

General Statement of ABACC in the First Meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

Vienna, July 31 to August 11, 2023

Mr. Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of ABACC, allow me to congratulate you on your election as Chair of this First PrepCom and wish you every success in your task.

Mr. Chair,

In 1991, Argentina and Brazil signed and ratified the Agreement for Exclusively Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy – the Bilateral Agreement - creating ABACC whose main mission is to guarantee that all nuclear materials and facilities in Argentina and Brazil are being used exclusively for peaceful purposes.

ABACC manages the Common System on Nuclear Material Accounting and Control, a robust and independent system that, through inspections and evaluation measures, verifies that nuclear materials are not diverted towards the manufacture of nuclear weapons. The inspections are performed on a cross-basis, as Argentinean inspectors inspect Brazilian nuclear facilities and vice-versa.

The ABACC inspectorate supplied by both countries has been carrying out inspection missions almost daily in Argentina and Brazil, obtaining independent and solid technical conclusions.

Throughout these 32 years, ABACC has carried out more than 3,500 inspections at nuclear facilities in both countries, including more than 300 unannounced inspections. Even during the pandemic in 2020 and 2021, despite all restrictions ABACC performed more than 200 inspections in both countries.

Mr. Chair,

ABACC has consolidated a solid international credibility in the effective and efficient verification of the nuclear activities of Argentina and Brazil. The main reasons for this have been the continuous political commitment, the technical and financial support provided by the two countries and the independence of ABACC in the implementation of its verification activities.

The ABACC is the corollary of the establishment of a deep and lasting relationship based on mutual trust between Argentina and Brazil and is a confirmation that cooperation, dialogue and mutual respect between countries contribute decisively to regional and international security.

ABACC is rightly considered one of the most successful nuclear non-proliferation initiatives in the world. The process and the lessons learned from this experience can serve as inspiration for other regions of the world.

Mr. Chair

ABACC, Argentina, Brazil and the IAEA signed a comprehensive safeguards agreement in 1991, the so-called Quadripartite Agreement, which entered into force in 1994. This agreement contains well-defined provisions on coordination and cooperation between the IAEA and ABACC, in particular, envisions that the two agencies will cooperate and minimize duplication of activities and, at the same time, reach independent conclusions. The good results obtained in the coordination of activities between the IAEA and ABACC over these years reflect the high level of understanding and cooperation achieved by both organizations.

Under this framework of cooperation, ABACC is firmly committed to continue promoting mechanisms and means by which IAEA safeguards can make full use of the findings and conclusions of this regional system, as provided for in the Quadripartite Safeguards Agreement and as it has been picked up by the NPT revision conferences.

32 years after the Bilateral Agreement and 55 years after the NPT, ABACC wishes to share this experience within the NPT to highlight the added value of this regional model to non-proliferation and underscore its commitment to maintain its technical effectiveness, independence and international credibility in compliance of its mandate.

Finally, I hope that the PrepCom and the next NPT Review Conference will reiterate the relevance of the model regional system established by ABACC.

Thank you, Mr. Chair