



BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA
Permanent Mission to the United Nations

On behalf of the Union of South American Nations
(UNASUR)

Thematic Debate on
Other Weapons of Mass Destruction

Fist Committee of the General Assembly

Please check upon delivery

October 17th 2016

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).
2. Allow me on behalf of UNASUR Member States to recall that in the Declaration on Security of the Americas, signed in 2003, our countries declared “our objective to make the Americas a region free of biological and chemical weapons”. In addition, through Resolution 2107, of 2005, adopted by the General Assembly of the Organization of American States, we decided unanimously to “fulfill concretely the shared commitment of Member States to make the Americas a region free of biological and chemical weapons”.
3. UNASUR States strongly condemn the existence of chemical and biological weapons and reiterates that their use is a crime against humanity. The catastrophic consequences of their use must be prevented through their complete elimination.
4. UNASUR reaffirms its commitment to the prohibition of the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and to their total elimination, as agreed in the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. We also support its full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation, and encourage the continued work towards its universalization.

Mr. Chairman,

5. As reiterated during the Seventh UNASUR Summit Meeting in Paramaribo, our region considers the use of chemical weapons in all its forms a war crime and a crime against humanity, and affirms the need to address the issue in the light of international law, in an impartial and transparent manner.
6. UNASUR reaffirms its most resolute condemnation of the use of chemical weapons and any other weapon of mass destruction, by any actor at any time and under any

circumstances. In that sense, UNASUR expresses deep concern over the use of chemical weapons in Irak and Syria.

7. UNASUR reaffirms the importance of taking and strengthening national measures, as appropriate, to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery and materials and technologies related to their manufacture, in accordance with relevant resolutions from the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council.
8. Regarding Libya, we welcome the initiative of the Security Council, who adopted unanimously Resolution 2298 (2016) after a request made by the Libyan authorities, authorizing member states to acquire, control, transport, transfer and destroy chemical weapons identified by the OPCW in Libya to ensure that the country's stockpile was eliminated in the "soonest and safest" manner.
9. In this regard, we express satisfaction for the announcement made by the OPCW in August confirming the complete elimination of the remaining chemical weapons in the country, through his transportation abroad in order to be finally destroyed.
10. UNASUR States warmly welcome the recent accessions of Angola and Myanmar to the Convention on Chemical Weapons. While highlighting the growing participation of States in the Convention, we call upon States that have not acceded to, to do so promptly. We also express our appreciation for the efforts made by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in promoting the universalization of the Convention and the full implementation of all its provisions.
11. We reiterate the importance of the agreement reached in December 2011, which stipulated a framework for the completion of the destruction of the remaining chemical arsenals, while preserving the integrity of the Convention and the credibility of the OPCW.
12. In this regard, we call upon the chemical-weapon countries to fulfill their obligations under the terms stipulated by the Convention and to destroy their arsenals within the

agreed timeframe. We also call upon all States that may possess chemical weapons to eliminate them and to join the Convention promptly, without any condition.

Mr. Chairman,

13. UNASUR notes that the provisions of the Convention should be applied so as to avoid hampering the economic or technological development of States Parties and international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention, as well as those relating to international scientific and technical information and chemicals and equipment for the production, processing or use of chemicals for purposes not prohibited under the Convention.
14. UNASUR States express their appreciation to the Technical Secretariat's contribution towards the development and effectiveness of the Organization, which helps to achieve the object and purpose of the Convention and to ensure the full implementation of its provisions, including those for international verification of compliance, while serving as a forum for consultation and cooperation to States Parties.
15. UNASUR States appreciate the international cooperation and assistance provided by OPCW, including through the promotion of events on assistance and protection against chemical weapons, which are convened annually across several UNASUR States. We believe that such initiatives contribute to the promotion of a safer environment in our region.
16. UNASUR welcomes the outcome of the Third Review Conference of the Convention for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, held in The Hague from 8 to 19 of April 2013. We underline, in particular, the adoption by consensus of its final report, which addressed all aspects of the Convention and made important recommendations on its continued implementation.

17. UNASUR also reaffirms the fundamental importance of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC). We ensure our readiness to continue cooperating actively and constructively to advance the goals of full implementation and universalization of the Convention.
18. In this regards, UNASUR welcomes the convening of the Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention to be held in Geneva in November 2016, and for which we look forward to having successful outcome.
19. We share, with many other States, the idea that effective international action against biological threats needs to be universal, legally binding and non-discriminatory. There is a need to design and implement additional measures to ensure effective enforcement of the banning. We therefore support the prompt resumption of negotiations on a Protocol to the BWC that establishes an effective verification regime, aiming at universal implementation of the Convention.
20. UNASUR Member States have actively participated in the Meeting of the States Parties and in the Meetings of Experts. We welcome the discussions that took place in line with the Standing Agenda adopted at the Seventh Review Conference of the BWC, in particular those related to strengthening cooperation and assistance under Article X, an essential tool for the realization of the objectives of the Convention.
21. UNASUR remains convinced that national measures translate obligations undertaken by States into practical and effective actions. We reiterate, therefore, our support for the Support Unit for the Implementation of the Convention (ISU), which has lent its assistance to Member States.

Mr. Chairman,

22. In conclusion, UNASUR reaffirms that the Conventions for the prohibition of chemical and biological weapons are vital international legal instruments to guide multilateral efforts in the struggle for the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction under strict and effective international control.

Thank you.