

Speech presented by the Deputy Secretary of ABACC, Dr. Odilon Marcuzzo do Canto at the 2010 TNP Review Conference

2010

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

Mr. President, distinguished delegates, representatives of the guest organisations, ladies and gentlemen,

Brazil and Argentina are proud of their history built on the basis of common understanding, in which consensus has been far more outstanding than eventual punctual disputes.

A clear example is the relationship attained by both countries, in connection with the nuclear sector, after the signature—in July 1991— of the Agreement for the Exclusively Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy.

While recognising the sovereign right of every nation to have access to nuclear technology for the scientific, technological, economic and social development of their inhabitants, both countries created their Common System for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (SCCC). The Agreement implied a clear and definite compromise for the use of all the materials and nuclear facilities submitted to their jurisdictions or control exclusively for peaceful purposes. Today, it represents a paradigmatic framework of the long process of economic, political, technological and cultural integration by both countries.

It was within this context that they created the Brazilian Argentine Agency of Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials—ABACC—, in order to manage and apply the SCCC.

On the 13th December this year, we will be completing eighteen years of activities within the framework of the Agreement between Brazil, Argentina, the ABACC and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the application of safeguards. In this

Quadripartite Agreement, both Member States committed themselves to accept the application of safeguards to all the nuclear materials involved in all the nuclear activities performed within their territories, under their jurisdictions and their control, with a single objective: assuring that such materials would not be diverted for their application in nuclear weapons or other explosive nuclear devices.

The joint work by the ABACC and the IAEA allowed to create an atmosphere of mutual confidence that resulted in the excellent results obtained throughout these eighteen years.

During this period more than 1.200 inspections were carried out in both countries. Last year, 58 inspections in Argentine facilities and 60 in Brazilian facilities were accomplished, involving 854 inspectors-day. The system established by Argentina and Brazil is not only “sui generis” but also presents clear advantages in comparison to safeguards agreements in general. The Quadripartite Agreement goes beyond a safeguard regime that connect a state party and the AIEA. It involves two neighboring States parties, and an agency created by them – the ABACC- , and the International Agency. It forms thus a much more comprehensive safeguards regime.

Mr. President,

The current status of civilisation, with its ever-growing energy requirements, does not allow for any further naive positions. We cannot accept that enormous portions of the world population be left out of development and of the fruits it bears. Now that humanity is starting to realise that its impact upon the environment can lead to its own destruction, nuclear energy is aimed at playing a leading role. Nowadays, several nations are taking a new approach to nuclear reactors as reliable sources of energy with zero contribution to the greenhouse effect; this, in turn, leads to an expectation of growth in all the activities related to the nuclear production chain.

On the other hand, political instability and the complexity of the relationship among nations and communities, associated with the simplicity of communications in this globalised world, produce an outlook of concern with regard to the possibilities of diversion of nuclear materials for belligerent purposes.

This context gives way to a huge responsibility for the sectors of society with access to the scientific and technological knowledge liable to make nuclear power generation both economically feasible and inherently safe.

History has demonstrated that, undoubtedly, the best way to guarantee a peaceful use of nuclear energy is promoting understanding and co-operation among nations. Co-operation and mutual understanding have been the basis for the joint work performed by the IAEA and the ABACC in the application of safeguards, as provided in the Quadripartite Agreement.

Argentina and Brazil have already made a clear decision to reactivate their respective nuclear programmes. This context implies an even more significant role of the ABACC, involving an increase in its activities of inspection, accounting and control for the years to come.

The search for excellence has been a constant concern in ABACC's history; for this purpose, a policy has been developed for the qualification of its officials and staff of inspectors. The co-operation received from the IAEA, the Department of Energy of the United States and the European Atomic Energy Community have been crucial in these undertakings. These efforts were mainly focused to the areas of non-destructive analyses, containment and surveillance, training courses and safeguards approaches.

The good results attained in the joint safeguards activities and procedures, with regard to unannounced inspections and the joint use of safeguards equipment units, reflect the high level of understanding and co-operation reached by both Agencies.

Both the Argentine and the Brazilian authorities have repeatedly stressed the relevance of the co-operation between the ABACC and the IAEA. Both organisations have also been asked to coordinate their tasks with a permanent goal: an efficient management of the cost of safeguards activities, avoiding any unnecessary duplication of efforts.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 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 and also, the possibilities of pacific uses of nuclear energy in all fields from industry, to agriculture and to health, poses great challenges to IAEA.

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 AIEA, while optimizing the available resources. In this regard, the success attained by 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 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 trying.

Offering incentives for co-operation between Regional Systems and the IAEA has been a reason for concern by the Board of Governors, which—in article 7 of INFCIRC/153—highlights the role of regional agencies and establishes that the Agency must give consideration to their technical efficiency. Besides, the enhancement of co-operation with the national or regional systems was one of the actions identified for the improvement of the effectiveness and the efficiency of safeguards in Part I of the so-called 'Programme 93+2' approved in 1995.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Even though ABACC core-business is concentrated in one the three pillars of the TNP, we firmly believe that the success of the Treaty is connected with the strengthening of all the three pillars. We also understand that this Conference is an important step in this direction. Therefore we congratulate all the distinguished delegations of the states parties gathered here in their best effort to achieve a better world for all mankind.

Finally, Mr. President, please accept our votes for a Conference full of good results and our appreciation for giving us the opportunity to deliver these statements.

Thank you all.