 1981, the operations to move the cargo into the ports are carried out by the private sector. The Frei Government decided not to privatize EMPORCHI (Empresa Portuaria de Chile) however, they are in favour of privatizing some of the port activities performed by them such as cargo terminal administration and container handling.

24. National ports, especially those in the Central Zone (Valparaiso and San Antonio) are reaching their limit of efficiency. A port is deemed to be inefficient when its piers are occupied more than 60% of the days of the year. The ports of Valparaiso and San Antonio have surpassed that limit. The index of port occupation in the U.S.A. is of 25%.

25. In the ports managed by EMPORCHI, investments of the order of US\$ 200 million are to be made over the next four years. On the other hand, the private sector will invest about US\$ 100 million in the ports of Mejillones, Lirquen and Coronel (See Table V).

II.3.4 Road network

26. The country has an interurban road network of 80,000 kilometres. More than a million vehicles circulate on them, with 90% concentrated on the Basic Network (Panamerican Highway) of 23,000 kilometres. Of these, only 11,000 kilometres are paved.

27. The growth of the Chilean export sector, the expansion of the cities, along with the explosive increase of the rate of motorization which trade liberalization and the growth of per capita income has brought about are some of the indicators which emphasize the strong needs for improvement of the road infrastructure of the country and of the business opportunities it paves the way for.

⁴ In chapter I, additional information is provided on air transport.