



General Assembly

Distr.: General
10 July 2023

Original: English

Seventy-eighth session

Item 102 (b) of the provisional agenda*

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

United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report contains a summary of the mandated activities of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa during the period from July 2022 to June 2023. The Regional Centre continued to provide assistance to African Member States, at their request, and intergovernmental and civil society organizations in Africa to promote peace, security, disarmament, non-proliferation and the control of conventional arms and weapons of mass destruction from a human security perspective. The Centre also developed information and outreach material and proactively reached out to stakeholders to help promote peace and disarmament.

The Regional Centre increased its interaction and cooperation with African regional and subregional organizations in the pursuit of greater coherence, coordination and optimization of its mandated activities in line with its strategic plan for the period 2021–2026 and in support of the Silencing the Guns by 2030 initiative of the African Union.

The Secretary-General expresses sincere gratitude to Member States and partners for their financial and in-kind contributions to the Regional Centre with a view to enabling the Centre to implement its mandated activities and encourages their continuous and increased support commensurate with the growing challenges to arms control and peace and security in Africa and beyond. The Secretary-General is particularly grateful to the Government of Togo for its long-standing support as the host-country for the Centre.

* [A/78/150](#).



I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution [77/83](#), commended the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa for its sustained support to Member States in implementing disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation activities through seminars and conferences, capacity-building and training, policy and technical expertise, and information and advocacy at the regional and national levels, and welcomed the continental dimension of the activities of the Regional Centre in response to the evolving needs of African Member States and the region's new and emerging challenges in the areas of disarmament, peace and security, including maritime security.

2. The Regional Centre works with Member States, United Nations entities and other partners towards the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and the strict control of conventional weapons in Africa, including by promoting norm-setting and compliance with multilateral agreements in the areas of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, by facilitating dialogue among diverse stakeholders, and by advocating for concrete and effective solutions to support sustainable peace and development in Africa, in compliance with its strategic plan for the period 2021–2026 and in line with the vision of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, as contained in its strategic plan for the period 2021–2025, of the realization of human, national and international security through the regulation, control and elimination of arms.

3. The present report is submitted pursuant to resolution [77/83](#), in which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its seventy-eighth session on the activities of the Regional Centre. The report covers the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023. A financial statement on the status of the trust fund for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa for 2022 is provided in the annex to the present report.

II. Functioning and mandate

4. The Regional Centre was established in 1986 in Lomé, pursuant to General Assembly resolution [40/151](#) G. It is mandated to provide, upon request, substantive support for initiatives and other efforts of Member States in Africa towards the realization of measures of peace, arms limitation and disarmament in the region.

5. The Regional Centre focuses its efforts towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 16, as acknowledged by the General Assembly in its resolution [77/83](#), in which it welcomed the work of the Centre in support of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, and target 16.4, which addresses the reduction of illicit arms flows, and noted with appreciation the tangible achievements of the Centre and the impact of the assistance that it provides to African States to control small arms and light weapons through capacity-building for national commissions on small arms and light weapons, defence and security forces, and United Nations peacekeeping mission personnel, as well as the support that the Centre provided to States in preventing the diversion of such weapons, in particular to non-State armed groups and terrorist groups.

III. Main activities

6. Throughout the period under review, the Regional Centre remained committed to assisting African Member States by providing technical assistance through various means, such as capacity-building and training initiatives, practical actions, advocacy

efforts, research endeavours and information exchange, with the aim of advancing disarmament, peace and security. Collaboration with the African Union, multiple regional organizations in Africa, various United Nations entities, intergovernmental organizations, academic and research institutions, as well as civil society organizations, played a crucial role in the execution of the programmes, projects and other undertakings of the Centre.

7. The Regional Centre actively contributed to increasing awareness among Member States and other relevant stakeholders in Africa by providing valuable information, technical guidance and assistance in the implementation of multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation instruments and agreements. These agreements include, but are not limited to, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the Arms Trade Treaty, the Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS) Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Material, the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and All Parts and Components That Can Be Used for Their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly, the Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). Through these efforts, the Regional Centre aimed to enhance the understanding of and promote the effective adherence to those instruments.

8. The Regional Centre utilized social media platforms extensively as information-sharing and peace education tools, as well as to publicize its work and achievements and those of the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

A. Weapons of mass destruction

9. The Regional Centre continued to support African Member States by raising awareness and facilitating dialogue to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including on issues relevant to controlling or banning the production and transfer of materials necessary for the production, transfer or proliferation of chemical, biological or nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

10. In support of the Biological Weapons Convention, the Regional Centre collaborated with the Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit based in Geneva in preparing for, and facilitating participation in, four capacity-building workshops on the implementation of the Convention, including the coordination meeting for the project on supporting universalization and effective implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention in Africa, organized by the Implementation Support Unit on 26 and 27 July 2022.¹

11. The Regional Centre also contributed to regional efforts to increase awareness of multilateral instruments in the area of nuclear security, particularly through engagement in regional activities on the universalization and implementation of the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its 2005 Amendment. The Centre participated in the high-level meeting on facilitating adherence to the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, held

¹ The three regional workshops on universalization and effective implementation of the Biological Weapon Convention in Eastern Africa, Central Africa and Northern Africa, were held on 18 and 19 October 2022 in Mombasa, Kenya; from 24 to 26 May 2023 in Douala, Cameroon; and from 13 to 15 June 2023 in Rabat, respectively.

in Accra on 16 and 17 February 2023, and the third virtual African regional workshop on strengthening nuclear security in Africa: implementing the amended Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material for a safer future, held on 29 and 30 May. Both were organized by the African Center for Science and International Security. At both events, the representative of the Regional Centre provided information on the work of the Centre and the Office for Disarmament Affairs in the areas of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear security.

B. Conventional arms

12. In the framework of the implementation of the European Union-funded global project on gender mainstreaming and small arms control, the Regional Centre organized in-person capacity-building activities targeting national commissions on small arms control. From 11 to 14 July 2022, the Centre conducted a three-day training course on gender mainstreaming and small arms control and a follow-up workshop on gender-responsiveness in national planning on small arms control, in Bujumbura, Burundi. The activities were organized in collaboration with the Burundi National Commission on Small Arms Control and in partnership with the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States as its in-country implementing partner. Participants included 20 speakers (9 women) and approximately 45 government representatives and various national and international stakeholders, such as the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region.

13. The Regional Centre also engaged in activities to encourage regional efforts to promote disarmament and arms regulation in the field of conventional weapons by participating in the first informal dialogue on international cooperation and assistance for ammunition management, held online by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), and the virtual meeting of African States on 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, both of which were held on 7 July 2022.

14. On 18 August 2022 in Yaoundé, the Regional Centre took part in the formal launch of a Saving Lives Entity project in Cameroon, which consists of awareness-raising and capacity-building, not only to prevent the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons, but also to address its consequences in terms of early recovery in areas affected by armed violence in Cameroon.

15. The Regional Centre extended its ongoing support to the African Union flagship initiative, Silencing the Guns by 2030, as well as its Master Road Map of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by 2020 (Lusaka Master Road Map). In collaboration with the African Union Commission and the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States, and with the support of the Conventional Arms Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Centre provided practical assistance in the implementation of Africa Amnesty Month in Liberia, Togo and the United Republic of Tanzania in September 2022, during which those countries conducted comprehensive awareness campaigns to educate the public about the dangers of illegal gun ownership and the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons. In addition, improvements were made in managing weapons stockpiles, and voluntarily surrendered weapons were successfully collected and destroyed in those countries. While the core activities of Africa Amnesty Month were consistent across all countries, each State tailored its message and activities to take into account the specific national and regional circumstances surrounding illegal gun ownership and the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons. A total of 12,335 small arms were securely collected, stored and destroyed during 2022.

16. On 16 August 2022, the Regional Centre, in collaboration with the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States and the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms, launched the 2022 Africa Amnesty Month project in Liberia. The event attracted many participants, including delegates from the diplomatic community in Monrovia. The Commission highlighted its appreciation for the Centre's support, including in the follow-up to the Commission's five-year strategic plan.

17. In Togo, as part of the Africa Amnesty Month commemoration, members of the African Union Peace and Security Council visited the Regional Centre, where they received a briefing on the Centre's mandate and work. The two-day commemorative event was held on 5 and 6 September 2022, with the participation of Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security of the African Union; Robert Dussey, Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and Togolese Abroad; and Amma A. Twum-Amoah, Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union for the month of September 2022, and included a symbolic destruction of approximately 2,000 weapons.² On 5 September, the Director and Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs also attended the event to represent the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

18. On 22 September 2022 in Addis Ababa, the Regional Centre participated in the Africa Amnesty Month high-level dialogue on the continent-wide campaign on achieving the goal of silencing the guns in Africa by 2030. Hosted by the African Union at its headquarters, the event gathered high-level officials from the African Union Commission and representatives from African Member States, the United Nations, the diplomatic community associated with the African Union and civil society organizations, who discussed current trends and future perspectives on the African Union initiative.

19. The Regional Centre also participated in coordination activities with the Mine Action Service in the field of conventional weapons, including a meeting on 2 November 2022 to discuss international assistance to the National Commission on Small Arms Control of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and an online meeting on 9 November 2022 to follow up on the implementation of the three-year project on gender mainstreaming and small arms funded by the European Union and to discuss the implementation of its second project cycle during the period 2023–2025, which also involved the United Nations Development Programme.

20. On 23 November 2022, delegates from the 15 national commissions on small arms and light weapons of ECOWAS member States visited the Regional Centre at the initiative of the ECOWAS Commission. During the visit, delegates discussed strategies to enhance efforts to counter the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons in West Africa, received briefings on the Centre's mandate, strategic plan and work aligned with the strategic plan of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, and engaged in a round-table discussion on challenges and priorities related to promoting peace and disarmament in the region. In particular, they called for support to improve cross-border security and management to prevent the illicit proliferation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons, especially in the Lake Chad basin and the Liptako-Gourma and neighbouring regions; emphasized the importance of involving women and young people in peace and disarmament efforts, including

² African Union "AUPSC commemorates the 2022 Africa Amnesty Month in Lomé, Togo", press release, 1 September 2022. Available at <https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/eng-press-release-aupsc-dedicates-its-open-session-to-commemorate-the-2022-africa-amnesty-month.pdf>.

through the arts and sports;³ and suggested that the United Nations system and ECOWAS explore further inter-agency cooperation.

21. From 31 January to 2 February 2023, in Lomé, the Regional Centre and the ECOWAS Small Arms Division co-organized a regional workshop focused on establishing a national control list by ECOWAS member States and promoting the universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty in West Africa. The Centre participated in preparatory work, delivered an opening statement to showcase its work in the region and moderated sessions on universalization of the Treaty, its sponsorship programme and its voluntary trust fund.

22. From 20 to 24 March 2023, the Regional Centre and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) co-organized a three-day training workshop for the national commissions on small arms and light weapons of the eight member States of WAEMU, which use a common currency. The aim of the workshop, which was held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, was to enhance the capacity and knowledge of the participants in effectively addressing the challenges associated with the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which are increasingly trafficked by violent extremist and transnational criminal groups. At the workshop, the participants developed a comprehensive plan of action, tailored to the specific needs and priorities of each member State, which is expected to serve as a road map for the implementation of effective strategies and measures to tackle the issues related to small arms and light weapons in the region.

23. From 4 to 6 April 2023, the Regional Centre supported the ECOWAS Commission through its participation in the Experts Validation Meeting of the Study and Guide on Civilian Possession of Arms, held in Abuja. The Centre demonstrated its commitment to supporting regional efforts to promote responsible civilian possession of arms and contributed to ensuring the accuracy and effectiveness of the study and guide.

C. Science and technology

24. On 8 and 9 November 2022, in Abuja, the Regional Centre participated in the ECOWAS-UNIDIR Regional Seminar on Disarmament and Arms Control. The Seminar produced a series of recommendations to strengthen disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control regimes at the national and regional levels, covering various areas, including emerging topics, such as cybersecurity, biosafety and security, and space security.

D. Strengthening partnerships for disarmament

25. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre continued to support not only African Member States, but also African regional and subregional organizations in promoting disarmament and arms control, including the African Union, ECOWAS, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Lake Chad Basin Commission, WAEMU, and the Regional Centre for Arms Control in the Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes Region and Bordering States, as well as United Nations entities, based on respective comparative advantages, including the United Nations Office to the African Union, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel and UNIDIR.

³ ECOWAS delegates encouraged the Regional Centre to organize activities related to arts and sports for peace and disarmament throughout West Africa to promote disarmament education among youth through paintings and sport events.

26. From 12 to 17 January and from 15 to 19 May 2023, the Regional Centre participated in the 54th and 55th meetings of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, held in Brazzaville and São Tomé, respectively, and presented details on its activities during the relevant reporting periods. Extensive consultations were held with Member States, UNOCA and the ECCAS Commission to explore opportunities for collaboration in support of the African Union Silencing the Guns by 2030 initiative.

27. On 16 and 17 May 2023, in Addis Ababa, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, accompanied by the Director of the Regional Centre, paid a working visit to the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security to review and assess their cooperation in advancing arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament on the African continent and to explore ways and means to make further progress in support of the African Union Silencing the Guns by 2030 initiative in accordance with the Lusaka Master Road Map. They agreed to develop and implement a joint action plan to advance the initiative at policy and programmatic levels. In addition, the two parties agreed to further consultations in the context of the development of the New Agenda for Peace proposed by the Secretary-General in his report entitled “Our Common Agenda” (A/75/982), taking into account the particular context and needs of African Member States. The leadership of the African Union called for a renewed partnership with the United Nations to better assess and address the growing role of other types of conventional and non-conventional weapons, including emerging technologies, in conflicts in Africa, particularly the increasing use of drones and cyberattacks.

28. On 4 April 2023, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, the new African Union High Representative for the Silencing the Guns by 2030 initiative, visited the Regional Centre to discuss and explore avenues for reviewing and strengthening collaboration in advancing the implementation of the Lusaka Master Road Map to achieve the objective of silencing the guns in Africa. The Director of the Centre provided a briefing to representatives from the permanent missions of African Member States to the United Nations in New York on 27 October 2022 during the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly. The briefing focused on the activities of the Centre in Africa, in particular its support to the African Union Silencing the Guns by 2030 initiative.

29. At the request of the World Customs Organization, the Regional Centre engaged in discussions regarding potential areas for further cooperation, particularly in the realm of border control, including arms control and human-centred security. The Centre also participated in the inaugural high-level panel and subsequent proceedings of the Global Conference on Enabling Customs in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations, held in Abuja from 31 January to 2 February 2023. It made a presentation on challenges to customs authorities at border points, in particular the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, against the backdrop of growing involvement of violent extremist groups and transnational criminal networks.

30. On 26 October 2022, during Disarmament Week, the Regional Centre hosted a workshop for parliamentarians from French-speaking African nations which aimed to explore their role in establishing effective defence and security policies in Africa. Co-funded by the Open Society Initiative for West Africa, the event brought together parliamentarians and experts from the Institute for Security Studies and the Parliamentarian Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons to promote discussions on inclusive and participatory civil-military relations. In a hybrid setting, parliamentarians from Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Niger and Togo and experts engaged in deliberations on regional security challenges and mechanisms for civilian-military cooperation and identified the requirements and opportunities for increased

involvement of parliamentarians in the formulation and implementation of defence and security policies.

E. Information and outreach

31. The Regional Centre continued to make use of social media platforms to disseminate information and news items and to keep users updated on regional disarmament and non-proliferation issues. Furthermore, its website, available in both English and French, continued to be updated after a major overhaul of both its design and content during the reporting period to make it more user-friendly for institutional and individual visitors.

32. The Regional Centre ensured the coverage of its hybrid, in-person and virtual workshops by local and international public and private print press sources and television and radio networks as a means of publicizing its activities and promoting peace and disarmament education. The Centre also endeavoured to broaden its outreach to various partners, including civil society organizations.

33. From 27 to 29 October 2022, the Regional Centre actively participated in and made valuable contributions to the third ECOWAS Forum on Education for the Culture of Peace through Intra- and Inter-Religious Dialogue, held in Lomé.

34. On 21 September 2022, the International Day of Peace, the Regional Centre participated in a high-level panel on the theme, “Strengthening social cohesion to build peace”, organized by the Ministry of Grassroots Development, Youth and Youth Employment of Togo.

35. On 28 October 2022, the Regional Centre played an active role in celebrating United Nations Day in collaboration with the country team in the host country. As part of the celebration, the Centre engaged extensively with youth at the campus of the University of Lomé, fostering meaningful interactions and discussions on peace, disarmament and collective security in the context of a growing trend of violent extremism and armed violence in various hotspots in Africa.

IV. Finances, staffing and administration

A. Finances

36. In 2022, the total amount of voluntary contributions to the trust fund for the Regional Centre was \$61,200. Additional information on the status of the trust fund for 2022 is provided in the annex to the present report.

37. The Secretary-General expresses his gratitude to the Member States and donors who have provided financial and in-kind contributions to the Regional Centre during the reporting period, thus empowering it to deliver its mandated technical and capacity-building assistance to Member States in the African region. The Secretary-General is particularly grateful to the Government of Togo for its long-standing support and financial contribution to the Centre.

38. The Secretary-General continues to encourage all Member States, including those in the African region, to provide financial and in-kind contributions to the Regional Centre to further advance arms control, disarmament, peace, security and stability in Africa.

B. Staffing and administration

39. The regular budget of the United Nations funds the posts of one Senior Political Affairs Officer/Director of the Centre (P-5), one Political Affairs Officer (P-3) and two General Service staff (G-7 and G-6, Local level). In addition, extrabudgetary contributions supported the post of one Political Affairs Officer (P-3), five General Service staff, one United Nations Volunteer and one consultant.

V. Conclusion

40. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre discharged its mandate by providing assistance to Member States and regional organizations in Africa, at their request, in the areas of arms control, disarmament and, more generally, to promote peace, security and stability.

41. The Regional Centre strengthened synergy and cooperation with the African Union, several African regional organizations and United Nations entities to advance arms control, disarmament, and peace and security with a human-centred approach, as mandated by the General Assembly and the Security Council, including in the context of promoting the implementation of Assembly resolution 76/45, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to seek specific measures to promote the meaningful and inclusive participation and empowerment of youth on disarmament and non-proliferation issues, as well as Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security.

42. The Regional Centre will continue to support Member States in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control by providing policy, technical and legal capacity-building assistance, as well as programmatic assistance, facilitating regional and national dialogue and consultations, supporting the drafting of national action plans and raising awareness of international instruments and cross-cutting issues, including gender mainstreaming and the nexus between disarmament and development.

43. The Secretary-General calls upon all Member States and other donors to provide the Regional Centre with the financial and in-kind support required to enable it to improve the discharge of its mandate in support of African Member States in the areas of arms control, non-proliferation, disarmament, peace, security and stability, in the pursuit of Sustainable Development Goal 16 towards peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

Annex

Status of the trust fund for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa for 2022

(United States dollars)

Accumulated surplus, 1 January 2022	438 192
Revenue	
Voluntary contributions ^a	61 200
Other revenue	6 091
Investment revenue	–
Total revenue	67 291
Less: Expenses and refunds	
Operating expenses	103 067
Refunds	–
Total expenses and refunds	103 067
Surplus/deficit for the year 2022	(35 776)
Accumulated surplus/deficit as at 31 December 2022	402 416

^a Consists of voluntary contributions as follows: \$31,937 from the Government of Togo; \$24,670 transfer from the trust fund for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America to the trust fund for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa; and \$4,593 from public donations.