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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 2019 to 30 June 2020.

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 organized a subregional workshop on the Arms Trade Treaty for Central Asian States and Mongolia, and provided a training course for South-East Asian States on the practical application of the Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium to streamline national practices of small arms and light weapons control. It also implemented a technical and legal assistance project in Timor-Leste and Sri Lanka and provided recommendations and measures for inclusion in their respective national action plans to strengthen the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the Arms Trade Treaty. The Regional Centre facilitated the organization of an inter-agency meeting in the Solomon Islands on the implementation of Security Council resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#), which resulted in that country submitting its first national report to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#).

The Regional Centre concluded its two-year project on gun violence and illicit trafficking of small arms from a gender perspective, which included the participation of women-focused non-governmental organizations and members of parliament, by holding a third subregional workshop for Pacific Island States and a concluding Asia-Pacific regional seminar. The Regional Centre produced a publication with the outcomes and recommendations of those workshops.

* [A/75/50](#).



During the reporting period, the Regional Centre launched a project on responsible innovation for a secure environment in Asia and the Pacific, which is intended to address potential challenges to peace and security caused by advances in technologies and to raise awareness among young researchers and students studying science, technology and engineering. The project aims to promote critical thinking and dialogue around the peaceful applications of innovative technologies and to provide the context and tools necessary to examine the human security consequences of those technologies.

The Regional Centre promoted dialogue and confidence-building in the region through its activities and continued with its outreach efforts. It organized a regional workshop for scientific experts from Asia and Africa to discuss possible ways to advance negotiations of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The Regional Centre concluded its baseline assessment of peace and disarmament education needs in the framework of its regional programme on peace and disarmament education.

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 [74/69](#), 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. The Assembly 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-fifth session on the implementation of resolution [74/69](#).
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 2019 to 30 June 2020. A financial statement on the status of the trust fund for the Regional Centre for the year 2019 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. The Regional Centre, with financial support from Japan, and in cooperation with the Group of Experts of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#), held a national round-table meeting with the Solomon Islands on 29 and 30 October 2019. That led to the country's submission, on 13 December 2019, of its first report to the Committee on the implementation of resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#).¹ The Regional Centre also contributed to a workshop on the Biological Weapons Convention, organized by the Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit and held from 19 to 21 September 2019 in Wellington, to promote the universalization of the Convention and the implementation of Council resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#) in the Pacific region.

6. The Regional Centre contributed to the third South-East Asia regional conference on enhancing capacity for the implementation of Security Council sanctions resolutions, organized by the Federal Office for Economic Affairs and Export Control of Germany and held from 21 to 23 October 2019 in Penang, Malaysia. The conference focused on sharing the national experiences and best practices of the

¹ [S/AC.44/2019/16](#).

States in the region regarding the implementation of the embargo-related obligations set out in the relevant sanctions resolutions and in resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#).

7. The Regional Centre continued its active collaboration with the Hiroshima office of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and delivered a presentation as part of the Institute's training programme on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, which in 2020 focused on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The programme is intended to train and educate 20 mid-level diplomats and military personnel from 10 Asian States and was held from 24 to 28 February 2020 in Hiroshima, Japan. In its presentation, the Regional Centre addressed the three main pillars of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the implementation of the respective provisions, as well as other global agreements on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including regional treaties on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and confidence-building measures in the military sphere. The training programme also included simulations of drafting documents on such matters, as well as meetings and discussions with civil society organizations.

2. Conventional arms

8. In support of promoting the universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty, the Regional Centre and the Government of Kazakhstan co-organized a subregional workshop for Central Asian States and Mongolia, which was held on 3 and 4 July 2019 in Nur-Sultan. The workshop provided a forum for discussion and addressed measures to build the institutional capacity of the participating States for the effective implementation of the Treaty. The discussion benefited from the participation of officials from Finland, Germany and Japan, the Head of the Arms Trade Treaty secretariat and experts from non-governmental organizations. The workshop also provided an opportunity to discuss the Treaty's relevance to the region and potential interrelation with the other commitments of States. Government representatives from five States were also introduced to international assistance tools, the Treaty's voluntary trust fund and mechanisms to support and encourage membership. The workshop was sponsored by the Arms Trade Treaty voluntary trust fund.

9. With financial support from Germany, the Regional Centre, in cooperation with the Government of Thailand, held a training workshop in Bangkok, from 1 to 4 October 2019, to build the capacity of States in South-East Asia to prevent diversion and reduce illegal arms flows through the development of national action plans based on the Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium. Government experts from the law enforcement authorities of six States, with assistance from experts from the Regional Centre, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and the Office for Disarmament Affairs, took part in practical exercises on six different scenarios related to border control and the destruction, physical security and stockpile management of small arms and on conducting surveys of national practices and regulations. The training workshop also fostered regional dialogue and allowed participants to explore possibilities for strengthening subregional cooperation and coordination.

10. The reporting period saw the conclusion of the Regional Centre's project on gun violence and illicit trafficking of small arms from a gender perspective. In that context, the Regional Centre held a third subregional workshop for Pacific Island States from 12 to 15 November 2019 in Suva, followed by a concluding Asia-Pacific regional seminar in Kathmandu from 4 to 6 March 2020. Those events brought together representatives of national non-governmental organizations focused on women's empowerment and members of parliament engaged in arms control and women's issues, as well as international experts from the Pacific Islands Forum, the

Centre for Armed Violence Reduction, the International Action Network on Small Arms and the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons. The regional seminar summarized the discussions and recommendations resulting from the three subregional workshops, which were aimed at empowering women's organizations to be more actively engaged with members of parliament in small arms control processes. The project provided an effective platform for networking among national organizations and members of parliament and offered potential approaches for future joint initiatives. The project was funded by the European Union. Under the project, the Regional Centre produced a compendium of the main outcomes and recommendations made by the participants, which was shared with the participants and other stakeholders in the region.

11. In order to support 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 Regional Centre provided technical and legal assistance to Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste. The project in Timor-Leste involved three site visits, which took place between 20 November 2019, when the assessment visit took place, and 13 February 2020, when the international experts presented their reports and recommendations for a national action plan to support national efforts on small arms control and the future implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty. In addition to the assessment visit, the Regional Centre conducted a one-day workshop on the Arms Trade Treaty on 19 November 2019, at the request of Timor-Leste. The assessment mission to Sri Lanka took place from 17 to 19 February 2020 and was conducted in the form of an interactive discussion with national representatives from ministries and agencies. The experts' reports and proposals for a national action plan were submitted to the Government on 7 May 2020 for internal consideration, as the final briefing visit was postponed owing to the epidemic of coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The project was funded by the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation.

12. The Regional Centre partnered with a regional non-governmental organization, Nonviolence International Asia, in organizing and contributing to the South Asia and South-East Asia interregional meeting on best practices on ammunition and weapons regulations and management, held on 25 and 26 September 2019 in Siem Reap, Cambodia. The meeting raised awareness among national practitioners of existing international tools to support national efforts to control small arms, light weapons and conventional ammunition, such as the Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium and the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines, as well as existing financial assistance mechanisms.

13. In response to a request from the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Regional Centre facilitated translations into Lao of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects; the template for reporting on national implementation of the Programme of Action; and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. The project was intended to assist the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic in assessing the level of compliance with the provisions and requirements of relevant agreements.

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

14. In the framework of a global project funded by the European Union, the Regional Centre, in cooperation with the Geneva branch of the Office for

Disarmament Affairs, organized a regional meeting for scientific experts from Asia and Africa to discuss possible ways to advance negotiations of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and to facilitate the contribution of regional expertise and experience into these negotiations. The workshop was held on 17 and 18 December 2019 in Bangkok. The meeting offered regional experts the opportunity to exchange views with members of the Group of Governmental Experts and the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group on the continued importance and relevance of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, and how the objective to advance negotiations on such a treaty fits within the respective regional priorities.

15. The eighteenth United Nations-Republic of Korea Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-proliferation Issues, on the theme “2020 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference”, was held on 13 and 14 November 2019 in Seoul. The Conference was attended by about 30 participants drawn from Governments, in particular from countries in the region, research institutes, academia and non-governmental organizations. The participants discussed prospects and building blocks for the 2020 Review Conference and ways to reinvigorate the review process. Some 70 additional participants from the same bodies attended the final session, entitled “Regional non-proliferation issue: the Korean Peninsula and the Non-Proliferation Treaty”. The annual Joint Conference provides an important forum for candid and constructive exchanges of views among participants from around the world on current challenges to security, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, at both the global and regional levels.

C. Partnership, outreach and advocacy

16. From July to November 2019, in line with the United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education² and the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters,³ the Regional Centre continued to conduct its baseline assessment of peace and disarmament education needs in select States in Asia and the Pacific. The assessment aims to determine how best to support Member States in their efforts to enhance and strengthen disarmament education as a means to promote peace, security and sustainable development. The assessment was conducted in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, the Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka and Tajikistan. The assessment brought together government representatives, educators, civil society 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 identification of potential partners for relevant future activities. The baseline assessment provides a foundation for future disarmament education activities focused on building safer and more secure environments for future generations in Asia and the Pacific. The project was supported financially by Rissho Kosei-kai of Japan.

17. The baseline assessment provided an in-depth understanding of the gaps in knowledge and programming that exist in the selected countries. It also indicated potential themes and needs at the subregional and regional levels, including mainstreaming disarmament education and awareness-raising campaigns, developing programmes addressing gender aspects and youth empowerment and educating educators. The Regional Centre will use the assessment to develop effective means to

² A/57/124.

³ A/72/185.

bridge gaps in knowledge and understanding on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control in order to better support Member States.

18. The Regional Centre actively worked on engaging young people on issues of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. From 15 to 19 July 2019, it supported the Embassy of the United States of America in Nepal and the Youth Thinkers' Society, a local non-governmental organization, in welcoming 200 young delegates from 20 Asian countries for the Everest International Model United Nations conference held in Kathmandu. On 21 and 22 August 2019, the Regional Centre contributed to the Rotaract and Rotary Global Model United Nations conference organized by Rotary Nepal-Bhutan District in Pokhara, Nepal, which brought together some 100 young people from Bhutan, India, Lebanon, Nepal, Pakistan and Uganda. At both meetings, the Regional Centre provided expert sessions on issues ranging from nuclear non-proliferation to cybersecurity, preventing violent extremism and the women and peace and security agenda.

19. The Regional Centre partnered with and contributed to the 2019 International Youth Media Summit held in July and August 2019 in Pokhara. The Summit brought together young filmmakers and provided media skills-building workshops to enable them to produce thematic films tackling current global issues such as discrimination, the environment, poverty, gender-based violence and youth empowerment. The Regional Centre sponsored the participation of five young people from Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines and Sri Lanka and mentored the violence issue group, helping youth delegates to understand armed violence-related factors and broader concepts for peace and security when looking at conflict prevention through the lens of disarmament and arms control. With the Centre's support, the sponsored youth delegates produced and shared a public service announcement video with four educational institutions in Kathmandu, showcasing the power of media for advocacy and education to combat violence. Over 120 students and their teachers participated in the events, which coincided with the International Youth Day 2019.

20. In order to address potential challenges to peace and security caused by advances in technology, the Regional Centre held a partnership-building meeting with government officials and representatives of universities and cutting-edge private sector companies in Singapore on 19 and 20 August 2019. The aim of the meeting was to launch a project on responsible innovation for a secure environment in Asia and the Pacific, with a view to raising awareness and critical thinking among science, technology, engineering and mathematics students and young researchers of the importance of responsible innovation to ensure the peaceful application of science and technology. The project provides the context and tools necessary to allow the participants to examine the security and human consequences of their future work.

21. As a part of the project, the Regional Centre, in cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Foundation and Systems, Applications and Products in Data Processing, conducted a subregional responsible innovation workshop for young innovators attending the ASEAN Data Science Explorers 2019 event, held on 10 October 2019 in Bangkok. The participants discussed how advances in science and technology contribute to the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the concerns those advances raise about potential risks and challenges to peace and security. In addition, the Regional Centre contributed to an international workshop on artificial intelligence, robotics and the future of defence, held on 11 and 12 November 2019 in Singapore, by delivering a presentation on artificial intelligence, responsible innovation and future governance. The presentation sparked a discussion on how to limit artificial intelligence and related technologies from reducing transparency, confidence and predictability in the Asia-Pacific region, and how meaningful and implementable consensus can be reached on their use for

military applications. That activity was supported financially by Rissho Kosei-kai of Japan.

22. With the aim of advocating women's empowerment and engagement on arms control policies and international agreements, and in the lead-up to the twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) on women and peace and security and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Regional Centre produced video testimonials by the participants of a seminar on gun violence and illicit trafficking of small arms from a gender perspective, held in Kathmandu from 4 to 6 March 2020, which showcased the experiences of women from civil society organizations and members of parliament in promoting disarmament and broader security initiatives. The videos were shared on the websites and social media accounts of the Regional Centre and the Office for Disarmament Affairs. The Regional Centre also continued to produce and disseminate regular newsletters and fact sheets through its website and directly to interested parties.

D. Future activities

23. 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 disarmament and non-proliferation education targeting young people; and contributing to achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda by focusing on reducing illicit arms flows and gun violence and empowering women's participation and leadership in decision-making in the area of arms control and disarmament.

III. Financial situation, staffing and administration

A. Financial situation

24. The Regional Centre was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution [42/39 D](#) on the basis of existing resources and voluntary contributions. In 2019, voluntary contributions to the trust fund for the Regional Centre in the total amount of \$741,639 were received from Member States. Information on the status of the trust fund for 2019 is contained in the annex to the present report. The Secretary-General encourages Member States to consider providing financial and in-kind contributions to the Regional Centre.

25. The Secretary-General expresses his appreciation to the Government of Nepal for the long-standing financial and political support that country has provided in its capacity as host country to the Regional Centre. The Secretary-General expresses his gratitude to the Member States and non-governmental organizations that made financial and in-kind contributions to the Regional Centre: China, Finland, Germany, Kazakhstan, Nepal, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, the United States of America and Rissho Kosei-Kai of Japan.

26. The Secretary-General also expresses his gratitude to the European Union and Japan, as well as 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.

27. 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.

28. 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

29. 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).

30. 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 Government of the Netherlands for providing the Centre with one Junior Professional Officer and the Government of Finland for sponsoring one United Nations Volunteer, and encourages Member States to support the Regional Centre by providing it with gratis staff.

IV. Conclusion

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

32. 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.

33. 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.

34. The Regional Centre paid special attention to cross-cutting issues such as gender equality and empowering women in arms control decision-making processes, assisted Member States in streamlining their efforts to reduce illegal arms flows and gun violence by developing national action plans, and continues to focus on disarmament education activities with a special emphasis on young people.

35. The Secretary-General calls upon Member States and other donors to provide the Regional Centre with the necessary financial and in-kind support to enable it to continue to fulfil its mandate effectively in serving the needs of Asia-Pacific Member States in the fields of peace, security and disarmament, in pursuance of Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 16, which promote gender equality and peaceful, just and inclusive societies, and in compliance with the 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 2019

(United States dollars)

Accumulated surplus, 1 January 2019	923 926
Revenue	
Voluntary contributions ^a	741 639
Investment revenue	27 437
Total revenue	769 076
Less: Expenses and refunds	
Operating expenses	383 998
Refunds ^b	50 409
Total expenses and refunds	434 407
Surplus/deficit for the year 2019	334 669
Accumulated surplus/deficit as at 31 December 2019	1 258 595

^a Consists of voluntary contributions: China, \$100,000; Germany, \$181,790; Kazakhstan, \$82,586; Republic of Korea, \$39,823; Thailand, \$3,000; and United States of America, \$334,440.

^b Consists of refunds to Australia of \$40,119 and to Germany of \$10,290.