

Fukushima Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety
15-17 December 2012

Statement by Brazil

**H. E. Ambassador Laercio Antonio Vinhas,
Permanent Representative of Brazil to the IAEA**

Mr. President,

First of all, I should like to express Brazil's thanks to the government and people of Japan for convening this timely conference and for the warm hospitality.

Brazil followed, with deep sorrow, the tragic events related to the earthquake and tsunami occurred in Japan nearly two years ago.

We Brazilians have strong friendship ties with the Japanese people. Brazil hosts the largest community of Japanese descendants abroad, and Brazilians constitute the third largest foreign community in Japan, with over 200 thousand people living and working here.

In the wake of the accident, and with the support of Brazil's National Nuclear Energy Commission, our diplomatic and consular missions in Japan provided the Brazilian community with the necessary assistance, information and analysis on the possible health and environmental impacts of the accident, while strictly following the Japanese government's evaluations and recommendations.

Among other steps, a webpage with guidance to our community in Japan was set up, and daily bulletins were released about the progress on the management of the accident.

Beyond its consequences for Japan, the Fukushima accident has had a deep impact on the public perception of nuclear energy worldwide. In

that sense, it reinforced the imperative need for enhancing nuclear safety and reassessing national standards, even in countries, like Brazil, where IAEA guidelines are rigorously observed. No later than five days after the Fukushima accident, a Technical Committee was established in Brazil to coordinate the actions needed to undertake our national assessments. These included, inter alia, evaluation of the design basis of our nuclear power plants, identification of possible vulnerabilities and verification of procedures required to control beyond design-basis accidents.

Moreover, President Dilma Rousseff requested the National Nuclear Energy Commission and the operator of our nuclear power plants – Eletronuclear – to carry out additional assessments in order to identify exceptional risk factors. A series of “stress tests” have since then been conducted, following international specifications, including those set out by the Western European Nuclear Regulators Association (WENRA) and the Iberoamerican Forum of Nuclear and Radiological Regulatory Bodies (FORO).

In September 2011 a Management Committee was established in Brazil with the aim of following through the guidelines contained in the “Eletrobras-Eletronuclear Response Plan to the Fukushima Accident”. Such Response Plan comprises 56 studies and projects related to nuclear safety, amounting to some US\$ 250 million dollars to be spent from 2011 to 2015. The Plan is meant to be reviewed every six months, taking into account the requirements set out by the National Nuclear Energy Commission as well as new international initiatives and recommendations.

Mr. President,

We appreciate the tangible progress made by Japan in the response to the nuclear accident. We look forward to the renewed discussions this conference will entail with a view to achieving the goal of a comprehensive IAEA report on the accident by 2014.

The IAEA Ministerial Conference and the Action Plan on Nuclear Safety approved last year were important steps in our collective efforts to review and enhance nuclear safety worldwide, especially with regard to the prevention of and response to possible accidents involving hazardous environmental factors.

Brazil is a party to all conventions on nuclear safety and security, and, as a founding member of the IAEA, has been actively engaged in all relevant discussions to promote enhanced standards in those fields. At the same time, in accordance with the IAEA Statute, we firmly believe that safety and security considerations must not be invoked as a prerequisite which might hamper international cooperation and peaceful nuclear applications, especially in developing countries.

Ours is a comprehensive approach to all nuclear issues, one that encompasses both IAEA and NPT interrelated goals of promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, preventing the proliferation of and ridding the world from the scourge of nuclear weapons.

Several thousand nuclear weapons and related stockpiles of highly-enriched uranium and plutonium remain outside IAEA or any other international supervision or control. Not only the safety and security of nuclear arsenals, but their complete elimination, within a specified timeframe, must remain a high priority in the international agenda.

Therefore, States possessing nuclear weapons must proceed to comply, fully, promptly and unconditionally, with the disarmament obligations contained in the NPT, as a necessary step to a safer and more secure world, where nuclear energy is used for peaceful purposes only.

Thank you.

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