

**SPEECH BY JULIO DE VIDO**

I am pleased to attend the 58<sup>th</sup> General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency and to have the opportunity to deliver this speech.

As Minister of Federal Planning, I am responsible for the nuclear sector in the Argentine Republic and I will present an overview of the current situation and our goals for the future.

In August 2006, Argentina redesigned its Nuclear Plan based on three pillars:

- Electric power generation;
- Scientific research and development; and
- Public health.

The achievements since then have included the following:

- ✓ USD 11 billion have been invested.
- ✓ 5,220 new experts in the field have been trained. The figure has grown from 3,000 to 8,220 experts to date - that is, a 174% increase.
- ✓ The year 2014 has been a milestone in Argentine history: Nuclear Power Plant Atucha II, the most eagerly awaited energy achievement of the last 30 years, has been completed and renamed "President Néstor Kirchner", in honour of the leader who decided to revitalize the nuclear sector, which had been paralyzed for more than twelve years, between 1990 and 2002. On 3 June 2014, the reactor reached criticality, and it is currently generating 410 MW at 55% capacity. It is expected that it will reach its full capacity of 745 MW in the next few weeks. The completion of the project required a total investment of USD 3 billion, 88% of which was supplied locally. Argentina designed, engineered and built the Power Plant.
- ✓ Works to expand the useful life of Nuclear Power Plant Embalse for an additional 30-year term are under way. The plant has a capacity of 649 MW and its useful life expansion will require a USD 5 billion investment. For the first time in history, Argentine companies will produce internal components for nuclear reactors. I would like to highlight that the Development Bank of Latin America has granted a line of credit for more than USD 200 million. This is the first time a multilateral credit institution has financed a strictly nuclear project.

- ✓ CAREM, a 25 MW low energy nuclear reactor prototype, is currently being built. This is the first reactor built using all-Argentine technology and design. The international bidding process for the "Balance of Plant" is currently under way. This reactor is expected to reach a capacity of 150-300 MW, with a view to marketing the energy it generates through grids that do not require high-power machines.
- ✓ The Uranium Enrichment Plant is currently being recovered. On 5 June, the Mock-Up Pilot Plant was finished and started loading uranium for enrichment. This is a landmark in Argentine history, since it has helped consolidate the country as a member of the group of 11 countries recognized by the International Atomic Energy Agency as having uranium enrichment capacity. We are also developing other advanced enrichment methods, such as laser and centrifugal enrichment.
- ✓ Argentina will build a Uranium Dioxide Production Plant that will supply the 460 tons that are annually required to generate nuclear electricity, including the President Kirchner Plant, commissioned this year.
- ✓ We have recently entered into agreements with the People's Republic of China for the construction of the fourth Argentine Nuclear Power Plant, equipped with an 800 MW pressurized heavy water reactor. In addition, we are at the negotiation stage with several bidders for the construction of the Fifth Nuclear Power Plant (PWR), leading Argentina on the path of uranium enrichment technology. WESTINGHOUSE, CHINA NATIONAL NUCLEAR CORPORATION, ROSATOM, KEPCO and ATMEA are already pre-qualified.
- ✓ The Argentine Nuclear Plan launched in August 2006 proactively included nuclear medicine based on the following:
  - Training human resources and investing in the acquisition of equipment and nuclear medicine centres available to the general public.
  - We have developed a national accelerator for the production of a high neutron flux in order to treat cancer by applying the boron neutron capture therapy.
  - We are currently working to expand the service of nuclear medicine at the federal level.
  - The Diagnostic Nuclear Medicine Centre of the City of Buenos Aires was completed in 2007, in compliance with the highest international standards in diagnostic, cardiologic, oncologic, and neurological treatments.
  - Based on national low-enriched uranium technology, Argentina currently produces 5% of the Molybdenum-99 consumed worldwide for the production of radiopharmaceuticals. Argentina is the third world producer of Cobalt-60. We have also exported radionuclide obtainment technology to Peru, Cuba, Algeria, Australia, and Egypt.

- In 2007, state-owned producer INVAP exported a nuclear research reactor to Australia, the largest turnkey technology export made by Argentina so far.
- Jointly with the Federative Republic of Brazil, we are developing two multi-purpose reactors: RA10 and RMB. It is expected that, by the time they are finished, the two countries will provide 40% of the radionuclide supply to the world market.

I would also like to refer to the most important measures implemented in terms of safety, and radioactive waste and spent fuel management:

- ✓ All power plants have been adapted to comply with the new post-Fukushima international requirements.
- ✓ By law, an annual report is submitted to the Argentine Congress on the work carried out in the management of radioactive waste. We participate in the “Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management”, adopted in Vienna in 1997, and we have submitted the required reports since the beginning.
- ✓ By law, the National Atomic Energy Commission has periodically prepared a “Strategic Plan for the Management of Radioactive Waste”, approved by the Nuclear Regulatory Authority, which is submitted to the Argentine Executive Branch and to the Argentine Congress for their approval.
- ✓ A new warehouse for the temporary storage of primary circuit filters in the Juan Domingo Perón Power Plant (former Atucha I) is being built, as well as new premises for the dry storage of spent fuels, with a view to streamlining the operations of the power plant.
- ✓ Warehouses and silos have been built to store waste resulting from the dismantling of components of the 648 MW Embalse Nuclear Power Plant, which, as I have explained, is currently undergoing works for the expansion of its useful life.
- ✓ Premises and systems for the treatment of solid, liquid and gas waste have been set up in the Néstor Kirchner Power Plant.
- ✓ A “Long-term Storage Warehouse” has been built in the Ezeiza Atomic Power Plant in order to treat and store the waste generated by the country's nuclear facilities.
- ✓ New facilities have been set up in the Ezeiza Atomic Plant for the storage of spent fuel from all radionuclide research and production reactors currently operating.

- ✓ Radioactive and chemical techniques have been developed to identify and quantify radionuclides, with a view to expanding the information available on the radiological inventory of radioactive waste.
- ✓ A new "Laboratory for the Characterization of Radioactive Waste" is being built in Ezeiza. It is estimated that works will be completed by the end of this year.
- ✓ With respect to the environmental restoration of the areas where mining activities for the extraction of uranium have been carried out, the National Atomic Energy Commission is currently developing an "Environmental Restoration Project", which is making significant progress.

**I would like to conclude by reporting that in the next 10 years, investments in the nuclear sector are expected to reach USD 31 billion.**

Throughout the years, Argentina has demonstrated its commitment to nuclear development for exclusively peaceful purposes, both by complying with international safety and non-proliferation regimes and by strengthening its own capacities in the different fields of nuclear technology. I have come before you today in order to reaffirm Argentina's commitment.

The Argentine Republic plays an active role in several nuclear sector meetings and fora. In June this year, my country chaired the plenary meeting of the Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG), held in the City of Buenos Aires.

In addition, Argentina is leading the process for the preparation of the Diplomatic Conference to consider the Amendment to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, which will be held in February 2015, in Vienna. We hope Argentina will chair this Conference as well.

These are two examples of the concrete contribution of Argentina to the legal and political frameworks aimed at ensuring the peaceful and safe uses of nuclear power.

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH**