

## STATEMENT BY THE ABACC

55<sup>th</sup> General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency

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Presented by Antonio Abel Oliveira (ARGENTINA)

Secretaries of ABACC

Mister President, Distinguished Delegates, representatives of the invited organisations, ladies and gentlemen,

Mister President, with my congratulations, receive our wishes for your mandate in the presidency of this Conference to attain the greatest success.

First of all, I want to express our appreciation to the International Atomic Energy Agency for honouring us with the invitation to participate in this 55<sup>th</sup> General Conference, as well as our conviction of the fact that this is always a very important event for ABACC, as it implies the opportunity of letting the international nuclear community know about some of the facts and activities that we consider important within ABACC. Furthermore, we want to reiterate our availability and our commitment for complying with our institutional mission as a Brazilian-Argentine agency managing the Common System for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials.

Mister President, Distinguished Delegates,

This is a very special year for us: we are celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the creation of ABACC. Twenty years of work and devotion in the compliance of our institutional mission, whose main mandate is to safeguard the nuclear facilities and all nuclear materials in Argentina and Brazil. This anniversary was highlighted by a series of events. In July, we had an important event in Buenos Aires, with the presence of the Chancellors of Argentina and Brazil, of the Director General of the IAEA and of the Secretary, Deputy Secretary and Officials of the ABACC. During this event, the chancellors of both countries expressed their shared understanding that ABACC, in addition to its unique contribution to the international non-proliferation regime, which deserves full recognition, plays an important role in the promotion of co-operation activities in the area of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In this regard, they reaffirmed that the governments of both Brazil and Argentina are willing to support the constant improvement and strengthening of ABACC in its tasks. In this occasion, the Director General of the IAEA, after congratulating both countries for the creation of ABACC, stated: “...*ABACC is today a great success and the IAEA is proud to be its partner*”.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> July, the Secretary General of the United Nations Organisation, Dr. Ban Ki-Moon, congratulated the Argentine and Brazilian governments, for the twentieth anniversary of ABACC and made the following statement:

*“ABACC has made a very substantial contribution to regional nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, by providing for a sound regional framework for the application of the IAEA’s safeguards and facilitating*

*the entry into force of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the nuclear-weapon-free zone encompassing the entire Latin America and the Caribbean region”.*

The commemorative events will be completed with the performance of an international seminar that will be held in Rio de Janeiro in November.

The participation of ABACC in this 55<sup>th</sup> General Conference will be more effective than in the last few years. We will also be present with a commemorative institutional stand in the rotunda. I take this opportunity to invite all this audience to visit our stand.

During these twenty years, ABACC has been operating with institutional policies aimed at a permanent technical training of its human resources. The application of such policies and the use of modern equipment are relevant factors fostering ABACC' success and the independence of its conclusions.

Likewise, the mature relationship with the International Atomic Energy Agency, performed during the years, allows both institutions to work in a tuned manner and with great objectiveness. The mechanisms developed for their joint activities, such as the Joint Use Agreement (aimed at sharing equipment) allow them to optimise their efforts.

Argentina and Brazil were able to establish a safeguards system that is currently unique in the world and that, consolidated and matured along these twenty years, has gained respect from the international community. A proof of this was its acceptance during the last meeting of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), as an alternative criterion of the IAEA's Safeguards Additional Protocol.

Another evidence of this perception is the number of academic theses and the articles published recently by specialised journals and magazines from different parts of the world, introducing the Argentine-Brazilian safeguards regime as a successful experience and, taking into account the political and social characteristics in each region, liable to be imitated.

Actually, we can assert that this system shows advantages when compared with the general safeguards agreements. The Quadripartite Agreement goes beyond the usual safeguards regime connecting a member-country with the IAEA. Two neighbouring countries, an agency created by them —the ABACC— and the International Atomic Energy Agency are the parties of this agreement. Therefore, it constitutes a far more complete safeguards regime. The concept of “*neighbours watching neighbours*” has been recognised as both efficient and effective.

Thus, it was with satisfaction and with great expectation of a fruitful result, that we received the news of a timely decision by the Director General of the IAEA, Mr. Amano, to convene a special forum aimed at discussing the possible contributions that can be obtained from regional arrangements for the verification and control of existing nuclear materials, such as EURATOM and the ABACC, through the development and start-up of similar arrangements in other parts of the world.

The arrangements of the ABACC type are a clear demonstration of the participating countries' political will to provide full transparency to their nuclear programmes. The creation of an environment of mutual confidence facilitates a good understanding among the parties and

creates the necessary conditions for facing technological challenges and, at the same time, prompts a constructive co-operation in non-proliferation policies, nuclear disarmament and the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Of course we are not here to defend a direct transposition of the ABACC model in other regions; both the geopolitical features of each region and their cultural differences that may hinder a direct transposition of the models need to be taken into account. Each experience must be analysed considering their social and political environments.

In any case, we believe that the creation of regional agencies making use of the “*neighbours watching neighbours*” concept is a possibility whose consideration is worthwhile.

On the other hand, in spite of the fact that the unfortunate nuclear incident that followed the extreme natural events of the earthquake and tsunami in Fukushima has brought along reactions against the use of nuclear power generation, the prospects of expansion in the use of nuclear reactors are still present in many countries.

The last forecasts presented by the IAEA indicate a growth involving almost 90 new reactors between now and the year 2030. Actually, such growth brings along great challenges in the fields of safeguards and non-proliferation.

In this forum, we have mentioned repeatedly our firm belief of the fact that promoting the creation of independent and reliable regional systems that could be applied in co-ordination with the IAEA would be a way to face the future challenges, while optimising the available

resources. The success attained by the ABACC's experience, after 20 years of activities as a binational agency applying safeguards, can serve as a guide.

The incentives for co-operation by regional systems with the AIEA was already discussed in the Board of Governors that, in INFCIRC/153, article 7, highlighted the role of regional agencies and established that the Agency must take into account their technical efficiency. Furthermore, increasing the co-operation with national and regional systems was one of the actions identified for increasing effectiveness and efficiency in safeguards in Part I of the so-called "93+2 Programme" approved in 1995.

Mister President,

As usual every year, once more, I want to take this opportunity to report to the international nuclear community that, as a result of the 99 inspections performed by our inspectors in the nuclear facilities of Brazil and Argentina during 2010, we can guarantee that all the nuclear materials and other elements under safeguards, both in Brazil and in Argentina, were used for exclusively peaceful purposes and properly registered in the accounts. Upon the completion of its tasks, ABACC did not find any signs of non-accomplishment with the commitments made by both countries.

It is worth recalling that, on the 13<sup>th</sup> December 1991, that Brazil, Argentina, the IAEA and the ABACC undersigned the Quadripartite Agreement, in which the two countries committed themselves to accept the application of safeguards to all the nuclear materials and in all of the nuclear activities performed in their territories. All of the activities

performed by ABACC for the application of safeguards are carried out in agreement with the IAEA, respecting the independence of the conclusions reached by each institution and, always, within the framework of the Quadripartite Agreement.

Efficiency and effectiveness in the application of safeguards, as it occurs with all human activities, are subject to scientific and technological developments that bring about important innovations liable to be applied to their processes. Three-dimensional laser-ray images, environmental samples and satellite images are important tools that can reinforce safeguards activities, making them more effective and less intrusive.

The capacity for keep abreast with these advancements is in direct relation with the qualification and the permanent training of the human resources of an institution. Aware of this reality, ABACC has been developing institutional policies favouring this issue. The search for excellence has been a constant concern in ABACC's history and, for this, the Agency has developed a policy for the permanent qualification of its officials, technicians and inspectors.

It is important to acknowledge that the strong integration of ABACC with the rest of the international entities devoted to the application of safeguards regimes has prompted an extremely rich exchange of experiences and knowledge for all of them. ABACC has benefited from technical co-operation with the IAEA, EURATOM, the Department of Energy of the United States, the ESARDA, the INMM and other international partners.

I want to express our special gratitude to all of them for these twenty years of co-operation and joint growth.

A determining factor for the success attained is the permanent support and recognition received by ABACC from both the Brazilian and the Argentine governments. Such support and recognition were a constant, but not only in the series of joint statements. They also involved the financial support of all the ABACC's activities and programmes and the preservation of its institutional independence. This has been always demonstrated by the support of the high representatives from Argentina and Brazil before the IAEA — Ambassadors Eugenio Maria Curia and Antonio Vallim Guerreiro, respectively— to whom I want to express our recognition and appreciation. There is also the technical co-operation between ABACC and the laboratories of the various agencies and institutions from both countries, always with the most generous support from both governments.

In closing my presentation, I reaffirm ABACC's commitment concerning its efficiency and efficacy in the application of safeguards procedures in Brazil and Argentina in a transparent manner, while maintaining the necessary confidentiality of the information and in agreement with the framework defined in the Quadripartite Agreement.

Please, accept, Mr. President, our wishes for a conference full of good results, with our gratitude for giving us the opportunity of this presentation.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH to all of you.