

Mr Laércio Antonio VINHAS

IAEA Conference on Nuclear Safety

Statement by Brazil

Mr. President,

First of all, my delegation would like to commend the Director-General for the timely initiative of convening this Conference. Brazil has always favored the enhancement of an international nuclear safety culture and we strongly support the Director-General's endeavours in that direction. We feel particularly honored to have you preside over our deliberations and are sure that your personal and professional credentials will contribute to a successful outcome.

2. We take note of the unfortunate events that motivated an even greater concern on the safety of nuclear installations around the world and would like to convey to the Japanese people our sincere hope that Japan fully recovers as soon as possible from the huge human and material losses it has suffered. In this respect, we are glad to note that the recovery efforts by Japan have already yielded many results.

3. The nuclear accident in Fukushima had a great impact globally and in the public opinion in Brazil. This was so because Brazil has a developed nuclear power program, and the population became naturally worried on the safety of the Brazilian nuclear power plants. Moreover, the Fukushima accident had a special impact for Brazil, because about 300 thousand Brazilians live currently in Japan and we host the largest community of Japanese descent nationals abroad.

4. In this regard, the Brazilian-Japanese community was particularly worried about the possible consequences of the dispersion of radioactive material for their relatives in Japan. In the aftermath of the accident, there was an enormous demand for information by the Brazilian nuclear authorities on the rates of exposure and contamination relating to Fukushima. In order to respond, the National Commission on Nuclear Energy (CNEN) created a specific webpage with guidance for the Brazilian community in Japan and issued daily bulletins about the progress after the accident, including information such as the dose rate and fall-out in all Japanese provinces. Besides that, CNEN reinforced its e-mail and telephone consultation system and received over 40 enquiries a day in the 10 days following the accident. The Brazilian nuclear authorities conceded over 100 interviews on nuclear safety in the aftermath of Fukushima.

Mr. President,

5. Brazil has always supported international efforts to enhance nuclear safety. Moreover, we firmly believe that the safe operation of nuclear installations – specially of nuclear power plants, whose operation has great visibility around the world – is essential to promote widespread public acceptance of nuclear energy. In this context, Brazil has signed and ratified all international conventions on nuclear safety and applies the IAEA Safety Standards as a basis for the national regulations. In addition, Brazil

supports the codes of conduct for the safety and security of radioactive sources and for the nuclear safety of research reactors.

6. Brazil is fully engaged in the international efforts to enhance nuclear safety. However, this process has to take into account the applicability of the proposed measures and the responsibility of each country for the safety of its nuclear installations. In our view, the application of international safety standards by the national regulatory authorities is more efficient and effective than its application by an international entity.

Mr. President,

7. In relation to the possible lessons to be learned from the Fukushima accident, the information available so far does not allow a thorough assessment. However, it is already possible to identify some preliminary lessons, such as the straightforward need to ensure the adequate working of a supplementary system to supply electricity and refrigeration to the reactor's core and spent fuel in case of failure of the regular emergency system.

8. Other possible lessons deserve further consideration, such as the investigation of the external initiating events and the combination among several of those, as well as the analysis of severe accidents caused by such events. This analysis should naturally consider the possibility of accidents beyond the design basis.

9. Concerning the measures adopted by Brazil, my delegation notes that immediately following the Fukushima accident, the national regulatory authority ordered the operator of nuclear power plants in Brazil to prepare studies to identify possible initiating events – external and internal – with the potential to cause common failures; to analyze the efficiency of the systems to control hydrogen within the containment; the working of the emergency electricity supply system; and the adequate operation of the core cooling system in case of failure of the external electricity supply source. These studies will be useful in the process of review of the national safety procedures for severe accidents and of the Probabilistic Safety Analysis (PSA).
Segurança.

10. At the regional level, it is important to note that last April, the Brazilian-Argentinian Bilateral Committee on Nuclear Energy (COBEN), which coordinates nuclear cooperation between Brazil and Argentina, decided to attach the highest priority to the strengthening of the national capacity of response to radiological and nuclear emergencies involving the exchange of experiences between the two countries in this matter.

11. To conclude, my delegation would like to recall that the existence of procedures that cover all possible situations make interventions easier and more reliable. However, it is important not to forget that sound technical knowledge, common sense and creativity are powerful tools to handle unusual and unforeseen emergency situations, which may require unusual solutions. Thank you.