INTERVENCION DE LA DELEGACION DEL URUGUAY EN
NOMBRE DE LOS ESTADOS MIEMBROS DEL MERCOSUR
—ARGENTINA, BRASIL, PARAGUAY Y URUGUAY— Y SUS
ESTADOS ASOCIADOS —BOLIVIA Y CHILE—

Debate Estructurado, Primera Comisión

Convención sobre la Prohibición del Uso, Almacenamiento,
Producción y Transferencia de Minas Anti personal y sobre su
Destrucción

Nueva York, 22 de octubre de 2003
(vale texto leído)

INTERVENTION BY THE DELEGATION OF URUGUAY ON
BEHALF OF THE MEMBER STATES OF MERCOSUR —
ARGENTINA, BRAZIL, PARAGUAY AND URUGUAY— AND
ITS ASSOCIATED STATES —BOLIVIA AND CHILE—

Structured Debate, First Committee

Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production
and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

New York, October 22nd 2003
(Check against delivery)
Mr. Chairman,

The Member States of Mercosur—Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, and its Associated States—Bolivia and Chile—on which behalf I address this Committee, belong in a continent that has suffered and suffers the devastating and permanent consequences of the existence of the anti-personnel mines. This experience has shown one country to support within the Organization of American States the declaration of the western hemisphere free of such weapons, even before adding their voices to those which subscribed at a later stage the Ottawa Convention for the prohibition of use, stockpiling, production and transfer of antipersonnel mines and on their destruction; Convention which has already been ratified by our six countries.

However and in a further demonstration of political will, the Chiefs of State of Mercosur and Associates declared our region “zone of peace, free from weapons of mass destruction”, and decided upon adopting measures which—among others—ensure the total elimination of the anti-personnel mines.

Within these international, regional and subregional frameworks, Mercosur and Associates started the implementation, through their national legislations, of a series of measures which allowed our countries to comply with the instruments and decisions adopted within the OSCE region, with a special emphasis in the destruction of those arsenals under their respective jurisdictions.

Such actions, inspired in the need to eliminate the dangers posed by weapons of which their effects go beyond the conflicts that might motivate their use, confer upon our sub region the authority to call upon those countries which have not done so, to adhere to the Ottawa Convention and in particular those where the largest production is concentrated. Such weapons affect more than fifty States but we must not see this as one more statistic, because it is not. When speaking of affected States, we are speaking about men, women and children who are victims to these weapons. We are speaking about large portions of land still unable to be used for agriculture or any other activity that serves the purpose of feeding a population. We are speaking about obstacles to development. And for Mercosur and Associates, these problems are a priority.

As they are the humanitarian aspects of it: the hundreds of thousands of victims that must live with the consequences of this weapon show the importance of reaffirming the need to continue making an effort to enhance every activity undertaken in the field of cooperation, from mine removal—activity in which some of our countries participate within the framework of UN peacekeeping operations—to the improvement of security for development. In this regard, we salute the activities that involve the donors.

The Fifth Meeting of States parties, recently held in Thailand but allowed to know the current state of activity in this regard, the increase in the participation of programs and workshops by the affected populations, the higher level of resource allocation to continue widening the range of activities and the destruction of stockpiled antipersonnel mines. In this regard, we would like to highlight the destruction of anti-personnel weapons undertaken by our countries during the last year, and although encouraging, all these activities do not seem to be enough, given that the international community still cannot eradicate these weapons. Therefore, the danger still exists.

Mercosur and Associates, committed to the right to a safe life and collaborating with their experience and possibilities, are confident that the number of States parties to the Ottawa Convention will keep increasing and that at the same time more and more countries will actively cooperate with this cause.

Thank you.