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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 overview of the mandated activities of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa from July 2023 to June 2024, in line with General Assembly resolution [78/56](#). The Regional Centre continued to provide assistance to African Member States, at their request, and intergovernmental and civil society organizations in Africa to promote peace, security, disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation from a human-centred perspective. The Centre also developed information and outreach material and proactively reached out to stakeholders to help promote peace and disarmament. It carried out, directly or jointly with partners, a total of 22 technical, legal and policy-related training and education activities directly or indirectly reaching several thousand beneficiaries.

The Regional Centre expanded its interaction and cooperation with African regional and subregional organizations in the pursuit of greater coherence, coordination and optimization of its mandated activities in line with its strategic plan for the period 2021–2026, culminating in the agreement on 17 October of an African Union-Office for Disarmament Affairs cooperation matrix articulating eight strategic areas of collaboration in support of the African Union initiative to silence the guns by 2030.

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

* [A/79/50](#).



I. Introduction

1. In its resolution [78/56](#), the General Assembly commended the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa for its sustained support to Member States in implementing disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation activities through seminars and conferences, capacity-building and training, policy and technical expertise, and information and advocacy at the regional and national levels, and welcomed the continental dimension of the activities of the Regional Centre in response to the evolving needs of African Member States and the region's new and emerging challenges in the areas of disarmament, peace and security, including maritime security.

2. The Regional Centre works with Member States, United Nations entities and other partners towards the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and the strict control of conventional weapons in Africa, including by promoting norm-setting and compliance with multilateral agreements in the areas of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, by facilitating dialogue among diverse stakeholders and advocating concrete and effective solutions to support sustainable peace and development in Africa.

3. The present report is submitted pursuant to resolution [78/56](#), in which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its seventy-ninth session on the activities of the Regional Centre. The report covers the period from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024. A financial statement on the status of the trust fund for the Centre for the year 2023 is provided in the annex to the present report.

II. Functioning and mandate

4. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution [40/151 G](#), the Regional Centre, located in Lomé, 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.

III. Main areas of activities

5. The Regional Centre continued to support States in their efforts to implement multilateral disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation instruments. This included providing capacity-building and technical and legal assistance to Member States in the region upon their request and providing platforms for dialogue and supporting initiatives to build confidence in the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. The Centre leveraged digital communication technology and virtual meeting platforms to supplement in-person activities in order to deliver on its mandate within available resources, notably through collaboration with several African regional organizations, including the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the East African Community, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Arab Maghreb Union, the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the West African Economic and Monetary Union, the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, as well as various United Nations entities, intergovernmental organizations, academic and research institutions, and civil society organizations.

6. The Regional Centre actively contributed to increasing awareness among Member States, African regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders in Africa by providing valuable information, technical guidance and assistance in the implementation of multilateral disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation instruments.

A. Disarmament trends in the region and emerging risks and opportunities

7. In a global context of resurgence of geopolitical tensions and armed conflicts, along with a surge in military expenditures, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Africa remains a pressing issue, intricately linked to broader security and development challenges across the continent. This proliferation is propelled by a confluence of factors such as the rise of violent extremism, political instability, porous borders, gaps in State authority, and development deficits. Moreover, climate change and its adverse impacts operate as a catalyst, exacerbating risks and grievances that heighten the susceptibility of individuals to join armed groups. Each of these elements not only facilitates the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons but also exacerbates existing socioeconomic and political vulnerabilities within the different subregions of the continent, not to mention the humanitarian consequences and devastating toll on the social fabric and economic development.

8. Many African States struggle with capacity and resource limitations that lead to gaps in reporting on 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. This inconsistency makes it difficult to assess the full scope of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and affects the ability to formulate cohesive policies. Furthermore, there is a crucial need to harmonize regional instruments with the Silencing the Guns by 2030 initiative of the African Union, a flagship project of its Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, which is aimed at ending all wars, civil conflicts, gender-based violence and violent conflicts and preventing genocide in the African continent by 2030. Regional efforts that are more aligned with this continental framework could create a more unified and effective approach to small arms and light weapons control, enhance accountability and improve the sharing of best practices and data across the continent.

9. In West Africa, persistent attacks continue on military and civilian targets, notably by the Al-Qaida affiliate Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) operating in the Liptako-Gourma region (Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger), which is largely controlled by violent extremist groups, armed groups and bandits. The fragile security situation, the threat of terrorism spreading towards coastal countries, and political instability, including due to the proliferation of unconstitutional changes of Government in Mali (in 2020 and 2021), Burkina Faso (two coups in 2022) and the Niger (in 2023) are having far-reaching consequences on peace and security in the West Africa region. Illegal activities (illicit trade of artisanal mined gold, drug trafficking and human trafficking) fuel illegal migrations, kidnapping, extortion, and weapons seizures through illegal cross-border trades in markets dotted across the Sahel.¹ In certain cases, weapons are diverted from inadequately controlled national stockpiles.² This proliferation of weapons and armed violence moved beyond the Sahel towards coastal countries in the Gulf of Guinea, spilling over to Benin, Côte d'Ivoire and Togo, exacerbating existing conflicts between nomad cattle herders and sedentary farmer communities. The subregion is also facing

¹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), "Trafficking in the Sahel: muzzling the illicit arms trade", 10 June 2023.

² UNODC, "Firearms trafficking in the Sahel" (New York, 2022).

the issue of the proliferation of self-defence groups or militia that operate in areas with limited government authority, some with the approval of certain national or local governments,³ creating a grey area regarding the use of weapons by the self-defence groups.

10. In the Lake Chad region, at the confluence of West and Central Africa, the region comprising parts of Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Niger and Nigeria remains the hotspot for arms trafficking and the local manufacture of small arms.⁴ The trafficking benefits various armed groups and criminal networks, fuelling ongoing conflicts and enabling violence. This creates a vicious circle, destabilizing local communities by empowering non-State armed groups, community-based armed self-defence groups, criminal groups and other violent actors, further undermining the rule of law in the region and therefore driving the proliferation and illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons, which in turn further undermines efforts to trace and curtail such illicit weapons.

11. In Central Africa and the Great Lakes region, porous borders gave rise to the illegal trafficking of weapons despite embargoes on arms trafficking in certain countries in the region (see [S/2023/431](#) and [S/2022/967](#)). Non-State armed groups and criminal networks, with links to conflict minerals, profit from the porosity of borders to smuggle illicit weapons, ammunition and improvised explosive devices.

12. In the Horn of Africa, some of the weapons utilized come from conflict areas in the Middle East (see [S/2023/95](#)), further fuelling conflict in the area, and affecting vulnerable populations. Somalia saw the highest level of casualties among children owing to the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The country also experienced the highest number of improvised explosive device incidents in early 2023, suggesting a continuous supply of illicit arms to Al-Shabaab and other Da'esh-affiliated group in the region (see [S/2023/443](#)).

13. Meanwhile, in Southern Africa, most of the illicit weapons being trafficked by criminal networks fuel organized crime, including in Cabo Delgado Province in northern Mozambique, which was affected by violent extremism. Member States have been striving to fight these illicit weapon flows, including through regional coordinated approaches by means of cooperation mechanisms of SADC and the International Criminal Police Organization.⁵

B. Weapons of mass destruction

14. In line with its mandate, and in keeping with the proposals that the Secretary-General made in his policy brief entitled “A New Agenda for Peace”, the Regional Centre organized, supported and participated in a number of activities promoting the elimination of nuclear weapons, upholding the norms against chemical and biological weapons and ensuring the prevention of the emergence of new domains of strategic competition and conflict. In addition, the Centre supported the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization in Africa and all activities organized in Africa within the framework of Office for Disarmament Affairs support to the Biological

³ Commission of the Economic Community of West African States “Self-defence groups as a response to crime and conflict in West Africa: learning from international experiences” (November 2023).

⁴ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, “Tri-border tangle: arms trafficking, crime and violence in the borderlands of Chad, Cameroon, and Central African Republic” (Geneva, 2024).

⁵ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, “Crime, conflict and corruption: Nampula as a smuggling hub” (April 2022).

Weapons Convention, funded by the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction.

15. From 11 to 13 October 2023, the Regional Centre supported the organization of a regional workshop in Lomé, focused on the universalization and effective implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention in Western Africa. The workshop attracted around 65 participants from the 14 West African States parties to the Convention, which are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. Additional attendees included representatives of Germany, Portugal and the United States of America, as well as members of the Resident Coordinator Office in Togo, the Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) Support Unit of the Office for Disarmament Affairs and ECOWAS. The workshop was aimed at strengthening the implementation of the Convention through legislative support, transparency enhancements, and engagement in biosafety and biosecurity, culminating in a field visit to the National Institute of Hygiene of Togo.

16. The Regional Centre facilitated a panel discussion at a workshop in Gaborone, from 12 to 14 March 2024, aimed at strengthening regional cooperation and enhancing national adherence to the Biological Weapons Convention in partnership with the Ministry of Defence and Security of Botswana. The event brought together 60 delegates from 10 Southern African States along with key international and regional organizations. The workshop was focused on building regional capacities to combat biological threats and promoting adherence to international disarmament norms and standards. Notable participants included representatives from Portugal, the United States, the World Organization for Animal Health and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, emphasizing the collaborative effort to fortify global security against biological risks.

17. From 29 to 30 August 2023, the Regional Centre participated in a national workshop on the Biological Weapons Convention in Banjul. The workshop was aimed at raising awareness about the Convention, its obligations and benefits and its contribution to international peace and security.

18. On 30 May and 1 June 2023 in Banjul, the Regional Centre took an active part in the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty Organization regional workshop for Africa. The event, which gathered 23 African Member States, was aimed at deepening understanding of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, with a focus on promoting full adherence across Africa while ensuring that all States signatories benefit from Treaty membership. The Centre stressed the crucial importance of the Treaty and its complementarity with other nuclear disarmament treaties in particular and other international disarmament arms control and non-proliferation instruments in Africa and beyond.

C. Conventional arms

19. The Regional Centre began implementing activities under a three-year global programme funded by the European Union, aimed at supporting the implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms.

20. In preparation for the fourth United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in 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, the Regional Centre organized two regional preparatory meetings in Africa. The first, targeting West and Central African nations, took place in Lomé on 29 February and 1 March 2024. Some 31 representatives (including 7 women) of national commissions against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and representatives of

ECOWAS, ECCAS, the Mines Advisory Group, and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) convened to deliberate on the progress of implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms within their countries. The participants identified region-specific challenges, exchanged successful countermeasures and collaboratively formulated strategic directions for the Conference. The Centre organized the same meeting for East and Southern African countries in Nairobi on 4 and 5 March 2024. That meeting served as a forum for 32 representatives (including 10 women) of national commissions against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and representatives of the African Union, SADC, the East African Community, IGAD, the Regional Centre on Small Arms and the Mines Advisory Group to evaluate their progress, share insights and tackle unique regional challenges associated with the control of small arms and light weapons. The participants established a unified regional perspective and drafted comprehensive recommendations for the Conference.

21. On 11 December 2023, a webinar was organized, the first of a series serving to discuss the integration of gender considerations into arms control policies entitled “Taking stock of gender-responsive actions into small arms control measures”. The webinar addressed the advancements and challenges faced by countries such as Burundi, Cameroon and Sierra Leone. It was attended by 42 representatives of national commissions and experts in disarmament across Africa (of whom 30 per cent were women). Furthermore, on 8 March 2024, marking International Women’s Day, the Regional Centre, together with UNIDIR, conducted a webinar on fostering gender-responsive small arms control and exploring perspectives from the African region on the Programme of Action on Small Arms and the Arms Trade Treaty. A total of 47 representatives (including 15 women) from national small arms commissions in Africa and experts participated in the webinar.

22. In addition, the Regional Centre supported Member States directly upon request. It provided assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the elaboration of its new national action plan against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. On the margins of the national workshop on the Biological Weapons Convention in the Gambia and following a formal request, the Centre held a working session with the Interior Minister of the Gambia and the Permanent Secretary of the newly established National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons of Gambia. The meeting was an opportunity to discuss the needs of Gambian authorities and their expectations in order to provide targeted support.

23. From 12 to 14 September 2023, the Regional Centre participated in a workshop organized by the Office of Counter-Terrorism in Nairobi. The event, part of a larger project aimed at eliminating the supply of weapons to terrorists in Africa, was focused on countering the terrorist use of improvised explosive devices and small arms and light weapons. Participants included the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, IGAD and UNIDIR. The workshop was aimed at raising awareness and building capacity regarding the threats and risks posed by these weapons while discussing international, regional and national legal frameworks, norms, standards and good practices. As part of efforts to support the technical guidelines on the facilitation of Security Council resolution [2370 \(2017\)](#), the Centre presented multiple sessions on the global and regional normative frameworks and practical strategies for managing small arms and light weapons, drawing upon its successful projects across Africa.

24. From 27 to 29 February 2024, in Rabat, the Regional Centre attended the regional workshop for the Sahel on countering terrorist use of improvised explosive devices and small arms and light weapons. Organized by United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre of the Office of Counter-Terrorism with the financial support of the Russian Federation, the workshop was aimed at supporting countries in the Sahel

region to better assess and counter the threat posed by terrorist use of improvised explosive devices, unmanned aircraft systems and small arms and light weapons. The workshop brought together 40 senior officials from Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Chad, Morocco, the Niger, Nigeria and Senegal, as well as representatives of 12 international and regional organizations responsible for counter-terrorism, law enforcement, arms control and intelligence. The Centre contributed by sharing experiences on upstream measures including regulations and control of manufacture, transfer controls, and security management of national stockpiles.

25. From 5 to 7 December 2023, the Regional Centre, in collaboration with UNIDIR and the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, convened a seminar in Lomé, aiming to strengthen conventional arms management in support of States' efforts in the prevention of violent extremism in West Africa. The seminar brought together 60 participants, including 11 women from 15 different West African countries, representing governments, regional organizations and civil society, offering an extensive platform for knowledge exchange, addressing challenges and discussing innovative approaches. Recommendations were captured in an official document, endorsed by the Centre, UNIDIR and Switzerland, and were aimed at contributing to the peace and security objectives in West Africa within the framework of the African Union initiative to silence the guns by 2030.

26. From 4 to 8 March 2024, in Lomé, the Regional Centre conducted a series of four training sessions, which included three specialized modules in support of the Ministry of Security, designed to train trainers on law and order in an election context within the special election security task force ahead of the upcoming legislative and regional elections in Togo. The sessions on training trainers targeted 200 trainers of the police and gendarmerie, with a focus on the responsible use of force, effective firearms management and proper arms handling, while emphasizing compliance with international arms control norms. The sessions played a critical role in preparing the forces to maintain public order during the electoral period.

27. The Regional Centre co-hosted two regional workshops in Lomé to raise awareness and support countries in implementing the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. The first, held on 30 and 31 January 2024, was focused on strengthening the protection of civilians from the humanitarian consequences of using explosive weapons in populated areas. More than 30 participants (including 5 women), representing national Governments and defence and security forces, as well as delegates from ministries and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), attended. The second, held on 1 and 2 February 2024, was centred on the universalization of the Convention, with the primary aim of encouraging States to adopt and implement the Convention, the aim of which is to ban or restrict the use of specific types of weapons that are considered to cause unnecessary or unjustifiable suffering to combatants or to affect civilians indiscriminately, and to promote international peace and security. It was attended by more than 30 representatives (including 5 women) from African countries, including military officials, defence ministries, international organizations and NGOs.

28. The Regional Centre organized a regional workshop on weapons and ammunition management and cross-border control in the Lake Chad basin on 13 and 14 December 2023, in Lomé. The event gathered 20 participants (including 6 women) representing Benin, Cameroon, Chad, the Niger and Nigeria, as well as regional organizations including ECOWAS, ECCAS, the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the West African Economic and Monetary Union. Experts from UNIDIR, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Institute for Security Studies, the Laboratoire d'analyse régionale et d'expertise sociale, the Ammunition Management Advisory Team and the Conventional Arms Branch of the Office for Disarmament

Affairs shared their experiences and derived lessons learned together with the participants.

29. On 8 and 9 June 2024, the Regional Centre provided support to the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons to organize its East Africa regional seminar in collaboration with the Parliament of Uganda. The Centre outlined the challenges and opportunities in implementing the Programme of Action on Small Arms in Africa, suggested mechanisms to foster collaboration among various stakeholders and advised on possible effective actions that parliamentarians can take to support arms control.

D. Science and technology

30. The Regional Centre continued to promote discussions and dialogue among States in the region on the impact of advancing science and technology on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. From 5 to 7 December 2023, the Centre participated in the West African region working group of the Global Counterterrorism Forum in Banjul. The meeting, supported by UNODC, gathered senior officials from States of West Africa and the Sahel, including Algeria, Cameroon, the Central African Republic and Chad, as well as Germany, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye. Discussions were focused on combating the illicit trafficking and use of small arms and light weapons, unmanned aircraft systems and associated ammunition by terrorist groups. The meeting served to emphasize the need for strengthened legislative frameworks, enhanced border security and improved regional cooperation and information-sharing to disrupt terrorist networks and safeguard regional stability. The Centre's contribution was focused on emerging patterns in the use of the above-mentioned weapons and technologies by non-State armed groups, including violent extremist groups in the Sahel, and ways to address such use.

E. Strengthening partnerships for disarmament

31. The Regional Centre has intensified its efforts to forge stronger partnerships and collaboration with external partners to advance disarmament matters while working with stakeholders to mainstream gender into all activities pertaining to disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. Through strategic meetings, collaborative projects and capacity-building programmes, the initiatives brought together a diverse array of stakeholders including the African Union, ECOWAS, ECCAS, SADC, IGAD, the West African Economic and Monetary Union, the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the Regional Centre on Small Arms, government officials, civil society organizations and research institutions. This engagement was aimed at exploring the link between arms control and non-proliferation with other relevant issues such as terrorism, the prevention of violent extremism, and sustainable development. During the activities, the Centre emphasized the importance of harmonizing regional instruments with global and continental frameworks, as well as effective communication to amplify the impact of these efforts.

32. Following the meeting on 18 May 2023 between the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security of the African Union, Bankole Adeoye, and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, at the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, the Regional Centre and the African Union launched a cooperation matrix in August 2023 to enhance collaboration on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation across Africa. The final matrix was approved on 17 October 2023. It is aimed at addressing the continent's peace and security challenges by strengthening policy cooperation, empowering disarmament policymakers, supporting research, curbing illicit arms trafficking and mitigating

risks posed by weapons of mass destruction and emerging technologies. The Centre is working with the African Union Commission to develop the programmatic part of the cooperation matrix.

33. On 25 October 2023, on the premises of the Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union to the United Nations, the Regional Centre briefed representatives from African Union member States that are part of the African Group on the situation of arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament in Africa, as well as on the Centre's activities in support of Member States and African regional organizations. The briefing was followed by a fruitful exchange of ideas regarding ways to strengthen collaboration and coordination between the Centre and African Union member States with a view to optimizing the impact of disarmament initiatives in the region. In addition, the Centre sought feedback and input from African Union representatives on its activities and explored opportunities for further support and cooperation in fulfilling its mandate.

34. The Regional Centre, in collaboration with the African Union and the Government of Mozambique, conceptualized, jointly funded and organized the continental launch of the 2023 Africa Amnesty Month, which took place on 11 and 12 September in Maputo. Key participants included the Chairperson of the African Union Peace and Security Council, Churchill Ewumbue-Monono; the High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa, Mohamed Ibn Chambas; the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mozambique, Verónica Nataniel Macamo Dlhovo; the Personal Envoy of the Secretary General for Mozambique, Mirko Manzoni; and the Resident Coordinator, Catherine Sozi. The Centre availed of the opportunity to involve the Office of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General to Mozambique and the Resident Coordinator and to showcase the successful United Nations-supported Mozambique disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process.

35. On 25 November 2023, in Lomé, the University of Lomé hosted a symposium entitled "The fight against terrorism in the Sahel and the Gulf of Guinea" with the support of the Regional Centre. The event brought together some 30 participants from Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, the Niger, Nigeria and Togo, including representatives from civil society organizations such as the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding and the Center for Civilians in Conflict, academics, government officials from the National Assembly and the Ministry of Education, members of the diplomatic corps based in Togo, and the United Nations country team in Togo. Discussions were focused on the rising challenges of violent extremism and terrorism in the Sahel and the Gulf of Guinea, the evaluation of regional counter-terrorism policies and strategies, and the role that African academia can play in supporting arms control and counter-terrorism efforts through operational research.

36. From 13 to 15 December 2023, in Dakar, the Regional Centre participated in the annual coordination meeting of 15 national commissions on small arms and light weapons, hosted by ECOWAS. The meeting served to address the critical issues of improvised explosive devices, youth gun violence and the escalation of violent extremism in the ECOWAS region.

37. On the International Day of Peace on 21 September 2023, the Regional Centre organized an interactive debate with senior students at Cours Lumière High School in Lomé about the importance of arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament in Africa and the proactive role that citizens can play in helping to curb the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons. On 24 October 2023, the Centre held an outreach event on peace and disarmament at the second largest market in Lomé to mark United Nations Day in partnership with other United Nations entities.

38. On 10 April 2024, following a scoping mission in Ghana jointly conducted by the Centre, the United Nations Development Programme, UNODC, the Resident

Coordinator Office and the National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons of Ghana in November and December 2023, the partners launched the project for Ghana under the Saving Lives Entity fund, a global project by the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme that allocates grants to catalyse more comprehensive approaches to small arms and armed violence reduction. The project is focused on a baseline assessment of firearms in Ghana, assistance towards an updated legal framework conducive to arms control in compliance with the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, training sessions for improved border control to detect and intercept illicit weapons, ammunition and explosives, and community awareness campaigns to deter the infiltration of violent extremists and consolidate social cohesion while ensuring that gender is substantially mainstreamed across all project activities.

39. The Regional Centre has actively utilized various digital and traditional media channels to enhance its outreach and keep stakeholders informed of regional disarmament and non-proliferation issues. It continued to make use of social media platforms to disseminate information and news items regularly.

40. The Regional Centre has also ensured that its activities, including workshops and seminars, are covered by local and international media outlets ranging from print press sources to television and radio networks in order to maximize public visibility and promote peace and disarmament education effectively. By engaging various partners, including civil society organizations, the Centre strives to foster a collaborative environment and broaden its impact on promoting disarmament initiatives globally. Through these strategic communication efforts, the Centre not only disseminates critical information but also enhances participant engagement across different platforms.

F. Future activities

41. For the upcoming year, the Regional Centre will continue its efforts to support African Member States and African regional organizations in implementing disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation activities, including within the framework of the New Agenda for Peace, under which the integration of disarmament into global security, sustainable development and gender equality frameworks is encouraged. The Centre plans to improve these efforts through capacity-building workshops, expert consultations, webinars, strategic partnerships and targeted projects. The goal is to deepen awareness of disarmament and enhance capacity to implement effective disarmament, small arms control and non-proliferation policies while promoting sustainable development and advancing the broader peace and security agenda across the continent, including the reduction of violent extremism.

42. The Centre plans to continue its activities under the project supporting the implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms, focusing on the integration of small arms control into broader gender equality, development and security efforts. In addition, the Centre will conduct assessments using the Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium in two countries to evaluate the application of the Compendium guidelines.

43. For the forthcoming year, the Regional Centre is implementing a project, which is funded by the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation, on capacity-building of Resident Coordinator Offices on integrating arms control in common country analyses and Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework processes.

44. In addition, as a follow-up to the seminar on the prevention of violent extremism, the Regional Centre, in collaboration with UNIDIR and the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, will launch a research initiative aimed at understanding the integration of conventional arms and ammunition management into the prevention of violent extremism in West Africa. The project will involve extensive field research and data collection, with the aim of generating actionable insights and guidelines for better integrating conventional arms and ammunition management into strategies for the prevention of violent extremism. The collaboration involves multiple stakeholders including local governments and ECOWAS.

45. The Regional Centre is organizing several outreach and awareness-raising activities for the implementation of the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management, which was adopted by the General Assembly in December 2023. Funded by Germany for 2024, the objective of these initiatives is to translate global commitments into actionable subregional strategies. The project is aimed at mapping regional priorities in West and Central Africa and East and Southern Africa, identifying gaps and opportunities within existing subregional mechanisms, frameworks and practices concerning conventional ammunition management. Two 2-day regional meetings – one in Lomé and another in Gaborone – will be organized to bring together representatives from national authorities, regional organizations and NGOs to promote the Global Framework and explore ways to enhance commitments at the regional and subregional levels.

IV. Financial situation, staffing and administration

A. Financial situation

46. The Regional Centre was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution [40/151 G](#), on the basis of existing resources and voluntary contributions. In 2023, the Centre's trust fund received voluntary contributions in the amount of \$168,528. Information on the status of the trust fund for 2023 is contained in the annex to the present report.

47. The Secretary-General expresses his appreciation to the Government of Togo for its long-standing support and financial contribution to the Regional Centre. The Secretary-General expresses his gratitude to the Member States that made financial and in-kind contributions to the Centre, namely Italy and Switzerland.

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

B. Staffing and administration

49. 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. The Secretary-General also encourages Member States to support the Regional Centre by providing it with gratis staff.

V. Conclusion

50. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre discharged its mandate by providing assistance to Member States and regional organizations in Africa, at their request, in the areas of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, and, more generally, to promote peace, security and stability. The Centre actively promoted and facilitated dialogue among Member States and provided platforms for the inclusion of diverse voices such as those of women, young people and a broad range of civil society actors.

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

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

53. The Secretary-General calls upon those in a position to do so to make voluntary contributions to the Regional 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. In addition, the Secretary-General 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 for Sustainable Development in the region.

Annex

Status of the trust fund for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa for 2023

(United States dollars)

Accumulated surplus, 1 January 2023	402 416
Revenue	
Voluntary contributions ^a	168 528
Other revenue ^b	3 317
Investment revenue ^c	17 394
Total revenue	189 239
Less: Expenses and refunds	
Operating expenses	326 248
Refunds ^d	13 429
Total expenses and refunds	339 677
Surplus/deficit for the year 2023	(150 438)
Accumulated surplus/deficit as at 31 December 2023	251 978

^a Consists of voluntary contributions as follows: \$31,502 from the Government of Togo; and \$137,026 from the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

^b Exchange gains.

^c Interest earned.

^d Refund to the Government of Australia.