

General Debates

General Statement of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials - ABACC- before the UN office during the Third Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (TNP)

New York, April 29 – May 10, 2019

Mr. Chairman, Excellences, ladies and gentleman.

On behalf of ABACC – the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials –, allow me first to congratulate you for your election to serve as the Chair of the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and to wish you all the success in this endeavour.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to emphasize that the creation of the ABACC as an intergovernmental organization arises from a confidence building process between Argentina and Brazil and from the establishment by both countries of a strategic alliance in the nuclear area.

On May 17, 1980, Argentina and Brazil sign a broad cooperation agreement for the development and application of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. This agreement establishes the necessary bases for a reciprocal knowledge of both nuclear programs through an exchange of information and consultations.

On July 18, 1991, both countries signed the Bilateral Agreement, creating ABACC whose mission is to verify and give assurances that all nuclear materials and facilities in Argentina and Brazil are used exclusively for peaceful purposes.

The Bilateral Agreement constitutes a milestone in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and is a decisive non-proliferation tool between these two countries with advanced nuclear programs in our region, the first Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (NWFZ) in a densely populated area of the world. That demonstrates the clear and definitive commitment of Argentina and Brazil to the exclusively peaceful use of nuclear energy, and, at same time, recognizes the sovereign right of each country to develop and use nuclear technology for the benefit of their people.

ABACC administers the Common System of Accounting of and Control for Nuclear Materials, a system of regional safeguards, robust and independent that through inspections and technical and evaluation measures verifies that nuclear materials are not diverted towards the manufacture of nuclear weapons or any other nuclear explosive device.

The cadre of ABACC's inspectors, designated by its governing body, on the basis of qualified human capital placed at the service of the agency by both countries, has been carrying out verification missions in Argentina and Brazil almost daily, allowing to obtain independent and solid technical conclusions. The technical capacity of ABACC and the growing use of new technologies also contribute to effective verification.

The nuclear plans of both countries continue to expand. The growth of activities and inventories of nuclear material in Argentina and Brazil represents a challenge for ABACC for the future that we are approaching today in a proactive way, adopting actions that ensure us to respond to this growth with adequate capacity of response and with the technical excellence that have characterized our agency.

Mr. Chairman,

Throughout these almost 28 years, ABACC has consolidated a solid international credibility in the effective and efficient verification of nuclear activities in Argentina and Brazil. The main reasons for this have been the continued political commitment, technical and economic support provided by the two countries and the independence of ABACC in the implementation of its verification activities.

ABACC is the corollary of the establishment of a profound and lasting relationship based on the mutual confidence of Argentina and Brazil and is a confirmation that cooperation, dialogue and respect between countries contribute decisively to regional and international security.

ABACC is rightfully considered one of the most successful initiatives in non-proliferation in the world. The process and the lessons learnt from this experience may serve as an inspiration for other regions in the world.

Mr. Chairman,

ABACC, Argentina, Brazil and the IAEA signed on 13 of December 1991 a comprehensive safeguards agreement, the so-called Quadripartite Agreement, which entered into force in March 1994. This agreement, which met 25 years of successful implementation last March, contains well defined provisions on the coordination and cooperation of activities between the IAEA and ABACC, in particular, that the two agencies shall cooperate and minimize the duplication of activities, and at same time, draw independent conclusions. The good results obtained in the coordination of activities between the IAEA and ABACC throughout the years reflect the high level of understanding and cooperation reached by both organizations.

Under the cooperation framework, ABACC is firmly committed to continue furthering ways and means by which the IAEA safeguards could make full use of the findings of this regional mechanism as envisaged in the Quadripartite comprehensive safeguards as it has been recognized by the previous NPT review conferences.

On the verge of turning 28 years of the successful model established by the Bilateral Agreement, ABACC wishes to share this experience especially within the NPT framework to signify the value of this regional scheme to non-proliferation and highlights its commitment towards maintaining its technical effectiveness, independence and international credibility in fulfilling its mandate.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman, we hope that the Sessions of the Preparatory Committee and the NPT Review Conference in 2020 will reiterate the contribution of the regional system that is ABACC and that its successful implementation, the cooperation and the process of building confidence between the two countries will serve as inspiration in their deliberations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.