



URUGUAY



Intervención del
Señor Presidente de la República Oriental del Uruguay

Dr. Tabaré Vázquez

Debate General
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(Vale texto leído)

Address by

H.E. Dr. Tabaré Vázquez

President of Uruguay

Sixtieth session of the United Nations General Assembly
General Debate

New York, 17 September 2005

(Check against delivery)

Mr President,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Distinguished delegates,

I come from Uruguay, a small South American country, whose main wealth is its vocation for peace, its libertarian drive and the democratic compromise that have been nurtured and developed generation after generation.

I bring with me a greeting from the people and Government of Uruguay, currently the broadest, most representative and most important forum.

It is a demanding, committed and hopeful greeting.

Demanding because we live in a very particular moment of the history of mankind.
In fact, few times throughout history there have been circumstances as rich in paradoxes and as poor in paradigms as the current one.

Mankind, as never before, has had at hand such scientific and technological advancement and such a wide cultural capital to guarantee its life under dignified conditions; however mankind, as never before, has suffered such inequality, intolerance and uncertainty.

We know we have reached this point, but we are uncertain about where we are heading...

We cannot bear passive witness to this situation; no one can remove himself from the problems that may sometimes look alien. We cannot give up and think that the future is the inertial extension of the present; there is no reason whatsoever to give up to a utopia without which, darkness may be our destiny.

Our greeting is committed because we bear the inexcusable responsibility to be the leaders of our own lives and architects of our own future.

This task is a road where no privileges or eternal condemnations are admitted; we all walk it in equal terms. This road does not allow shortcuts neither; history is neither a gallery of heroes nor a calendar of outstanding events: history is made by the people day by day.

In this context, those to whom their people have granted the task of a government, have a very demanding responsibility ahead. And that is because governing is managing with efficiency and transparency the present, articulating in a democratic way this rich and complex web that is a society. But to govern is also to envisage the future and to convene the people to build such future among all and for all.

Our greeting is hopeful too because although we do not ignore the risks, the difficulties and the limitations within the national, regional and global scenarios, we believe in mankind, we trust mankind. We believe in society. We believe in democracy as a means to govern, but also as a human drive and as a state of society.

Mr President,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Distinguished delegates,

Although I have already expressed it during our intervention at the High Level Plenary meeting, which took place in this same hall a few hours ago, I wish to reiterate before this Assembly that Uruguay reaffirms the principles that have characterized its foreign policy:

- 1 The firm commitment with peace, sovereignty, democracy and solidarity.
- 2 The firm rejection against any kind of terrorism, violence and discrimination
- 3 The inalienable right of every State to have safe and stable borders and to exercise in its widest freedom its sovereignty and self determination
- 4 The respect of the international law, as the best guarantee for the sovereignty of people and their peaceful coexistence
- 5 The non-alignment and non-intervention in affairs that do not belong in the domestic jurisdiction of the States
- 6 The reaffirmation of multilateralism as a means to strengthen the international law, enhancing the role of the United Nations

7 The acknowledgement of the indivisibility of all human rights, be them political, social, economic, civil or cultural, including those of a collective nature such as the right to development and to the environment.

Along these principles, Uruguay:

- 1.-deems necessary to advance in those reforms which will allow the United Nations to fulfill its mandate. Being such reforms of a complex nature, they should be undertaken with a historic approach and with political will.
- 2.- renews its commitment with the millennium goals, which in our country represent the design and implementation of a system of integrated and global social policies which take care of poverty and extreme poverty suffered by almost one million Uruguayans, together with a strategy for reform and development.
- 3.- reiterates its will to continue participating in UN peacekeeping operations, offering its experience and efforts to improve the conditions under which those missions take place and are carried out.

We also wish to express our support to the initiative of the Secretary General to create a Commission for Peace to which we believe Uruguay could bring its own experience and expertise, gathered while helping to recover and rebuild devastated countries.

Mr President,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Distinguished delegates,

There is no peace in intolerance and terrorism, no freedom in poverty, and no democracy in inequality.

It is imperative to reject every expression of violence, but before rejecting it, is important to avoid it by attacking its roots.

This is simply because every human being has the right to live in dignity. Societies where the opulence of a few contrast with a majority being neglected, are not prosperous. Societies where to be born is a problem, to be young is suspicious, to get education and a job is a privilege and where to grow old is a curse, have no place in the future.

This is the way we see it in Uruguay; we learnt it from those generations that preceded us in building a country, which although bearing unique features, is not alien to the Latin American context.

While it is true that the first half of the XX Century was a good time for Uruguay, it is also true that as a result of the combination of a series of foreign circumstances together with some domestic structural frailties, the last fifty years have been of deterioration for the economy, impoverishment of the population and even an institutional breakdown in 1973.

We, Uruguayans, recovered democracy in 1985 and the current government that took office exactly 200 days ago, is working hard to heal those wounds that the dictatorship caused in the field of human rights violations.

We are not hostages of the past, but our society needs to know the truth about what happened, to avoid living it again.

Regardless the former, and fulfilling the compromises acquired before our society, whose will is our mandate, the Government I represent is promoting changes: necessary, possible, responsible, progressive and with a political and social support.

Changes which do not ignore the reality but that do not give up to the concrete utopia of a Uruguay with a human development, with a productive economic growth, with a safe environment, fully integrated to its own region and actively inserted in the international arena.

We are not starting from scratch but we have a lot to do towards this utopia, which drives us as a nation.

What I wish to convey to you as the last comments of my intervention on behalf of the people and the Government of Uruguay is that in the south of South America there is a country which is not giving up to difficulties, which is building its own future and from it, wishes to follow its tradition and add its strength to build a better world.

Thank you