

**Statement of ABACC at the 54th General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency**

Sep 2010

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Mister President, 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-Fourth Session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency. I am also profiting of this occasion in order to express the full support of ABACC to your management. Furthermore, I want to thank the International Atomic Energy Agency for the invitation to participate in this event, by which we are honored. This is the seventeenth consecutive year in which we are granted the privilege of making a presentation before such a qualified audience.

ABACC has always considered this opportunity as highly especial, because it is here where we can let the international nuclear community know about some events and performances that we consider are significant, and express our willingness and our commitment to comply with our institutional mission as a regional agency for the application of safeguards in Argentina and Brazil.

Currently, ABACC is applying safeguards on all the nuclear materials available at approximately 70 nuclear facilities in both countries, through the application of the Common System for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials, carrying out about 110 inspections per year. All of this, within the framework of the Agreement for the Application of Safeguards, better known as the Quadripartite Agreement, undersigned by Argentina, Brazil, the IAEA and ABACC, enforced in 1994.

The task performed, Mr. President, allows us to assert that Argentina and Brazil have carried out their activities in the nuclear field in full compliance with the commitments made in the area of safeguards and non proliferation.

The Secretariat is certain that such results were only possible thanks to the dedication and expertise of the Agency's officials, collaborators and team of inspectors, to whom we devote our special appreciation.

We want to reaffirm, Mr. President, what we expressed in this forum last year: that the political will of the governments of Argentina and Brazil for the reactivation of their respective nuclear programs for peaceful purposes, as well as that of facing joint undertakings, does not only prompt expectations of growth throughout the nuclear production chain in both countries but, also, gives way to new opportunities and broadens the ABACC's responsibilities. ABACC's experience can be highly useful in the implementation of this new joint undertaking, taking into account that our Agency is the first fully operational binational organization created by both countries. Any joint undertaking implies multiple interactions, all of them involving problems to be solved, and ABACC has gained a great experience in the management of interactions since its creation.

Within this context, Mr. President, we must note that the President of the Argentine Republic, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, and the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, held a working meeting in San Juan, Argentina, on the 3rd August, in order to review the progress made in bilateral cooperation concerning the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

In this occasion, they highlighted the peculiar role played by ABACC, as a mechanism for building mutual and international confidence, ensuring the submittal to full safeguards of all the nuclear activities in Argentina and Brazil.

Additionally, they stated that ABACC has made a unique contribution to the international non-proliferation regime, which must be fully recognized by promoting cooperation and through a free access of Argentina and Brazil to the sensitive technologies in the field of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. To this effect, they decided that ABACC, whose safeguards system is a fundamental pillar for bilateral cooperation in the nuclear arena, must be constantly perfected and reinforced in its actions.

In tune with the guidelines issued by its Commission, ABACC's Secretariat is set to face new challenges, looking forward to continuous improvement in its technical and administrative activities.

The permanent search for the enhancement of its operational team and its concern for keeping updated in the state of the art of technologies and innovations applicable to safeguards have resulted in the international recognition of ABACC as an example of a binational effort towards mutual confidence and transparency in the use of nuclear energy for exclusively peaceful purposes.

Mr. President, we are pleased to start with this brief summary of the relevant events related to the compliance with our mission that took place as of the last General Conference, highlighting the visit paid to ABACC's headquarters—in Rio de Janeiro—by the Director General of the IAEA, Dr. Yukiya Amano, within the framework of his mission to Latin America, earlier this year. In that occasion, the understanding between both agencies was reinforced and they ratified the importance of mutual cooperation in the application of safeguards performed within the framework of the agreements previously undersigned by the parties.

An example of this effort was the decision of implementing new verification techniques at the uranium enrichment plants, which involves technological innovation in the approaches to safeguards and in unattended monitoring systems that will be applied in the various Brazilian and Argentine facilities. These systems evidence the willingness of both countries to apply new techniques for the control of the materials under safeguards.

During 2009, ABACC received a special invitation: to participate in the 21st meeting of the Consulting Group of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, which was held in Vienna between the 30th September and the 1st October. In his presentation, ABACC's Secretariat highlighted the tasks and activities performed by the Agency and made emphasis on the contribution by the Common System of Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials as an essential tool for the verification of nuclear activities in Argentina and Brazil.

Also, ABACC participated in the conference for the review of the NPT held at the Headquarters of the United Nations, in New York, during May this year. In a plenary session at the beginning of the conference, ABACC's Secretariat presented a statement stressing the originality of ABACC's model and the atmosphere of mutual confidence that has prevailed between these two countries throughout its 20-year history. At the end of the conference, an institutional presentation was made as a side event. Mr. President, the search for excellence has been a constant concern in the history of ABACC; for this purpose, a policy was developed for the qualification of its officials and of its team of inspectors. The cooperation received from the IAEA, from the Department of Energy of the United States and from the European Atomic Energy Community has been crucial in connection with these undertakings. These efforts were especially focused to the areas of non-destructive analyses, containment and surveillance, training courses and safeguards approaches.

In addition to the participation of ABACC's officials and of Brazilian and Argentine specialists, the participation of foreign instructors is promoted, considering the permanent evolution of the concepts applicable to nuclear safeguards and of the technologies in use.

Within this context, the participation of specialists from the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, the Department of Energy of the United States and the IAEA need to be noted.

On the other hand, it is worth mentioning that a "Regional Course on Systems for National Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials" was held in Rio de Janeiro in November 2009. This periodical course of the IAEA, carried out in cooperation with the Brazilian Nuclear Energy Commission and the ABACC, is aimed at spreading the international safeguards procedures among the facility operators and the inspectors involved in the national safeguards systems.

With regard to cooperation with other agencies, ABACC and EURATOM are currently developing cooperation projects for the application of more modern technologies, such as the use of 3-dimensional laser for the verification of the design data and the use of ultrasonic seals. Another project being developed is the analysis of procedures for the

Common Use of Equipment during the joint inspections with the IAEA. It was agreed that both institutions will be carrying out activities aimed at strengthening the regional systems along with the IAEA.

It must be noted that the activities performed within the framework of the cooperation agreements made with the US Department of Energy has also meant an important contribution.

Furthermore, as part of the technical cooperation between ABACC and the Republic of Korea, represented by the KINAC, topics related to the exchange of information were discussed, including short-notice random inspections and new systems and equipment applied to CANDU-type reactor.

Mr. President, the prospects for expansion in the use of nuclear reactors are posing significant challenges in the field of safeguards and non proliferation.

As we had already mentioned before this forum last year, one way of facing these future challenges would be promoting the creation of independent and reliable regional systems that could be applied in a coordinated manner with the IAEA, thus optimizing the available resources. To this effect, the success attained by ABACC's experience, after almost 20 years applying safeguards as a binational agency, may serve as a guidance.

It is a fact that regional geopolitical features and cultural differences do not allow for a direct transposition of models; however, the central idea of developing regional agencies making use of the concept of "neighbors watching each other" is a possibility that is worth a trial.

Mr. President, it is pertinent to consider that, in addition to its permanent technical and administrative staff, ABACC's model comprises a team of highly specialized inspectors with a thorough knowledge of the idiosyncrasy and the social, economic and political conditions in the region, which is a very important advantage at the time of performing an overall analysis of the situation with regard to safeguards and non proliferation in the involved countries.

We must recall that, the offer of incentives for cooperation among Regional Systems and the IAEA was a matter of concern for the Board of Governors that—in article 7 of INFCIRC/153— highlighted the role of regional agencies and established that the Agency must pay attention to their technical efficiency. Furthermore, the enhancement of co-operation with national or regional systems was one of the activities identified in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of safeguards in Part I of the so-called “93+2 Programme”.

Finally, 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.