

## **Statement of ABACC at the 56th General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency**

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Mr. President, Mr. Director General, distinguished delegates, representatives of guest organizations, ladies and gentlemen.

First of all, let me join those who took the floor before and congratulate you for your election as the President of this Fifty-sixth Session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

I will also profit of this opportunity to express the total support from ABACC for the performance of this meeting and, in advance, wish you successful results.

Mr. President, Argentina and Brazil were able to establish a safeguards system that is currently unique worldwide and that, consolidated and perfected along over twenty years, has gained respect from the international nuclear community.

Actually, it may be said that this system involves features that cannot be found in other general safeguards agreements. The Quadripartite Agreement goes beyond a safeguards regime setting up the commitment by a member State before the International Atomic Energy Agency. It involves two neighboring member States, an agency created by the latter —the ABACC— and the IAEA. Therefore, it implies a far more complete safeguards regime by which the concept of “neighbors watching neighbors” — recognized internationally as efficient and effective— is implemented.

Currently, ABACC is applying the Common System to all the nuclear material existing in approximately 70 nuclear facilities in Argentina and Brazil, performing about 110 inspections per year in such installations, which entails a very significant effort.

The task performed by the ABACC during over two decades, Mr. President, allows us to assert that both countries —Argentina and Brazil— have carried out their activities in

the nuclear field in full compliance with the commitments made in the area of nuclear safeguards and non proliferation, at both the binational and the international level.

In this occasion, we bear mentioning a statement made by the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Commission, Mr. Yukiya Amano, in September 2011: “In the occasion of ABACC’s 20th anniversary, I am pleased to express my warmest congratulations to the people and the governments of Argentina and Brazil, in view of the vision evidenced when they created this binational agency and of their decision to keep together on the road of peace and cooperation, in which they will always enjoy the support of the IAEA.”.

ABACC’s relationship with the IAEA, having matured as time went by, allows both institutions to work in a fine-tuned manner and with great objectivity. The arrangements for cooperation between both entities for the application of safeguards have been developed and implemented respecting the basic principles in the Quadripartite Agreement: the joint performance of inspections, the coordination of activities, so as to avoid duplications in human resources and materials, and the independence of the conclusions reached.

On the basis of these principles, numberless mechanisms were developed for joint actions in the use of equipment, personnel and analyses for the application of safeguards, thus attaining a great optimization of the resources available.

ABACC’s strong integration with the rest of the international agencies involved in the application of safeguards has fostered an exchange of experience and knowledge that has resulted enriching for all of us. ABACC has benefited from its cooperation with the IAEA, with EURATOM, with the United States Department of Energy, with nuclear institutes in the European Community and with the Argentine and Brazilian national authorities. Its relationship with international partners —particularly with those from Canada, in the development of training courses, South Korea, France, Japan and the United Kingdom— in the conceptual development of the application of safeguards has been relevant. Its participation in international forums organized by associations involved in the field of safeguards, such as ESARDA and the INMM, has made it

possible to exchange ideas and experiences that were extremely fruitful for ABACC's qualification.

Furthermore, since 2011, ABACC has been participating, as an Observer, in the meetings of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Mr. President, since its creation, ABACC has been applying institutional policies devoted to a permanent technical training of its human resources. The application of such policies and the use of high-end equipment units are relevant factors in ABACC's success and in the independence of its conclusions.

A decisive factor in the Agency's success has been the permanent recognition and support received from the governments of Brazil and Argentina. This has been demonstrated by a historical series of joint statements by the latest governments, which has become apparent in the endeavor devoted by their chancellorships and by the members of its Commission in order to ensure a good performance by ABACC, by providing the necessary budgetary resources for its operation and preserving its institutional independence, this being essential for ABACC to achieve its mission and reach the objectives for which it was created.

The integration of ABACC's staff, including its functional body and its team of inspectors, is an evident demonstration of such support: they all come from institutions in the nuclear areas of both countries. The technical cooperation between ABACC and the laboratories of the various agencies and institutions in both countries has always enjoyed a full support from both governments. This support is used in obtaining the results of the verifications performed by ABACC, while respecting the Institution's independence and credibility.

Mr. President, in 2006, when I made my first presentation in this General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, I stated that maintaining the nuclear facilities in both countries under safeguards implied traveling along a lengthy path crowded with challenges. Among other, the following are worth mentioning:

- Completion and testing of the installation of an unattended system for the dry transfer of spent fuel elements to the silos at the Embalse Nuclear Power Plant.

- Installation and operation of the safeguards systems of the Atucha II Nuclear Power Plant, whose commissioning is scheduled for 2013.
- Application of a safeguards approach at the uranium enrichment plants in both countries. This activity will imply investments in equipment and a greater inspection effort, as the new cascades start to be operated.
- Application of safeguards at conversion plants in both Argentina and Brazil. ABACC expects to get finished with this safeguards approach and purchase the necessary equipment to be used in such facilities.

In connection with technical evolution in the area of safeguards, the ABACC's Secretariat will be alert regarding any new developments occurring in the international scenario, so as to keep updated towards a permanent upgrading of its performance. Some projects involving the update of surveillance systems with special authentication requirements, using new technologies, do also appear as areas to which ABACC will have to pay greater attention.

For instance, concerning the tests for remote data transmission on the state-of-health of the safeguards equipment units, ABACC and the IAEA are preparing a proposal that needs to comply with the pre-requirements set up by the national authorities and make use of IAEA's experience in the installation of these systems. The technique of remote data transmission will be applied in some surveillance systems of both Argentina and Brazil.

The follow-up of the validation by the IAEA of the so-called ABACC-Cristallini method for the sampling of uranium hexafluoride, and its qualification, in cooperation with the American Society for Testing and Materials, is also to be noted. This method implies lower costs and generates a smaller amount of liquid wastes.

Besides, another challenge arises for the definition, and coordination with the IAEA, of the methodology for the application of safeguards using the "State Level Concept".

On the other hand, Mr. President, based on the statements made by both governments during the last few years, in the near future, ABACC and the IAEA, jointly with

interested parties, will have to take care of the application of the Special Procedures foreseen in Art. 13 of the Quadripartite Agreement to the nuclear materials that must be submitted to safeguards as per such Agreement and aimed to be used for the nuclear propulsion and operation of all sorts of vehicles, including submarines, and of their prototypes.

Finally, Mr. President, I am pleased to report that, during next week, in this city, we will be holding the 12th meeting of the Quadripartite Agreement Liaison Committee, where the parties will be discussing several topics related to the application of such Agreement. Mr. President, I want to conclude my presentation re-asserting the commitment of ABACC concerning a continuous improvement in its work of applying safeguards in Argentina and Brazil, within the framework of the Quadripartite Agreement. Once more, let me express our appreciation for the opportunity of delivering this statement.

Thank you very much.