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**STATEMENT BY NICARAGUA ON BEHALF OF THE LATIN AMERICAN AND  
CARIBBEAN GROUP (GRULAC) ON ITEM 14 OF THE AGENDA OF THE NINTH  
SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES, ON THE MATTER  
OF THE PROGRAMME AND BUDGET FOR 2005**

We take the floor on behalf of the Member States of the OPCW that make up the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC), in our capacity as current coordinator of the GRULAC, in order to make the following statement on a matter of fundamental importance to the OPCW and all the States Parties:

1. The commitment of the countries of our region to the principles of the Convention and the work of the OPCW is broad and firm. In this framework, our delegations agree to accept the budget for 2005, as submitted in revised version by the Director-General.
2. However, while recognising the efforts of the Director-General of the OPCW, Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter, in submitting a revised version of the budget, we have to say that an increase, even of 3.5%, will have serious consequences for our countries, and these might take the shape of a reduced ability to pay.
3. Therefore, GRULAC repeats its concern that future OPCW budgets should adhere to the policies of zero real and nominal growth. There is no doubt that the results-based budgeting method will help us to achieve that goal, as well as increasing transparency and efficiency, which we all want.
4. We recall that international cooperation is one of the pillars of the Chemical Weapons Convention, and repeat our concern about the inadequacy of the regular funds allotted to this area, specifically to programmes relating to the implementation of Article XI.
5. On behalf of GRULAC, I should like to request that this statement of principles be inserted into the minutes of the Conference, and circulated as a document thereof.

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