

**Biography of Mr. Didier Opertti,
President of the 53rd Session of the General Assembly**

Didier Opertti, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uruguay was today elected President of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly. Prior to being appointed Foreign Minister in February, Mr. Opertti served as his country's Minister of the Interior, from 1995 to 1998. During that period, he was also elected to the International Law Commission of the United Nations and served as a member of the Uruguayan National Group of the Permanent Court of Arbitration.

Mr. Opertti, who is a lawyer, served during 1993 and 1994 as Special Counsellor to the Inter-American Development Bank and the Institute for Integration of Latin America and the Caribbean (INTAL) on issues related to the Summit of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR). He also acted as the Personal Representative of the President-elect of Uruguay, Julio Maria Sanguinetti, at the Summit of American Presidents, which was held in Miami in December 1994.

Mr. Opertti was Uruguay's Permanent Ambassador to the Organization of American States (OAS) from 1988 to 1993. In that capacity, he was also President of the Permanent Council of the OAS (1990), and President of the Permanent Council's Commission of Juridical and Political matters (1989). During the latter period, he also served as President of the Inter-American Conference on Private and International Law (CIDIP IV). Between 1988 and 1992, he was Uruguay's delegate to the Inter-American Convention on Drug Abuse Control (CICAD).

Between 1985 and 1988, Mr. Opertti was the Director of the Diplomatic Law Advisory of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uruguay. From 1985 to 1987, he was the Secretary of the Uruguayan-Argentinean Bi-national Commission of the Buenos Aires-Colonia Bridge, coordinating an early study of that project to link the two countries. During the same period, he also served as a member and President of the Uruguayan delegation to the Rio de la Plata Administrative Commission.

From 1982 to 1987, Mr. Opertti was the Special Juridical Counsellor to the Inter-American Children's Institute (IIN), where he worked on international private law matters related to minors and the family. He continued to provide advice to that body until 1994 on both the civil and criminal aspects of such issues as international adoption of children, food subsidies, international restitution of children and the international kidnapping of children.

From 1979 to 1981, Mr. Opertti served as Director of the Office of Codification and Development of International Law of the General Secretariat of the OAS.

Mr. Operti was the founder and is currently a board member of the International Law Association of Uruguay. He is also a member of the Portuguese-Spanish American International Law Institute (IHLADI), the International Law Association of Argentina and the International and Comparative Law Academy of Brazil. In addition, he is a member and Director of the Uruguayan Comparative Law Institute and a member of the Lawyers Association of Uruguay.

Mr. Operti began his teaching career in international private law in 1961 as an Assistant Professor at the University of Uruguay. In 1986, he was appointed Professor of International Private Law at the International Law Academy of The Hague, Netherlands. In 1986, he was appointed Professor of both International Private Law at the College of Law and Social Sciences, and of the bachelor's degree programme in international relations at the University of Uruguay. In 1994, he was appointed Professor of International Private Law at the Damaso A. Larranaga Catholic University of Uruguay.

Mr. Operti graduated from the College of Law and Social Sciences of the University of Uruguay in 1960. He holds a doctorate in law and social sciences.

Born in 1937 in Montevideo, Uruguay, Mr. Operti is married and has four children.