

As you are aware, the major earthquake which struck Chile on Saturday has caused a national disaster. Everyone working with and for the ALMA Project in Chile has been personally affected in one way or another. We are immensely relieved that, as far as we can ascertain at this time, there have been no serious injuries to ALMA staff or to members of their families, although many have suffered property damage, in some cases very severe.

The ALMA sites in the North of Chile were not affected by the earthquake. Access to the Santiago offices, which do not seem to have suffered major damage, is being restored.

In order for our staff to be with their families during this national crisis, ALMA has decided to suspend general operations, including AIV and commissioning activities, for the remainder of this week. The majority of the JAO staff on OSF, will be leaving the site for Santiago by bus today. Support services at the OSF are however running as normal, and for IPT staff we are making the decision on a case by case basis as to whether it is more appropriate to remain at the OSF, or travel to Santiago.

The Santiago airport remains closed for both internal and international flights. We will monitor and assess this situation on a daily basis. In the interim, we request that any international staff who had planned travel to Santiago delay this travel to March 10<sup>th</sup> at the earliest. We will contact individual IPTs, to discuss this situation in more detail.

We appreciate your support at this difficult time.

Thijs de Graauw