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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 2021 to 30 June 2022.

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 the run-up to the Eighth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider 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, the Centre organized a virtual training for States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to bolster their capacity to prepare and submit their national reports. To address issues related to small arms control and the prevention of the illicit trafficking, illegal possession and misuse of such arms, the Centre also implemented a project to establish and maintain gun-free zones, under which activities were carried out to build and enhance the national capacities of States in Asia and the Pacific.

The Regional Centre continued the implementation of a project, funded 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 implemented independently and in cooperation with other stakeholders. In partnership with the

* [A/77/50](#).



French think tank Fondation pour la recherche stratégique, the Centre held a subregional webinar on the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, addressing concerns over the proliferation of delivery vehicles and the need to foster the global non-proliferation regime through various confidence-building measures. The Centre also continued to provide support in the context of organizing the Twentieth United Nations-Republic of Korea Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Issues and contributed to the facilitation of a 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. In celebration of International Women's Day, the Centre partnered with the International Action Network on Small Arms to host a webinar and launch a joint publication on exploring ways to enhance gender-responsive small arms control in the region in the light of the exacerbation of gender-based violence during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The Centre 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 targeting 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. 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 76/59, 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-seventh 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 2021 to 30 June 2022. A financial statement on the status of the trust fund for the Centre for the year 2021 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. Despite the continued coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, some meetings and events resumed in person when it was deemed safe to do so, while the Centre maintained its digitalized work modalities 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 held a subregional webinar on the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation together with the French think tank Fondation pour la recherche stratégique and the financial support of the European Union on 5 and 6 April 2022. The meeting was aimed at promoting universalization of the Code of Conduct. It included an overview of the current trends of ballistic missile proliferation in the Asia-Pacific region and was focused on the key obligations and benefits of subscribing to the Code, as well as on the issue of the dissemination of delivery vehicles for weapons of mass destruction, while promoting the development of outer space. Government officials representing both subscribing and non-subscribing States delivered remarks on their respective national perspectives on the Code and ballistic missile proliferation.

6. In partnership with the Government of the Republic of Korea, the Office for Disarmament Affairs held the Twentieth United Nations-Republic of Korea Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Issues on the theme “Disarmament and non-proliferation: 20 years of achievements and future

aspirations” in Seoul on 11 and 12 November 2021. The Regional Centre provided substantive and organizational support for the Conference, enabling representatives from Member States, intergovernmental organizations, think tanks and other stakeholders to discuss key challenges in the areas of multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation diplomacy, including, among others, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as regional issues in Asia and the Pacific.

2. Conventional arms

7. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre continued the implementation of the global project funded by the European Union in support of gender-mainstreamed policies, programmes and actions in the fight against the trafficking and misuse of small arms and light weapons in the region. Under the project, the Centre conducted a series of training courses on gender mainstreaming and small arms control, in a combination of virtual, hybrid and in-person formats, reaching 177 government officials, members of parliament and civil society representatives (including 82 women) from six countries, namely Cambodia (9–19 July 2021), the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (14–16 July 2021), Papua New Guinea (23 September–1 October 2021), Nepal (6–8 April 2022), Timor-Leste (10–12 May 2022) and Bangladesh (21–23 June 2022). The training courses comprised five main pillars: (a) an introduction to gender and small arms control and the relevance of disaggregated data collection; (b) the convergence of arms control policy agendas, the women and peace and security agenda, and other instruments; (c) the implementation of gender-responsiveness in small arms control throughout the life cycle of small arms; (d) the role of arms control in the elimination of gender-based violence; and (e) the importance of multi-stakeholder involvement for an inclusive approach to small arms control. In all six countries, the training courses were followed or preceded by practical activities tailored to the respective country, with an emphasis on action-oriented approaches and national ownership.

8. In Nepal, on 24 and 25 November 2021, the Regional Centre partnered with a local civil society organization, Women for Peace and Democracy Nepal, to hold a national workshop on promoting the Arms Trade Treaty and encouraging the country’s accession to the Treaty, which served as an entry point for the subsequent training on gender and small arms control. In Cambodia and Papua New Guinea, on the basis of the respective sets of recommendations that emerged from the training courses, the Centre conducted an analysis of their respective national legal and policy frameworks on small arms control with the aim of assessing their gender responsiveness and compliance with global instruments. An assessment report was submitted to the Government of Papua New Guinea in April 2022 and to the Government of Cambodia in May 2022. In the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Timor-Leste and Bangladesh, follow-up activities consisted of national workshops addressing specific needs identified during the training. A national consultation workshop was held in Vang Vieng on 10 and 11 March, during which the existing national action plans of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic were reviewed to identify entry points for the integration of gender-responsive small arms control. A workshop was held in Dili on 16 May on the establishment of a national coordination mechanism and action plan on small arms and light weapons control in Timor-Leste. A training was held in Dhaka on gender and small arms control in Bangladesh and concluded with a session on the development of a national action plan. With a view to the implementation of the project and the pursuit of its objectives, the Regional Centre also translated key instruments and technical guidance into national languages. Specifically, a few modules of the Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium, including modules on gender, youth and the national coordination and implementation of small arms and light weapons control, were translated into Lao and

Nepali, and the Arms Trade Treaty and its implementation toolkit were translated into Nepali.

9. The Regional Centre held a webinar on 8 and 9 June in support of the establishment and maintenance of gun-free zones in Asia and the Pacific. The webinar served to enhance the understanding of representatives from national law enforcement agencies, local authorities and civil society organizations on the positive effects that firearm-restricted public spaces have on community safety and security. The webinar provided representatives with practical guidance, knowledge and skills on developing and implementing measures to prevent and reduce the occurrence of gun violence with a view to promoting public safety while also considering gender-sensitive approaches. As part of the webinar, the participants took a self-paced online educational course on the challenges, opportunities and feasibility of implementing gun-free zones at the community level, including examples from the region.

10. 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 in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. On 9 March, it hosted a webinar on considering gun violence and illicit small arms trafficking from a gender perspective in the Asia-Pacific region in partnership with the International Action Network on Small Arms. The event brought together small arms and light weapons control experts, members of parliament, civil society representatives and gun violence survivors to discuss challenges and opportunities in combating illicit small arms and light weapons and their misuse. The webinar also served to promote a briefing paper prepared jointly by the Centre and the International Action Network on Small Arms, entitled “Reinvigorating gender-responsive small arms control in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic in Asia and the Pacific”, which is focused on the relevance of gender-responsive small arms control to the health crisis and its social and security consequences.

11. On 20 May, in preparation for the Eighth Biennial Meeting of States, the Regional Centre conducted the second edition of its virtual training on preparing and submitting national reports on 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 International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. The training reached 40 participants from nine countries, namely Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Maldives, New Zealand, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

B. Partnership, outreach and advocacy

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. On 23 September 2021 and 24 February 2022, 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 to university students on gender and disarmament. 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 threats posed by a variety of weaponry, ranging from small arms to weapons of mass destruction, from a gender perspective.

13. On 18 September 2021, the Regional Centre was among the panellists of the webinar on disarmament and the Sustainable Development Goals, held by the United Nations Youth Champion from Viet Nam and the Wars' Aftermath Initiative. The event allowed for a variety of representatives from the Office for Disarmament Affairs to connect with young people in Asia and the Pacific who are interested in disarmament and development. The Centre contributed by delivering a presentation illustrating the nexus between disarmament initiatives and the achievement of the Goals.

14. On 5 October, the Regional Centre delivered a keynote presentation to students at the Foreign Trade University in Viet Nam on the topic of security and disarmament in the context of the Asia-Pacific region. The event reached over 500 students and included a presentation and discussion on the primary thematic areas of the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda, entitled "Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament", in the regional context.

15. The Regional Centre joined the expert panel of a webinar on engaging, educating and empowering the leaders of tomorrow on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, held by the Office for Disarmament Affairs under the framework of the Youth4Disarmament initiative on 20 April 2022. It contributed by delivering a presentation on the impact of nuclear weapons testing and use on the Sustainable Development Goals, with a particular emphasis on Goals 14 and 15.

16. As part of a project led by the World Federation of United Nations Associations, the Regional Centre delivered in-person lectures at Hanyang University in the Republic of Korea on 13 November 2021. The lectures were presented to 100 participants on the topics of the nexus between disarmament and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and responsible innovation.

C. Future activities

17. 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, 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 the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects; the establishment and maintenance of gun-free zones; the promotion of disarmament and non-proliferation education targeting young people; and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, focusing 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

18. The Regional Centre was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution [42/39 D](#) on the basis of existing resources and voluntary contributions. In 2021, voluntary contributions to the trust fund for the Centre in the total amount of \$67,378 were received from Member States. Information on the status of the trust fund for 2021 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.

19. The Secretary-General expresses his appreciation to the Government of Nepal for the long-standing financial and political support it 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 Centre: Nepal, Sweden, Thailand, the Republic of Korea and the Rissho Kosei-kai of Japan.

20. 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.

21. 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.

22. 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

23. 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).

24. 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

25. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre implemented a number of arms control and disarmament initiatives and programmes, some of which were conducted in person. It also continued its partnership with Member States and other stakeholders by engaging in their activities in Asia and the Pacific.

26. The Regional Centre 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.

27. 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.

28. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre paid special attention to and highlighted synergies 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 focus on young people.

29. 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 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, 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 2021

(United States dollars)

Accumulated surplus, 1 January 2021	1 165 158
Revenue	
Voluntary contributions ^a	67 378
Other revenue	692
Investment revenue	116
Total revenue	67 954
Less: Expenses and refunds	
Operating expenses	205 128
Refunds	–
Total expenses and refunds	205 128
Surplus/deficit for the year 2021	137 174
Accumulated surplus/deficit as at 31 December 2021	1 027 984

^a Consists of voluntary contributions: Sweden, \$35,360; Republic of Korea, \$29,018; and Thailand, \$3,000.