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United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides an account of the activities of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa from July 2019 to June 2020.

During the reporting period, the Regional Centre continued to provide assistance, at their request, to Member States and regional and subregional intergovernmental and civil society organizations in Africa to foster peace, security, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control of weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons, including the prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors. The Regional Centre also promoted peace education and publicized the United Nations and Member States disarmament work in Africa through its information, communication and outreach resources.

More than 500 people from 35 Member States in the African region, including government officials, members of parliament, defence and security officers, youth, women and civil society leaders, as well as media personnel, participated in the capacity-building activities organized by the Regional Centre. Additional stakeholders from across Africa benefitted indirectly from the Centre's activities. Furthermore, approximately 40 staff and personnel from United Nations offices and peacekeeping missions also took part in the Centre's capacity-building activities on arms control, disarmament, human security, prevention of violent extremism and community violence reduction.

Moreover, the Regional Centre continued to provide substantive support on disarmament issues to the African Union, in particular through its "Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020" initiative, and to the 11 Member States participating in the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. The Centre provided support to the Committee's ministerial and governmental expert meetings held in Luanda in November 2019, organized by the United Nations Regional

* A/75/50.



Office for Central Africa. The Centre also cooperated with more than 10 African regional organizations.

The Secretary-General expresses his sincere thanks to Member States and other institutions that made financial and in-kind contributions to the Regional Centre, enabling it to fulfil its mandate. The Secretary-General calls upon all Member States and other stakeholders to continue to make contributions to enhance the Centre's activities. The Secretary-General is particularly grateful to the Government of Togo for its long-standing support, as host country, to the Centre.

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 74/71, the General Assembly commended the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa for its sustained support for 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.

2. In the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the resolution at its seventy-fifth session. The present report, submitted pursuant to that request, highlights the main activities carried out by the Centre from July 2019 to June 2020 and contains a financial statement on the status of the trust fund for the Centre in 2019.

II. Function and mandate

3. The 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 African Member States towards the realization of measures of peace, arms limitation and disarmament in the region.

4. The Centre focuses its efforts towards Sustainable Development Goal 16, as acknowledged by the General Assembly in its resolution 74/71, in which it welcomed “the work of the Regional 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”.

III. Main areas of activity

5. During the reporting period, the Centre cooperated with and provided assistance to Member States at their request, as well as to African regional organizations, intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations in the field of peace and disarmament, with a particular emphasis on the prevention and fight against the proliferation and illicit flow of small arms and light weapons.

6. To this end, the Centre continued its engagement with regional and subregional organizations on the continent and endeavoured to work with United Nations offices to deliver as one. Furthermore, on a number of occasions, event organizers¹ requested support from the Centre on developing agendas, identifying participants and recommending experts from the Centre’s database for their events.

7. Due to the restrictions caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), the Centre quickly scaled up its virtual meetings to maintain essential interactions and consultations with Member States, sister United Nations entities and other stakeholders.

A. Peace and security

8. In July, the Centre held several consultations with Member States following the high-level regional methodological workshop on electoral security in Africa, which

¹ Organizers included Control Arms, the Foundation for Strategic Research, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the Government of Namibia and the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

was held on 24 and 25 June at its premises and organized jointly with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). The workshop brought together heads of police and gendarmerie components as well as other government officials from the security and defence sector of 12 African francophone and lusophone countries and the relevant heads of departments of the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States. The participants shared views and experiences on the challenges of crowd control, public order and security during election time. Following this workshop, the Centre consulted the participants on issues to be considered for a possible capacity-building programme on election security in their countries, taking into account both national and international legal frameworks, with a particular emphasis on human rights.

9. From 7 to 12 July, the Centre participated in two inter-agency field missions in the border areas of Benin, Burkina Faso and Togo to assess the impact of violent extremism and identify possible priority actions to assist the three Governments and affected local communities in the prevention of violent extremism and the promotion of social cohesion.

10. On 17 July, the Centre conducted a one-day awareness seminar for 30 members of the YMCA-Togo on Security Council resolution 2250 (2015), the “Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020” initiative and the Agenda 2063 of the African Union, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament and the prevention of violent extremism in Africa. In the same vein, on 29 July, the Centre hosted a workshop sponsored by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to strengthen the capacity of 30 female participants from women’s organizations on the radicalization of women and girls in contemporary societies.

11. Responding to a request from the University of Lomé to help set up professional masters programmes in conflict, peace and security, and post-conflict physical and psychological trauma management, the Centre and UNITAR held several consultative meetings with the president of the University and his cabinet, at the technical level. The University aims to create a centre of excellence for the West African region to bring high quality, practical, conflict-related masters programmes to African students and professionals with assistance from the Centre and UNITAR, a project which could be replicated in other African regions if successful.

12. On 1 October, the Centre held a discussion with the head of the Arms Trade Treaty secretariat on the current and possible future cooperation among the two entities in support of African Member States in ratifying the Treaty and ensuring that national laws are compliant with its provisions. On 3 October, a separate consultative meeting was held with a representative of the Ministry of Defence of Madagascar to take stock of progress towards the conclusion of a joint project on the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty in Madagascar.

13. From 1 to 3 October, the Centre participated in a regional workshop on the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty in State Parties in francophone Africa, organized by the Government of Togo, with funding from the Treaty’s voluntary trust fund.

14. On 4 and 5 November in Libreville the Centre participated in the second focal points meeting for Peace and Development Advisers and other United Nations staff members in charge of peace and security issues in Central Africa. The meeting reviewed the effectiveness of the United Nations presence and coordination in Central Africa, discussed the Secretary-General’s call for building partnerships and provided input to the upcoming meeting on the United Nations presence in Central Africa at the principal level, planned for 2020. The next day, 6 November, in Libreville, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the Regional Centre and the United Nations Regional Office for

Central Africa held a consultative meeting on synergy of actions among the three United Nations entities on topics pertaining to gender, peace and security and the prevention of violent extremism across Central and Western Africa, the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin regions.

15. From 25 to 29 November in Luanda, the Centre participated in the 49th meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. The Centre and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) made a presentation on the state of non-proliferation activities in the subregion, the outcome of a project funded by the United Nations peace and development trust fund to advance the Kinshasa Convention in the framework of the African Union's "Silencing the guns in Africa by 2020" initiative. The Standing Advisory Committee strongly recommended that the United Nations Secretariat support a successor project to consolidate progress gained in the ratification and effective operationalization of the Kinshasa Convention, with particular stress on institutional support to national institutions fighting the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, the promotion of women's engagement in disarmament activities, capacity-building for the development of academic and training centres in Central Africa specializing in peace, security, arms control and disarmament, and the fight against the expansion of maritime insecurity, mercenaries, transnational criminal networks, armed militia and terrorist groups.

B. Small arms and light weapons

16. Combatting the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons is a major focus for the Centre, given the magnitude of the harm caused to civilians, social cohesion and peace and stability by armed violence in Africa as a result of the misuse of small arms and light weapons.

17. From 8 to 12 July in Lomé, the Centre organized a training of trainers' workshop on physical security and stockpile management, marking and data registration for 35 trainers from various branches of the Togolese defence and security forces in the framework of a project for the marking, tracing and secure management of weapons and ammunition in Togo and Madagascar, funded by Japan. On 7 August in Atakpamé, Togo, a sensitization campaign was launched by the National Commission to Combat the Proliferation, Illicit Circulation of and Traffic in Small Arms and Light Weapons for political, administrative and security officials as well as the customary chiefs, civil society organizations, opinion leaders and the public at large to inform them about the upcoming arms marking operations.

18. Later, on 22 August, the nation-wide exercise to mark weapons owned by the police, gendarmerie, park rangers, penitentiary guards and the customs force was formally launched at the police headquarters in Lomé. At the end of the first phase of the arms marking exercise, on 13 September, 98 per cent of the weapons owned by those five components of the Togolese defence and security forces had been marked.

19. From 12 to 16 August, a one-week training programme on the theme "Weapons and ammunition management in a changing disarmament demobilization and reintegration context" was held in the framework of a joint project by the Department of Peace Operations and the Office for Disarmament Affairs. The sessions on theory were held at the Centre's premises in Lomé, while the practical sessions were organized in Accra, at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre. The training brought together United Nations disarmament, demobilization and reintegration practitioners from six United Nations missions as well as staff of the Mine Action Service, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre and the African Union. The

training was organized and facilitated by the Department of Peace Operations, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and UNITAR, with technical support provided by the Small Arms Survey and the Ammunition Management Advisory Team of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining. Observers from the Centre de perfectionnement aux actions post-confliktuelles de déminage et de dépollution de Ouidah in Benin, the Ecole de maintien de la paix Alioune Blondin Beye in Mali, and the Centre d'entraînement aux opérations de maintien de la paix in Togo also attended.

20. On September 21, on the occasion of the International Day of Peace, the Centre helped the Government of Togo, through its National Commission to Combat the Proliferation, Illicit Circulation of and Traffic in Small Arms and Light Weapons to carry out a weapons and ammunitions destruction activity in the framework of the arms marking project.

21. From 25 to 27 September, the Centre organized a subregional legal assistance workshop for States Parties to the Kinshasa Convention in Malabo. Funded by the United Nations peace and development trust fund, the workshop brought together 40 participants from the States members of ECCAS (Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda and Sao Tome and Principe), international experts on small arms and light weapons and representatives from the United Nations and subregional organizations. Following presentations by experts, the participants reviewed the legal and regulatory framework in ECCAS member States and adopted a statement of conclusion with relevant recommendations for States parties to the Convention.

22. In the framework of the same project, the Centre conducted validation workshops on the outcome of surveys on the state of implementation of the Kinshasa Convention in 10 out of 11 ECCAS member States. Each national workshop gathered 30 to 40 small arms and light weapons experts and stakeholders to review data and best practices consolidated in a draft implementation guide.

23. On 6 November, a coordination meeting was held in Libreville, at the ECCAS headquarters, with ECCAS and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa to review the interim narrative and financial reports of the project. A successor project was drafted and presented at the meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee from 25 to 29 November 2019 in Luanda.

24. On 5 November, the Centre participated in a national workshop on the implementation of the Kinshasa Convention, organized by the Cameroon Youths and Students Forum for Peace in Brazzaville and funded by the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation. The workshop was held in the framework of national capacity-building, as the Congolese Government expressed the wish to formally set up a national commission to combat the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons, including to help address the illicit proliferation of such weapons in the Pool region.

25. On 20 and 21 November in Kinshasa, the Centre participated in a regional conference on the harmonization of national legislation of Central African States with the Kinshasa Convention and 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 (Firearms Protocol). Organized by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in collaboration ECCAS, the conference allowed experts and national representatives to promote a better understanding of the synergies and complementarities between the Firearms Protocol, the Kinshasa Convention and other relevant arms control instruments.

26. On 5 and 6 December in Addis Ababa, the Centre participated in the 11th meeting of the African Union-Regions Steering Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, in which member and observer entities reported on their respective activities in Africa, discussed the state of play and related challenges on small arms and light weapons and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration on the continent and reviewed the rules of procedure for the Steering Committee.

C. Weapons of mass destruction

27. The Regional Centre continued awareness-raising activities for African Member States and relevant stakeholders, including civil society and the media, on weapons of mass destruction, in particular by providing information, technical advice and assistance in implementing international disarmament and non-proliferation instruments, such as 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) on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery to non-State actors; the negotiation process for a possible fissile material cut-off treaty and the 2002 International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, known as The Hague Code of Conduct, established as a mechanism to avert the proliferation of ballistic missiles.

28. The Regional Centre assisted the Weapons of Mass Destruction Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the African Union Commission with organizing a regional meeting for African States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which was held on 29 and 30 August in Addis Ababa for 38 States.

29. The Centre collaborated with the Foundation for Strategic Research for the preparation and practical organization of seminars and experts missions on The Hague Code of Conduct, with financial support from the European Union, including a subregional seminar held in Djibouti on 26 September for the member States of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and a national expert mission on 12 December to Abidjan.

30. The Centre provided expert support to a regional workshop held on 4 and 5 March in Accra on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; an event jointly organized by the Nuclear Threat Initiative and the African Centre for Science and International Security. In a related development, the Centre continued consultation with the African Commission on Nuclear Energy.

D. Information and outreach

31. On 21 September, the International Day of Peace, the Centre participated in a UNDP-led youth outreach event on the year's theme linking peace, disarmament and environmental protection.

32. The Centre continued its outreach efforts through its website and social media accounts, including Twitter, Facebook and Flickr.

IV. Financial situation, staffing and administration

A. Financial situation

33. In 2019, voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund for the Centre were received in the amount of \$669,930. Detailed information on the status of the trust fund for 2019 is provided in the annex to the present report.

34. The Secretary-General expresses his particular recognition to the Government of Togo for its long-standing support and financial contributions to the Centre. The Secretary-General also expresses his gratitude to the Government of Japan and UNITAR for their financial contributions.

35. The Secretary-General continues to encourage financial and in-kind contributions from African States to the Regional Centre, which clearly indicate the value that Member States place on the expertise and technical assistance of the Centre.

36. The Secretary-General is grateful to all Member States and relevant partners for their contributions to and support for the Regional Centre to enable the Centre to provide enhanced technical and capacity-building assistance to Member States in the region, in fulfilment of its mandate.

B. Staffing

37. 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). Project personnel are funded through voluntary contributions

V. Conclusion

38. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre continued to implement its mandate in support to Member States and other relevant stakeholders. In so doing, the Centre has developed and strengthened its partnership with the African Union and several other African regional organizations to harness the added value of their respective mandates and knowledge of their respective geographical areas of responsibility. Although the main focus of the Centre remained on combatting the illicit proliferation and flow of small arms and light weapons, the Centre provided assistance on the whole spectrum of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control issues.

39. The Secretary-General reiterates his call upon those Member States and other partners in a position to do so to provide the Regional Centre with financial and in-kind support, including direct financial contributions from African States, which are necessary for it to continue to carry out its mandate effectively and serve the needs of Member States in the region. The Secretary-General also encourages States to continue to fully utilize the Centre's expertise and experience in their joint efforts to promote peace, security and disarmament in the region.

Annex

Status of the trust fund for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa for 2019

(United States dollars)

Accumulated surplus, 1 January 2019	2 088 334
Revenue	
Voluntary contributions ^a	618 123
Other transfers and allocations	51 807
Investment revenue	30 860
Other revenue	486
Total revenue	701 276
Less: Expenses and refunds	
Operating expenses	1 732 836
Refunds ^b	382 910
Total expenses and refunds	2 115 746
Surplus/deficit for the year 2019	(1 414 470)
Accumulated surplus/deficit as at 31 December 2019	673 864

^a Consists of voluntary contributions in 2019, as follows: \$522,339 (Japan); \$95,784 (Togo); and \$51,807 (UNITAR).

^b Consists of refunds as follows: \$23,597 (to Switzerland) \$334,605 (to the European Union); \$22,281 (to the Arms Trade Treaty secretariat); and \$2,427 (to Action for Social and Economic Progress).