

**Proceedings of the INMM & ESARDA Joint Virtual Annual Meeting
August 23-26 & August 30-September 1, 2021**

**Overcoming Challenges in Establishing and Maintaining a State System of Accounting for
and Control of Nuclear Material: A Perspective from Southeast Asia**

Phonenipha MATHOUCHANH

Independent Consultant
Nuclear Non-proliferation and Security

ABSTRACT

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has always been a strong supporter of the nuclear non-proliferation regime whether being through its activities in the relevant international organizations, or the ratification, by its Member States, of the related international legal instruments. In the field of safeguards, ASEAN Member States have all concluded a comprehensive safeguards agreement (CSA) with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) therefore meeting their legal obligations under the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (SEANWFZ) and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It is in such a context that all ASEAN Member States have accepted that the IAEA applies safeguards to nuclear activities within their territory, under their jurisdiction or carried out under their control anywhere, for the purpose of verifying that nuclear material is not diverted to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

The obligations of States with a CSA include, inter alia: the provision of information and access to the IAEA, including through the conduct of inspections; or, the establishment and maintenance of a State system of accounting for and control of nuclear material (SSAC). The ability of States to provide the IAEA with accurate information and access, including in a timely manner, relies substantially on the effectiveness of the SSAC, which typically also comprises an authority responsible for safeguards implementation (SRA).

For many States in the Southeast Asian region, establishing both an SRA and SSAC comes with challenges such as the lack of awareness and understanding of safeguards or the limited resources to maintain an SSAC, which also impacts the coordination between domestic entities. These difficulties are often exacerbated for States with very little or no nuclear material and limited nuclear fuel cycle activities. The purpose of this paper is to explore these challenges for ASEAN Member States and provide recommendations for better meeting safeguards obligations. It also looks at outreach activities conducted by the IAEA and provide potential solutions for those activities to better support States in meeting their SSAC obligation, therefore, reinforcing the nuclear non-proliferation regime as a whole.

I. INTRODUCTION

Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has always been strong supporters of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. In the field of safeguards, they all have concluded a comprehensive safeguards agreement (CSA) with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in the context of which they have accepted that the IAEA applies safeguards to nuclear activities within their territory, under their jurisdiction or carried out under their control anywhere, for the purpose of verifying that nuclear material is not diverted to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

Among the various obligations of States with a CSA, the establishment and maintenance of a State system of accounting for and control of nuclear material (SSAC) enables such States to provide the IAEA with accurate and comprehensive information on nuclear material and activities and access to facilities and locations outside facilities. As a consequence, a comprehensive and effective SSAC plays a key role in the IAEA being able to draw its safeguards conclusions for a State.

For many States in Southeast Asia, establishing and maintaining a comprehensive and effective SSAC, which includes an authority responsible for safeguards implementation (SRA), often constitutes a challenge for reasons such as, inter alia, the lack of awareness or understanding of safeguards or the limited resources to maintain an SSAC. This paper explores the challenges faced by States, essentially from Southeast Asia perspective, in establishing and maintaining their SSAC. It first looks at the rights and obligations of States with a CSA and the status of safeguards among ASEAN Member States. This paper then focuses on the main elements that contribute to a comprehensive and effective SSAC and put them in perspective with the difficulties faced by ASEAN Member States. At last, it provides recommendations to overcome those challenges, including through the support of the IAEA.

II. ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING AN SSAC: BASIC OBLIGATION UNDER A CSA

Under art. III of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), each non-nuclear-weapon State (NNWS) party to the Treaty “*undertakes to accept safeguards, as set forth in an agreement to be negotiated and concluded with the International Atomic Energy Agency in accordance with the Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Agency's safeguards system, for the exclusive purpose of verification of the fulfilment of its obligations assumed under this Treaty with a view to preventing diversion of nuclear energy from peaceful uses to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (...)*” [1]. As a result of such an obligation, each NNWS party to the NPT has concluded a CSA with the IAEA and accepts the application of safeguards by the IAEA to all of their source or special fissionable materials.

Adopted by the IAEA Board of Governors in 1972, the document entitled “*The Structure and Content of Agreements between the Agency and States required in connection with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons*” (published as IAEA document INFCIRC/153 (Corr.)) [2], serves as a basis for negotiating safeguards agreements between the IAEA and NNWS party to the NPT.

Part I of INFCIRC/153 (Corr.) contains the general provisions of the safeguards agreement, which includes the main rights and obligations thereunder. For example, para. 3 contains the obligation for the IAEA and the State to cooperate in facilitating the implementation of safeguards. Another example is para. 8 which provides for the information that has to be submitted by the State to the IAEA – i.e. information on nuclear material subject to safeguards and the features of facilities relevant to safeguarding such material.

State System of Accounting for and Control of Nuclear Materials (SSAC)

Para. 7 of INFCIRC/153 (Corr.) establishes the obligation for the State to “*establish and maintain a system of accounting and control of all nuclear material subject to safeguards (...) and that such safeguards shall be applied in such a manner as to enable the [IAEA] to verify, in ascertaining that there has been no diversion of nuclear material (...), findings of the State’s system*” [2]. Considering this, the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of the SSAC is of paramount importance as it directly influences the IAEA’s ability to verify its findings and therefore to draw safeguards conclusions.

The SSAC comprises a set of technical and administrative measures that enable a State, through an authority responsible for safeguards implementation as well as various supporting stakeholders and procedures (e.g. accounting/operating records, etc.), to know the type, composition and location of nuclear material on its territory, therefore contributing in ensuring that nuclear material is not misused or removed from its assigned location without proper authorization and accounting.

While the SSAC is one of the general provisions contained in Part I of a CSA, reference to the system can also be found in Part II of the agreement, which specifies the procedures to be applied for the implementation of safeguards. Para. 31 of INFCIRC/153 (Corr.) provides that the IAEA shall make full use of the SSAC, therefore reaffirming the importance of such a system in the implementation of safeguards. Furthermore, para. 32 of INFCIRC/153 (Corr.) highlights that the SSAC shall be based on a structure of material balance areas (MBAs) and should include procedures related to: a system for the evaluation of precision and accuracy of measurements and the estimation of measurement uncertainty; for the identification, review and evaluation of differences in shipper/receiver differences; physical inventory taking; a system of records and reports showing, for each MBA, the inventory of nuclear material and the changes in that inventory; and, a system for reporting to the IAEA in accordance with the obligations pertaining to the reports system, as provided for in paras 59-69 of INFCIRC/153 (Corr.).

The notion of SSAC is not limited to the safeguards implementation procedures provided in the agreement. In fact, it is also essential for the State to establish and designate a State authority responsible for the implementation of safeguards (SRA). Importantly, such SRA is also, among other things, in charge of the coordination with the IAEA to facilitate the safeguards implementation. The authority, which typically holds the knowledge pertaining to safeguards, also prepares the requirements and procedures pertaining to nuclear material, as provided for in para. 32 of INFCIRC/153 (Corr.), therefore contributing to an effective and comprehensive SSAC.

Interestingly, INFCIRC/153 (Corr.) does not require the State to establish and designate an SRA. Nevertheless, the IAEA considers that such an authority enables the State to meet its safeguards

obligations whether being the establishment and maintenance of an SSAC or the provision of the information to the IAEA. While there is no fix format for the structure of the SRA, it is necessary for the SRA to have the sufficient legal authority under domestic law to conduct safeguards functions in the State, including licensing, inspection and enforcement. Developing countries usually assign the SRA functions within the domestic nuclear regulatory authority, as the staff therein is typically having the knowledge related to safeguards. Furthermore, for States with limited or no quantity of nuclear material and/or nuclear fuel cycle activities, which corresponds often to States with a Small Quantities Protocol (SQP) in force, the staff of the SRA is also responsible for safety, security or radiation protection. To ensure an optimum implementation of those various responsibilities, it is important that those responsibilities are distinguishable from one another.

III. ASEAN AND STATUS OF SAFEGUARDS

ASEAN Member States have always been playing an active role to promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Guided by its Charter, ASEAN, as a regional organization, has always been prompting initiatives towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation as a mean to achieve regional peace and security, as well stability. Importantly, art. 1 of the Charter also provides that one of the purposes of ASEAN is “*to preserve Southeast Asia as a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone and free of all other weapons of mass destruction*” [3].

The Treaty establishing the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty), which established in 1997 the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, specifically provides in its art. 5 that States Parties have the obligation “*to conclude an agreement with the IAEA for the application of full scope safeguards to its peaceful nuclear activities (...)*” [4]. Its art. 10 also creates a control system comprising, inter alia, of the IAEA safeguards system, with the purpose of verifying the compliance of the States Parties to their obligations. The Commission the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ Commission), established under art. 8 of the Treaty, recognized the importance of safeguards for the full compliance of the Bangkok Treaty. Its Plan of Action to strengthen the implementation of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia nuclear weapon-Free Zone (2018-2022) encourages the conclusion of IAEA Additional Protocols (AP) by all States Parties [5]. The Plan of Action neither contains references to the Small Quantities Protocols (SQPs) nor encourages States Parties to amend such protocols.

As shown in table 1 below, all ASEAN Member States have concluded a CSA. In addition, with the exception of Brunei Darussalam, all ASEAN Member States have either signed or ratified an AP (three States with pending ratification: Laos, Myanmar and Malaysia). Five States (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Singapore) have an operational SQP in force, while two of those SQPs (Cambodia and Singapore) are based on the revised standard text.

Table 1. Status of Safeguards in ASEAN States (as of 31 July 2021)

	SMALL QUANTITIES PROTOCOLS	SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENT	ADDITIONAL PROTOCOL
Brunei Darussalam	In force: 4 Nov. 1987 (O)	In force: 4 Nov. 1987	
Cambodia	In force: 16 July 2014 (R)	In force: 17 Dec. 1999	In force: 24 Apr. 2015

Indonesia		In force: 14 Jul. 1980	In force: 29 Sep. 1999
Lao PDR	In force: 5 Apr. 2001 (O)	In force: 5 Apr. 2001	Signed: 5 Nov. 2014
Malaysia		In force: 29 Feb. 1972	Signed: 22 Nov. 2005
Myanmar	In force: 20 April 1995 (O)	In force: 20 Apr. 1995	Signed: 17 Sep. 2013
Philippines		In force: 16 Oct. 1974	In force: 26 Feb. 2010
Singapore	In force: 31 Mar. 2008 (R)	In force: 18 Oct. 1977	In force: 31 Mar. 2008
Thailand		In force: 16 May 1974	In force: 17 Nov. 2017
Vietnam		In force: 23 Feb. 1990	In force: 17 Sep. 2012

O: SQP based on the original standard text

R: SQP based on the revised standard text

IV. NATIONAL CHALLENGES TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN AN SSAC

While the status of the conclusion of safeguards legal instruments among ASEAN Member States show a strong commitment to the nuclear non-proliferation regime, it is essential to also look at the national infrastructure and legal framework, which enables the States to meet their international obligations under the relevant safeguards instruments.

Table 2 below shows, for each ASEAN Member State, the nuclear regulatory authority, which may include the SRA, and, if existing, the national legal framework related to such implementation, particularly provisions establishing an SSAC.

Table 2. National infrastructure and legal framework (as of 31 July 2021)

	NATIONAL AUTHORITY	NUCLEAR LEGAL FRAMEWORK
Brunei Darussalam	Safety, Health and Environment National Authority (SHENA)	Radiation Protection Order, 2018 ✓ Includes limited safeguards provisions ✗ No reference to the establishment of an SSAC
Cambodia	Ministry of Mines and Energy (MoME) (Temporary)	No nuclear law
Indonesia	National Nuclear Energy Agency of Indonesia (BATAN)	Nuclear Energy Act, 1997 ✗ No provisions on safeguards ✗ No reference to the establishment of an SSAC
Lao PDR	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MoESS)	Radiation Protection and Safety Law, 2019 ✗ No provisions on safeguards ✗ No reference to the establishment of an SSAC
Malaysia	Atomic Energy Licensing Board (AELB)	Atomic Energy Licensing Act, 1984 ✗ No provisions on safeguards ✗ No reference to the establishment of an SSAC
Myanmar	Division of Atomic Energy, Department of Technology Promotion and Coordination, Ministry of Education	Atomic Energy Law, 1998 ✗ No provisions on safeguards ✗ No reference to the establishment of an SSAC

Philippines	Philippine Nuclear Research Institute (PNRI)	Science Act, 1958 Atomic Energy and Liability Act, 1968 ✗ No provisions on safeguards ✗ No reference to the establishment of an SSAC
Singapore	Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources (MEWR)	Radiation Protection Act, 2007 ✓ Includes provisions on safeguards ✓ Provisions establishing an SSAC
Thailand	Office of Atoms for Peace (OAP)	Nuclear Energy for Peace Act, 2016 ✓ Includes provisions on safeguards ✓ Provisions establishing an SSAC
Vietnam	Vietnam Agency for Radiation and Nuclear Safety (VARANS)	Law on Atomic Energy, 2008 ✗ No provisions on safeguards ✗ No reference to the establishment of an SSAC

Table 2 illustrates that all States have a nuclear regulatory authority in charge of regulating the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The size of such an authority is commensurate with the nuclear fuel activities of the State. For example, Thailand and its Office for Atoms for Peace (OAP) has more staffs and responsibilities than the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Lao PDR as Thailand possesses nuclear research reactors. All SRAs in ASEAN Member States are located within the nuclear regulatory authority. Furthermore, most of the States, apart from Cambodia, have a national legal framework on the peaceful use of nuclear energy. It is however important to highlight that many of those nuclear laws do not contain safeguards provisions, which typically establish an SSAC and include safeguards obligations for licensees.

Observations on both the infrastructure and the legal framework, as well as the potential weaknesses associated to them, show that some of the States may face significant challenges to ensure safeguards implementation, including their SSAC. Such challenges may, as a result, complicate the States' ability to meet their obligations under their respective safeguards agreements and protocol thereto, therefore also adding difficulties for the IAEA in applying safeguards.

III.1. Structure of the SRA

Having a national authority responsible for regulating the conduct of activities related to nuclear energy is an essential element. This is also applicable to the SRA which is, ultimately, responsible for facilitating safeguards implementation, therefore enabling the State to meet its international obligations. Table 2 shows that ASEAN Member States have two types of national regulatory authority: a body created independently and outside of an existing structure; and a body established within an existing structure, such as a Ministry or a governmental agency.

Establishing a regulatory body represents a particular challenge for developing countries as they usually have limited resources and/or knowledge related to nuclear energy. This explains why most of ASEAN Member States have decided to establish their regulatory body within an existing structure, which also helps them to save costs related to the setting up of a new entity. Such an approach nevertheless may come with shortcomings which could overall impact safeguards implementation.

One of those shortcomings is related to the performance of the SRA. In fact, if the staff of the SRA has a wide range of other responsibilities, including some not related to the functions of a nuclear regulatory authority, it may not be able to dedicate sufficient time and resources to conduct

safeguard-related tasks such as raising awareness safeguards implementation and related obligations under the relevant legal instruments. The level of cooperation between the State and the IAEA on safeguards implementation could also be negatively impacted. For instance, such a situation could happen if the staff of an SRA, due to its other responsibilities not being clearly distinguishable from those related to safeguards, is not able to address in due time the IAEA's requests. Similarly, if the SRA is embedded under a complex and existing structure, the IAEA's communications may not always reach the responsible person in a timely manner. Responding in due time to the IAEA's questions, for example on reports provided under the CSA, is an essential element related to the obligation of cooperation, as provided for in para.3 of INFCIRC/153 (Corr.).

III.2. The key role of a national legal framework

Having a national legal framework is an important element for an comprehensive and effective SSAC. As highlighted by the IAEA, “[i]t is important that the national legislation or the regulations promulgated by the authorized regulatory body clearly identify the nuclear activities, installations, facilities and material to which safeguards will be applied” [6]. National law and the related regulations are essential tools for States' regulatory authority to ensure that all nuclear material and activities are under regulatory control. It serves also as a means to collect information from licensees, therefore enabling the State to provide correct and complete information to the IAEA.

While both CSA and AP do not require the State to enact a nuclear law with safeguards provisions, the IAEA considers that such provisions are essential for the State to meet its international obligations. As shown by table 2, most of the ASEAN Member States have a nuclear law but many of those do not have therein provisions on safeguards, including the establishment and maintenance of an SSAC. In the absence of such provisions, it appears that many nuclear regulatory authorities de facto act as the SRA, even though they may not have the clear legal authority to do so. In such a context and in the absence of safeguards regulations, they may also be collecting information from licensees without having in the established legal authority. Having a comprehensive legal framework for safeguards implementation is also relevant for States with an SQP in force. Even though most of the obligations under Part II of INFCIRC/153 (Corr.) are suspended for those States as long as they meet certain eligibility criteria, the national legal framework should include provisions related to the obligations that are not suspended under an SQP, such as the provisions of access, the designation of inspectors or the establishment and maintenance of an SSAC.

Due to the lack of resources and knowledge, drafting and enacting a comprehensive nuclear law covering nuclear security, safety, safeguards and civil liability represent a substantial challenge for developing countries and/or States with limited or no nuclear fuel cycle activities. ASEAN Member States are no exception to that. Many are currently amending their nuclear law, including with the assistance of the IAEA Office of Legal Affairs.

III.3. Other challenges

While challenges related to the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of the SSAC may be particularly related to the infrastructure or the legal and regulatory framework, it is possible to

identify other several challenges. As with the challenges portrayed above, the challenges described below have been observed throughout personal interactions with governmental authorities from ASEAN Member States.

There is a general assumption for authorities that safeguards are important only for States with large quantities of nuclear material or advanced nuclear fuel cycle activities. This is further exacerbated for States with an SQP. In such a context, it has been observed that there is a tendency for such States not to prioritize the establishment and maintenance of an SSAC. However, irrespective of the quantity of nuclear material, the nuclear fuel cycle-related activities or whether or not the State has an SQP in force, the obligation of establishing and maintaining an SSAC remains and the necessary steps should be taken at a national level by the relevant authorities.

Moreover, safeguards and their implementation are complex topics in a sense that they require the understanding of technical concepts related to nuclear science and technology. For a State with limited nuclear fuel cycle activities and/or nuclear technology, the expertise available might be limited. Language challenges may also constitute a barrier. In fact, most of the learning materials, essentially from the IAEA, are available in English or in official United Nations languages while many developing States facing safeguards implementation challenges do not have such languages as official ones. The technicality of the topic also requires a high level of English to be well understood, particularly in a context in which many of the terms used in safeguards do not have corresponding words in many languages.

Achieving an effective safeguards implementation, therefore contributing to a comprehensive SSAC, requires a strong cooperation with licensees, whether being users of gauging or radiotherapy devices or energy producers. Such actors are playing a key role by providing information required under the relevant safeguards instruments to the SRA on nuclear material or activities. For States with an SRA with limited resources or knowledge, gathering information from licensees may constitute a challenge. Along the same line, licensees may be lacking understanding on what type of information is to be provided to the SRA and may also not be able to clearly identify a focal point within the SRA who would clarify such matter. Such an observation is particularly relevant in the context of the AP implementation in which numerous information needs to be provided by the State to the IAEA on all aspects covering nuclear fuel cycle activities, from mining to the export of nuclear related items.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Many ASEAN Member States are facing challenges related to the establishment and maintenance of their SSAC which potentially impacts safeguards implementation as a whole. The recommendations below are intended to provide some insights on ways to overcome such challenges. These recommendations are not intended to be exhaustive and should be considered while taking into account specificities of each State.

Tailor-made and sustainable training

To enable the staff of the SRA and licensees to contribute to a comprehensive and effective SSAC, the training provided by the IAEA or partner States should, to the extent possible, take into account

the specificities of each State, including their infrastructure. Currently, such training appears to follow a standard approach which may lead to the misconception from States that safeguards are not relevant to them or should not be a priority as they have limited nuclear material and/or fuel cycle activities. This is particularly relevant for States with an SQP where the training provided should be tailor-made and aimed at achieving realistic milestones for those States to meet their limited obligations under their SQP. Considering the technicality of safeguards and the often-limited knowledge of English, the training materials should be, where feasible, translated in the national language(s). Such an approach will enable those the concerned States to build a national expertise and therefore sustain safeguards knowledge and awareness.

While the *train the trainer* approach has been used for many years, it has not always delivered the expected outcomes due to the technicality of safeguards, limited linguistic skills and the briefness of the training programmes, which did not give time to participants to master the subject. In this context, the importance of *train the trainer* approach should be reinforced by, inter alia, supporting the development of State specific training materials that would be produced in close cooperation with national trainers who would then be able to disseminate such materials in their national language. A training programme developed with national trainers and provided by them would contribute to a good understanding of safeguards by national stakeholders, therefore contributing to a comprehensive and effective SSAC. While this process would require more time, it would offer a sustainable solution to the training programmes.

Best practices are not guidance

Good practices are essential and should be encouraged. However, they should not be presented as the only solution. It should be emphasized that best practices, while being inspirational, are a final result that may have been determined by specific national variables that may not be transferable to other States. The risk of not insisting thereon is that States would take those practices as guidance, with ultimately a final result that may not be realistic or implemented considering their national settings.

Building an ASEAN safeguards mechanism and capacity

As any other regional cooperation, ASEAN is a community of States with its own character and specificities. With a view of enhancing cooperation in the field of nuclear science and technology, ASEAN established in 2012 the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Nuclear Energy (ASEANTOM). The network enables ASEAN Member States to exchange information and share best practices in the field of nuclear safety, security and safeguards.

While safety and security have been discussed at numerous occasions within ASEANTOM, safeguards have not benefited from the same attention among the network members. It is therefore recommended that ASEANTOM establishes a more regular and in-depth cooperation process in the field of safeguards. This would enable States to share practices and also identify common challenges in the field of safeguards. Such a process could be supported by the IAEA. For example, the practical arrangements concluded in 2019 between the IAEA and ASEAN could constitute an ideal mechanism to promote cooperation on safeguards in the region. The participation of senior IAEA officials in ASEANTOM meetings could offer an ideal opportunity to initiate a global

regional effort to develop a comprehensive approach to enhancing SSAC capabilities in ASEAN. Such an effort would also have the benefit of increasing the importance of safeguards in the context of the SEANWFZ Commission. Similarly, increasing safeguards cooperation could be supported through regional networks and partner States such as the Asia Pacific Safeguards Network (APSN) or the United States' International Safeguards Engagement Program (INSEP).

Reinforcing IAEA's assistance

The IAEA, in addition to applying safeguards under the relevant legal instruments, plays a key role in supporting States to strengthen the effectiveness of their SRA and the comprehensive of the SSAC as a whole. The recently launched IAEA Comprehensive Capacity-Building Initiative for SSACs and SRAs (COMPASS) offers a unique opportunity for many ASEAN Member States to benefit from a programme that aims at addressing most of the challenges described above by providing national training, devices and equipment as well as legal and regulatory support.

To be effective, especially considering the specificities of each ASEAN Member State requesting such an assistance, the COMPASS project should be designed after a careful assessment of States' needs and in close consultation with such States. The more the assistance will be tailor-made, the more it will be effective to address the SSAC challenges. Having been launched recently in 2020, it is important that the IAEA promotes the project in its interactions with ASEAN Member States.

IAEA's assistance on safeguards implementation is not limited to COMPASS and also includes a wide-range of activities such as national training courses, advisory service missions or the publication of documents. National authorities are often not familiar with those important activities that could be beneficial in establishing and maintaining their SSAC. It is therefore important that the IAEA, through its various interactions with States, provides information on such activities and that they are available to States only upon request.

At last, it is essential that for each of its activities, the IAEA increases its follow-up actions with a view of maintaining the momentum on safeguards at a national level. Follow-up actions can take various forms such as new outreach missions, regular discussions with State authorities or virtual events. Such an aspect is a key to maintain and sustain the SSAC and the role of the related national stakeholders in a context in which safeguards are not perceived as a priority or misunderstood.

REFERENCES

- [1] Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (1968), Reg. No. 10485, entered into force 5 March 1970.
- [2] "The Structure and Content of Agreements Between the Agency and States Required in Connection with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons", IAEA Doc. INFCIRC/153, IAEA, Vienna, 1972, p.125.
- [3] The ASEAN Charter, signed on 20 November 2007, Singapore.
- [4] Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone, Reg. No. 33873, entered into force on 27 March 1997.
- [5] 2018-2022 Plan of Action to strengthen the implementation of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone, available at:<http://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/PLAN-OF-ACTION-TO-STRENGTHEN-THE-IMPLEMENTATION-OF-THE-TREATY-ON-THE-SOUTHEAST-ASIA-NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE-ZONE-2018-2022.pdf>
- [6] Stoiber, C. et al., Handbook on Nuclear Law, IAEA, Vienna, 2003, p.125.