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General and complete disarmament

Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context

Report of the Secretary-General

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



I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 76/43, the General Assembly reaffirmed the ways and means regarding confidence- and security-building measures set out in the report of the Disarmament Commission on its 1993 session, and it called upon Member States to pursue these ways and means through sustained consultations and dialogue, while at the same time avoiding actions that might hinder or impair such a dialogue. Furthermore, the Assembly urged States to comply strictly with all bilateral, regional and international agreements, including arms control and disarmament agreements, to which they were a party. The Assembly also emphasized that the objective of confidence-building measures should be to help to strengthen international peace and security and to be consistent with the principle of undiminished security at the lowest level of armaments, and it encouraged the promotion of bilateral and regional confidence-building measures, with the consent and participation of the parties concerned, to avoid conflict and prevent the unintended and accidental outbreak of hostilities. It requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Assembly at its seventy-seventh session containing the views of Member States on confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request and on the basis of information received from Member States.

2. In that connection, notes verbales were sent to all Member States on 15 February 2022, requesting their views. To date, replies from the Governments of Burkina Faso, Cuba, Honduras, Mexico, Pakistan and Spain have been received and are reproduced in section II below. A reply from the European Union has been received and is reproduced in section III below. Any views received after 31 May 2022 will be posted on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs in the original language received. No addenda will be issued.

II. Replies received from Governments

Burkina Faso

[Original: French]
[31 May 2022]

Concerned about international peace and security, Burkina Faso has subscribed to several subregional and regional commitments in the area of arms regulation.

The Arms Trade Treaty, adopted on 2 April 2013 by the United Nations General Assembly, was signed by Burkina Faso on 3 June 2013, and the instrument of ratification was deposited on 3 June 2014. Act No. 014-2019/AN of 30 April 2019, implementing the Arms Trade Treaty in Burkina Faso, was subsequently adopted. It therefore endorses the provisions of the Treaty. In other words, Burkina Faso applies the provisions of the Treaty to the transfer of arms into or through its territory.

Regarding signatures on arms imports, the date stamps and specimen signatures of the persons authorized to act on behalf of Burkina Faso have been sent to all diplomatic and consular missions around the world. Pursuant to the regulations of Burkina Faso, only the Minister of Defence is authorized to import weapons of war and only the Minister of Security is empowered to authorize the import of civilian weapons and ammunition. Affixed to all these signatures is the stamp of the Permanent Secretary of the National Commission for the Control of Arms, who has been delegated to sign by the Prime Minister.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials

prohibits imports of small arms and light weapons in principle. Transfer, including import, is authorized on an exceptional basis with the agreement of the other member countries. In other words, the certificate of exemption is a document in which the other member countries give their consent to allow importing by any member country.

The ECOWAS exemption certificate therefore helps to build confidence among the different member countries at the subregional level.

At the legislative level, Burkina Faso adopted a law in May 2021 on the regime for civilian weapons and ammunition, which takes into account the provisions of the Arms Trade Treaty and the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons. This law specifically covers weapons of war and civilian weapons.

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[30 May 2022]

Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context must be agreed upon on a voluntary and reciprocal basis, taking into account the legitimate security concerns and needs of all States involved and with respect for their sovereign equality and self-determination. At the same time, the voluntary nature of such measures and the characteristics and specificities of each country and region must be taken into account. This is the only way to ensure the effectiveness of such measures and to promote their universal adoption.

The adoption of regional and subregional confidence-building measures that fully respect the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, with the consent and participation of all parties concerned, can help to avoid conflict, prevent the unwanted and accidental outbreak of hostilities, and contribute to regional stability and the achievement of development objectives, including overcoming poverty and protecting the environment.

No State or group of States should gain advantages over others at any stage of the confidence-building process. Any such action would jeopardize the delicate balance on which confidence-building measures are based, erode the foundation of goodwill underlying them and undermine their effectiveness and the constructive participation on which they depend.

The Latin America and the Caribbean region has made a significant contribution to confidence-building by proclaiming itself a zone of peace. It is an honour for Cuba that the Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States signed the Proclamation to that effect at their Second Summit, held in Havana in January 2014.

As a State party to 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 and the Protocols thereto, the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, Cuba is fulfilling its obligations in good faith and regularly reports on the many control measures that it has established to ensure the security of conventional weapons. These measures include a willingness to work actively and constructively with other States parties to the above-mentioned instruments in order to assist and cooperate in their implementation. We believe that

such exchanges of information contribute to mutual understanding and trust among States.

While the implementation of confidence-building measures can contribute to the creation of an environment conducive to the implementation of disarmament commitments and their verification, Cuba reaffirms that such measures can in no way replace disarmament and arms control measures or existing regional and subregional treaties on the subject, nor are they a precondition for their implementation.

Our country embraces the following principles, on which confidence-building measures are based:

- (a) Refraining from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations United Nations;
- (b) The peaceful settlement of disputes;
- (c) Non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States;
- (d) Cooperation among States in solving international problems;
- (e) Equal rights and the self-determination of peoples;
- (f) Sovereign equality and respect for the rights conferred by sovereignty;
- (g) Adherence in good faith to the provisions of international law.

Honduras

[Original: Spanish]
[11 April 2022]

Honduras wishes to provide the following information regarding the request of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs to Member States on compliance with General Assembly resolution [76/43](#) concerning confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context.

Information-sharing measures

(a) The Organization of American States (OAS) and the Inter-American Defense Board are informed about information shared among intelligence liaison officers of countries in the region regarding the production and/or purchase of new equipment or weapons.

(b) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation periodically informs OAS and the Inter-American Defense Board about the composition of the Armed Forces of Honduras and their organization, facilities, armaments, materials and equipment.

Measures against terrorism, organized crime and related activities

(a) OAS and the Inter-American Defense Board are informed about coordinated actions among the Armed Forces of Honduras who are members of the Conference of the armed forces of Central American countries and are conducting coordinated patrols in the international political boundary with a view to combating illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in the Central American area.

(b) OAS and the Inter-American Defense Board are informed about joint actions in support of the public security authorities, the configuring of patrols, information-sharing and operations.

(c) Joint exercises are conducted between the Armed Forces and members of the Conference of the armed forces of Central American countries for the interdiction of arms shipments.

Mexico

[Original: Spanish]
[31 May 2022]

Mexico is submitting this document pursuant to General Assembly resolution [76/43](#), entitled “Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context”, in which the Secretary-General is requested to submit a report containing the views of Member States on confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context.

Mexico believes that confidence-building measures at both the regional and subregional levels must be agreed upon on a voluntary and reciprocal basis, taking into account the security concerns and needs of the States parties in each region, in order to address the growing and increasingly complex security challenges. That is why trust, cooperation, transparency and the continuous exchange of information are key tools for safeguarding international peace and security. At the same time, the voluntary nature of such measures and the characteristics and specificities of each country and region must be taken into account. This is the only way to ensure the effectiveness of such measures and to promote their universal adoption.

At the regional level, Latin America and the Caribbean has endeavoured to make important contributions to confidence-building. In particular, its commitment has been affirmed by virtue of becoming a zone of peace and free of nuclear weapons, thanks to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco), whose depositary country is Mexico.

The peaceful resolution of conflicts is the guiding principle and foundation of Mexican foreign policy. Mexico therefore promotes the defence of peace and security at the international, regional and subregional levels and the implementation of confidence-building measures in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, thereby seeking to prevent the destabilizing accumulation of weapons that endanger the international community.

Mexico attaches great importance to its commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation and to the achievement and maintenance of peace and security in the region. Since the adoption of General Assembly resolution [58/43](#) in 2003, Mexico has prioritized the implementation of confidence-building measures in the political and military spheres at the regional and subregional levels. This is because these are provisions and actions aimed at preventing crises and conflict situations, strengthening international peace and security, promoting development and creating and fostering the necessary conditions for effective cooperation through transparency, goodwill and building the foundations of trust.

Mexico thereby seeks to contribute to the objective of complying with the provisions of Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular Article 33, echoing the call to Member States to settle any dispute by peaceful means.

In compliance with General Assembly resolution [76/43](#), Mexico refrains from the use or threat of use of force. In the event of conflict, it also reaffirms the importance of seeking a solution by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements or other peaceful means of its own choice.

Mexico also complies with all bilateral, regional and international agreements to which it is a party, including those on arms control and the regulation of dual-use materials. The foregoing seeks to contribute to building regional and international confidence in disarmament and non-proliferation matters, and to prevent the diversion of dual-use goods and technologies.

As part of its participation as an elected member of the Security Council for the period 2021–2022, and as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), Mexico recognizes that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery represents a threat to international and regional security. It therefore seeks to promote international cooperation towards transparency and information-sharing.

In particular, the Mexican Government considers it a priority to review illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, as these are the weapons that claim the most lives worldwide. In this regard, during the temporary presidency of the Security Council held by Mexico in November 2021, the Mexican delegation to the Council promoted a resolution against arms smuggling, through which private sector companies were called upon to implement measures to prevent arms trafficking, owing to the fact that this fuels violence in different regions and countries. As a result of this work, resolution 2616 (2021) was adopted in December of the same year, concerning arms trafficking and diversion, in order to maintain international peace and security.

In effect, this Security Council resolution seeks to reduce the firepower of criminal organizations through a diplomatic and legal campaign to limit arms trafficking that minimizes the negligent production and marketing of weapons for their illicit transfer. This will be achieved through measures such as arms monitoring and tracing, increased border controls and stricter regulation of private companies. The resolution was supported by 71 Governments and, in the Security Council, obtained 21 votes in favour, with three abstentions.

In this matter, Mexico also reiterates its commitment to the implementation of the obligations established in the Arms Trade Treaty, to which it has been a State party since 2013.

In order to address the challenge of trafficking in small arms and light weapons, Mexico has various procedures to regulate the manufacture, storage, transport and use of civilian and military weapons, as well as export controls. In accordance with the Federal Firearms and Explosives Act, the Ministry of Defence controls the sale of weapons and ammunition, mainly in collaboration with the public security units of the three branches of government, with public and private organizations, and with individuals and legal entities in the national territory.

In addition, a permanent operational deployment is maintained through the establishment of strategic military security posts on the main routes and roads in Mexico, in order to help prevent the possible entry of and trafficking in small arms, light weapons, weapons of mass destruction and chemical, biological, toxicological and bacteriological substances that pose a proliferation risk.

Mexico is also continuing to implement the programme for the exchange of small arms and the destruction of weapons confiscated in the country, in order to reduce their use against the civilian population as instruments for the generation of violence.

Regarding the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Mexico reiterates that it does not develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile, retain or transfer, directly or

indirectly, anti-personnel mines or cluster munitions. In this context, in April 2022 Mexico sent the respective annual national reports to the implementation units of each of the aforementioned conventions and to the Organization of American States (OAS), for the integration of its report on anti-personnel mines.

Mexico also continues to collaborate actively in regional and universal disarmament and non-proliferation organizations and forums, which also includes the adoption of confidence-building measures.

In this regard, Mexico reiterates its support for and fully implements its obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. Within the framework of these disarmament conventions, Mexico has submitted its national reports in a timely manner and has advocated the implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures, reiterating that our country does not develop, possess or transfer such weapons. In particular, within the framework of the Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention in November 2021 Mexico, together with France, promoted the creation of an exchange platform on voluntary transparency exercises to strengthen the Convention.

At the national level, Mexico has upheld its commitment to contributing to the development and implementation of measures arising from the work of the OAS Working Group on Cooperation and Confidence-Building Measures in Cyberspace.

It is worth noting that, as a sign of its commitment to confidence-building measures, Mexico has chaired the OAS Working Group on Cooperation and Confidence-Building Measures in Cyberspace since 2021. It has taken concrete actions to increase stability and security and to prevent information and communication technology practices that are acknowledged to be harmful or that may pose a threat to international peace and security, in addition to regional cooperation activities, the creation of national points of contact in response to cyber incidents and national capacity-building efforts.

Mexico also supports and implements the confidence-building measures adopted within the OAS framework. Mexico is a party to all inter-American security agreements and conventions, contributing thereby to the implementation of confidence- and security-building measures in the hemisphere.

Mexico submitted its 2021 report on confidence- and security-building measures to OAS in June 2022. This is in accordance with article 19 of resolution AG/RES.2970 (LI-O/21) “Advancing Hemispheric Security: A Multidimensional Approach” and the Consolidated List of Confidence- and Security-Building Measures.

Lastly, it should be noted that Mexico has various national instruments to regulate and control trade in dual-use goods and technologies. This allows Mexico to implement and comply with the international commitments undertaken in this area and to contribute to global efforts to prevent dual-use goods and technologies from being diverted to weapons programmes or to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Pakistan

[Original: English]

[29 April 2022]

The current international security environment presents a challenge to the existing norms on non-proliferation and disarmament, while aggravating strategic stability at the global and regional levels.

Under these circumstances, confidence-building measures assume increased significance to ensure a conducive environment for the resolution of complicated issues between States.

Confidence-building measures should be pursued simultaneously at the global, regional and bilateral levels.

Confidence-building measures cover the whole spectrum of measures ranging from crises management, risk reduction, arms limitation and arms reduction.

It would be useful to draw upon the previous experiences which have proved to be effective. At the same time, there is a need to evaluate the reasons as to why certain measures did not work in the past.

It is also important to assess the relevance of the confidence-building measures of the past to the present-day complexities.

It would be useful to look at a new paradigm for confidence-building measures which is holistic and integrated and includes risk reduction across various domains, including conventional, nuclear and emerging technologies, whether they are specifically weaponized or not. The risk posed by new technologies, especially the possibility of conventional entanglement, which results in greater risks in the nuclear fields, warrants closer attention.

Multilateral discourse on regulating the hostile use of new and emerging technologies and their militarization has not kept pace with the advancement in such technologies. There is an urgent need to develop clarity and understanding on a multilateral regulatory framework and further development of international norms and the legally binding agreements for avoiding the employment of new technologies in a manner which can threaten deterrence stability at the global and regional levels.

The need for conventional military doctrines which are defensive rather than offensive in nature cannot be overemphasized. However, in a nuclearized environment, doctrines which are offensive in nature or seek to create space for war are a dangerous proposition. Confidence-building measures should include reversal of such doctrines.

In most cases, doctrines are declaratory positions and statements. In actual practice, States' security calculus is shaped by the military capabilities, force postures and types and number of weapon systems deployed by their competitors and/or adversaries.

Discussion on confidence-building measures, therefore, should move beyond theoretical constructs and focus on the actual threat perceptions that force States to have reliance on nuclear capabilities.

Confidence-building measures need to go beyond measures for crisis stability and include steps for arms control stability. In the absence of arms control measures and measures for the avoidance of arms races, measures for risk reduction and crisis stability agreed in a particular context tend to lose their utility with new destabilizing inductions in another domain.

Confidence-building measures should seek a broader objective than mere management or avoidance of crisis. Their broader objectives should remain the creation of an environment of trust and stability which is conducive for States to open channels of negotiations for settlement of disputes. In the absence of parallel measures for the settlement of long-standing disputes, there will always be potential for conflict and dangerous escalation. Dispute resolution should be accorded priority.

This has been witnessed in several regional crises whereby, due to the underlying disputes, unpredictable events have led to the risk of military escalation. In such situations existing confidence-building measures tend to be ignored.

Establishment of formal channels of strategic communication, both at the political and military level can contribute significantly to crisis stability and trust building. States should be encouraged to resort to such formal channels during crises.

Public statements pandering to domestic political constituencies for temporary electoral gains, bypassing the formal communication channels during crises, are subject to misinterpretation. Discussion between States to avoid such irresponsible signalling can help in re-establishing the relevance of established formal channels of communications.

Given the ever-growing influence of media, both traditional and social media, it is imperative to examine options for expanding the ambit of confidence-building measures beyond States.

In the context of South Asia, Pakistan has made a strategic restraint regime proposal, which is premised on three interlocking and mutually reinforcing elements of conflict resolution, nuclear and missile restraint and conventional balance.

No approach can succeed in the absence of political will at the regional level to engage in meaningful confidence-building measures which can be tailored to specific circumstances, without impinging on any party's extra-regional interests. Reference to extra-regional concerns for avoiding confidence-building measures in a regional context should not therefore be used as a pretext to engage bilaterally or regionally.

Spain

[Original: Spanish]
[31 May 2022]

The ultimate goal of a regime for arms control or of confidence- and security-building measures must be conflict prevention by reducing the danger of misperceptions or miscalculations with regard to the military activities of other States; by implementing measures to make covert military preparations more difficult; and by reducing the risk of surprise attacks or the accidental eruption of hostilities.

From that perspective, arms control and confidence- and security-building measures within a regional and subregional context are of great value as a form of prevention specifically adapted to that context, given that they involve a smaller number of participants and can therefore be more stringent, adapted to the local context and, therefore, more effective. All of the foregoing makes such measures easier to adopt and implement.

Within its own regional sphere, Spain has actively participated in all relevant initiatives.

Spain is a member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) It was initially bound by some confidence-building measures of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. At the Madrid Conference,

between 1980 and 1983, the Madrid mandate was established for the negotiation of confidence- and security-building measures, defining, among other issues, the zone of application for these measures, which was to become the Vienna Document 1999 of the Negotiations on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures. The measures envisaged in this latest politically binding document cover Europe as a whole, as well as the contiguous maritime area and airspace. It was updated in 2011 in order to improve and expand its application. Spain is committed to the annual conferences to evaluate the implementation of this document.

Spain is also a party to legally binding instruments, such as the Treaty on Open Skies. Spain belongs to the Western European Union Group of States Parties to the Treaty on Open Skies, which is how the Group is still known for the purposes of the Treaty, despite the disappearance of the European defence organization.

Spain also applies other OSCE documents such as the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, the Global Exchange of Military Information and the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

A fundamental and key element for the performance of verification activities in connection with disarmament and the confidence- and security-building measures of Spain abroad is the Spanish Verification Unit established in 1991, which reports to the chief of the defence staff and is responsible for the detailed planning and performance of the aforementioned activities.

In October 2021, Spain led an inspection in Cyprus under the Vienna Document 1999. It also participated with a guest inspector in the June inspections of Slovenia (in Switzerland), and in the November inspections of Belgium (in Finland).

The Vienna Document 1999 requires, among other things, the performance of the following activities:

- To receive a visit to an air base every five years.
- To receive a visit to a military facility or military formation every five years.
- To arrange a demonstration when a participating State deploys a new type of weapon system, as a general rule, no later than one year after its deployment.

In order to save money, the possibility of carrying out these three activities jointly is allowed, which is therefore called a “triple event”.

Members of the Spanish Verification Unit have participated in several Vienna Document 1999 events in countries such as Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia and Lithuania. It should be noted that Spain organized a dual event in October 2021 in Zaragoza, which was attended by delegates from the signatory countries of the agreement, a representative of the Conflict Prevention Centre and representatives from Morocco and Tunisia.

Regarding the Treaty on Open Skies, the current situation with the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic prevented observation flights during 2021.

OSCE has adopted other documents that expand on confidence- and security-building measures, such as Permanent Council Decision No. 1106 of 2013 on confidence- and security-building measures for cybersecurity or Decision No. 1202 of 2016 on OSCE confidence-building measures to reduce the risks of conflict stemming from the use of information and communication technologies.

Spain regrets that OSCE mechanisms such as the Vienna Document 1999 are experiencing difficulties, particularly as a result of the military aggression by the Russian Federation, with the collaboration of Belarus, against Ukraine.

Spain participates in the OSCE Structured Dialogue on current and future challenges and risks, an initiative that emerged from the Hamburg Ministerial Council in 2016 that seeks to re-energize arms control and confidence- and security-building measures in Europe. Spain chaired the informal working group of the Structured Dialogue in 2020 and 2021. To support the Spanish Chair of the Structured Dialogue, a military working group was created for the preparation and execution of the workshops of military experts.

Within the framework of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), article 4 of the Treaty on consultations also serves the objective of confidence-building measures. There are NATO structures that also serve these objectives. Within the NATO framework, Spain defends the usefulness of structured dialogues with non-NATO partners. This is the case of the NATO-Ukraine Commission, the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative and the Mediterranean Dialogue. Spain has organized the Youth Mediterranean Dialogue in this field and has participated in various NATO alliance events. Russian aggression in Ukraine has made it unfeasible to continue the dialogue which, until January 2022, had been channelled through the NATO-Russia Council.

Spain also supports the principles of transparency and risk reduction measures as regional confidence-building mechanisms, for example within the European Union.

It should be noted in this regard that the Strategic Compass of the European Union, approved in March 2022, devotes one of its four pillars to strengthening cooperation with strategic partners, including the development of tailored regional partnerships in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Western Balkans.

Spain participates in other forums that promote mutual trust, such as the 5+5 Defence Initiative, which brings together 10 countries from both shores of the Western Mediterranean, and through which an annual plan of activities is organized and executed, consisting of some 50 military cooperation activities, including courses, seminars, observers of exercises (search and rescue, marine pollution, maritime traffic control and air safety), humanitarian demining, research on problems affecting regional security, cyberdefense, military health and a gender approach, among others.

Spain also adopts bilateral confidence- and security-building measures in key regions for national security. Defence diplomacy plays a key role in boosting and consolidating bilateral relations with countries around the world with a view to building mutual trust through measures such as information-sharing, providing notification of and encouraging participation in operations and exercises, and providing notification of arms and ammunition reductions.

Spain approved a defence diplomacy plan in 2011. This is a set of activities, mainly based on dialogue and cooperation, carried out by the Ministry of Defence at the bilateral level with partner and allied countries to promote mutual knowledge and trust, prevent conflicts or strengthen security capabilities.

As part of Spanish defence diplomacy, a fluid and systematic relationship is maintained with most of the countries of Latin America, Africa and Asia. Spain maintains defence attachés in a large number of countries and holds joint defence committees and bilateral meetings of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the respective armies, where bilateral cooperation programmes are agreed upon.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic led to a certain interruption of this cooperation and the cancellation of many activities, which were progressively resumed as the health situation improved.

Since September 2021, bilateral relations contributing to confidence-building and security have re-emerged in earnest. In Latin America, joint defence committees have been held with Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Peru.

In relation to the Middle East, mention should be made of the recent joint defence committees held with Bahrain, Egypt and Jordan. Lebanon is also a country of priority interest for Spain, as evidenced by the significant Spanish contribution to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and the urgent humanitarian aid contribution motivated by the difficult situation that this country is going through in 2022.

In Africa, the Maghreb, the Sahel and the Gulf of Guinea are regions of great importance for security- and confidence-building, where Spain carries out cooperative security activities with various countries with the aim of improving their military capabilities and contributing to their governance.

In the Maghreb, in addition to the ongoing activities of the 5+5 Defence Initiative, cooperation is very fruitful following the joint defence committees developed with Tunisia in 2021 and with Mauritania in 2022. In the Sahel, the special relationship with Mali is notable owing to the presence of a large Spanish military contingent. In the Gulf of Guinea, it is worth mentioning the joint defence committee with Senegal and the start of bilateral cooperation with Gabon, in addition to the cooperative security activities with Cabo Verde.

The deployment of a Spanish ship in the Gulf of Guinea has been maintained and expanded. It has been carrying out defence diplomacy and cooperative security activities, such as patrols and joint exercises with the coastal countries, in addition to port calls in Angola, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Mauritania, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe and Senegal.

In Asia, and in spite of the inherent difficulties, potential joint defence committees with India and other States are on the agenda, in addition to a constant and fluid dialogue with Japan and the Philippines.

In 2020, the European Union launched a pilot of the Coordinated Maritime Presences concept in the Gulf of Guinea. In 2022, once it has been completed, the European Union has decided to continue with the Coordinated Maritime Presences in the region and envisages extending them to other regions, starting with the Indo-Pacific.

Spain participates in the Coordinated Maritime Presences in the Gulf of Guinea through the ships that the Navy deploys there. The objective is to improve knowledge of the environment, strengthen cooperation with coastal States, contribute to improving security in these waters, especially in relation to the problem of piracy, and support the security architecture of Yaoundé.

III. Reply received from the European Union

[Original: English]

[31 May 2022]

1. The European Union in 2021 pursued its efforts to work for the peaceful resolution of the problems of regional instability and insecurity and of conflict situations. The European Union continued its support for the establishment of regional and subregional confidence- and security-building measures as an important tool to build trust, enhance transparency and military predictability, avoid conflict and maintain stability, especially in situations of armed confrontation and areas of tension. Under the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security

Policy, the European Union sought to advance the general arms control and disarmament processes.

2. Building trust incrementally and carefully is important in a mediation process. Trust needs to be built around the process constructed by the mediation and the parties, by conducting pre-talks, developing methodologies and using a shared language. Clarity on the process enables trust. Confidence-building measures can be a tool in building trust, before the talks, and at the beginning or in the middle of the negotiations.

3. While there is no universally accepted definition, confidence-building measures can be defined as actions or processes undertaken in all phases of a conflict cycle with the aim of increasing transparency and the level of trust and confidence between two or more conflict parties. Confidence-building initiatives, if applied early on when tensions arise, can play a role in preventing the outbreak of conflict in the first place. Confidence-building measures can help to improve relations. They can facilitate a more conducive environment for a peaceful political solution. Confidence-building measures can be part of the enabling conditions and success factors that effectively address both domestic and international actors, as well as the environment in which they operate. If successful, confidence-building measures can themselves become key steps that form part of a peaceful political transition.

4. Several current protracted conflicts reflect the largely stalled track I mediation efforts. Among the various factors that bring peace processes to a halt, the loss of trust and confidence is fundamental. In mediation processes, the European Union has made repeated efforts to engage key actors and present new options that could bring parties back to the negotiating table. The introduction of specific ceasefire monitoring to be shared by all parties involved is a confidence-building measure to build confidence and trust in the security of information.

5. In the Middle East and elsewhere, a proxy element of conflict – whereby international and regional States are indirectly involved in a conflict by supporting armed factions on the ground or are directly engaged to support one side or the other – provides little incentive to commit to peace processes and negotiations. Confidence-building initiatives become all the more important in such cases, whether they be between and among national-level parties to a conflict, regional and international actors and/or broader constituencies of citizens. As regional and international actors become involved in confidence-building measures, however, citizen inclusivity often experiences a downturn owing to the design of such processes. The European Union has been promoting the importance of the inclusion of civil society in all peace processes in which it is involved and in all phases, through globally significant support for track II and track III dialogues to ensure that civil society constituencies are consulted and their ideas heard.

6. The European Union has consistently been supporting and promoting the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation as the only multilateral transparency and confidence-building instrument addressing the spread of ballistic missiles. The European Union advocates the universality, full implementation and enhanced functioning of the Hague Code of Conduct. The diplomatic support of the European Union for the Code is enhanced by a number of European Council decisions financing outreach activities, including side events, research papers, expert meetings and regional awareness seminars conducted by the Paris-based Fondation pour la recherche stratégique, usually also involving the rotating Code Chair. The European Union continues to promote the Code under European Council decision (CFSP) 2017/2370 of 18 December 2017. 2022 marks the twentieth anniversary of the Hague Code of Conduct.

7. Nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosions represent a serious threat to international peace and security and undermine the global non-proliferation regime. Since its opening for signature in 1996, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has helped stop that practice while also serving as a strong confidence- and security-building measure: internationally, regionally and bilaterally. The European Union believes that the entry into force of the Treaty, through the signature and ratification by the remaining annex 2 States will constitute a tangible step towards building trust and peace. All States members of the European Union have demonstrated their commitment to the Treaty by ratifying it and by applying its basic obligations.

8. The early entry into force and universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty are important objectives of the European Union Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. All European Union member States have demonstrated their commitment to the Treaty by ratifying it and by applying its basic obligations. The Treaty is a strong confidence- and security-building measure, and promoting its entry into force was one of the action items of the initiative of the Secretary General, Securing our Common Future: an Agenda for Disarmament, which the European Union decided to support.

9. In 2021, besides its high-level participation at the biannual Conference on Facilitating Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (Article XIV Conference) in September, the European Union has carried out démarches in those remaining eight annex 2 States, whose ratification is needed for the entry into force of the Treaty. The European Union consistently promotes the benefits and the contribution of the Treaty to peace, security, disarmament and non-proliferation, including in its civil applications. The financial support of the European Union for the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization as outlined in Council decision (CFSP) 2020/901 on Union support for the activities of the Preparatory Commission of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO), in order to strengthen its monitoring and verification capabilities and in the framework of the implementation of the European Union Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, continues in the new funding cycle for 2020–2023, with a total allocated amount of €6.28 million. The European Union and its member States also contributed to the maintenance and strengthening of the Treaty verification regime through the provision of technical support and advice at Working Group B of the Treaty Organization and other workshops and seminars. The European Union participated actively in the sessions of the Preparatory Commission, in its Working Groups A and B.

10. The European Union acknowledges the importance of nuclear weapon-free zones for peace and security, in accordance with article VII of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The European Union recognizes that treaty-based security assurances are available to nuclear-weapon-free zones and encourages nuclear-weapon States to sign and ratify the relevant protocols of the treaties establishing nuclear weapon-free zones drawn up following the requisite consultations. The European Union also calls upon those States in existing nuclear weapon-free zones that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the relevant nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties. Under European Council decision (CFSP) 2019/938 of 6 June 2019, the European Union provides funding for the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in support of a process of confidence-building leading to the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The European Union continues to call upon all States in the region which have not yet done so to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Proliferation Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Doing

so would be an important confidence- and security-building measure and could constitute a tangible step towards the establishment of a zone.

11. The European Union Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Initiative is funded and implemented by the European Union through the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe. It addresses the mitigation of and preparedness for risks related to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear material and agents. The origin of these risks can be criminal (proliferation, theft, sabotage and illicit trafficking), accidental (industrial catastrophes, in particular chemical or nuclear waste treatment and transport) or natural (mainly pandemics but also as a consequence of natural hazards on chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear material and facilities).

12. The aim of the Initiative is to support partner countries and regions in strengthening chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risk mitigation and an all-hazards security governance, following a voluntary and demand-driven approach. Under the responsibility of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear national focal points and their inter-ministerial chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear national teams, European Union support is provided to implement a wide range of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risk mitigation activities, including needs and risk assessments, national and regional action plans, training, train-the-trainer modules, table-top and real-time (including cross-border) field exercises, in all partner countries (62) and regional secretariats (8).

13. The Initiative is led by the European Commission Service for Foreign Policy Instruments, in close coordination with the European External Action Service. The Joint Research Centre of the European Commission provides technical support to partner countries, while the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute ensures coherent and effective national, regional and international cooperation. Other relevant international and/or regional organizations and experts also contribute to the Initiative, the European Union's largest civilian external security programme.

14. The Initiative network consists of 62 partner countries, grouped into eight regions, each facilitated by a regional secretariat: African Atlantic Façade, Central Asia, Eastern and Central Africa, the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, the Middle East, North Africa and the Sahel, South-East Asia and South-Eastern and Eastern Europe. The needs assessment questionnaire is a tool which helps national teams identify and document areas requiring chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risk mitigation. It is based on a voluntary request from any partner country. The national action plan enables the partner countries to define their priority objectives in the field of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risk mitigation. They can share them to build joint projects and formulate an integrated regional approach. Within the Centre of Excellence network, 88 chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear projects have been implemented and 31 are ongoing.

15. Where appropriate, the Initiative works in cooperation with international and regional partners, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Biological Weapons Implementation Support Unit, the World Health Organization, the World Organization for Animal Health, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol), the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), the League of Arab States, the African Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the International Science and Technology Centre and the G7 Global

Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction. Each of these partners contributed its own unique expertise in accordance with its institutional mandate. One practical avenue of cooperation is the organization of training events with the NATO-accredited Joint Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defence Centre of Excellence in Vyskov, Czechia, which is accredited by NATO. The first such was organized in late 2017.

16. With European Union support, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) implements projects for strengthening biological safety and security in Ukraine in line with Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery and the European Union-Association Agreement with Ukraine. Under European Council decision (CFSP) 2019/1296 of 31 July 2019 in support of strengthening biological safety and security in Ukraine in line with the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, activities are funded to harmonize existing Ukrainian regulations on biosafety and biosecurity with international standards, to establish a sustainable veterinary surveillance system in Ukraine and to raise awareness among and train life scientists on biosafety and biosecurity. Through European Council decision (CFSP) 2017/1252 of 11 July 2017 in support of the strengthening of chemical safety and security in Ukraine in line with the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, the European Union also supports the strengthening of chemical safety and security in Ukraine. States members of the European Union are parties to the Treaty on Open Skies and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and observe the politically binding provisions of the Vienna Document 2011 on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures, in line with the spirit and principles of support for multilateralism and the rule of law that the European Union upholds.

17. In December 2019, the European Council adopted its decision (CFSP) 2019/2108 of 9 December 2019, in support of strengthening biological safety and security in Latin America in line with the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which provides for €2.7 million over three years. The European Union funding allows the Organization of American States (OAS) to provide technical and legislative assistance to beneficiary countries to strengthen regulations on biosafety and biosecurity and ensure their harmonization with international standards, to promote and enhance regional cooperation and to raise awareness of, educate in and organize training on biosafety and biosecurity. The regional cooperation includes peer reviews, with States voluntarily agreeing to work together to assess their mutual strengths and weakness in implementing obligations under Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and to identify effective practices and areas for continued bilateral cooperation.

18. Building national capacities and strengthening regional cooperation remain central to the efforts of the European Union, as set out in its strategy against illicit firearms, small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, which was adopted in 2018. In this context, the European Union cooperates closely with United Nations regional centres and with regional and subregional organizations.

19. In South-Eastern Europe, the European Union continues to provide significant support for capacity-building relating to small arms control through the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, which operates under the United Nations Development Programme and the Regional Cooperation Council. Furthermore, the European Union supports the implementation of the road map for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition in the western

Balkans by 2024, which was adopted at the Western Balkans Summit held in London in July 2018 and for which action plans have been agreed. In addition, the European Union supported the activities of OSCE to reduce the risk of illicit trafficking and the excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons and conventional ammunition in North Macedonia and Georgia (Council decision (CFSP) 2017/1424) of 4 August 2017 in support of OSCE activities to reduce the risk of illicit trafficking and excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons and conventional ammunition in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Georgia and to combat illicit trafficking in weapons, ammunition and explosives in Ukraine (Council decision (CFSP) 2019/2009 of 2 December 2019 in support of Ukraine's efforts to combat illicit trafficking in weapons, ammunition and explosives, in cooperation with the OSCE). In 2021, the Council adopted its decision (CFSP) 2021/2133 in support of the comprehensive programme on supporting efforts to prevent and combat illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons and conventional ammunition in South-Eastern Europe.

20. The European Union strongly supports African-led efforts in the area of peace and security, including the African Union ambition to "silence the guns by 2020". The activities of the European Union related to small arms and light weapons control are implemented in close partnership with the African Union, its member States, the United Nations and regional organizations, notably the Economic Community of West African States, the Economic Community of Central African States and the Southern African Development Community. The support provided by the European Union for Africa's peace and security architecture funded by the African Peace Facility has helped to improve physical security and stockpile management in existing conventional arms and ammunition depots in the Central African Republic and the Sahel region and to collect and destroy arms and ammunition across West Africa. In July 2019, the European Council adopted its decision (CFSP) 2019/1298 of 31 July 2019 in support of an Africa-China-Europe dialogue and cooperation on preventing the diversion of arms and ammunition in Africa.

21. For the first time, the European Union and the League of Arab States have also entered into a partnership on capacity-building in the area of arms control and countering illicit trafficking in conventional arms. Through European Council decision (CFSP) 2018/1789 of 19 November 2018 in support of combating the illicit trade in and proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the Member States of the League of Arab States, experts from the World Customs Organization and INTERPOL are contributing to this effort.

22. In Latin America, the European Union contributes to the enhancement of small arms control capacities of several Latin American and Caribbean States through OAS. Through European Council decision (CFSP) 2018/2010 of 17 December 2018 in support of countering illicit proliferation and trafficking of small arms, light weapons (SALW) and ammunition and their impact in Latin America and the Caribbean in the framework of the European Union Strategy against Illicit Firearms, Small Arms and Light Weapons and their Ammunition 'Securing Arms, Protecting Citizens', the European Union supports activities that include, among others, stockpile management, training and legislation.

23. The Arms Trade Treaty is a landmark instrument aimed at enhancing greater responsibility and transparency in the trade of arms. In 2021, in line with its longstanding support for the Treaty, the European Union continued to promote its universalization and effective implementation in various political dialogues. In addition to these diplomatic efforts, the European Union funded the Treaty implementation support programme, which amounts to just over €8 million. Through this programme, the European Union has provided technical assistance to a good number of beneficiary countries in Latin America, Africa, Central and South-East

Asia, Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, with the aim of strengthening their national systems, in line with the requirements of the Treaty. The European Union also launched a project implemented by and in support of the Treaty Secretariat: Council decision (CFSP) 2021/649 of 16 April 2021 on Union support for activities of the Arms Trade Treaty secretariat in support of the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty.

24. The European Union has a long history of support for the implementation of the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (Ottawa Convention) and mine action. For more than two decades, European Union institutions and Member States have been supporting mine clearance, stockpile destruction, assistance to victims, awareness raising, advocacy and research and development for the detection and clearance of mines for humanitarian and development purposes. In addition, the European Council adopted its decision (CFSP) 2021/257 of 18 February 2021 in support of the Oslo Action Plan for the implementation of the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction.

25. Many of the other European Union assistance activities are focused on promoting universal adherence to and national implementation of key international instruments, including the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and Security Council resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#), to name just a few.
