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United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides an overview of the activities undertaken by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.

During the reporting period, the Regional Centre supported the universalization and implementation of multilateral disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control instruments at the regional level, raising awareness and promoting dialogue among Member States of the Asia-Pacific region. In cooperation with various partners, it supported a number of commitments on enhancing adherence to and improving the implementation of international disarmament and non-proliferation mechanisms, including the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction and Security Council resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#).

The Regional Centre continued to support Member States in implementing the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. It completed the four-year project financed by the European Union in support of gender-mainstreamed policies, programmes and actions in the fight against the illicit trafficking and misuse of small arms and light weapons, and provided capacity-building training courses and technical and legal assistance to national authorities and key stakeholders to integrate gender considerations into small arms control programming and policymaking.

During the reporting period, the Regional Centre promoted dialogue and confidence-building measures in the region through its activities in cooperation with other stakeholders. It provided support for the organization of a workshop to promote

* [A/78/50](#).



military confidence-building in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations region, continued to support the organization of the twenty-first United Nations-Republic of Korea Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Issues and contributed to the facilitation of regional dialogue on the revitalization of multilateral diplomacy in disarmament and non-proliferation regimes.

The Regional Centre also cooperated with other stakeholders, focusing on the inclusion of gender considerations and the engagement of young people in disarmament and arms control. It contributed to several webinars held by civil society organizations by delivering lectures on the gendered impact of armed conflict and human security, the importance of a gender perspective in disarmament and arms control efforts and the nexus between disarmament and the Sustainable Development Goals. It also liaised with universities in the region to strengthen outreach and disarmament education activities for young people.

The Regional Centre depends solely on voluntary financial contributions to implement its programme of activities. The Secretary-General wishes to express his gratitude to Member States, in particular the host country, Nepal, and other partners that have provided support for the operations and programmes of the Centre with financial and in-kind assistance. The Secretary-General calls upon countries in the region and beyond to make voluntary contributions to the Centre to ensure the sustainability of its activities and operations and to enable it to fulfil the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly.

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 77/85, the General Assembly reaffirmed its strong support for the role of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific in the promotion of activities of the United Nations at the regional level to strengthen peace, stability and security among its Member States. It also expressed its gratitude to the Government of the host country, Nepal, for its cooperation and financial support. In addition, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its seventy-eighth session on the implementation of the resolution.

2. The present report is submitted pursuant to the above-mentioned request and covers the activities of the Regional Centre during the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023. A financial statement on the status of the trust fund for the Centre for the year 2022 is contained in the annex to the present report.

II. Function and mandate

3. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 42/39 D, the Regional Centre is mandated to provide, upon request, substantive support for initiatives and other activities mutually agreed upon by Member States in Asia and the Pacific for the implementation of measures for peace and disarmament through the appropriate utilization of available resources.

4. In line with its mandate, the Regional Centre contributes to strengthening adherence to and the implementation of norms, mechanisms and instruments on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control in the Asia-Pacific region through awareness-raising, capacity-building, fostering dialogue and promoting regional cooperation.

II. Main areas of activity

5. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre continued to contribute to international and regional security through its programmatic activities focused on promoting the implementation of global disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control instruments, including by providing capacity-building and technical and legal assistance to Member States in the region upon their request; enhancing dialogue and confidence-building in the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation; and undertaking outreach and advocacy initiatives. Applying lessons learned from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Centre opted to utilize, as much as possible, digital technology and virtual meeting platforms to carry out its activities in order to maximize its impact with the available resources.

A. Weapons of mass destruction

6. In line with the Secretary General's disarmament agenda, *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*, the Regional Centre organized, supported and participated in a number of activities promoting the elimination of nuclear weapons, upholding the norms against chemical and biological weapons and ensuring the prevention of the emergence of new domains of strategic competition and conflict.

7. In that regard, the Regional Centre contributed to the expert panel of workshops on promoting the universalization and effective implementation of the International

Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, held in the Pacific from 8 to 10 May and in South-East Asia on 21 and 22 June. At the workshops, the Centre raised awareness among participating States of existing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation mechanisms such as nuclear-weapon-free zones, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and emphasized the importance of strengthening the norm against nuclear weapons.

8. On biological weapons, the Regional Centre supported regional efforts in Central Asia to enhance the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction by contributing to the peer review exercise in Kyrgyzstan in support of the Convention, organized by its Implementation Support Unit and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) programme office in Bishkek from 16 to 18 August, and highlighted its previous cooperation with States in the region. It also supported regional efforts in South-East Asia by sharing information on its past cooperation with States in the region at the third regional preparatory meeting for the Ninth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention, organized by its Implementation Support Unit on 14 and 15 September.

9. The Regional Centre facilitated a number of regional workshops on the implementation of Security Council resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#) on preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors, in close cooperation with the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#) and its Group of Experts. On 21 and 22 September, the Centre supported the organization of a workshop in Bangkok for regional points of contact for the Committee in Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) States, in which Member States in South-East Asia shared common implementation challenges and lessons learned, as well as available opportunities for assistance. From 8 to 10 November, in cooperation with OSCE, the Centre supported the organization of a peer review exercise in Istanbul, Türkiye, for resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#) for Central Asia and Mongolia, bringing together key government officials from participating States and providing a platform for sharing experiences and lessons learned. It allowed for dialogue among senior managers of law enforcement agencies and ministries and created a larger network of stakeholders beyond that of national points of contact.

10. Furthermore, the Regional Centre supported the organization of a number of national activities in support of the implementation of resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#) in Asia. From 28 November to 2 December, it facilitated the organization of a national round-table workshop in Cambodia, briefing government officials on key elements of the resolution. Furthermore, from 5 to 8 December, the Centre supported a national round table in Ulaanbaatar on prioritizing items relating to the resolution in the national action plan of Mongolia and assisted the Government of Mongolia in reviewing the implementation of the plan. The Centre contributed to raising awareness of the importance of national efforts to implement obligations under the resolution and creating a network of points of contact in the Asia-Pacific region for sharing experiences and lessons learned.

11. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre engaged with various civil society organizations to foster dialogue on nuclear issues in the region, including a conference from 23 to 25 November on managing strategic risks in Asia and the Pacific, organized by the Asia-Pacific Leadership Network for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament and the Toda Peace Institute.

B. Conventional arms and ammunition

12. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre continued to support gender-mainstreamed policies, programmes and actions in the fight against the trafficking and misuse of small arms and light weapons in the Asia-Pacific region. It held a virtual workshop with the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic on 9 September, with a view to finalizing the Government's national action plan on gender-responsive small arms control, followed by an in-person workshop from 21 to 23 September. The Centre also held a virtual workshop with the Government of Cambodia on 13 October to finalize a report on the country's legal and regulatory framework on small arms and light weapons control. These series of activities marked the completion of the Centre's four-year project on promoting gender mainstreaming in the fight against the trafficking and misuse of small arms and light weapons in line with the women and peace and security agenda, which was funded by the European Union. As a result, the Centre enhanced the capacity of government officials through in-country training programmes, improved regional cooperation and expanded regional partnerships on mainstreaming gender into small arms control in Asia and the Pacific.¹

13. The Regional Centre conducted the second iteration of its webinar series on 7 and 8 November in support of the establishment and maintenance of gun-free zones in Asia and the Pacific. The event, a follow-up to the first workshop held in June 2022, focused on providing practical guidelines on how to establish and maintain gun-free zones based on the framework outlined in the occasional paper published by the Office for Disarmament Affairs in 2014 on how to establish and maintain gun-free zones. Marking the end of the Centre's project funded by the Government of Sweden, the webinar was attended by 53 participants from Bhutan, Fiji, Nepal, the Philippines and Sri Lanka, as well as representatives of relevant international organizations. Scenario-based table-top exercises were conducted, along with an exercise to develop national action plans based on the guideline of the Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium.

14. The Regional Centre worked to promote transparency and confidence-building measures in the Asia-Pacific region. On 16 and 17 January, it supported the organization of a regional workshop on military confidence-building measures for the ASEAN region, which provided a platform for government and military points of contact to exchange ways to increase regional participation of peers in military confidence-building measures. Experts from international organizations, academic institutions and civil society presented effective practices as model regional cooperative mechanisms. The workshop contributed to raising awareness among government and military officials in the ASEAN region of the importance of military confidence-building measures in maintaining sustainable peace, as well as practical ways to increase participation in various regional and international transparency and confidence-building mechanisms such as the Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures.

15. The Regional Centre also continued to promote international mechanisms to enhance global efforts to control conventional arms. On 4 and 5 April, it supported the organization of a regional workshop in Bangkok on achieving the universalization of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects in South-East Asia, with financial contributions from the European Union. Invitations to attend the workshop were extended to 25 participants from 10 States members of ASEAN and experts from international organizations and

¹ Information on the project is available from <https://disarmament.unoda.org/gender-salw-project>.

civil society. The workshop contributed to raising awareness of the Convention, its key obligations and provisions, and challenges and lessons learned in implementing it, and served as an opportunity to encourage non-States parties to accede to it at the earliest opportunity.

C. Science and technology

16. The Regional Centre continued to promote discussions and dialogue among States in the region on the impact of advancing science and technology on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. On 3 and 4 November, in partnership with the Government of the Republic of Korea, it organized the twenty-first United Nations-Republic of Korea Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Issues, focusing on the theme of space security. The conference addressed the growing range of threats to space systems, risks for miscalculation and concerns about a new arms race. States in the Asia-Pacific region and partners exchanged their opinions, together with experts from academic institutions and civil society, on ways to strengthen the work of the open-ended working group on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours.

D. Strengthening partnerships for disarmament

17. The Regional Centre continued to work with partners in civil society on promoting the importance of disarmament education, in particular for young people. On 19 and 20 January, it convened a workshop for high school and university educators in Nepal, entitled “Strengthening education in Nepal for disarmament”, with financial contributions from the Government of the Republic of Korea. The workshop provided an opportunity to assess the status of disarmament education in secondary and tertiary education institutions in Nepal, raise awareness of the meaning and importance of disarmament education and introduce available tools and resources to enhance disarmament education. Participants shared their experiences in delivering disarmament curricula to their students, as well as challenges and lessons learned, and developed a set of recommendations to enhance the inclusion of disarmament-related subjects in national curricula.

18. The Regional Centre continued to collaborate with civil society within various regional and national frameworks aimed at raising awareness about how gender is linked with peace and disarmament. On 23 February, it contributed to the lecture series on peace and gender organized by the Prajnya Trust and Sansristi, two civil society organizations based in India, by delivering a lecture to university students on gender and disarmament. The lecture focused on the gendered impact of armed conflict and human security, the role of gender norms in influencing the professional field of disarmament and arms control, and ongoing international efforts to counter threats posed by a variety of weaponry, ranging from small arms to weapons of mass destruction, from a gender perspective.

19. On 4 April, the Regional Centre delivered a keynote presentation to students at the University of Malaya on the topic of the United Nations and disarmament, which was attended by approximately 110 students and included a presentation on the history of the work of the United Nations on disarmament issues, key areas of the Secretary-General’s disarmament agenda and its context for the Asia-Pacific region.

20. As part of a project led by the World Federation of United Nations Associations, the Regional Centre delivered in-person lectures in Seoul on 5 November. The lectures were presented to over 100 university students on the topics of the nexus

between disarmament and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and responsible innovation.

E. Future activities

21. The Regional Centre will continue its work to assist Member States in the region, upon request, to contribute to their national and regional efforts towards disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, as well as to promote dialogue and confidence-building, and peace and disarmament education. It will remain guided by its mandate, taking into consideration the disarmament agenda of the Secretary-General. It will continue to provide practical assistance and support for national capacity-building for the effective implementation of key multilateral mechanisms on weapons of mass destruction; provide support for the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects; organize regional consultations and provide assistance for the preparations for the Review Conference of the Programme of Action scheduled for 2024; promote disarmament and non-proliferation education for young people; and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals focused on reducing illicit arms flows and gun violence and on the empowerment, participation and leadership of women in decision-making in the area of arms control and disarmament.

III. Financial situation, staffing and administration

A. Financial situation

22. The Regional Centre was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution [42/39](#) D on the basis of existing resources and voluntary contributions. In 2022, voluntary contributions to the trust fund for the Centre in the total amount of \$178,312 were received from Member States. Information on the status of the trust fund for 2022 is contained in the annex to the present report. The Secretary-General encourages Member States to consider providing financial and in-kind contributions to the Centre.

23. The Secretary-General expresses his appreciation to the Government of Nepal for the long-standing financial and political support that it has provided in its capacity as host country of the Regional Centre. He also expresses his gratitude to the Member States that made financial and in-kind contributions to the Centre in 2022, namely Nepal, Thailand and the Republic of Korea.

24. Furthermore, the Secretary-General expresses his gratitude to the European Union and the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation for their financial contributions to the Office for Disarmament Affairs, through which the Regional Centre was able to implement project activities in the Asia-Pacific region.

25. The Secretary-General recognizes financial and in-kind contributions to the Regional Centre from States in Asia and the Pacific as a clear indication of the value that Member States attribute to its expertise and technical assistance, and therefore continues to encourage States in the region to provide such contributions.

26. The Secretary-General wishes to thank all Member States and partners for their generous contributions to and support for the Regional Centre and encourages their ongoing efforts in that regard, which will enable the Centre to continue to provide technical and capacity-building assistance to Member States in the region, at their

request, in fulfilment of its mandate. Such financial and in-kind contributions remain essential to ensuring the sustainability of the operations, core activities and programmes of the Centre, which benefit Asia and the Pacific.

B. Staffing

27. The regular budget of the United Nations funds the posts of one Senior Political Affairs Officer/Director of the Regional Centre (P-5), one Political Affairs Officer (P-3) and one General Service staff member (G-7, Local level).

28. The Secretary-General thanks the host country, Nepal, which funded two additional local General Service staff members through its annual contribution. He also encourages Member States to support the Regional Centre by providing it with gratis staff.

IV. Conclusion

29. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre implemented a number of arms control and disarmament initiatives and programmes for States in Asia and the Pacific, contributing to enhanced awareness and capacity. It also continued its partnership with Member States and other stakeholders by engaging in their activities in the region.

30. The Regional Centre promoted dialogue among Member States and civil society and engaged in outreach and advocacy activities. It cooperated actively with partners in the region to strengthen the capacity of States in Asia and the Pacific to enhance disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

31. The Regional Centre increased its efforts to promote disarmament education, as well as activities promoting the full and effective inclusion and participation of women and young people in decision-making with respect to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control as part of the efforts of the United Nations to further promote peace, security and disarmament in Asia and the Pacific.

32. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre highlighted synergies between such cross-cutting issues as advances in science and technology, promoting gender equality and empowering women in arms control decision-making processes, assisting Member States in streamlining their efforts to reduce illegal arms flows and gun violence through the development of national action plans in line with the women and peace and security agenda, and enhancing the role of disarmament education with a special focus on young people.

33. The Secretary-General calls upon Member States and other donors to provide the Regional Centre with the financial and in-kind support necessary to enable it to continue to fulfil its mandate effectively in serving the needs of Member States in the Asia-Pacific region in the fields of peace, security and disarmament, in pursuance of Sustainable Development Goals 4, 5 and 16, which promote education, gender equality and peaceful, just and inclusive societies, and in compliance with the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda, *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*.

Annex

Status of the trust fund for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific for 2022

(United States dollars)

Accumulated surplus, 1 January 2022	1 027 984
Revenue	
Voluntary contributions ^a	(35 315)
Other revenue	3 823
Investment revenue	6 088
Total revenue	(25 404)
Less: Expenses and refunds	
Operating expenses	286 651
Refunds	—
Total expenses and refunds	286 651
Surplus/deficit for the year 2022	(312 055)
Accumulated surplus/deficit as at 31 December 2022	715 929

^a Consists of voluntary contributions from Sweden (\$127,454), the Republic of Korea (\$47,858) and Thailand (\$3,000) and the refund of voluntary contributions to the United States of America (\$213,627).