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### **Review and implementation of the Concluding Document of the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly: United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean**

## **United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean**

### **Report of the Secretary-General**

#### *Summary*

The present report provides an overview of the activities of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean from July 2021 to June 2022, in line with General Assembly resolution [76/58](#).

During the reporting period, the Centre carried out 88 technical, legal and policy-related activities to support Member States, at their request, in the implementation of international instruments relating to conventional arms and weapons of mass destruction. As part of those efforts, the Centre provided technical training and assistance to some 3,900 national officials (over 1,700 of whom were women). The Centre continued to strengthen its partnerships for disarmament, with a focus on youth engagement, the empowerment of women and close collaboration with regional, subregional and international partners.

The Secretary-General expresses his gratitude to the Member States, in particular the host country, Peru, and other partners that supported the Centre's operation and programmes with financial and in-kind contributions and calls upon those in a position to do so to make voluntary contributions to the Centre in order to sustain and further develop its activities in response to the continuing requests for assistance and cooperation by Member States in the region.

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



## I. Introduction

1. In its resolution [76/58](#), the General Assembly reiterated its strong support for the role of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean in the promotion of peace, disarmament and development among its Member States, recognized that the Centre had an important role in the promotion and development of regional and subregional initiatives and encouraged the Centre to further develop activities in all countries of the region in support of peace, disarmament and development, and to provide, upon request and in accordance with its mandate, support to Member States.

2. The General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of the resolution at its seventy-seventh session. In the present report, submitted pursuant to that request, the main activities carried out by the Centre from July 2021 to June 2022 are highlighted. A financial statement on the status of the trust fund for the Centre in 2021 is contained in the annex to the present report.

## II. Function and mandate

3. The Centre, located in Lima, Peru, was established in 1987, pursuant to General Assembly resolution [41/60 J](#). It is mandated to provide, upon request, substantive support for the initiatives and other activities of the Member States in the region for the implementation of measures for peace and disarmament and for the promotion of economic and social development.

## III. Main areas of activity

4. During the reporting period, the Centre carried out 88 technical, legal and policy assistance and capacity-building activities, supporting some 3,900 officials and partners in the region (over 1,700 of whom were women) in their efforts to implement disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation instruments. The following paragraphs provide an overview of the Centre's main areas of activity. Further details are provided in subsequent sections.

5. As in past reporting periods and in keeping with requests for assistance from States, the majority of the Centre's support was focused on bolstering State implementation of international conventional arms instruments, such as the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (International Tracing Instrument) and the Arms Trade Treaty.

6. Following the adoption, in 2020, of the Roadmap for Implementing the Caribbean Priority Actions on the Illicit Proliferation of Firearms and Ammunition across the Caribbean in a Sustainable Manner by 2030 (Caribbean Firearms Roadmap), the Centre promoted the development and adoption of national action plans, which will serve as vehicles for implementation, as well as a monitoring and evaluation framework, which will make it possible to track progress. The Roadmap and all initiatives carried out thereunder build on regional aspirations related to combating illicit trafficking in firearms and are fully aligned with the obligations set out in international instruments.

7. The Centre continued to work with national stakeholders throughout the region to combat illicit firearms trafficking and strengthen interdiction capacity through the delivery of specialized courses and the establishment of investigative firearms units

responsible for tracing and managing evidence related to weapons used in criminal activities. Moreover, the Centre built the capacity of forensic scientists, scientific officers, firearm examiners, police officers and armourers to recover serial numbers on illicit firearms, which is a prerequisite for tracing and conducting successful criminal investigations.

8. The Centre also engaged with national authorities responsible for the development of new laws and policies on small arms and light weapons to ensure that national legal frameworks were aligned with international obligations. Similarly, the Centre continued to work with States to incorporate arms control measures into public policies and practices in order to reduce the risk of armed violence against women and to keep weapons out of schools. In addition, specialized courses on the integration of gender perspectives into firearms investigations were conducted in several States, with new courses for judges and prosecutors launched during the reporting period.

9. To reduce the risk of small arms and ammunition being diverted into illicit markets, the Centre also worked to enhance the regulation and control of arms and ammunition stockpiles, including the safe and proper management of firearms evidence held in judicial facilities.

10. In all aspects of its work, and also through dedicated initiatives, the Centre continued to advocate the participation of women and youth in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, in line with General Assembly resolution [65/69](#) on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control and General Assembly resolution [74/64](#) on youth, disarmament and non-proliferation. The empowerment of women and youth is key to bolstering effective responses in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

11. Lastly, the Centre assisted States with the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (Biological Weapons Convention), including by providing legal assistance to national authorities.

## **A. Disarmament that saves lives: supporting the implementation of firearms-related instruments**

### **1. Bolstering the implementation of the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap**

12. The Centre continued to support the efforts of States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and the Dominican Republic, to prevent and combat the illicit proliferation of firearms and ammunition in the region through the implementation of the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap. The Roadmap provides practical guidance to the 16 participating Caribbean States on implementing the main provisions of relevant regional and international instruments for a safer Caribbean. The Centre and the Implementation Agency for Crime and Security of the Caribbean Community are the co-custodians and main implementers of the Roadmap.

13. During the reporting period, the Centre conducted 54 activities in the region to contribute to the implementation of the Roadmap. Some 600 officials (of whom 220 were women) participated in and benefited from those activities, which included the development of national action plans and monitoring and evaluation initiatives, and received direct assistance to support the achievement of the four goals set out in the Roadmap. The activities also supported progress in realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular target 16.4, which is aimed at significantly reducing illicit arms flows by 2030.

*National action plans*

14. The Centre carried out 18 activities to assist with the drafting of national action plans under the Roadmap. It hosted the second and third regional thematic inter-institutional round tables in July 2021, which brought together all the States of the region to discuss goals 2, 3 and 4 of the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap. At the meetings, participants emphasized the importance of capacity-building for law enforcement and customs officials responsible for border and port control; the need to enhance information-sharing and collaboration at all levels and between all stakeholders and authorities; the need to make resources for firearms tracing available; and the importance of aligning practices with international standards.

15. The regional round tables were complemented by national seminars and workshops in Belize, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Suriname, which were focused on the selection of national priorities within the Roadmap framework. As at June 2022, 10 States have drafted their national action plans,<sup>1</sup> 6 have approved their plans<sup>2</sup> and 3 have begun the drafting process.<sup>3</sup>

16. The Centre's support to Haiti has been folded into the Roadmap process following Haiti's formal adoption of the Roadmap in February 2022. The Centre has built on the extensive legal assistance it had provided to Haiti in previous years, and its support culminated in the completion of a draft decree and the launch of a multisectoral legal task force, both in January 2022. The Centre has continued to provide legal assistance to Haiti, and has broadened its assistance to include a national webinar on the prevention of armed violence against women (December 2021) and a series of events in preparation for the drafting of a national action plan (February–July 2022). The Centre will continue to provide assistance to Haiti in close collaboration with the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) and other Roadmap partners. In June 2022 in New York, representatives of the Centre made a presentation on the Centre's assistance to Haiti at the symposium on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. The annual meeting, organized by the Department of Peace Operations, brings together practitioners in the field of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. The management of weapons and ammunition is an integral part of the mandate of BINUH, and the Centre's assistance to Haiti contributes to the achievement of that mandate, with a view to reducing community violence.

*Monitoring and evaluation framework*

17. The Centre developed a monitoring and evaluation framework for the Roadmap. The framework includes macro and subkey performance indicators, which will enable all stakeholders to measure and evaluate the progress made in implementing the Roadmap.

18. Based on the framework, the Centre has started to collect regional baseline data, a project that will continue throughout 2022. This work is being done in close cooperation with international partners, which enables the Centre to tap into existing mechanisms for collecting data related to small arms and light weapons.

19. In addition, the Centre initiated the development of an online monitoring and evaluation platform that will enable States to submit data and information related to the macro and subkey performance indicators on an annual basis, thus facilitating the

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<sup>1</sup> Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

<sup>2</sup> Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica and Saint Lucia.

<sup>3</sup> Dominica, Haiti, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

tracking of both national and regional progress. The platform will also be a repository for extensive baseline data from States, so that ultimately it will be possible to use it to generate comparative reports.

#### *Process and partnerships*

20. The Centre supported the political process envisaged in the Roadmap. In November 2021, the Centre and the Implementation Agency for Crime and Security of CARICOM organized the first annual regional meeting of States to discuss progress made in implementing the Roadmap. Over 70 representatives (including 37 women) of Caribbean States, partners and the donor community participated in the virtual event.

21. Throughout the year, the Centre and the Implementation Agency hosted several donor and partner coordination meetings to ensure that assistance provided under the Roadmap was coordinated and effectively aligned with the priorities identified by States in their national action plans. Implementing partners for the Roadmap include the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the World Customs Organization (WCO), the Organization of American States (OAS), the International Criminal Police Organization and the Small Arms Survey. The donor community, which has provided essential financial support, includes Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. The Centre also carried out gender-related activities to contribute to the implementation of the Roadmap, with funding from the European Union.

22. In June 2022, the Centre and the Implementation Agency hosted a partner coordination meeting, at which participants discussed the three core tools that will form the partner coordination mechanism, established with a view to achieving effective coordination: (a) regular meetings of partners, (b) the partner platform, which includes a joint calendar of activities and (c) the compilation of an overview of the kinds of assistance that partners can provide to States under the terms of the Roadmap.

23. The Caribbean Firearms Roadmap has inspired Member States in Central America to consider a similar subregional initiative.

## **2. Combating illicit trafficking in weapons, ammunition, parts and components**

24. Combating the illicit trafficking in weapons, ammunition, parts and components requires coordination and cooperation among national authorities, as well as between States, to address cross-border trafficking. To that end, the Centre delivered its new course on combating arms and ammunition trafficking in Chile in May 2022. The course enabled 103 practitioners and policymakers (including 25 women) from Chilean authorities to strengthen their capacity to enforce legal and practical control measures during international firearms transfers. Participants deepened their understanding of illicit trafficking, and the course also raised their awareness of the importance of multisectoral cooperation and coordination as a cornerstone of anti-trafficking initiatives. Participants were given the opportunity to put their newly gained knowledge to the test in a practical exercise, a simulation of an international transfer of firearms and ammunition.

25. In 2022, the Centre will roll out this modular, state-of-the-art course, which is composed of units that can be delivered individually or in combination. There are units on the modalities of weapon-trafficking routes; concealment and detection methods relating to illicit firearms trafficking; recent subregional trends; illicit manufacturing; illicit brokering; control and documentation systems; border control and international cooperation; and intelligence and investigation tools. The course

will benefit a wide range of officials from national authorities tasked with overseeing and implementing arms and ammunition control and regulation. The modularity allows the Centre to tailor the course to subregional and national contexts. The Centre is developing additional material, including a unit on illicit weapons trafficking on maritime and waterway routes.

26. Selected units of the new course were previously rolled out in Chile, Honduras and Panama in 2021. In Chile, 93 customs officials (of whom 26 were women) expanded their knowledge of illicit arms trafficking in the region, including knowledge of new manufacturing and trafficking modalities and the documentation required for international transfers of small arms. The Centre collaborated with WCO to deliver the training. The course in Panama was focused on legal and practical control measures during international arms and ammunition transfers, while the workshop in Honduras was focused on international cooperation. The latter two courses were supported by the Central American Integration System.

27. The Centre convened a round-table discussion on illicit firearms trafficking in Latin America and the Caribbean in December 2021 to present the preliminary findings of its research on trafficking trends in Central America, the Andean region and the Southern Cone region. A preliminary study by the Centre of regional progress and challenges in relation to indicator 16.4.2 was also presented. A number of trafficking modalities and challenges persist, as previously reported (such as the proliferation of firearms in conjunction with drug trafficking and arms trade across porous borders), with new challenges posed by the growing trends of trafficking through postal shipments, the conversion of small arms and the printing of weapons, parts and components. Research has shown that a significant knowledge gap remains in the area of weapons tracing and ammunition profiling. In order to better understand the patterns of illicit firearms trafficking, further research is needed on issues such as the implications of the developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology and design; the use of the dark web for trafficking; and the role of women in firearms trafficking.

28. One trend in the region is the increase in ghost guns, a term used to refer to unregulated, usually unmarked and untraceable firearms that can be purchased illicitly without a background check. Ghost guns or their parts are often purchased online and then assembled at home, and they therefore pose a particular challenge to national authorities, including customs and law enforcement officials. In 2021, the Centre held two events to raise awareness of ghost guns. During a regional webinar, 31 officials (including 16 women) from the ministries, police and defence forces, forensic laboratories and offices of public prosecutors of 11 CARICOM States benefited from presentations on the core characteristics of ghost guns, international best practices for criminal investigators and the implications of privately made firearms for forensic analysis. In a follow-up event, participants were able to delve into a forensic examination of privately made firearms and learn how tools and machines that make firearms operate.

29. Tracing illicit weapons, parts, components and ammunition requires marking and efficient record-keeping. This was the focus of a regional round-table workshop held in December 2021, which brought together 110 participants (of whom 26 were women) from Latin American authorities responsible for weapons and ammunition control or involved in combating illicit trafficking in firearms and ammunition. In addition to the theoretical framework and the international guidance on marking, the workshop included a practical component where participants had the opportunity to witness a marking exercise with a laser marking machine. States from the Latin American region have indicated the need for further assistance on national regulations related to marking and associated standardized procedures for arms and ammunition marking. The Centre intends to continue to support States on this important issue.

30. The Centre also conducted a regional webinar that focused on ammunition tracing in relation to the 2030 Agenda. Presenters provided practical recommendations for effective ammunition tracing and the results of research on national practices in the region that support the achievement of target 16.4 of the 2030 Agenda to 35 officials (of whom 4 were women) from Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru and Trinidad and Tobago. It is worth noting that some States have already integrated the target and its related indicator into their national planning instruments. In contrast, many national agencies lack integrated computer systems that would allow better data collection. To contribute to the fulfilment of the commitments made for the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals, the Centre will continue to support sustainable solutions to the illicit trafficking in firearms and ammunition.

### **3. Strengthening of legislative and regulatory frameworks that govern civilian access to small arms and light weapons**

31. Inadequate national regulation of civilian access to small arms and light weapons and their ammunition contributes to illicit trade. To ensure that privately held small arms and ammunition are owned and used legally, it is essential that regulatory mechanisms be in place and be enforced effectively.

32. With a view to bolstering legislative and regulatory frameworks, the Centre supported State efforts to digitize firearms licensing management systems by organizing a round table, in December 2021, for 48 representatives (including 27 women) of national institutions of Trinidad and Tobago. The discussion was focused on national experiences and best practices with regard to computerizing licensing processes in order to reduce loopholes that enable the diversion of weapons, and on ensuring compliance with the Arms Trade Treaty reporting standards.

33. The Centre also continues to respond to States which are seeking to make their ammunition management practices conform to the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines. The Centre held seminars on national ammunition control measures in Panama (July 2021) and Honduras (August 2021), benefiting 142 representatives (including 27 women) of the two countries. The seminars were focused on the need to establish, improve and implement adequate ammunition controls to regulate civilian access, in line with international standards and instruments. To that end, the trainers provided an overview of the global ammunition market, existing national legal frameworks and practices in Latin American and Caribbean States, as well as entry points for strengthened controls throughout the ammunition life cycle.

### **4. Reducing the diversion of arms and ammunition from government stockpiles**

34. One of the main sources of illicit arms and ammunition is inadequately managed ammunition and weapon stockpiles, making the adequate management of stockpiles vital. The Centre continues to support States to avoid the diversion of weapons and ammunition from stockpiles by providing training, practical tools and equipment to improve stockpile facilities, with the goal of combating illicit firearms trafficking and reducing armed violence.

35. In this context, the Centre carried out technical assessments for armouries in Antigua and Barbuda and Grenada in March 2022. The Centre reviewed the weapons and ammunition management practices of eight government facilities, in accordance with international guidelines including the Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium and the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines. Based on its findings and recommendations, the Centre will assist those States to improve their physical security and stockpile management measures,

including through armoury management training and the provision of standard operating procedures and physical materials to enable better security and stockpile management at the facilities.

36. In October 2021, the Centre delivered a workshop in Argentina on the management and control of firearms and ammunition inventories. Through the workshop, it strengthened the capacity of 78 officers (of whom 13 were women) from the defence sector. The session was focused on aspects of stockpile management such as accounting, registers, stock checks, notification of losses and investigations, in order to highlight the relevance of inventory management measures to adequate stockpile management. Later that same year the Centre hosted a second virtual workshop, at which 142 officers (of whom 22 were women) from the Argentinian defence sector learned about international standards and guidelines and how to use a self-assessment template, which was developed by the Centre to help authorities to strengthen stockpile management procedures. It is important that States conduct periodic risk assessments in relation to their stockpiles and that they have standard operating procedures for effective stockpile management as part of any arms and ammunition control programme. Such assessments allow States to detect the loss or theft of weapons and ammunition from stockpiles in a timely manner.

37. The diversion from storage facilities of weapons and ammunition seized by the authorities is not uncommon in the region. The systematic monitoring of weapons and ammunition that might be used as evidence in judicial proceedings in facilities where seized firearms or ammunition are safeguarded is essential to reduce the risk of loss, theft and robbery. Moreover, inadequate controls compromise the integrity of evidence, affecting investigations and criminal justice processes.

38. In this connection, the Centre held a workshop in El Salvador in July 2021 on the management of physical security of firearms and ammunition in judicial storage facilities. At the workshop, it trained 20 officials (including 2 women) from the Department of Confiscations and Storage Control of the Logistics Division of the Ministry of National Defence to be storekeepers in facilities where weapons are stored as evidence. Among other things, the training covered the technical aspects of physical security, risk management, security plans, operational procedures, the transport of evidence and the management and control of inventories. To promote sustained national ownership over evidence management processes, the Centre delivered equipment, including barcode readers and printers, to improve the management of evidence storage facilities and control of their inventories. Priority for use of that equipment will be given to warehouses that receive and store a large number of weapons. Special strong boxes were also provided and are now in use, assisting with the safe and secure transportation of different types of weapons. The workshop concluded a series of events on physical security and stockpile management that were organized with funding from the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation in response to a request by the Ministry of National Defence of El Salvador.

## **5. Crime prevention through enhanced firearms investigations**

39. In support of the implementation of goals 2 and 3 of the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap,<sup>4</sup> the Centre carried out a range of activities to assist States with the prevention of armed crimes through enhanced firearms investigation capacities.

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<sup>4</sup> Goal 2: reduce the illicit flow of firearms and ammunition into, within and beyond the region.  
Goal 3: bolster law enforcement capacity to combat illicit firearms and ammunition trafficking and their illicit possession and misuse.

40. Multi-agency collaboration is vital for all crime prevention strategies. Accordingly, the Centre organized a subregional webinar in September 2021 to promote the role of an integrated firearms trafficking working group in the CARICOM States. The objective of establishing such a working group is to ensure inter-agency communication among multiple law enforcement agencies, customs agencies, prosecution services and forensic services so as to reduce the illegal use of firearms in crimes, thus contributing to an overall crime prevention strategy. The webinar benefited 47 officials from the CARICOM States (of whom 18 were women) and provided the participating States with a platform for discussion and to share experiences. Following the webinar, the Centre has supported Jamaica by developing draft guidelines for the establishment of a firearms tracing and investigation working group, and it will present those draft guidelines to the Jamaican authorities for their consideration and implementation.

41. Successful strategies to preventive gun crimes also require States to pre-empt armed crimes. Accordingly, building a successful strategy to achieve that aim requires law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies to adopt a comprehensive and transformative approach to the way in which they view and respond to armed violence. That approach includes securing communities that are frequently affected by armed violence and outlying communities to which violent offenders may flee. At the core of every successful preventive gun crime strategy are eight critical components: (a) stakeholder buy-in; (b) a regional approach; (c) ballistic imaging; (d) utilizing all available law enforcement intelligence databases simultaneously; (e) knowledge of offenders and how they interact; (f) use of a single intelligence unit; (g) public buy-in; and (h) including additional communities in the process. In early 2022, the Centre familiarized 104 officials (of whom 36 were women) from 12 CARICOM States with those concepts and emphasized the need for multi-stakeholder collaboration. The Centre also provided in-depth training on several of the eight critical components to States in the CARICOM region.

42. The processing of firearm-related criminal cases requires the examination and organization of a large volume of evidence and information. Thanks to technological developments and greater competence and training in forensic firearm identification and forensic firearm examination, the ballistics or firearms units that examine firearms and ammunition evidence can, provide a wealth of information, real-time intelligence and vital investigative leads to fight gun crime. It is therefore essential that ballistic information be disseminated and analysed at the same time as information and intelligence from other analytical and investigative units, in order to support and improve investigations. To that end, the Centre conducted a virtual training session on ballistic intelligence management for 18 officials (of whom 5 were women) from the Royal Bahamas Police Force to enhance their understanding of the role of forensic ballistics in firearms investigations.

43. Another critical component of successful preventive gun crime intelligence programmes is the comprehensive collection of firearm-related data and evidence and the rapid dissemination of results. The cornerstone of such a programme is ballistic imaging technology. In March 2022, the Centre conducted a training course on cartridge case triage for 22 officials (of whom 10 were women) from the Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre and the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. Participants gained theoretical knowledge and hands-on experience in identifying and assessing fired cartridge cases from crime scenes and recovered firearms through a triage process. Such training will enable practitioners to significantly accelerate firearms investigations by enhancing their capacity to enter ballistic evidence into national automated ballistics identification systems in a timely manner, with a view to identifying firearms utilized in violent crimes domestically, regionally and internationally.

44. The Centre provided an in-depth training on the role of firearm examiners, from attending a crime scene to giving expert evidence in court, to another 120 officials (of whom 74 were women) from Trinidad and Tobago. Participants gained an understanding of how to examine firearms in order to determine whether they are functional or had been modified to function in a way that the manufacturer did not intend; restore serial numbers that have been obliterated to prevent the tracing of firearms; examine fired bullets or cartridge cases from a crime scene to compare with unfired ammunition recovered from a suspect's house; reconstruct shooting incidents to provide information that can corroborate or refute various accounts of a shooting; and image fired bullets and then search for them in a database, with a view to determining the likelihood of the same firearm having been used at other shooting scenes.

45. Criminals often obliterate, remove or alter markings, including serial numbers, to prevent tracing and identification. However, with the right training and equipment, forensic firearms scientists can restore removed characters. Between November 2021 and February 2022, the Centre conducted serial number restoration courses in six CARICOM States in order to build their capacities to restore serial numbers. A total 50 of persons (19 of whom were women), including forensic scientists, scientific officers, firearm examiners, police officers and armourers, received hands-on training in methods and techniques for restoring serial numbers that have been obliterated from firearms. The courses increased those States' capacities to recover serial numbers on illicit firearms, trace firearms back to their last known legal owners and initiate trafficking investigations.

46. Tracing weapons not only fulfils the requirements of various international instruments, it also promotes the realization of target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals. Accordingly, the Centre conducted two dedicated workshops on tracing to complement the series of courses on serial number restoration. In support of the efforts of Antigua and Barbuda and Guyana to trace all firearms in a timely manner, the Centre provided training on weapon tracing to 31 officials (9 of whom were women) from various security sector agencies. The participants reviewed existing national practices and analysed innovative ideas and concepts that could be used to assist in the fight against firearm-related crimes.

## **6. Building State capacity to detect illicitly trafficked weapons at entry and exit points**

47. Arms trafficking is one of the main threats to regional and international security. In collaboration with the Centre for Adaptive Security Research and Applications, based in Switzerland, the Centre developed a training course on interdicting small arms, ammunition, parts and components. The main training tool used in the course is an X-ray identification guide. In addition, trainees were provided with descriptions and technical specifications of weapons and information on innovative concealment methods used by traffickers, with a view to assisting authorities in better detecting and identifying weapons and ammunition illicitly trafficked through entry and exit points, including ports and airports, as well as through couriers and postal services and penitentiary services.

48. During the reporting period, the Centre delivered 10 such training courses in 11 States in the region. In Honduras, Panama and Paraguay, over 100 screening officials (of whom 41 were women) were trained in state-of-the-art interdiction techniques between August and December 2021. In the Caribbean, 123 screening operators (43 of whom were women) refined their X-ray identification and detection techniques, with courses organized in Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Grenada, Jamaica and Saint Kitts and Nevis between September 2021 and April 2022. At the subregional level, that same course was delivered to 31 officials (of whom 11 were women) from

Guatemala, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay in May 2022. The benefit derived from those courses cannot be overstated; the officials who participated in the courses are now able to detect and confiscate weapons and their parts and components more effectively.

## 7. Ending armed violence against women

49. The combination of the widespread availability of firearms and the illicit trafficking of weapons has resulted in extremely high levels of armed violence, which also affects women, in the Latin American and Caribbean region. In 2019, the region registered 12 femicides per day,<sup>5</sup> often enabled by or committed with firearms. Moreover, firearms are used to threaten, coerce and control victims, thus facilitating violence against women. The Centre therefore continued to prioritize work that is aimed at eliminating all violence against women.

50. In 2021, to mark the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Programme of Action on Small Arms, the Centre organized a subregional workshop that reviewed the progress made in implementing the Programme of Action on Small Arms and the enduring challenges with respect to the inclusion of gender considerations in arms control in Latin and Central America. The event brought together 37 participants (23 of whom were women) from national authorities of Argentina, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama and Peru. They shared such national good practices as the active inclusion of women's organizations in the small arms commission of Guatemala, the collection of disaggregated data on firearms through national household surveys in Mexico and the establishment of a femicide registry in Argentina.

51. While States in Latin America and the Caribbean have only provided limited information on gender-related questions in their national reports submitted under the Programme of Action on Small Arms, they have progressively added gender elements to their arms control work and they continue to improve their track record with regard to increasing women's participation in policymaking and implementation efforts. The provision of technical assistance and donor engagement will remain vital to maintaining momentum in that regard.

52. The Centre conducted one subregional webinar and six national webinars on preventing armed violence against women. More than 900 participants (of whom more than 600 were women) benefited from an overview of the regional context, learned about best practices and were provided with a platform for inter-institutional exchange of information on how arms control measures that are aimed at preventing and ultimately eliminating armed violence against women could be integrated into public policies. The Centre presented the findings and recommendations of various legal studies that it had conducted in the region between 2017 and 2021. In those studies, national legal frameworks on firearms were compared to those on the prevention of violence against women and gender-based violence, with a view to initiating discussions on the importance of greater gender accountability in firearms control policy and related legal responses. In addition, the webinars provided an opportunity for engagement with civil society. The large number of participants in those webinars demonstrates the issue's relevance to Latin America and the Caribbean. The Centre will continue to serve as a regional knowledge hub for this issue.

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<sup>5</sup> According to statistical data collected by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in 2019, 4,615 women from 18 countries of the region were murdered because of their gender, which is the equivalent of 12 femicides per day.

53. States in Latin America and the Caribbean have made preventing violence against women a national priority. Accordingly, the Centre has continued to offer its flagship course on firearms investigations from a gender perspective. The course enables national agencies to analyse practices in which gender considerations are not, or insufficiently, integrated into firearms investigations, crime site management and police responses, despite the clear implications of those practices in domestic and intimate violence cases. That specialized course fills an important institutional gap and enables participants to conduct criminal investigations of firearms-related crimes using a gender perspective as a method of complementary analysis.

54. During the reporting period, the Centre carried out specialized courses in Argentina, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Jamaica and Mexico that benefited professionals responsible for managing, processing and investigating crime scenes involving firearms and ammunition, officials responsible for prosecuting such crimes and prosecutors and staff who are specialized in criminal investigations of violence against women. By bringing together stakeholders from different national agencies, the course bolstered inter-institutional cooperation and initiated substantive discussions among institutions on the importance of overcoming stereotypical ideas about women and violence against them, with a view to preventing firearms investigations from arriving at distorted outcomes.

55. In order to continue building capacity in criminal investigation processes, the Centre launched two new specialized courses tailored for prosecutors and judges, respectively. The courses serve as additional building blocks that enable authorities to apply gender considerations after evidence has been collected and prosecutors take over the investigations, and when judges analyse the evidence that is presented. The Centre provided those courses in response to requests from States to expand the scope of its assistance to prosecutors and judges.

56. The first course on firearms investigations from a gender perspective for prosecutors was held in Costa Rica in June 2022. Prosecutors and personnel from the Public Prosecution Service and the Office of the Attorney General tasked with investigating cases of violence against women, domestic abuse, family violence and sexual violence participated in the course and learned about the importance of applying gender perspectives when prosecuting cases of violence against women. They were provided with knowledge tools that will allow them to design gender-sensitive legal strategies. The specialized course for judges was launched in Argentina in June 2022. It provided judges and magistrates with the technical knowledge they need to incorporate gender perspectives when assessing evidence in cases that involve firearms and violence against women. The Centre will continue to roll out both courses to ensure gender considerations are integrated into all stages of firearms-related judicial processes.

## **8. Raising awareness of firearms use and possession in schools**

57. States made a commitment, in the context of the 2030 Agenda, to leave no one behind. That commitment extends to Sustainable Development Goals 4 (quality education) and 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions). Within that framework, target 4.a of the Goals requires action to provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all, while target 16.2 calls for an end to all forms of violence against and torture of children. With the return to the classrooms in many parts of the Caribbean and Latin America during the reporting period following the lifting of restrictions imposed during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Centre continued to focus on implementing its programme to safeguard children in school settings.

58. In March 2022, when many students returned to the classrooms in Latin America, the Centre launched a social media campaign to highlight the growing phenomenon of firearms in schools in the region. Throughout the month, the Centre presented data, material and publications in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese to increase the visibility of the relevant issues. The campaign also saw the launch of an animated video on firearms in schools that explains the phenomenon to a non-technical audience.

59. The Centre also hosted four webinars on firearms in schools between November 2021 and May 2022 that were attended by more than 300 persons (of whom 157 were women). The webinars, which were conducted in Argentina, El Salvador, Jamaica and Panama, presented the findings of the Centre's regional study entitled "Firearms in Latin American and Caribbean schools: approaches, challenges and responses" and provided a platform for dialogue and knowledge-sharing for national representatives of the security and education sectors, who traditionally do not work together, for identifying actions that they can take jointly to respond effectively to this multidimensional phenomenon. During the webinars, panellists and participants agreed on the importance of inter-institutional coordination, the need for school violence assessments and data collection, as well as strengthening awareness-raising and education campaigns aimed at students and school communities. Likewise, it was recognized that including students in all relevant initiatives is pivotal to guaranteeing a comprehensive approach to preventing the presence and use of firearms in school settings. The webinars were very well received and enabled participants to place the issue within the broader framework of armed violence prevention and reduction. In Jamaica, the webinar was organized in the context of the Saving Lives Entity fund project, which is aimed at reducing violence and the proliferation of illicit firearms.

## **B. Disarmament to save humanity: supporting the implementation of multilateral instruments relating to weapons of mass destruction**

### **Supporting the implementation of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime**

60. The Centre continues to support States' efforts to rid the world of nuclear weapons, develop strengthened norms related to other weapons of mass destruction and prevent the emergence of new domains of strategic competition and conflict.

61. Workshops were conducted with national authorities from Peru on the international regime for disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The first workshop brought together 80 participants (25 of whom were women) representing national authorities and private sector companies involved in the use and transfer of dual-use goods. Discussions focused on the effective implementation of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime, namely, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco); the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons; the Biological Weapons Convention; the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction; and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). In support of efforts in that regard, the Centre has made available such practical tools as a licensing guide and a guide on control lists and focus lists, which were developed to support legal and practical measures. A follow-up workshop focused on how to translate the provisions of the Biological Weapons Convention into national laws on the prohibition of biological weapons.

62. On 31 July 2021, the Centre concluded a series of technical and legal assistance activities that helped Chile draft regulations for a law that implements the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention. The assistance provided included support for the development of technical documents, including, inter alia, a recommended control list of biological agents, toxins and technologies. At the request of Chile, the Centre, in collaboration with the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism of OAS, presented legal comments on the first draft of the regulations. A final draft of those regulations has since been approved by the Ministry of Defence of Chile.

63. The Centre also collaborated with the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism on initiatives related to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including a national workshop on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) in Ecuador. In the course of that workshop, the national authorities of Ecuador expressed interest in receiving assistance from the Centre and the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism to update their national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). The Centre also collaborated with the Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit of the Office for Disarmament Affairs and, in March 2022, participated in workshops on enhancing the implementation of the Convention and improving biosafety and biosecurity frameworks in Suriname and the Dominican Republic. Suriname reiterated its interest in drafting relevant national laws and requested the Centre to continue providing legal assistance in that regard.

64. The Centre will continue to collaborate with its Member States, regional organizations and civil society in fostering dialogue on current and potential risks related to the proliferation of delivery systems for weapons of mass destruction.

## **C. Strengthening partnerships for disarmament**

### **1. Full and equal participation of women in decision-making processes**

65. Women remain underrepresented in arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament diplomacy worldwide, as well as in Latin America and the Caribbean. While the region has a high number of women delegates participating in disarmament forums, the number of women working to operationalize disarmament and arms control in the field remains unsatisfactorily low.

66. The Centre, as part of its efforts to build regional momentum for the implementation of General Assembly resolution 65/69 on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, held a virtual symposium entitled “Women: Forces of Change” to celebrate the eleventh anniversary of the resolution’s adoption. The event highlighted the contributions, challenges and achievements of women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control and highlighted various pathways to strengthen the participation of women in these fields. Women from diverse backgrounds and positions shared their experiences. They gave visibility to the pivotal and historical role that women in the region have played and continue to play in the fields of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

67. That symposium also saw the launch of a new video series entitled “Women: Forces of Change”. The video series, which highlights the contribution of women in the region to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, has enabled the Centre to promote the issue to a larger audience.

## 2. Empowering youth to engage in disarmament issues

68. Young people make a significant and positive contribution to the promotion and realization of sustainable peace and security in the context of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. Likewise, young people have a key role to play in addressing the issue of firearms homicides in the region, which has the highest rate of such homicides in the world. Young people can and should play a vital role in raising awareness of and developing new approaches to reducing armed violence in their communities.

69. Recognizing the importance of engaging the young people of Latin American and Caribbean States in disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, and to commemorate the second anniversary of the adoption of General Assembly resolution [74/64](#) on youth, disarmament and non-proliferation, the Centre organized a round-table discussion in December 2021 entitled “Youth Forces of Change: prevention of armed violence in Latin America and the Caribbean”. The virtual event provided a space for exchange and dialogue with young people and featured presentations on youth-led initiatives in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras and Peru to combat the proliferation and misuse of arms. On the margins of that event, the Centre launched an online group named “Youth Forces of Change for Peace and Disarmament in Latin America and the Caribbean”, with a view to creating a space for young people from the region to connect.

70. The Centre continued to support initiatives and events that promote disarmament and arms control in the context of youth and peace and security, such as the Youth4Disarmament initiative of the Office for Disarmament Affairs and events organized by the International Action Network on Small Arms and the Global Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security.

71. The Centre intends to continue fostering exchange and dialogue to inspire new generations to engage in the field of disarmament.

## IV. Staffing, financing, and administration

### A. Finances

72. In accordance with General Assembly resolution [41/60](#) J, the Centre was established on the basis of existing resources and voluntary contributions made by Member States and interested organizations for its core and programme activities. In 2021, the Centre’s trust fund received voluntary contributions in the amount of \$2,853,856. The Secretary-General expresses his appreciation to the Government of Peru for the support it has provided in its capacity as host country to the Centre. The Secretary-General expresses his gratitude to the Centre’s donors, the Governments of Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States, for their financial support of activities pertaining to the Caribbean Firearms Roadmap. Likewise, the Secretary-General is grateful for the support provided by the Governments of Canada and Sweden for activities pertaining to women, youth and disarmament. The Secretary-General also expresses his gratitude to the Government of Spain for its voluntary contribution, which has enabled the Centre to implement activities related to the “disarmament to save humanity” priority of the Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament. Those contributions, along with contributions from the European Union, provided through the Conventional Arms Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, enabled the Centre to continue to assist Member States in the region, at their request, throughout the reporting period.

73. The Secretary-General also expresses his appreciation to Guyana, Mexico, Panama and Peru for their financial contributions. He continues to encourage financial and in-kind contributions from Latin American and Caribbean States as a clear indication of the value that Member States place on the Centre's expertise and technical assistance.

74. The Centre supported the delivery of activities in Jamaica as part of the Saving Lives Entity fund project with funds from the Global Programme on Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development of UNDP.

75. The Secretary-General wishes to thank all States and partners for their generous contributions to and support for the Centre and encourages their ongoing support to ensure that the Centre can continue to provide technical and capacity-building assistance to Member States in the region, at their request, in fulfilment of its mandate. Information on the status of the trust fund for the Regional Centre for 2021 is contained in the annex to the present report.

## **B. Staffing and administration**

76. 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 one General Service staff member (G-7, Local level). Project personnel are funded through voluntary contributions.

## **V. Conclusion**

77. The Centre undertook 88 substantive activities to support States in their implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms, the International Tracing Instrument, the Arms Trade Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention, and General Assembly resolution [65/69](#), among others. Over half of the Centre's activities focused on supporting the implementation of the first subregional firearms road map in the Caribbean region.

78. The Centre delivered technical and legal assistance to States in Latin America and the Caribbean with a view to building national capacity in combating illicit firearms trafficking and the physical safety and security management of government-held stockpiles so as to prevent the diversion of weapons and ammunition into illicit markets. The Centre supported enhanced firearms investigations as part of crime prevention strategies, including enhanced capacities for weapon detection at entry and exit points so as to facilitate the interdiction and seizure of illicit arms. Activities aimed at eliminating armed violence and raising awareness of firearms in schools continue to attract great interest in the region. The Centre continued to support States in their efforts to prohibit biological and toxin weapons and implement multilateral instruments relating to weapons of mass destruction, and it continued to work with regional and international partners and civil society to carry out its mandates. In addition, the Centre continued to empower women and youth to play an active role in the field of disarmament.

79. The Secretary-General reiterates his call to Member States and other partners in a position to do so to provide the Centre with the financial and in-kind support, including direct financial contributions from Latin American and Caribbean States, 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 and security and implement the 2030 Agenda in the region.

## Annex

### Status of the trust fund for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean for 2021

(United States dollars)

<b>Accumulated surplus, 1 January 2021</b>	<b>3 279 540</b>
<b>Revenue</b>	
Voluntary contributions <sup>a</sup>	2 853 856
Other transfers and allocations	—
Other revenue	—
Investment revenue	5 140
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>2 858 996</b>
<b>Less: Expenses and refunds</b>	
Operating expenses	1 454 510
Refunds <sup>b</sup>	3 576
<b>Total expenses and refunds</b>	<b>1 450 934</b>
Surplus/deficit for the year	1 408 062
<b>Accumulated surplus/deficit as at 31 December 2021</b>	<b>4 687 602</b>

<sup>a</sup> Includes voluntary monetary contributions from Germany \$224,066, Canada \$1,634,842, Guyana \$4,201, Mexico \$10,000, Panama \$4,400, Peru \$11,633, Sweden \$53,724, Spain \$33,784, United States of America, \$750,000, and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, \$127,206.

<sup>b</sup> Consists of refunds to Canada \$5,902 and United States of America \$9,052, offset against the cancellation of prior refunds (Australia \$4,186, Sweden \$3,350; and Arms Trade Treaty voluntary trust fund \$3,842).