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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 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 2021 to June 2022. The Regional Centre continued to provide assistance to 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. In addition, the Centre developed information and outreach material and reached out proactively to stakeholders to help promote peace and disarmament.

The Regional Centre continued to provide assistance to Member States and relevant regional organizations regarding the control of a wide range of weapons and ammunitions, with a particular focus on small arms and light weapons, which have the most devastating impact on the African continent and its populations.

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 for arms control and peace and security in Africa and beyond. The Secretary-General is especially grateful to the Government of Togo for its longstanding support to the Centre as its host country.

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



## I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution [76/57](#), commended the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa for its sustained support to Member States in implementing disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control activities through seminars and conferences, the provision of 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 the areas of disarmament, peace and security.
2. The present report is submitted pursuant to resolution [76/57](#), in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on the activities of the Regional Centre. The report covers the period from July 2021 to June 2022. A financial statement on the status of the trust fund for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa for 2021 is provided in the annex.

## II. Functioning and mandate

3. 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.
4. The Regional Centre focuses its efforts towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 16, as acknowledged by the General Assembly in its resolution [76/57](#), 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 activities

5. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre continued to provide assistance to Member States, despite the significant impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on its activities. As physical restrictions relating to the pandemic were gradually eased, the Centre implemented measures to normalize its work, including commencing an incremental return to office and switching some of the online events to hybrid or, where feasible, in-person modes. The Centre provided support and technical assistance to Member States in Africa to promote disarmament, peace and security through capacity-building and training programmes, practical measures, advocacy, research and information-sharing. The Centre worked in partnership with the African Union, African regional organizations, other United Nations system entities and intergovernmental organizations, academic and research institutions and civil society organizations in implementing its programmes, projects and other activities.
6. The Regional Centre continued to raise awareness among Member States and other relevant stakeholders by providing information, technical advice and assistance in implementing international disarmament and non-proliferation 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 Arms Trade Treaty, the Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, 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 (Kinshasa Convention), 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).

7. Furthermore, the Regional Centre made extensive use of social media platforms 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. Promoting peace and security, including support provided to regional and subregional organizations in Africa as well as other United Nations entities in Africa**

8. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre continued to support not only Member States but also regional and subregional organizations in Africa in promoting disarmament and arms control, including the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the West African Economic and Monetary Union, the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States, and United Nations system 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, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR).

9. On 14 and 15 July 2021, in Lomé, the Regional Centre participated in a regional consultative workshop of ECOWAS member States to harmonize their positions in the lead-up to the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York from 26 to 30 July 2021. From 15 to 17 September 2021, in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, the Centre participated in a regional workshop conducted with experts from ECOWAS member States to finalize draft implementation guidelines on the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials and on the Arms Trade Treaty for consideration by the Conference of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS. On 15 June 2022, at the regional consultative meeting of ECOWAS member States held in Dakar, the Centre made presentations on the eighth Biennial Meeting of States, to be held in New York from 27 June to 1 July 2022.

10. From 13 to 16 July 2021, in Dakar, the Regional Centre conducted a half-day workshop on gender mainstreaming and small arms control for the member States of the West African Economic and Monetary Union, namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, the Niger, Senegal and Togo, during the four-day meeting of its consultative framework. The Regional Centre raised the awareness of and trained participants regarding the inclusion of gender dimensions in policies and plans to combat the proliferation, trafficking and misuse of small arms, enabling the development of recommendations with regard to regional approaches across borders.

11. On 2 February 2022, the Regional Centre provided substantive, logistical and administrative assistance for the preparation of the second session of the International Cybercrisis Management regional workshop series organized by UNIDIR in partnership with the African Union.

12. On 21 April 2022, the Regional Centre participated in the third meeting of the African Union-Regions Steering Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and provided updates on its recent efforts concerning the control of illicit small arms and light weapons and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes to representatives of participating member States, African regional organizations and regional mechanisms and bodies.

13. The Regional Centre took several measures to promote safe and secure weapons and ammunition management. From 24 to 26 November 2021, the Centre hosted an in-person joint pilot workshop of the Department of Peace Operations and the Office for Disarmament Affairs on weapons and ammunition management in peacekeeping missions. From 29 November to 3 December 2021, the Centre took part in and provided technical support to a weapons and ammunition management assessment in Togo, organized by ECOWAS together with UNIDIR, the Ammunition Management Advisory Team and the Mines Advisory Group. The Centre also took part in a weapons and ammunition management baseline assessment in Cotonou, Benin, from 28 March to 1 April 2022.

14. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre continued to participate in the monthly meetings of the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements working group of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), which addresses conflict-related sexual violence in the country. The Centre contributed to the meetings through interventions relating to the linkages between small arms control and the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence and to the need for the national commission for the fight against the proliferation of illicit weapons and ammunition to develop effective prevention and protection mechanisms on conflict-related sexual violence. On 20 October 2021, within the framework of the working group, the Centre submitted a semi-annual report on United Nations support to the national commission for the period from 1 April to 30 September 2021, which was aimed at informing United Nations and non-United Nations partners about current and future initiatives in support of the Commission.

15. On 29 July and 14 December 2021, in Kinshasa, the Regional Centre participated in two meetings organized by the Partnerships Working Group of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. The Centre contributed to the review by the Working Group of the partnerships and resource mobilization strategy and provided recommendations on ways to integrate gender dimensions across the strategy.

16. From 22 to 26 November 2021 and from 29 May to 4 June 2022, the Regional Centre participated in the fifty-second and fifty-third meetings of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, held in Libreville and Yaoundé, respectively, and presented details of its activities during the relevant reporting period. Extensive consultations with Member States, UNOCA and the ECCAS Commission were held to explore opportunities for collaboration in support of the Silencing the Guns by 2030 initiative of the African Union. At both meetings, the Centre highlighted the need for the safe and secure stockpile management of arms and ammunition in the region and briefed the participants on the Saving Lives Entity fund, from which it is planned to start funding projects in three beneficiary countries in Africa, namely Cameroon, South Sudan and Togo.

17. On 18 May 2022, the Regional Centre delivered a statement to the Peace and Security Council of the African Union on the occasion of its briefing on disarmament and the control of illicit small arms and light weapons in Africa on the theme “Civil-military relations: a factor for peace and security in Africa”. In its statement, the

Centre addressed the ongoing challenges and opportunities in the area of disarmament and arms control of illicit small arms and light weapons and civilian-military relations in Africa, and United Nations support provided to Member States, the African Union and other regional organizations.

18. The Regional Centre contributed to the guidance note entitled “Youth, peace and security: fostering youth-inclusive political processes” prepared by the Global Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security. It provided inputs focused on the links between young people and the availability of small arms in fragile and conflict-affected societies and emphasized that further analysis should be conducted for the development of protection and prevention mechanisms for young people.

## **B. Small arms and light weapons and other conventional arms**

19. In connection with the implementation of the European Union-funded global project on gender mainstreaming and small arms control, the Regional Centre organized and conducted in-person capacity-building activities targeting national commissions on small arms control in six countries, namely Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and Sierra Leone.

20. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Regional Centre concluded the implementation of the project in support of its National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons to develop, in collaboration with the Mine Action Service, a gender-responsive monitoring and reporting tool to facilitate the exchange of information and in-country coordination with regard to implementing the national action plan on small arms control, in line with the women and peace and security agenda. On 21 April 2021, at the request of the National Commission, the Centre carried out a half-day workshop with its 30 Permanent Secretary members, in which it presented the final tool to them and discussed its application.<sup>1</sup>

21. From 6 to 9 September 2021, in Bamako, the Regional Centre conducted a three-day training course on gender mainstreaming and small arms control<sup>2</sup> and a follow-up workshop on gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation, in collaboration with the National Commission on the Fight against the Proliferation of Small Arms and heads of the regional offices of the Commission, in Gao, Kayes, Sikasso and Timbuktu. Participants developed a list of recommendations to advance the integration of gender considerations into the small arms control policies and programmes of Mali.

22. From 30 November to 3 December 2021, in Sierra Leone, the Regional Centre conducted a three-day training course on gender mainstreaming and small arms control<sup>3</sup> and a follow-up activity to review the forthcoming national action plan on small arms and light weapons. The Centre prepared a policy brief containing a strategy developed by course participants in support of drafting a gender-responsive national action plan on small arms and light weapons.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> United Nations, Office for Disarmament Affairs, “New tool to track gender-responsive small arms control in the Democratic Republic of Congo”, 27 May 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., “Gender equality at the heart of Mali’s fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons”, 18 October 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., “Include women and youth at all levels of arms control, says the Sierra Leone National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons”, 14 January 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Sierra Leone National Commission on Small Arms and United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, “Gender mainstreaming small arms control in Sierra Leone”, policy brief. Available at [https://front.un-arm.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/2022-Policy-Brief\\_ICTP-Gender-and-SALW-Sierra-Leone.pdf](https://front.un-arm.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/2022-Policy-Brief_ICTP-Gender-and-SALW-Sierra-Leone.pdf). (26 June 2022).

23. In the Central African Republic, following the activities on gender mainstreaming and small arms control conducted by the Centre in collaboration with the National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons,<sup>5</sup> the Regional Centre launched an in-country study to perform a gender analysis of small arms control policies and programmes. The research was carried out in the period from August to November 2021 in collaboration with the National Commission, the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Conflict-related Sexual Violence Section of MINUSCA. The Centre conducted a series of national consultations with nearly 70 organizations working on small arms control, and the security and judicial sector, as well as stakeholders working on women-related issues and gender-based violence. On 13 October 2021, the Centre conducted a round-table discussion with 30 governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to present the first findings of the research and to help identify and fill knowledge gaps in order to prepare the final publication that will be made available at the end of the project cycle.

24. On 13 December 2021, the Regional Centre held a virtual meeting with the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms to respond to the Government's request for assistance and brainstorming on collaboration modalities. Similar meetings were held with Burundi, Togo, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. To follow up, the Centre participated in virtual coordination meetings with the African Union on the selection of beneficiary countries and implementation modalities for the joint African Union-Office for Disarmament Affairs African Amnesty Month project aimed at supporting efforts at the national level to collect and destroy illicit weapons and ammunition while ensuring awareness-raising and education campaigns directed at arms control stakeholders and the general public. The project is funded by Germany, in support of the Silencing the Guns by 2030 initiative.

25. From 16 to 18 May 2022, the Regional Centre conducted a mission to N'Djamena, to consult with the Lake Chad Basin Commission on implementation modalities for the project aimed at capacity-building to prevent the acquisition of arms and ammunitions by violent extremist and terrorist groups in the Lake Chad basin, which was funded by the Governments of Finland, France and Italy. The objective of the project is to support the States members of the Commission participating in the Multinational Joint Task Force (Benin, Cameroon, Chad, the Niger and Nigeria) in advancing the fight against violent extremism in the Lake Chad basin through three main pillars: (a) improved weapons and ammunition management; (b) improved gathering and sharing of data among Member States; and (c) improved border control.

26. On 15, 19 and 20 May 2022, the Regional Centre carried out a mission to the ECOWAS Commission headquarters in Abuja to enhance cooperation and synergy in order to advance peace, security and arms control in West Africa, on the basis of the strategic plans of the Centre and the Commission. The Centre met with the President and the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security of the Commission, respectively, before holding working sessions with the Directorate of Peacekeeping and Regional Security and the Directorate of Early Warning, respectively. The Centre also participated in the conclusion of a meeting of experts on the review of the study of operational guidelines on arms brokering in the ECOWAS region carried out by the Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies.

27. In Burundi, following its request for assistance, the Regional Centre will conduct a three-day in-country training programme and a follow-up activity on gender mainstreaming and small arms control from 11 to 14 July 2022 in collaboration with the National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons Control and the

<sup>5</sup> United Nations, Office for Disarmament Affairs, "In push for gender equality, Central African Republic eyes vital role of small arms control", 17 November 2020.

Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States, an implementing partner, with approximately 50 national participants, including from the National Commission; the ministries of gender, defence and foreign affairs; customs authorities; and civil society. The training and the follow-up activity will lead to the development of recommendations on ways to integrate gender dimensions into small arms control and the review of the Commission's national action plan on small arms control with a view to identifying gender gaps and opportunities for a future action plan.

### **C. Weapons of mass destruction**

28. The Regional Centre continued to support Member States by facilitating awareness-raising and dialogue to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including on issues related 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. On 23 November, in Kinshasa, the Centre contributed to a workshop on The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, providing logistical and substantive support, in particular in relation to small arms control and the implementation of Security Council resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#) in Africa.

29. On 17 and 18 August 2021, the Regional Centre participated in a virtual introductory workshop on the Biological Weapons Convention and its confidence-building measures, which was held as part of the national preparedness programme of the Sudan, under the provisions of European Council decision 2019/97 in support of the Convention.

30. On 23 August 2021, the Regional Centre participated in a virtual national workshop for Mali on the preparation and submission of confidence-building measures under the Biological Weapons Convention. Mali made a presentation on its implementation of the Convention, including international cooperation and compliance with international biosafety and biosecurity obligations, as did Kenya on its national data collection, challenges, lessons learned and good practices.

31. On 10 March 2022, the Regional Centre contributed to the organization of a hybrid workshop on national capacity-building with regard to the Biological Weapons Convention in Lomé. Experts from Kenya, Mali and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention made presentations on the Convention and biosafety to participants from defence and security institutions in Togo. The Togolese national health institute provided updates on the national legal framework for biosafety and on its contingency plans. On 30 March 2022, in Lomé, the Centre participated in an awareness-raising and capacity-building workshop on chemical safety and security measures, organized by the National Authority for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Measures to improve the control and handling of dual-use material stockpiles as well as preventive measures to avoid accidental explosions were discussed.

### **D. Information and outreach**

32. The Regional Centre published news stories and policy briefs covering the outcomes of its activities. Furthermore, its website, available in both English and French, continued to be updated.

33. 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, but also for peace education purposes.

34. 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. The Centre also endeavoured to broaden its outreach to various partners, including civil society organizations.

35. The Centre contributed to the Global Girls Summit, held in Togo on 21 and 22 October 2021, which was organized by Plan International as part of its global campaign to achieve equality for girls. The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs delivered a video message to the plenary, and the Centre participated in a panel discussion.

36. In April and May 2022, as part of the commemorations of the thirtieth anniversary of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, the Regional Centre provided a written and audiovisual contribution for a special edition of *UNOCA Magazine*, highlighting the Centre's historical contribution to the Advisory Committee and the preparation and entry into force of the Kinshasa Convention.

## **IV. Financial situation, staffing and administration**

### **A. Financial situation**

37. In 2021, the total amount of voluntary contributions to the trust fund for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa was \$145,768. Additional information on the status of the trust fund for 2021 is provided in the annex to the present report.

38. The Secretary-General expresses gratitude to the Member States and donors that 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 especially grateful to the Government of Togo for its longstanding support and financial contribution to the Centre.

39. 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**

40. 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).

## **V. Conclusion**

41. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre discharged its mandate by providing assistance to Member States and African regional organizations, at their request, in the areas of arms control and disarmament and, more generally, to promote peace, security and stability. The Centre adopted a five-year strategic plan for the period 2021–2026, as recommended by a strategic review mission carried out in June

2021, which articulated its mission as being to serve as an effective vehicle to transmit, implement and support the mandates of the Office for Disarmament Affairs across Africa and its vision as being to realize human, national and international security through the regulation and elimination of arms in Africa, with the mission giving rise to five strategic objectives.

42. The Regional Centre strengthened synergy and cooperation with the African Union, regional organizations in Africa and United Nations system entities to advance arms control, disarmament, and peace and security from a human security perspective as mandated by relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, including in the context of promoting the implementation of 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.

43. 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 discussions and consultations, supporting the drafting of national action plans, and raising awareness of international instruments and cross-cutting issues, including gender mainstreaming.

44. The Secretary-General calls upon 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 Member States in Africa in the areas of arms control, disarmament, peace, security and stability, in the pursuit of Sustainable Development Goal 16, which promotes peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

## Annex

## Status of the trust fund for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa for 2021

(United States dollars)

<b>Accumulated surplus, 1 January 2021</b>	<b>365 018</b>
<b>Revenue</b>	
Voluntary contributions <sup>a</sup>	145 768
Other revenue	529
Investment revenue <sup>b</sup>	(3 781)
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>142 516</b>
Less expenses	
Operating expenses	69 342
<b>Total expenses and refunds</b>	<b>69 342</b>
Surplus/deficit for the year 2021	73 174
<b>Accumulated surplus/deficit as at 31 December 2021</b>	<b>438 192</b>

<sup>a</sup> Consists of voluntary contributions (\$34,193 (Togo), \$112,612 (Italy) and \$3,557 (International Organization of la Francophonie)) less refunds/transfers/adjustments (\$4,594 (Open Society Initiative for West Africa)).

<sup>b</sup> Includes a sizeable unrealized loss due to a decline in the market value of the investment portfolio as at 31 December 2021.