

Statement of ABACC at the 49th General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency

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José Mauro E. dos Santos

Mr. President,

On the outset, allow me to join the other speakers and congratulate you on your election as the President of the Forty Ninth General Conference of The International Atomic Energy Agency.

I take this opportunity to assure you the full support of ABACC for the success of this important meeting. I am sure that under your guidance, this Conference will reach all its expected goals. Also, I would like to congratulate Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei. for his indication for one more term as the Director General of this Agency.

Mr. President,

In the year of 2005, an important political event should be recalled by ABACC : the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Declaration of Iguacu, when the presidents of Argentina and Brazil declared their understanding that nuclear technology and science would play a fundamental role for the economic and social development of both countries.

Precisely in this spirit, in 1985, the governments of Argentina and Brazil have taken many decisions with respect to their integration. Among them, a working group to analyze and evaluate both nuclear programs was created laying down the fundamental ideas for the creation of ABACC.

Further, a number of activities were carried in Argentina and in Brazil to design a unique common system of accounting and control of nuclear materials in a clear demonstration of the transparency that both nuclear programs were carried in our countries. As a consequence of those activities, ABACC was created, in 1991 as the first regional nuclear accounting and control organization in the South American region.

I understand that regional organizations are a creative way to address important technical issues, respecting cultural, ethnical and local values without losing the ultimate objective of nuclear control.

Today, there were 14 years since ABACC was created by the Agreement for the Exclusively Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy, signed in 1991. The creation of ABACC was a long historical process of confidence building and construction of a strategic alliance between Argentina and Brazil in the nuclear sector.

During this period, many efforts have been done for the development of a safeguards organization with international credibility in the non-proliferation field. In particular, among the work developed by ABACC, we could mention the verification of the completeness and correctness of the nuclear inventories in both countries, the development of unique safeguards approach for sensitive uranium enrichment facilities; the formation of high quality standards inspectorate staff; the implementation of joint procedures with IAEA for the use of equipment and for the inspection regime for the facilities; the participation in most of the international forums and technical groups on non-proliferation and safeguards and the implementation of safeguards approaches for all the nuclear installations.

With all these activities, I understand that ABACC has contributed to give the international community the assurance that Argentina and Brazil have accomplished their non-proliferation goals and that their nuclear programs are oriented for peaceful purposes.

Even in the future, when ABACC completes the negotiation of the facility attachments of all the 76 nuclear installations of Argentine and Brazil, its mission will be far from being completed. The implementation of safeguards is a long route in which its most important part is to keep safeguarded all the facilities in both countries.

Turning to the period 2004–2005, and before addressing the main points of ABACC's work, I would like to assure that all nuclear materials and other items placed under safeguards, both in Brazil and Argentina, were used exclusively for peaceful purposes or were appropriately accounted for. Having performed its tasks, ABACC found no

indication of the existence or undeclared nuclear materials and activities in these countries.

On what respects to the technical activities, during the last period, ABACC's work was mainly dedicated to the implementation of the safeguards approach of the first commercial uranium enrichment plant of Brazil.

This approach resulted from an important partnership between ABACC, IAEA and the National Nuclear Energy Commission of Brazil. Originally, the approach was based on a permanent perimeter control through the containment and surveillance techniques. Later, the safeguards approach evolved to a more pragmatic concept based in the same principle used for the Hexapartite Project with improvements on surveillance and containment application on certain selected and key measurement points of the plant. In addition, an unique implementation of design information verification methodology allows closing the approach giving IAEA and ABACC tools to accomplish their obligations.

The main idea behind the design of this safeguards approach was to apply effective safeguards and, at the same time, protect the technological secrets involved in the facility. ABACC understands that the protection of technological secrets is an important goal to be pursued in the non-proliferation field.

Turning to Argentina, during the last period ABACC updated and installed new important surveillance and containment systems allowing for more efficient inspection efforts. ABACC relies the updating and the enhancement of verification equipment as essential for effective and efficient safeguards implementation. For that, the Agency had relied on both countries contribution to maintain its technical instrumentation up to date, as compared to the most modern available technologies.

I turn now to the joint activities performed by ABACC and IAEA. As it has been requested by the governments of Argentina and Brazil, both organizations continue to pursue co-ordination as a permanent goal in order to achieve cost-effectiveness in safeguard activities, avoiding unnecessary duplication of efforts.

In doing so, many actions were jointly performed as the development and use of guidelines for joint inspection activities and for common use of equipment. During the period, the common book auditing procedure for ABACC and IAEA was officially approved and successfully implemented.

Besides that, the number of joint inspections and joint equipment use procedures had increased demonstrating the desired integration of both organizations.

I turn now to information technology and training. During the last three years, ABACC and IAEA had started a number of actions to improve its safe communication. In this direction, measures have been taken to increase and reinforce the security of safeguards information on electronic media. The use of encrypted data transmission between both agencies had been successfully implemented in some areas and is expected to be enhanced in the near future.

The implementation of effective safeguards relies on the need of well trained personnel. With this respect, ABACC continues to promote a number of training events, to support inter comparisons of data workshops and to incentive the participation of its officials in the most important safeguards events. We understand that permanent training is an essential tool for good safeguards application.

Mr. President,

In the last period, due to the growing non-proliferation issues being discussed in the media, we felt the need to provide better information to the society about ABACC's activities.

Having this idea in mind, ABACC has promoted a complete renewal of its "abacc.org" website. Now, besides presenting all the organization history, we are providing to the public a number of information on safeguards and links to the most important organizations acting in the nuclear field.

Besides that, we have modernized our bulletin "ABACC News" providing to the public an additional source of safeguards and non-proliferation information. We regard

permanent education as a way to guarantee informed new generations on the nuclear proliferation risks.

Before concluding my remarks, I would like to leave my sincere thanks to my colleague and friend Dr. Elías Palacios that is leaving ABACC this year. Dr. Palacios in his capacity as the Secretary of ABACC, for nine years, has contributed definitively for the enhancement of our organization. I wish him the best in his new assignment back in Buenos Aires.

In conclusion, I would like to say that, for the future, ABACC is committed with the improvement of the effectiveness of the application of safeguards and with the partnership between Argentina and in Brazil, initiated twenty years ago, with the Declaration of Iguazu, and that I expect to guide our work for the years to come.

Thank you, Mr. President.