

URUGUAY



**63º PERÍODO DE SESIONES DE LA
ASAMBLEA GENERAL DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS**

DEBATE GENERAL

INTERVENCIÓN DEL

Dr. GONZALO FERNÁNDEZ

MINISTRO DE RELACIONES EXTERIORES DEL URUGUAY

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**63rd SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

GENERAL DEBATE

STATEMENT BY

Dr. GONZALO FERNÁNDEZ

MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF URUGUAY

New York, September 27th, 2008

(Check against delivery)

Mr. President of the General Assembly
Mr. Secretary General
Excelencies Heads of State and Government
Ministers
Permanent Representatives and Ambassadors
Ladies and Gentlemen

Uruguay, one of the founders States of the United Nations, sees its fundamental principles of its foreign policy totally reflected in the Charter of this Organization. That's why we understand that it is relevant to reaffirm, the importance that has acquired its effective use in the present international context and to emphasize, once again, the traditional Uruguayan position of unrestricted respect to international law, its support to multilateralism; the pacific settlement of disputes; the sovereign equality of States; the rejection to the use or the threat of the use of force; the nonintervention in the internal jurisdiction of States; the free determination of Peoples; the promotion and protection of human rights and the international economic and social cooperation.

This is not about a mere list of good intentions, but of juridical principles and fundamental values, whose inclusion in the Charter of the United Nations, granted them rank of international norm, to which force and applicability all the States must adjust. These principles constitute, in addition, essential tools to lead us in a world that present us great challenges. We, the Nations gathering here, must have the moral and juridical duty to find suitable solutions to make peace and development the rule of coexistence between our people.

As we all know, a serious food crisis strikes at this moment to too many countries in the world. To find a sustainable and lasting solution, it is necessary to understand and face the structural factors that lie in the origin of this crisis. Without any doubt, the correction of the distortions presented by the multilateral trade system and in particular, in agricultural trade, is a decisive element to assure a plenty provision food that covers the needs of all the population of the planet.

Uruguay considers that, apart from dealing with this serious crisis with urgent measures, it turns out indispensable to advance towards a long term solution. This must inevitable imply an increase of the efforts to strengthen the multilateral trading system and to re-launch, quickly, the negotiations in the World Trade Organization. It is essential to do this, especially in the agricultural sector, to guarantee food security and to avoid a backward movement towards protectionist practices that will only worsen the present situation.

But it's not only the food crisis that affects us, Mr. President. One of the most crucial challenges that face the world economy today is the energy crises.

So as it happens in the case of agriculture, Latin America requires technological cooperation from developed countries. Equally, and regarding the development of the production of alternative energies, like bio-energy and bio-fuels, research and technical assistance are critical to take advantage of the opportunities that this kind of production offers without affecting food security or the environment. In this matter the United Nations has a crucial catalytic role to play.

We cannot either forget the present financial crisis that affects the main developed countries. The causes of this crisis cannot be attributable to the developing countries, but their effects strike them as well as the emergent economies. This is another probe of globalization and the interdependence among States.

Mr. President,

With reference to environment and sustainable development, Uruguay is part of the main international conventions in this matter and, while it has emphasized the importance of international cooperation, it has also stressed the individual responsibility of each State to protect actively the environment on its own territory and its waters, as well as it has valued the vigilant participation of the civil society in this issue.

For that reason, my country, while receives important investments that contribute to its industrial development, also exerts a rigorous control on their environmental standards, applying its rules and demanding the use of the most modern technologies available, with an effective control in the field of the environmental impacts of such activities.

The Uruguayan Government reiterates, then, its strong commitment with the protection of the environment, as a human right and as a fundamental element for the achievement of a true sustainable development.

Another relevant issue of the agenda of this General Assembly is constituted by the Millennium Development Goals, agreed in September, with whose Uruguay is totally identified.

Within that frame, our country has taken firm steps for its implementation. Among other policies of strong social content, it is important to emphasize the recent put into operation of the National Health Integrated System, which aims at the transformation of the sanitary attention model, prioritizing primary health attention and prevention, so as to guarantee this basic right of all citizens, within the framework of the strong social inclusion policy that Uruguay is delivering.

Mr. President,

As a result of its strict attachment to International Law, Uruguay is firmly committed with the consolidation of peace and international security. Thus it is demonstrated by its condition of being one of the ten biggest -and the highest per capita- contributors of troops to the peace keeping operations of the United Nations.

Our country participates at the moment in 16 of the 18 peace-keeping missions unfolded by the United Nations in Africa, America, Asia and Europe.

From the beginning of its participation in this missions to the present time, Uruguay has been accumulating experience in matters linked to the reconstruction and consolidation of peace in areas devastated by conflicts, unfolding enormous efforts to the end hostilities, so that different societies and communities could reach peace and obtain national reconciliation.

Notwithstanding, as international experience demonstrates, although peace-keeping is essential, it is not enough to reinsert the affected countries to institutional normality and an ordered and pacific life.

To this respect, a strong involvement of the international community with the tasks of peace building is needed, that assures effectively the construction of stable, democratic and prosperous societies with vigorous institutional mechanisms to settle its conflicts. For such reason, Uruguay presented in February 2007 its candidacy to the Peace Building Commission and hopes to be able to contribute, from that seat, to reach so relevant objectives.

Mr. President,

The pursuit of peace requires a fortified and effective organization, which leads us to the United Nations reform process.

Those negotiations have not taken place with the fastness and the approach originally planned. Although we are in the first years of existence of the recently established bodies, the Human Rights Council and the Peace Building Commission, it has not been possible yet to agree on the Security Council reform which is essential, and we have achieved timid steps forwards in the Secretariat and General Assembly reform processes.

Uruguay reiterates its support for the Security Council reform process with new permanent and non-permanent members, but it won't support the creation of new members with veto right because Uruguay understands that the issue of the veto right extension cannot be included in any intergovernmental negotiations package. What is more, being consequent with our traditional position since the foundation of the United Nations, our country dissents with the veto right which constitutes a privilege that goes against the democratization of our Organization.

With regard to the reform, we also conceive the Pilot Program "ONE UN" in a double dimension: firstly as an instrument to reform the operational activities of the United Nations System, and secondly as an exercise for cooperation in priority areas that has been identified by the Uruguayan Government in the context of a national development strategy based on sustainable economic growth with equity and social justice.

However we understand that the "ONE UN" Program must be aligned to national priorities and country specific needs and that there is no model that fits all pilot countries given the intrinsic differences among them.

I would also like to refer to an issue of particular relevance for Uruguay, the situation of middle-income countries. These countries face a paradox: even when some economic growth indicators are recognized, there is no recognition of the negative circumstances that prevent them from developing a medium and long term sustainable economic growth, as well as the dramatic decline perceived in some of such progresses.

In a globalized world the economic vulnerability of these developing countries is particularly visible and have dramatic consequences which make them subject to external crises with well-known and evident results such as the increase of poverty and

the inequity in the income distribution, as well as the increase of migration, to mention just a few of the effects Uruguay has directly faced.

Mr. President,

While renewing its firm commitment in the fight against terrorism, Uruguay reiterates its rejection to all terrorist attacks. We fully condemn all attacks against civil population as well as attacks against infrastructure whose destruction directly or indirectly affects civil population.

Terrorism must be clearly condemned. We must increase cooperation among States with the aim to prevent that such attacks remain unpunished but at the same time making sure that the fight against terrorism is based on the Rule of Law and with due respect to international humanitarian law and human rights law.

This must be also the framework in the fight against drug trafficking.

Uruguay continues to be actively engaged in the fight against illicit drug trafficking, taking into account its double component of supply and demand. Due to the policies implemented and the achievements obtained in the fight against drug trafficking, our country has been placed at the vanguard in the continent with regard to consumption prevention policies and access to treatment for those affected by drugs.

Mr. President,

Terrorism and drug trafficking seriously affects the enjoyment of human rights, whose protection has been one of the main strategic policies of our current Government who wants the respect of human rights to constitute not a simple programmatic declaration but a true expression in the daily life of its citizens.

On these bases our country has prioritized the strengthening of competent legislation and national bodies and has promoted the extension of the international humanitarian law and the strengthening of international institutions that effectively protect human rights and prevent its violations.

The protection of human rights is in fact one of the pillars of our foreign policy and one of the main political and institutional bases of our country.

As it is clear, the effective protection of human rights requires a strong jurisdictional instance that guarantees its enforcement. In such sense, the creation of the International Criminal Court is an essential contribution to the process of progressive development of International Law and a fact of huge significance, not only from a legal point of view but also from a political one.

Uruguay promulgated in 2006 a national Law that has established total cooperation with that Court. And, we respectfully exhort the international community to do the same, in order to prevent genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity from going unpunished.

Mr. President,

To conclude, I would like to emphasize that considering the present situation, with conflicts that threaten peace and international security, and taking into account the increasing interdependence between States, it becomes essential to strongly stress, the significance of the United Nations as the governing body and main multilateral forum to find solutions suitable for the most important challenges that we presently face.

Because of this, the support of multilateralism implies the search of collective answers to international conflicts and problems, in accordance with the international law and within the framework of the principles of the UN Charter, that regulate the peaceful coexistence among nations.

It is all about maintaining the ideals that inspired the foundation of this Organization, that project of civility to which we cannot resign, since it is a pending issue that we still owe to ourselves and to generations to come.

Thank you very much.