



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Ninth Session
29 November – 2 December 2004
Item 15 of the agenda

C-9/NAT.4
2 December 2004
ENGLISH
Original: SPANISH

**STATEMENT BY NICARAGUA ON BEHALF OF THE LATIN AMERICAN AND
CARIBBEAN GROUP (GRULAC) ON ITEM 15 OF THE AGENDA OF THE NINTH
SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

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 to this Session of the Conference of the States Parties:

1. We affirm once more the firm commitment of our countries to the principles and objects of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, as well as to the efforts of the United Nations to eliminate all kinds of weapons of mass destruction.
2. We belong to a historically peaceful region which has always contributed to the non-proliferation of those kinds of weapons. It has never manufactured them, either for offensive, or for defensive, purposes, and we are firmly resolved to go on contributing to the eradication of weapons of mass destruction, wherever they may be.
3. However, there is one fact which we cannot ignore, and which causes great concern to our region, namely, the great difficulty which most of our countries have in duly meeting our financial obligations to international organisations, including the OPCW.
4. All the Member States in arrears are developing countries and, of them all, the countries of our region bear the greatest burden. This fact weakens the OPCW since, when they lose the right to vote, the countries of our geographical area are excluded from the decision-making process.
5. The delay in payment of contributions is not dictated by a lack of political will. For that reason, we must seek creatively for ways to continue with our contributions, but within our financial means. We were, therefore, pleased to see the announcement made by the Director-General on this matter, in his report to this Session of the Conference (C-9/DG.8, dated 29 November 2004).
6. 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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