

Statement of ABACC at the 53rd General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency

9/2009

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Madam President, distinguished delegates, representatives of guest organizations, ladies and gentlemen.

Madam President, please, receive our congratulations for your designation to lead this General Conference, as well as our wishes for the success of such mandate.

First of all, I want to thank the International Atomic Energy Agency for honoring us with the invitation to participate in this fifty-third General Conference. This is the sixteenth time in which the ABACC participates and in which we are given the privilege to make a presentation before this highly-qualified audience.

We consider this a very special occasion because it is the right time to tell to the international nuclear community some of ABACC's facts and undertakings which, in our judgement, are important, and to reaffirm our determination and commitment to comply with our institutional mission as the Brazilian-Argentine agency managing the Common System for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials.

In complying with such mission —whose main mandate involves safeguarding the nuclear facilities and all the nuclear materials in Brazil and Argentina— and with the feeling of fulfillment of our duty, once more we are pleased to guarantee, before the international community that, within 2008, all of the nuclear materials and other elements under safeguards in both Brazil and Argentina were used exclusively for peaceful purposes and were recorded appropriately. 57 inspections were performed in Argentine facilities and 58 in Brazilian facilities, which demanded an inspection effort equivalent to 400 inspectors-day in the field and a total availability of 874 inspectors-day. After completion of its tasks in this period, the ABACC did not find any signs of non-compliance with the commitments made by both countries.

It is important to note that all the activities performed by ABACC in the application of safeguards are carried out hand-in-hand with the IAEA, respecting the independent

conclusions by each one of the agencies and, always, within the framework of the Quadripartite Agreement undersigned by Brazil, Argentina, ABACC and the IAEA on the 13th December 1991. As per this Agreement, both State parties committed themselves to accept the application of safeguards to all the nuclear materials involved in all the nuclear activities performed anywhere within their territories, under their jurisdiction or under their control, with the only objective of ensuring that such materials shall not be diverted for their application in nuclear weapons or other explosive nuclear devices.

The tenth meeting of the Liaison Committee, a forum contemplated in the Quadripartite Agreement, was held in December 2008 with the participation of both State parties, the IAEA and ABACC. In order to facilitate the application of the Agreement and to follow up the implementation of the safeguards methods and techniques, these meetings are highly important in order to attain harmony and efficiency in the application of the safeguards regime.

The coordination of activities between the International Atomic Energy Agency and the ABACC has been considered as a permanent objective by both agencies. This is the fact that gives way to the necessary conditions for an effective cost management, for avoiding the duplication of efforts and for attaining efficiency and effectiveness in the safeguards activities. The good results obtained in our joint safeguards activities and procedures with regard to unannounced inspections and to sharing the use of safeguards equipment reflect the high level of understanding and co-operation attained by both institutions.

An important step forward this year was the fully successful implementation of the short-notice random inspections at the Factory of Fuel Elements owned by CONUAR, the Argentine Nuclear Fuel Company and at the Factory of Nuclear Fuel owned by INB, the Brazilian Nuclear Industries.

These successful undertakings were made possible thanks to the efforts made by officials, technicians, inspectors, consultants and laboratories in both countries, all of them working under the supervision and guidance of the ABACC's Board of Directors.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Recently, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations published its 2009 Report announcing that, during this year, there will be more than a billion people suffering malnutrition. When he launched the Report, its Director General, Jacques Diouf, stated: “The hunger crisis poses a serious risk for world peace and security. We must urgently reach a consensus for a fast and full eradication of hunger”.

On the other hand, there is great expectation regarding expansion in the use of nuclear reactors in order to satisfy the growing demand for energy, caused by the foresight of environmental disasters, due to the global warming, and by changes in public perception concerning nuclear power plants, which are now starting to be viewed as reliable sources of energy that do not contribute to the emission of carbon dioxide.

In both cases, the IAEA must comply with its international mandate. In the former, the co-operation between the IAEA and the FAO has already shown good results for decades, improving harvests, both in quantity and in quality, through the use of adequate nuclear technologies. However, the challenges in this field are becoming greater and greater! The United Nations have foreseen a 2.5 billion growth in population for the next 40 years. Africa will double its population, while Asia may grow 30% and in Pakistan by 85%. These foresights point out that the role of the IAEA in this sector will become stronger.

In the second case, IAEA’s responsibilities grow exponentially. While its accumulated experience and knowledge label the IAEA as an invaluable source of support and assistance for the construction of adequate, safe and reliable infrastructure in the countries that join the nuclear sector, the proliferation risks increase as the number of installed nuclear power plants increases. Unfortunately, the threat of already-started confrontations, either by belligerent nations or by groups with terrorist purposes, using nuclear materials (“dirty bombs” or nuclear artifacts), has become a reality at the start of this millennium.

These scenarios lead to enhanced responsibilities and, consequently, to the need for increasing the IAEA’s budget, which its member countries might not be able to bear.

The Zedillo Commission itself reached the conclusion that the Agency's budget should be doubled by the year 2020 for it to be able to face the new demands successfully.

A way of facing these future challenges will be prompting the creation of independent and reliable regional systems that can be applied in a coordinated manner with the IAEA, while optimizing the available resources. In this regard, the success attained by EURATOM and ABACC's experience after 18 years as a binational agency applying safeguards may serve as a guidance. It is a fact that the regional geopolitical characteristics and the cultural differences do not allow for a direct transposal of models; however, the central idea of developing regional agencies making use of the "neighbors-watching-neighbors" concept is a possibility that is worth considering.

Promoting the co-operation of the regional systems with the IAEA was already a matter of concern for its Board of Governors that, in article 7 of INFCIRC/153, highlights the role of regional agencies and establishes that the Agency must take into account their technical efficiency. Furthermore, the increase of co-operation with national and regional systems was one of the measures identified in order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of safeguards in Part I of the so-called "93+2 Programme" approved in 1995.

Madam President,

The decisions made in Argentina and Brazil to restart their respective nuclear programs further stresses the role of the ABACC, and an increase in its inspection, accounting and control activities is being foreseen for the next few years. Besides, the new scientific and technological developments provide important innovations that can be incorporated into the safeguards processes. The 3-D images obtained with laser rays, environmental samples and satellite images are important tools that can strengthen the safeguards systems, making them more effective and less intrusive.

The ABACC is tuned with these developments and understands that the permanent training of the officials and inspectors is a guarantee that allows it to keep up in the "state of the art" with the new technologies. The search for excellence has been a constant concern in ABACC's history and, aiming at this goal, a policy has been developed for the qualification of its staff and of the team of inspectors. A fundamental

issue in this effort has been the co-operation with the IAEA, with the US Department of Energy and with the European Atomic Energy Community. These efforts were especially devoted to non-destructive analyses, containment and surveillance, to training courses and safeguards approaches.

In finalizing my presentation, I take this opportunity to express, both in my name and in the name of all the ABACC officials and inspectors, our deepest acknowledgment and appreciation to Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei, who completes his mandate as Director General this year, for his outstanding leadership at the IAEA. We wish Dr. ElBaradei happiness and success in his new undertakings.

Also, our congratulations and our wishes for a fully successful performance to Ambassador Akiya Amano, just-elected Director General, while we reinforce the ABACC's commitment for co-operation and joint work with the IAEA.

I conclude re-affirming ABACC's commitment with efficiency and effectiveness in the application of the safeguards procedures in Brazil and Argentina, in a transparent manner, while maintaining the required confidentiality of the information and in accordance with the framework defined by the Quadripartite Agreement.

Please, accept, Madam President, our wishes for a Conference filled with success, along with our appreciation for the opportunity of delivering this presentation.

THANK YOU ALL.