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Item 102 (d) of the preliminary list\*

### Review and implementation of the Concluding Document of the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly

## 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 during the period from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021.

During the reporting period, the Regional Centre promoted the universalization and implementation of multilateral non-proliferation and arms control instruments, providing capacity-building programmes for Member States of the Asia-Pacific region upon their request. In support of the regional implementation of Security Council resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#), the Regional Centre conducted a series of subregional webinars for South Asian States and Mongolia and organized the virtual national inter-agency meeting for Mongolia to develop a national implementation action plan.

The Regional Centre continued its support to the implementation of a global project in support of gender-mainstreamed policies, programmes and actions in the fight against illicit trafficking and the misuse of small arms and light weapons and engaged with national authorities and key stakeholders from the region to strengthen their capacity for the integration of gender-relevant considerations in small arms control programming and policymaking. With the purpose of promoting the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the Arms Trade Treaty and facilitating discussion during the upcoming Seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action at the national, regional and global levels, the Regional Centre organized a virtual training course to build the capacity of regional States to prepare and submit online national reports to the Programme of Action.

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\* [A/76/50](#).



During the reporting period, the Regional Centre promoted dialogue and confidence-building measures in the region through its activities implemented solely and in cooperation with other stakeholders. It supported the office of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research in Hiroshima, Japan, in implementing the online Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Training Programme for diplomats and military personnel from Asian States and cooperated with the French think tank Fondation pour la recherche stratégique in organizing a digital workshop on the Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. The Regional Centre continued to engage with members of parliament and civil society representatives from the region to reinvigorate the discussion on promoting gender-responsive approaches to armed violence reduction and organized with the International Action Network on Small Arms and the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons a stocktaking webinar on gun violence and the illicit trafficking of small arms from a gender perspective.

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 Regional Centre with financial and in-kind assistance. The Secretary-General calls upon countries in the region and beyond to make voluntary contributions to the Regional Centre to ensure the sustainability of its activities and operations and to allow it to fulfil the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly.

## I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution [42/39 D](#), the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific 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.
2. In its resolution [75/78](#), the General Assembly reaffirmed its strong support for the role of the Regional Centre 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. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its seventy-sixth session on the implementation of the resolution.
3. 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 2020 to 30 June 2021. A financial statement on the status of the trust fund for the Regional Centre for the year 2020 is contained in the annex to the present report.

## II. Activities of the Regional Centre

4. 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. Owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, in-person meetings and events could not be held, and the Centre adapted its work modality to a digitized format and conducted its activities virtually.

### A. Promoting the implementation of global arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation instruments

#### 1. Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

5. The Regional Centre and the Group of Experts of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to Security Council resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#) held a subregional virtual webinar series under the framework of its project on strengthening national implementation of resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#) in South Asia and Mongolia on 1, 8 and 15 December 2020. The webinar series presented the key objectives and obligations of the resolution and served as a launching point for the second phase of the project, which is focused on promoting country-specific dialogue in the beneficiary States<sup>1</sup> aimed at increasing the level of implementation of resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#) in the region. From 18 to 20 May 2021, the Regional Centre, the Government of Mongolia and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe co-hosted the first national inter-agency virtual meeting to assist Mongolia in developing a national action plan to implement resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#). As a result of the meeting, significant progress was made towards finalizing a draft national action plan. These

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<sup>1</sup> Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

events were made possible with financial contributions from the United States of America and the European Union.

6. The Regional Centre organized a regional webinar on the Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation together with the Fondation pour la recherche stratégique, which was held on 18 December 2020. At the meeting, which was aimed at promoting the universalization of the Code of Conduct, the presenters delivered an overview of the current trends in ballistic missile proliferation in the Asia-Pacific region and focused on the key obligations and benefits of joining the Code. Government officials representing both subscribing and non-subscribing States delivered presentations on their respective national perspectives on the Code and ballistic missile proliferation as a whole. The webinar was funded by the European Union.

7. The Regional Centre continued its practice of active collaboration with the office of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research in Hiroshima, Japan, in implementing the yearly Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Training Programme for mid-level diplomats and military personnel from Asian States. The Programme, in which 41 officials from 14 countries participated, was held from 2 to 19 March 2021. The Programme offered a comprehensive understanding of the current state of nuclear arms control at the global and regional levels, in addition to detailed insight into the processes, protocols and procedures required at disarmament and non-proliferation conferences, with specific regard to the upcoming tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The Programme also focused on other global agreements on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including regional treaties on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and confidence-building measures in the military sphere. The training included a simulation exercise in which participants were introduced to negotiation and communication techniques.

## **2. Conventional arms**

8. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre continued its support to the implementation of the global project funded by the European Union in support of gender-mainstreamed policies, programmes and actions in the fight against trafficking and the misuse of small arms and light weapons. The Centre engaged with national authorities and key stakeholders from the region to strengthen their capacity for the integration of gender-relevant considerations in small arms control programming and policymaking. In that regard, the Centre began preparations for a series of training programmes aimed at building national capacity to gender mainstream small arms control in six countries of the region, namely, Bangladesh, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nepal, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste, and initiated a series of virtual meetings to discuss with key government officials the relevance of a gender-responsive framework to small arms control and to identify synergies with national priorities relating to the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. As part of that effort, the Regional Centre undertook a desk review of the activities carried out by other agencies in order to ensure complementarity and avoid duplication, in addition to a review of national legislation and relevant national action plans to identify the priorities of States in respect of mainstreaming gender in the field of small arms control.

9. The Regional Centre continued to engage with members of parliament and civil society representatives from the region to reinvigorate the discussion on promoting gender-responsive approaches to armed violence reduction and the need for the equal participation of women in that field. On 8 March 2021, the Centre convened a stocktaking webinar on the series of subregional and regional workshops conducted within the framework of its project on gun violence and illicit trafficking of small

arms from a gender perspective. The event was organized with the International Action Network on Small Arms and the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons. In total, 36 members of parliament and civil society representatives from 12 countries<sup>2</sup> in the region attended the event.

10. On 28 May 2021, the Regional Centre conducted a training course on preparing and submitting online national reports to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. The online course engaged 40 participants from eight Member States from Asia and the Pacific<sup>3</sup> that had requested assistance with the submission of their national reports ahead of the Seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action. The participants received practical guidance and training on compiling the report online.

## **B. Partnership, outreach and advocacy**

11. On 26 September 2020, the Regional Centre delivered an opening statement and participated in the following discussion at the virtual gathering of representatives of the Asia-Pacific region devoted to the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, which was organized by the coalition of more than 80 civil society organizations “WeThePeoples2020” and attended by representatives of Member States, civil society organizations, academic institutions, members of parliament and the media.

12. 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. In October 2020 and February 2021, the Centre 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 on gender and disarmament targeting university students. The lecture was 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 the ongoing international efforts to counter the threats posed by a variety of weaponry from small arms to weapons of mass destruction from a gender perspective. The Youth Champions for Disarmament attended both events and shared its views on the key role of young people in arms control and disarmament efforts.

13. On 16 March 2021, the Regional Centre participated as a panellist in the webinar “Connecting the dots: Enhancing implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action and the Women, Peace and Security and 2030 Agendas – through increased parliamentary engagement and action in international processes”, organized by the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly. The event promoted further dialogue and the building of partnership among United Nations agencies, diplomats, policymakers and experts working on the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 16, the women and peace and security agenda, and disarmament and small arms control issues.

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<sup>2</sup> Afghanistan, Bhutan, Cambodia, Fiji, India, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste.

<sup>3</sup> Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste.

14. On 26 March, the Regional Centre joined the expert panel of the non-governmental organization forum organized by the International Action Network on Small Arms devoted to the sixty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The Centre focused its contribution on the role of civil society in the fight against gun violence from a gender perspective.

15. The Regional Centre contributed to a series of webinars and educational programmes with high school and university students that were organized as a follow-up to the 2020 project “A future without weapons: youth perspectives on disarmament and non-proliferation in Northeast Asia” by the Youth Steering Committee of Northeast Asia and implemented jointly with the Office for Disarmament Affairs as part of the Youth for Disarmament initiative.

### **C. Future activities**

16. 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 arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation and to promote dialogue and confidence-building as well as peace and disarmament education. The Centre will remain guided by its mandate, taking into consideration the disarmament agenda of the Secretary-General. The Centre will continue to provide practical assistance and support to building national capacity for effective implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and Security Council resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#); promoting disarmament and non-proliferation education targeting young people; and contributing to the achievement of the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by focusing on reducing illicit arms flows and gun violence and empowering women’s participation and leadership in decision-making in the area of arms control and disarmament.

## **III. Financial situation, staffing and administration**

### **A. Financial situation**

17. The Regional Centre was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution [42/39 D](#) on the basis of existing resources and voluntary contributions. In 2020, voluntary contributions to the trust fund for the Regional Centre in the total amount of \$198,299 were received from Member States. Information on the status of the trust fund for 2020 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 Regional Centre.

18. The Secretary-General expresses his appreciation to the Government of Nepal for the long-standing financial and political support that country has provided in its capacity as host country to the Regional Centre. The Secretary-General expresses his gratitude to the Member States and non-governmental organizations that made financial and in-kind contributions to the Regional Centre: Nepal, Thailand and Rissho Kosei-Kai of Japan.

19. The Secretary-General also 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.

20. The Secretary-General recognizes financial and in-kind contributions to the Regional Centre from Asian and Pacific States 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.

21. 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 allow 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 Regional Centre, which benefit Asia and the Pacific.

## **B. Staffing**

22. 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).

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

## **IV. Conclusion**

24. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre implemented several arms control and disarmament initiatives and programmes, partnered with stakeholders and engaged in their activities in Asia and the Pacific.

25. The Regional Centre also engaged in outreach and advocacy activities and actively cooperated with partners in the region. Its efforts to strengthen the capacity of States in the region to control conventional arms and to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors continue to be highly relevant.

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

27. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre paid special attention to and highlighted mutual complementarity between such cross-cutting issues as 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; and enhancing the role of disarmament education with a special emphasis on young people.

28. The Secretary-General calls upon Member States and other donors to provide the Regional Centre with the necessary financial and in-kind support to enable it to continue to fulfil its mandate effectively in serving the needs of Asia-Pacific Member States in the fields of peace, security and disarmament, in pursuance of Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 16, which promote gender equality and peaceful, just and inclusive societies, and in compliance with the disarmament agenda of the Secretary-General, entitled "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 2020

(United States dollars)

<b>Accumulated surplus, 1 January 2020</b>	<b>1 258 595</b>
<b>Revenue</b>	
Voluntary contributions <sup>a</sup>	198 299
Other revenue	1 692
Investment revenue	21 603
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>221 594</b>
<b>Less: Expenses and refunds</b>	
Operating expenses	232 846
Refunds <sup>b</sup>	82 185
<b>Total expenses and refunds</b>	<b>315 031</b>
Surplus/deficit for the year 2020	93 437
<b>Accumulated surplus/deficit as at 31 December 2020</b>	<b>1 165 158</b>

<sup>a</sup> Consists of voluntary contributions: Nepal, \$195,299; and Thailand, \$3,000.

<sup>b</sup> Consists of refunds to Kazakhstan of \$34,826 and to Germany of \$47,359.