



**58° PERIODO ORDINARIO DE SESIONES DE LA
ASAMBLEA GENERAL**

SEGUNDA COMISIÓN

**Discurso del Embajador Dr. Felipe H. Paolillo
Representante Permanente del Uruguay ante las Naciones Unidas
En nombre del MERCOSUR, Bolivia y Chile**

Tema 94 del programa: "Medio ambiente y desarrollo sostenible"

SECOND COMMITTEE

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Felipe H. Paolillo
Permanent Representative of Uruguay to the United Nations
On behalf of MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile**

Agenda item 94: "Environment and sustainable development"

New York, October 16th, 2003

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the member countries of MERCOSUR, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, and of the associated countries Bolivia and Chile on agenda item 94, entitled "Environment and sustainable development".

I take this opportunity to extend to you the congratulations of the Group and its associated States on your election as Chairman as well as to the members of the Bureau. We wish to assure you of our fullest cooperation.

Mercosur and the associated countries reiterate our firm commitment to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and to the Conventions on Climate Change and Biological Diversity, recognizing that they offer clear guidelines for achieving sustainable development.

In this connection, we wish firstly to express our satisfaction at the entry into force of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety this past September and urge the developed countries to adopt specific measures for the transfer of the necessary technology for the effective implementation of the Protocol.

We also appeal to the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to take the necessary measures and to negotiate an international instrument for the fair and equitable distribution of the benefits derived from the use of biological and genetic resources, in fulfillment of the commitment given at the Johannesburg Summit in 2002, which was contained in the Plan of Implementation, and which will also contribute to the fulfillment in a balanced manner of the three objectives of the Convention, namely, conservation, sustainable use and fair and equitable distribution of the benefits derived from the use of these resources.

On the subject of climate change, we regretfully must state once more that a large group of countries, which are also the principal emitters of greenhouse gases, are failing to live up to their commitments in this area. In light of the serious consequences which this phenomenon represents, we call for the urgent ratification of the Kyoto Protocol to the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

In this regard, we wish to assure you of the readiness of our Group to study the important conclusions contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/58/277) on the implementation of the international strategy for disaster reduction, in particular as it relates to the adverse impact of external climatic events and related natural disasters in vulnerable countries, in order to ensure a comprehensive review of the various issues involved.

Another phenomenon of particular concern to the Group relates to the adverse consequences of the increase in ultraviolet radiation on living animals and plants. We urge the parties to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, particularly those developed countries that are the greatest consumers of these substances and their precursors, to ensure the effective implementation of their commitments and the suppression of the illegal trade that undermines the purposes of the Convention and Protocol.

We also wish to express the support of our countries for the activities of the Secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification, particularly activities to prevent the degradation of land in arid, semi-arid and dry, sub-humid areas.

The loss of productivity of the soil and reduction of plant cover because of the impact of human activity and climatic variations such as prolonged drought are of particular concern to the countries of our regional bloc.

In this connection, we wish to draw attention to the results of the recent Latin American Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Sixth Conference of the Parties, held in Bogotá last July, which identified indicators and benchmarks for desertification, drought, the integrated and efficient management of water resources, promotion of agro-forestry, poverty alleviation, best practices in traditional knowledge and technologies, and renewable energies.

Like other developing countries in general, the countries of Mercosur note with concern the emergence of a double discourse on the protection of the environment. This was recently confirmed by the failure at Cancun, where once again the developed countries found excuses to maintain their agricultural subsidies and non-tariff barriers that distort trade, but which also cause irreparable damage to the environment.

Indeed, the subsidies provided encourage the over-exploitation of soils and degradation of the environment in general by encouraging agricultural production at excessive levels.

This is also an impediment to any possible progress in combating poverty, since agricultural communities in developing countries, such as ours, are prevented from marketing their products and thus from succeeding in improving their living conditions.

The countries of Mercosur recognize the existence of a clear link between poverty, desertification and climate change and we reject the tendency to use arguments, such as the promotion and conservation of biodiversity, to justify trade practices that are the real cause of the problems. We reaffirm the importance and relevance of conventions in this field that recognize economic and social development and the eradication of poverty as absolute priorities for developing countries.

We regard as very positive the work of UNEP in the development of environmental law, particularly through the Montevideo Programme that has set out the strategy for the activities of UNEP in this field.

Lastly, Mr. Chairman, the countries of Mercosur are concerned at the level of the resources that have been earmarked for the work of the Conferences of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change and its subsidiary organs in the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 and, given the importance that we attach to the work of those Conferences, we will work constructively to ensure that the General Assembly approves the necessary resources for their adequate functioning.

Thank you very much.