

## Paraguay

### **Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction** — Act No. 558 of 17 December 1975

The 1992 Paraguayan Constitution currently in force, in article 8, provides that: "... The manufacture, assembly, import, sale, possession or use of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons is prohibited ...". In view of the geographical situation of Paraguay, which shares large stretches of penetrable borders with neighboring countries, the country faces significant border control challenges, and considerable economic and financial resources are needed to deal with them. The difficulty in obtaining these resources makes it harder to acquire the necessary means and materials to ensure full control. Despite budgetary, logistical and salary constraints at the institutional level however, the Paraguayan Customs Office is committed to becoming a more efficient and modern institution, on the assumption that the new Customs Code will endow it with greater autonomy and its own resources to help it achieve the major objectives assigned to it.

Currently, the General Customs Directorate is in the process of elaborating a databank on hazardous goods warning systems for the Common Market of the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR).

MERCOSUR is the appropriate forum for dealing with these issues at the sub-regional level. In June 2000, its members, aware of the importance of combating all forms of criminal action and of the need to continue the proposal, incorporation into domestic legislation and implementation of new operative measures to combat illicit trafficking in nuclear/radioactive materials, and desiring to contribute to the sustainable development of the region and to determine appropriate monitoring systems for and responses to radiological risk situations, in particular in the border areas, approved accession to the Addendum to the General Plan for Mutual Cooperation and Coordination for Regional Security with regard to Illicit Trafficking in Nuclear/Radioactive Material. The aim is to establish a mechanism that would provide an "early warning" to MERCOSUR members and associate members of incidents involving both so-called "orphan sources" and nuclear material, especially those deriving from acts of illicit trafficking, as well as a database of such incidents, and to elaborate common procedures for guaranteeing proper coordination among the intervening authorities of each member and associate member. MERCOSUR is also contemplating the formation of an efficient network among its members for the exchange of information, and to coordinating the detection of and responses to the presence of orphan sources and/or radioactive materials, as well as human resource training in the field. The Paraguayan Government intends to give priority to the ad hoc working group on training established under the above-mentioned Plan of Work when it assumes the Chairmanship of the MERCOSUR regional forum in January 2005.