



URUGUAY



Intervención del
Señor Presidente de la República Oriental del Uruguay

S.E. Dr. Jorge Batlle Ibáñez

Debate General
59º Período de Sesiones de la Asamblea General
Naciones Unidas

Nueva York, 23 de setiembre de 2004
(Valc texto leído)

Address by

H.E. Dr. Jorge Batlle Ibáñez

President of Uruguay

59th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
General Debate

New York, 23 September 2004
(Check against delivery)

Mr President,
No one denies today that globalization is here to stay.

Not only has it changed the world of communications so that everything now happens at the same time throughout the world, but it has also made frontiers fixed by history now meaningless. The current generation of young people has more contact with others living thousands of kilometers away than with their neighbors or relatives. A global culture is emerging among us.

While this is happening the world is still experiencing its nationalisms, cultures, age-old habits, interests and projects that are inherent to nations and which are often alien to the new realities.

The question that we Governments ask, and in particular those that represent small nations, is whether this inexorable change can be handled by the organizations that we have created or whether these organizations still have a long way to go in adapting to the new reality.

Looking at the impressive success achieved since San Francisco in 1944 to today, two things emerge clearly. Firstly, the institutions that we have created represent the greatest and most successful effort made by mankind to organize its peaceful coexistence and to equip the planet with appropriate instruments for dealing with the most important aspects of the lives of human beings in society.

Secondly, it is equally clear that the world of that time has changed so much that its reality now far exceeds the capacity of its institutions, which were created to address and resolve issues that today have taken on totally different characteristics.

It suffices to recall that the founding Members of the United Nations were 51 - today the number of member States amounts to 191. What is more important is that only half the number of people alive today lived on the planet at that time. And the total will soon reach 9 billion.

Over the last forty years, moreover, advances in science and their subsequent technological applications have multiplied the resources of a small group of nations, leaving far behind many other countries, some of which recently gained their independence, most of them rich in natural resources but lacking the basic structures needed to achieve sustainable growth and where, in addition and no doubt as a consequence of this, the population is increasing at very high rates and emigration will create in other continents serious difficulties of coexistence.

Again I ask, are the United Nations, which has recognized this situation in its Millennium Declaration, and its various agencies adequately equipped to deal with these problems?

The need for change, for adapting to the times, becomes even greater and more urgent.

Uruguay, which has been a Member of the United Nations since its founding and which has faith in the Organization and in the various multilateral agencies that support the Organization's efforts to improve the quality of life for its people, understands the need to examine the reform of the Charter so that nations that did not represent at that time what

they represent today can assume greater obligations in the inescapable tasks that the situation of mankind now imposes on us.

It is time for them to share greater responsibility, together with those five nations that assumed such responsibility sixty years ago.

Uruguay has also been participating for many years in the various United Nations peacekeeping operations. Uruguay is One of the largest troop contributors in the world, and the first if considered the relationship between population and peace keepers. We have participated in operations in Asia and Africa and we are currently deployed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Eritrea and other locations.

Uruguay acknowledges and welcomes the wise and farsighted effort by the European Union to equal at the highest level that of the nations with marked differences in income levels. The examples of Ireland, Portugal, Spain and Greece, which will surely be emulated in the new countries that recently became members of the European Union, clearly point to the way forward in Congo and Haiti.

Mr President,
Achieving peace would be futile if at the same time the United Nations lacks a ready source of funding that could be immediately spent for the benefit of none other than the peoples for whom it is intended.

We must create global and largely autonomous financial instruments to achieve these goals. This is the only way in which we can succeed.

A nation like Haiti, with 27,000 square kilometers of territory and 9 million inhabitants, where the average number of children per mother is 4.7, and which is lacking the necessary institutional and material infrastructure, cannot resolve its problems merely because a contingent of military forces from MERCOSUR countries are ensuring peace.

Another type of action is needed. If our aim is to respond to the demands of a different world, we must do so with different objectives, procedures and resources. Only the United Nations can undertake this task.

Just three years since the fateful day of 11 September and just over six months since the tragedy in Madrid, new and terrible forms of violence continue in other parts of the world claiming hundreds of innocent victims, in Russia, in the Middle East, and are taking place with all their destructive power, thereby posing a permanent threat to the world as a whole, a source of irresistible sadness and a cause for despair about the human condition itself.

Over and beyond their dates and precise location, all of these acts of terrorist violence constitute a new diffuse and indiscriminate enemy of peaceful coexistence. They have altered the international agenda and the lives of people everywhere, claiming thousands of victims in an unending spiral of violence and aggression.

Terrorism and a genuine commitment to combat and defeat it must therefore be the first item on the domestic and international agendas. And this is certainly much more than mere words.

In our view, each State, each nation and community and, certainly, each human being must contribute to this common endeavor and in doing so help the United Nations to fulfill its role as universal guarantor.

Naturally, the international system with its global and regional institutions must be in the forefront in organizing the struggle against this scourge, as it has been doing and will continue to do in various parts of the world.

The fight against this and other evils—hunger, poverty, underdevelopment, marginalization, exclusion, in short inhumanity—needs a United Nations that is more united and capable of more rapid and effective responses. This is why it must be more representative, balanced and reliable, so that it could continue to be a reference point for the weak and a restraining influence on the strong.

Our country has recently adopted legislation aimed at strengthening the system of prevention and control of money laundering and financing of terrorism.

With regard specifically to the fight against terrorism, the law:

- a) Punishes terrorist activities and their financing, basing its provisions on the principles contained in the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism and the Inter-American Convention Against Terrorism;
- b) Establishes a procedure for freezing the assets of terrorist organizations and persons connected with them, in accordance with the provisions of the above mentioned instruments. It is also in compliance with the mandate contained in resolution 1373 (2001) of the United Nations Security Council.

The law also provides for improvements in the international cooperation mechanisms for combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism.

Lastly, Uruguay has ratified eleven of the twelve treaties against terrorism of universal scope, apart from two regional ones.

Mr. President,

At the Millennium Summit and in the Doha Declaration and Monterrey Consensus, we agreed on principles, goals and priorities and we made commitments which we have just reaffirmed a few days ago at our Summit of World Leaders on the Action against Hunger and Poverty.

We wish to affirm here once more that if one of the current goals of the multilateral system is to discipline and effectively operate in a globalized world, then the elaboration of more just and equitable rules of international trade becomes a key chapter in the march towards social and political stability, which is today in serious jeopardy.

This is particularly important since it is well known that States that preach and demand freedom of trade and opening of markets impose and institute obstacles to trade, subsidize their production in distorting ways, and engage in disloyal competition with

countries such as ours and many others that can only offer to the world the fruit grown from their land and the fruit of the labor of their people.

Uruguay attaches great importance to the economic and financial questions. The most tangible demonstration of this is the fact that Uruguay has dealt with the worst crisis in its history with frankly positive results, which has permitted us to complete our constitutional mandate with growth in the national product in the order of 9%, thanks to the joint efforts of our people and Government, of the Governments of friendly countries and of the international financial system.

Mr President,

We wish to reiterate our firm support for the Doha Round and to express our strong hopes that its deliberations will lead to a greater opening of markets. People will become strong only if they are able to create their future from within themselves and in freedom.

Freedom is an indivisible whole.

Mr President,

One does not strengthen democracy if at the same time women and men cannot find decent work to which to dedicate their efforts. This cannot be achieved with only assistance but with freedom of trade.

Lastly, Mr. President, Uruguay is a country that is committed to the international system and to the progressive development of international law, whose most recent expression has been the establishment of the International Criminal Court, of which its Statute we have ratified.

Uruguay reaffirms its conviction that multilateralism is the main principle upon which the conduct of the international affairs must be based and aspires, from an operational perspective, for the region and the world to combine their efforts, in a realistic and committed approach.

It therefore continues to believe in the United Nations as an institution that can always be improved, recognizing in it our best collective instrument in the search for peace.