

General Statement of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials - ABACC at the Second Meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference of the Parties in Charge of the Review of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) of 2026.

Geneva, July 22 to August 2, 2024

The creation of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC) arises from a process of generating mutual trust between Argentina and Brazil and from the development by both countries of a strategic alliance for the nuclear sector.

On July 1991 both countries signed the Agreement for Exclusively Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy – the Bilateral Agreement – creating ABACC whose main mission is to guarantee that all nuclear materials and facilities in Argentina and Brazil are being used exclusively for peaceful purposes.

ABACC manages the Common System of Nuclear Material Accounting and Control, a robust and independent system that, through mutual inspections (Argentinean inspectors inspect Brazilian nuclear facilities and vice-versa) and through evaluation measures, verifies that nuclear materials are not diverted towards the manufacture of nuclear weapons.

The binational agency has become a symbol of a historic, unprecedented process of transparency and confidence-building, displaying the two countries' political determination — between themselves and before the international community — to develop and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes only.

The bilateral agreement was ensued by the quadripartite agreement concluded in that same year of 1991, involving the two countries, ABACC and the IAEA. I would like to emphasize that the Common System applied by ABACC is the basis for the quadripartite agreement, that means the IAEA has to take into account the activities and results of ABACC.

As the only binational safeguards organization in the world to deal with the enforcement of full-scope safeguards, ABACC has performed, more than 3500 inspections in both countries, including more than 350 unannounced, most of them in partnership with the IAEA. On average daily 3 to 4 ABACC inspectors are performing inspection missions. The safeguards model of neighbor watching neighbor is probably more effective than any other safeguards arrangement.

ABACC is independent from the two governments, and while ABACC and the IAEA draw independent conclusions, close cooperation between the two agencies has been crucial for the success of the whole undertaking. As a result, it has been possible for the two agencies to develop procedural arrangements for the maximization of the effectiveness and efficiency in safeguards implementation.

Looking at the past 33 years, Argentina and Brazil are proud that the dialogue and cooperation in the nuclear field has become a common asset of their strategic partnership.

The political and legal framework the two countries were able to build has become a source of inspiration for other efforts related to nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. Creative thinking and strong political will at the highest level, as the one underpinning the Argentine-Brazilian experience, will be of paramount importance for the achievement and maintenance of a more secure world, free from the threat of nuclear weapons, and where the atom is exclusively used for peaceful purposes.

Finally, I hope that the PrepCom meetings and the 2026 NPT RevCon will reiterate the relevance of the model regional system established by Argentina and Brazil.