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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 during the period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019.

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. The Regional Centre participated in and contributed to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime regional programme, consisting of a series of national and regional events, on countering terrorism and the financing of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by providing expertise on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). The Regional Centre also provided support in building national capacity through conducting two subregional training courses, in cooperation with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, for States of South and South-East Asia and Mongolia on conventional ammunition stockpile management, using the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines and the SaferGuard programme. Moreover, the Regional Centre organized the South-East Asia Regional Outreach Seminar on Trade and Trafficking of Illicit Conventional Ammunition and two subregional workshops for South-East and South Asia to address problems of gun violence and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons from a gender perspective.

The Regional Centre promoted dialogue and confidence-building in the region and beyond through its activities, and continued with its outreach efforts. It organized two regional workshops on the fissile material cut-off treaty consultative process for Asian and Pacific Island States. It also contributed to a seminar on The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation and the threat of missiles in South

* A/74/50.



Asia. Recently, the Regional Centre commenced a regional programme on peace and disarmament education with baseline assessment visits.

The Regional Centre depends solely on voluntary financial contributions to implement its programme 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 Regional Centre's operations and programmes 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 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 [73/77](#), the General Assembly expressed its satisfaction at the activities carried out over the past year by the Regional Centre and 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-fourth 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 2018 to 30 June 2019. A financial statement on the status of the trust fund for the Regional Centre for the year 2018 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 in the following areas: 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.

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

1. Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

5. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre actively engaged in the maritime security and counter-terrorism regional joint programme of the International Maritime Organization and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, which supported efforts to counter the financing of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors through the implementation of Security Council resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#). The Regional Centre participated in three national legislative workshops in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in July and August 2018, respectively, and in Bhutan in January 2019. In addition, the Regional Centre, jointly with the Group of Experts of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#), took part in a subregional workshop for South Asia on maritime counter-terrorism in London in November 2018 and a cross-regional South and South-East Asia workshop in Indonesia in February 2019. The Centre promoted the role of national points of contact and national coordination mechanisms and underscored the recommendation of the Security Council contained in its resolution [1977 \(2011\)](#) encouraging Member States to prepare, on a voluntary basis, national implementation action plans to implement the provisions of resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#).

6. The Regional Centre supported the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) “Regional Workshop on Why We Need the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons”, held in Bangkok on 31 August 2018, which was organized by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Thailand and sponsored by New Zealand. The event was aimed at promoting further awareness of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in order to facilitate the signing and/or ratification process of the Treaty in the Asia-Pacific region. In addition to representatives from the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons also took part in the workshop.

7. In January 2019, the Regional Centre contributed to a national workshop held in Kathmandu aimed at raising awareness on the content, rights and obligations regarding the Biological Weapons Convention and building national capacity for the implementation of the Convention. The workshop was organized by the Convention’s Implementation Support Unit and the Verification Research, Training and Information Centre and contributed to the Kathmandu process.

2. Conventional arms

8. In order to build the capacity of States in the region to implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the Regional Centre organized two subregional training courses to engage States of South and South-East Asia and Mongolia on the subject of conventional ammunition stockpile management and utilization in national practice in line with the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines and the SaferGuard programme. The training courses were held in Kathmandu from 11 to 16 November within the framework of the Kathmandu process. Through the training provided by experts from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, officials and experts from 10 Member States enhanced their capacity and knowledge on the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines at the national level. Participants were trained in the safe and secure management of ammunition stockpiles and the use of SaferGuard tools. The training courses served as a platform to introduce the SaferGuard validation process and to encourage the participation of technical ammunition experts from Asia in future validation exercises. In support of the validation process, participants engaged in a survey of national ammunition management systems, the findings of which will contribute to the development of a standardized methodology for managing ammunition. The training courses were made possible with financial support from the Government of Sweden.

9. With financial support by Germany, the Regional Centre organized the Regional Outreach Seminar on Trade and Trafficking of Illicit Conventional Ammunition, as part of its project for South-East Asian States on preventing illicit trafficking of small arms, light weapons and conventional ammunition. The Seminar took place from 20 to 22 March 2019 in Bangkok. In response to the challenges posed by unsecured or poorly managed national ammunition stockpiles, the Seminar provided an opportunity to promote regional dialogue among South-East Asian States on matters of illegal arms flows and was aimed at advancing the implementation of one of the three pillars of the Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament, “disarmament that saves lives”, specifically action 22, on securing excessive and poorly maintained stockpiles, as well as Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals on peace, justice and strong institutions. Government experts from 10 South-East Asian States¹ working in the field of ammunition management engaged in discussions with representatives from the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations Institute

¹ Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), the Ammunition Management Advisory Team, Nonviolence International and the Golden West Humanitarian Foundation. Participants benefited from briefings by experts on tools like the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines and the SaferGuard platform and examined regional trends and implications for safety and security, as well as possible joint responses and synergies between the international instruments. During the Seminar, round-table consultations were held in support of the work of a group of governmental experts on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition in surplus, to be convened in 2020 in accordance with General Assembly resolution [72/55](#).

10. Within the framework of its regional project on women and peace and security, the Regional Centre organized two subregional workshops for South-East and South Asian States on gun violence and illicit small arms trafficking, which is also an activity under the Kathmandu process. The workshops were held from 3 to 6 July and 18 to 21 September 2018, in Bangkok and Kathmandu, respectively. They brought together representatives of national non-governmental organizations focused on women's empowerment and members of parliaments engaged in arms control and women's issues, as well as international experts from the Small Arms Survey, the International Action Network on Small Arms and the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons. By applying a gender perspective, the workshops aimed at highlighting and bolstering efforts to empower women to take part in decision-making processes. The events also provided opportunities for representatives of civil society and parliamentarians from the two regions to exchange ideas, discuss strategies and consider possibilities for joint initiatives to address challenges posed by the illicit trade in small arms and its distinct impact on women. The workshops were funded by the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation.

B. Promoting dialogue and confidence in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and security

11. The Regional Centre continued its work, in cooperation with the Geneva Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, relating to a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. By bringing together scientific and academic experts to discuss a fissile material cut-off treaty with national representatives, the Regional Centre aimed to raise awareness and facilitate dialogue among Member States of the Asia-Pacific region, as an integral part of the consultative process of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group.

12. Against this background, the Regional Centre organized two regional workshops for Asian and Pacific Island States on the outcomes of the high-level expert preparatory group. The first workshop was held in Astana, on 17 and 18 September 2018, and the second on 13 and 14 December 2018 in Nadi, Fiji. The workshops were aimed at facilitating dialogue at the subregional level among Member States on the implications of a future treaty to develop a sense of ownership of the issue and clarify its relationship with already existing global and regional instruments. Officials from seven Asian States² and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia attended the first workshop, and representatives from eight Pacific Island States³ and the Pacific Islands Forum

² Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Turkmenistan.

³ Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Samoa and Vanuatu.

Secretariat participated in the second event. Participants exchanged views and discussed potential challenges related to the negotiations on scope, definitions, a verification regime and institutional arrangements of a future fissile material cut-off treaty with international experts. Both events were funded by the European Union.

13. In December 2018, the Office for Disarmament Affairs co-organized the 17th United Nations-Republic of Korea Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-proliferation Issues, on the theme “Disarmament to save humanity: towards a world free from nuclear weapons”, with financial support from the Government of the Republic of Korea. The Regional Centre provided substantive support during the Conference, which was held on Jeju Island, Republic of Korea. The Conference is a forum for engaging Member States, intergovernmental organizations, academia, civil society and other stakeholders in informal and frank discussions on key challenges in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, contributing to security- and confidence-building.

14. The Regional Centre contributed to a seminar on The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation and the threat of missiles in South Asia, organized by the Foundation for Strategic Research, in January 2019, in Colombo. The Regional Centre delivered a presentation and informed participants on its roles in assisting States in the region in the area of arms control, disarmament and security.

C. Partnership, outreach and advocacy

15. The Regional Centre continued its efforts to enhance partnerships with major stakeholders in the region, including Member States, subregional organizations, other United Nations entities and civil society, through its concerted information and outreach activities, as well as joint initiatives and collaborative projects. In this context, the Regional Centre, inter alia, strengthened its partnerships with ASEAN, the European Union, and the Pacific Islands Forum, through information exchange, invitations to each other’s events and joint projects. In addition, the Regional Centre actively participated in, and substantively contributed to, the events described below.

16. In the framework of the International Youth Day on 17 August 2018, the Regional Centre organized an event in Kathmandu entitled “Creating safe spaces for youth”, as part of its efforts to promote education about peace and disarmament. It brought together participants from three high schools, four universities and three Nepalese youth organizations, as well as officials from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and representatives from the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Population Fund. Youth participants were offered a chance to analyse and discuss the pillars of the Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament, entitled “Securing Our Common Future”, as well as the interdependence between disarmament and sustainable development. The event facilitated dynamic discussions on peace and disarmament issues and on practical approaches, ideas and actions for youth as agents of change in promoting a culture of peace and non-violence in communities. Participants advocated for more peace and disarmament training opportunities for youth, a need for financial resources allocated to disarmament education programmes, activities and innovations, and the need to work with the Government to support its work on arms control and disarmament and promote the implementation of Security Council resolution [2250 \(2015\)](#). The event was funded by Rissho Kosei-kai.

17. Building upon prior achievements in the field of education on peace and disarmament, the Regional Centre initiated baseline assessments of needs for peace

and disarmament education in select States in the Asia-Pacific region. These assessments constitute the first phase of a comprehensive peace and disarmament education programme and will guide the development of follow-up activities in the beneficiary countries, involving other partners from within and outside of the United Nations as appropriate. To that end, the first baseline assessments were carried out in Nepal in March and April 2019, Myanmar in May 2019 and Bangladesh in June 2019. The assessments brought together government representatives, educators, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, international organizations and United Nations entities for analysis, mapping of activities related to peace and disarmament education, focus group discussions, one-on-one semi-structured interviews and the identification of potential partners for relevant future activities. The project is supported financially by Risho Kosei-kai of Japan.

18. In April 2019, the Regional Centre contributed to AI/SUM, one of the region's largest artificial intelligence events, organized by the Nihon Keizai Shimbun (Nikkei) in association with the Japanese Ministry of Economics, Trade and Industry. The Regional Centre, in cooperation with the Science, Technology and International Security Unit of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, coordinated, with the organizers, a high-profile fireside chat with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, with an audience of ministers, international government officials, academics, including representatives from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration of the United States of America (NASA), civil society organizations, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and industry leaders, including Microsoft and Intel. The Regional Centre also moderated a panel on ethics and bias in artificial intelligence with representatives from the Government of Canada, the Free University of Berlin and Microsoft's applied machine learning unit.

19. The Regional Centre has continued to make use of its awareness-raising facilities, including through developing an outreach video based on its event entitled "Creating safe spaces for youth", which was first shown during the side event of the First Committee on regional disarmament held in New York in October 2018.

20. In this framework, on 7 September 2018, the Regional Centre hosted a one-day briefing at its offices for Nepalese government officials, which featured presentations on its main activities and discussions on ways to foster closer collaboration with the Government and highlighted its contribution to maintaining peace and security in the region, including through the Kathmandu process. The Regional Centre continued to produce and disseminate regular newsletters and fact sheets through its website and directly to interested parties.

21. The Regional Centre contributed to the Asia-Pacific Security Conference on Countering Terrorists of the World Customs Organization held from 28 to 30 May 2019 in Kyoto, Japan. In its presentation, the Regional Centre addressed a number of challenging issues related to the prevention of the illicit trafficking in small arms and conventional ammunition, as well as the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). The critical role of strengthening cooperation with customs authorities and border control agencies was underscored, as were the need for more effective joint efforts on implementing Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and strengthening coordination with the World Customs Organization.

D. Future activities

22. 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. The Regional Centre will

remain guided by its mandate, taking into consideration the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda. The Regional 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 peace, disarmament and non-proliferation education targeting youth, and contributing to achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development focusing on reducing illicit arms flows and gun violence and empowering women in terms of participation and leadership in decision-making in the area of arms control and disarmament.

III. Financial situation, staffing and administration

A. Financial situation

23. The Regional Centre was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 42/39 D on the basis of existing resources and voluntary contributions. In 2018, voluntary contributions to the trust fund for the Regional Centre in the total amount of \$283,554 were received from Member States. Information on the status of the trust fund for 2018 is contained in the annex to the present report. The Secretary-General encourages other Member States to consider providing in-kind contributions to the Regional Centre.

24. The Secretary-General expresses his gratitude to the Member States that made financial and in-kind contributions to the Regional Centre: China, Kazakhstan, Nepal, New Zealand and Thailand. 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.

25. The Secretary-General also expresses his gratitude to the European Union and Sweden for their financial contributions to the Office for Disarmament Affairs, through which the Regional Centre was able to implement project activities.

26. 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.

27. 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 Regional 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 Regional Centre's operations, core activities and programmes, which benefit Asia and the Pacific.

B. Staffing

28. 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).

29. 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 thanks the Governments of Japan and the Netherlands for each

providing the Centre with one Junior Professional Officer and Finland for sponsoring one United Nations Youth Volunteer.

IV. Conclusion

30. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre engaged in and assisted a number of arms control and disarmament initiatives and programmes in Asia and the Pacific. Working with Member States and other stakeholders, several activities were undertaken during the reporting period as part of the Kathmandu process.

31. 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.

32. The Regional Centre plans to expand the scope of its activities to also include peace and disarmament education, as well as activities promoting the full and effective inclusion and participation of women and youth 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 the region and the world.

33. 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 Goal 16, which promotes peaceful, just and inclusive societies, and in compliance with the Secretary-General's disarmament agenda, entitled "Securing Our Common Future: an Agenda for Disarmament", as presented in Geneva on 24 May 2018.

Annex

Status of the trust fund for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific for 2018

(United States dollars)

Accumulated surplus, 1 January 2018	762 187
Revenue	
Voluntary contributions ^a	283 554
Investment revenue	18 481
Other revenue	2 160
Total revenue	304 195
Less: Expenses and refunds	
Operating expenses	58 939
Refunds ^b	33 896
Total expenses and refunds	92 835
Surplus/deficit for the year 2018	211 360
Less: Adjustments	49 621
Accumulated surplus/deficit as at 31 December 2018	923 926

^a Consists of voluntary contributions: China, \$50,000; Kazakhstan, \$10,000; Nepal, \$253,527; Thailand, \$3,000; and New Zealand, \$27,027.

^b Consists of refunds to Australia of \$15,822 and to Germany of \$18,074.