Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor for my colleagues and I to address the First Committee on regional disarmament, under agenda item 98, and specifically on the activities of the Office for Disarmament Affairs' Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. In keeping with their mandate, the Regional Centres support regional disarmament measures, at the request of States, taking into account the specific characteristics of each region, with a view to enhancing the security of States and contributing to regional and international peace and security.

While the operational costs of the Regional Centres are funded in part by the Regular Budget of the Organization, their substantive programmes rely entirely on voluntary contributions. We would like to express our gratitude to those States and organizations that have made financial and/or in-kind contributions to the Regional Centres.

Based on requests from Member States and UNODA's programme priorities, we believe that capacity building is central to the success of promoting and implementing global disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation norms and instruments at the regional, subregional and national levels. During the past year, the three Regional Centres' programmes have undertaken activities mainly in the following areas:

1) provision of capacity building programmes and legal and technical assistance to Member States in their efforts to accede to and to implement global and regional instruments, such as the UN PoA on the illicit trade in SALW, various regional and subregional instruments on combating illicit SALW and their control, the Arms Trade Treaty, BWC, CWC and UNSC resolution 1540.

2) promoting dialogue and confidence building through organizing global and regional conferences and workshops on both WMD and conventional arms issues, as well as on regional security challenges.

3) undertaking advocacy and outreach activities to promote global treaties, and raise public awareness on disarmament and non-proliferation through peace and disarmament education programme. I will leave the details of these activities to the Directors of the Regional Centres to elaborate on their respective Centre’s programmes.

Since our last report before the Committee, the Centres have undertaken about 90 activities funded from extrabudgetary contributions. Upon request, these have focused on
supporting Member States in building their national capacities. In doing so, we have made greater efforts to build or strengthen partnership with other UN entities, regional and subregional organizations, civil society organization and other stakeholders, which aimed at improving programme delivery and achieving synergy on the ground. We have also made conscious efforts to integrate the Centres’ disarmament and arms control programmes into the UN’s overall regional and subregional strategies where relevant, and to enhance cross-regional cooperation and coordination.

The Regional Centres shall continue their close cooperation with Member States requesting assistance and with relevant regional organizations; as well as with donors and other partners. We also look forward to your continued interest, support and engagement in the activities undertaken by the three UN Regional Centres.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.

UNREC presentation to the First Committee (70th General Assembly)
Thursday, 29 October 2015

Thank you Mr. Chair,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the pleasure to report to the First Committee on the activities of ODA’s Regional Centre in Africa (UNREC) during the period of October 2014 and October 2015.

I would like to express my appreciation for the support received from Member States and our institutional partners, including the African Union and the European Union.
I would especially like to thank Republic of Togo for hosting us for the past 30 years.

Since the last meeting of this Committee, the Centre has continued to assist Member States, intergovernmental and civil society organizations through capacity-building, policy support and technical assistance to promote peace, security and disarmament in Africa.

In line with the priorities of the continent, the prevention of the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons has remained the primary focus area of UNREC’s activities.

As an observer member of the African Union-Regions Steering Committee on Small Arms, the Centre provided substantive and technical advice to the AU Commission and the Committee on the implementation of the AU Small Arms Strategy as well as its DDR programme. UNREC contributed to the drafting of a training manual on DDR and a guide for Central African States to harmonize their national legislations on small arms with regional and international instruments such as the Kinshasa Convention.

The Centre provided substantive support to the eleven States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Question in Central Africa on issues
related to disarmament and non-proliferation. Building upon the UNSAC recommendation and in the context of the upcoming AU Summit on Maritime Security, UNREC is conducting informal consultations with member States of the Gulf of Guinea—from Southern Africa to West Africa—and potential partners on the adverse consequences of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons for maritime security and sustainable development.

UNREC provided assistance for the implementation of international and regional instruments to combat the illicit trade and the uncontrolled proliferation in small arms and light weapons. In particular, by assisting in the drafting of national action plans on small arms and in strengthening the capacity of governments and civil society organizations in the field of small arms control. The Centre also provided substantive support in the area of legislation by reviewing the small arms related legislation of Mali, Nigeria and Togo.

UNREC, in cooperation with UNIDIR and the ISACS Implementation Support Unit, conducted a training for officials from East African Member States on the International Small Arms Control Standards Assessment Tool. With this tool, East African States will assess how their policies, programmes and practices align with international standards and will identify areas in need of strengthening. UN peacekeeping missions in the subregion also participated in the training.

With regards to the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, UNREC is undertaking a study in nine countries ranging from the Sahel to Central Africa. The study, supported by UNDP, will provide up-to-date information on small arms-related challenges in those countries.

This information will form the basis for future capacity-building activities such as envisaged under the European Union-funded programme of activities on physical safety and stockpile management of small arms in the Sahel. The project will be conducted over a three-year period to reduce the risk of illicit trade in small arms, light weapons and ammunition.

The Centre has conducted capacity-building activities and provided technical support to Mali to empower national civil society organizations to prevent the proliferation of arms through national awareness-raising programmes. The Centre also began activities focusing on the marking and registration of government-owned and civilian-held weapons and the development of standard operating procedures for the management of imported weapons.

The Centre provided recommendations to Liberia on the physical security and management of weapons stockpiles, in the context of an assessment which the Security Council had requested the Secretary-General to undertake. A training on the marking and registration of small arms and light weapons in Liberia was conducted by UNREC in cooperation with the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

ODA, in coordination with UNODC, provided assistance to Burkina Faso, Niger and Sierra Leone with the implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. Marking machines were provided and training sessions were organized on marking and record-keeping of small arms and light weapons.
The Centre provided support to Togo in the marking and registering of over 9,000
civilian-held arms. The activity was accompanied by an awareness-raising campaign for the
public and a high-level briefing for the Government.

The Centre also developed and piloted a training course on weapons and ammunition
management for security forces, including guidelines for the use of force, the International
Ammunition Technical Guidelines and the International Small Arms Control Standards.

Building on its existing work in this field, UNREC has continued to provide support
and assistance to African States in their efforts to implement the Arms Trade Treaty.

The Centre provided information to and raised the awareness of States on the
ATT and its provisions, as well as assisted States in planning the steps towards the implementation
of the treaty. Through advocacy, information and technical assistance, UNREC will continue
to engage with Member States and regional and subregional organizations on the Treaty by
contributing its expertise. In particular, UNREC has assisted Small Island Developing States
of Africa to identify the specific challenges they face and how the ATT can contribute to
responding to them. UNREC will specifically focus its assistance on understanding how
human-rights related provisions in the ATT are to be implemented, including those related to
women.

In the area of weapons of mass destruction, the Regional Centre has provided
assistance on the implementation of international instruments, including the Biological
Weapons Convention. UNREC also supported Member States in their efforts to implement
Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). This builds on the work done by the Centre in the
previous year on assisting Africa States in reporting to the Committee.

The Centre facilitated and assisted the Experts of the 1540 Committee in visiting
Malawi, Senegal, Togo and Zambia to provide assistance, in particular discussing future steps
to be taken by those States in the implementation of resolution 1540. More African States
have also expressed interest in hosting such country visits.

UNREC worked with the governments of Benin, Burkina Faso and Uganda in
strengthening their national capacity to implement their obligations under the Biological
Weapons Convention, in particular confidence-building measures, legislative and
administrative measures, awareness-raising and the creation of a code of conduct on biosafety
and biosecurity standards. This was done in cooperation with the BWC ISU.

The Centre has continued its information, advocacy and outreach activities towards
States, civil society, and the public at large through various media, events and celebrations, in
particular briefings to diplomats accredited to African States, the distribution of the UNREC
e-newsletter to over 5,500 global subscribers and the website.

With regards to contributions and the support received by States, UNREC would like
to thank its donors: France, Germany, Japan (through UNDP), Norway, Togo, the United
Kingdom and the United States of America (through the 1540 Trust Fund), in addition to the
Economic Community of Central African States, and the European Union. The Centre also
benefited from the generous in-kind contribution from Finland which financed an
international UN Volunteer, and from Germany who is funding an Associate Expert /JPO in
legal affairs. Additionally, through the 1540 ODA Trust Fund, the United States of America is funding a national UN Volunteer to coordinated activities on resolution 1540 in Africa.

UNREC is also grateful for in-kind contributions from Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana and Mali in the form of technical experts provided by these governments.

The Centre also wishes to express gratitude for financial contributions from donor States to the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation, the United Nations Development Programme, the International Organization of La Francophonie, and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

The Centre remains ready to support Member States in addressing disarmament and non-proliferation challenges in Africa. I would also like to echo the appeal of the Secretary-General and that of the African Union for States in a position to do so to make financial contributions to the Trust Fund of the Centre, and in particular from African States.

UNRCPD presentation to the First Committee (70th General Assembly)
Thursday, 29 October 2015

Thank you Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the pleasure to report to the First Committee on the activities of the UNRegional Centre in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD) since last year’s First Committee.

The Centre carried out 7 projects reaching as many as 400 participants or trainees. The Centre focused its activities on three main areas: 1) providing capacity-building and technical assistance for the implementation of international instruments on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation; 2) promoting dialogue and confidence building among Member States through organizing major conferences and other fora; and 3) undertaking outreach and advocacy activities, including peace and disarmament education programmes.

As many of you may have learned that the Centre has been temporarily relocated to Bangkok, Thailand since 18 May this year after the strong earthquakes struck Kathmandu in April and May. During these earthquakes, the Centre’s office building was severely damaged and deemed no longer safe for use by the UNDSS, and the living premises of the majority of the Centre’s staff also suffered serious damage and they had to be resettled at a temporary shelter. The temporary relocation made it possible for the Regional Centre to continue its planned regional activities for 2015 and early 2016 covering a number of Member States in the Asian and Pacific region.

1. Capacity-building activities, UNRCPD carried out several projects to assist Member States in the Asia-Pacific region to implement their commitments relating to multilateral instruments, including the UN Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in SALW (PoA) and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).
The Centre organized in cooperation with the Government of Bangladesh a national capacity-building workshop on the PoA and the ATT. About 40 government officials from 19 national ministries and agencies participated in the workshop which addressed policies, practices and technical issues relating to the combating illicit trafficking in SALW and the ATT. The workshop identified areas where further support would be required, in particular on national legislation and record-keeping systems.

The Centre completed a two-month project in the Maldives by providing the Government with technical and legal assistance to facilitate the implementation of the PoA and support its capacity to move towards accession to the ATT. This project was developed in response to a request by the Maldives for assistance to implement the PoA. It consisted of three phases: a) an assessment visit to the Maldives to identify needs, including a site visit; b) a review of the national legislation, regulations and procedures relating to small arms control, including stockpile management, and development of recommendations for further action; and c) the presentation of recommendations to Government experts and officials.

The Centre organized a regional legal assistance workshop on the ATT in Cambodia with 13 Member States of from the region participated. The workshop focused on facilitating the process of the signature, ratification of and accession to the Treaty. The workshop provided an opportunity to assess and discuss the gaps between national legislations and Treaty obligations. At the workshop, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands Forum presented a model law that can be used for the implementation of the ATT.

Furthermore, the Centre conducted jointly with the MFA of Indonesia a National Round Table Discussion on the ATT. Thirty-five representatives from more than ten key ministries and national agencies dealing with international transfers of conventional arms participated in the meeting. The meeting provided briefings on the Treaty provisions and discussed the implications of accession to the ATT.

2. Dialogue and confidence building fora. UNRCPD co-organized two annual conferences to promote dialogue and confidence-building among Member States and to address current global and regional challenges in disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation.

The 13th United Nations-Republic of Korea Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-proliferation Issues, held in December 2014, focused on preparations for the 2015 NPT Review Conference, and issues related to the Treaty implementation. In addition, it addressed the potential danger of the development and use of autonomous lethal weapons systems and possible preventive measures to regulate various aspects of such systems.

The 25th UN Conference on Disarmament Issues held in Hiroshima City, Japan in August 2015 addressed the outcome of the 2015 NPT Review and possible next steps in view of this outcome; the significance of nuclear-weapon-free zones; the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, and the role of civil society and education in renewing the efforts towards realizing the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. With the participation of some members of the CTBT Group of Eminent Persons, the Conference also discussed the important role of the CTBT in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

3. Peace and disarmament education programme. In 2014, the Centre concluded Phase I of its Peace and Disarmament Education project in Nepal, incorporating peace and
disarmament education modules into middle school curriculum in Nepal. Building on the progress achieved, the Centre commenced Phase II of the project in December 2014 in partnership with UNESCO. The Centre organized four workshops attended by 100 teachers and other education practitioners. Six articles on PDE methodology were published. The curricula and textbooks created during Phase I and II of this project will reach hundreds of thousands students in Nepal per year for the next 10 years.

The Centre has strengthened its outreach activities. UNRCPD publishes regular factsheets and newsletters and constantly improves and updates its website, to reach an increasing number of audience interested in disarmament issues in the region and beyond. UNRCPD’s twitter stream provides updates on disarmament issues in Asia-Pacific and has reached over 1,200 followers worldwide.

Moreover, the Centre engaged with sub-regional organizations and other stakeholders in the region. Staff of the Centre contributed substantively to events on capacity building and promoting peace, arms control and disarmament agreements in the region organized by these organizations.

In conclusion, despite the earthquakes in Nepal and its temporary relocation, the Centre, with the support of Member States, including the donor countries, as well as of ODA’s HQ, managed to implement more projects and activities than previously.

I would like particularly to thank our donors for their confidence and financial support: Australia, China, Germany, Japan, Kazakhstan, Nepal, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Thailand and United Kingdom, as well as Rissho Kosei-kai of Japan. In addition, Canada, Finland, Japan and Switzerland also provided the Centre with in-kind support, such as UN Volunteers or UN Youth Volunteer.

The Centre is looking forward to continuing its cooperation with and assistance to Member States in the region upon request to strengthen their capacities to implement global and regional disarmament and non-proliferation instruments. However, the Centre’s ability to carry out these programmes depends on the availability of both human and financial resources. Therefore, I would like to echo the call by the Secretary-General in his report A/69/127 on the Regional Centre for the countries in the region and beyond to make voluntary contributions to the Centre to ensure the sustainability of its activities and operations and to enable it to fulfil the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly.

Thank you for your attention.
Thank you Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the pleasure to report to the First Committee on the activities of the UNODA Regional Centre in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC) during the period between October 2014 and October 2015.

Since we last met, UNLIREC has undertaken over 50 activities in 17 States reaching more than 1,550 officials through capacity-building activities, including trainings, and legal and policy assistance covering issues of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. The Centre assisted Member States in their implementation of various international instruments, such as the Arms Trade Treaty, the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms; the International Tracing Instrument; Security Council resolution 1540 (2004); and the General Assembly resolution on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control (65/69).

A few highlights of the Centre’s work and assistance this year included:

**UNGA 65/69**

In 2014-15, UNLIREC renewed its mission to promote women as ‘agents of change’ in disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, and launched the second edition of its ‘Women Forces of Change’ publication. This publication pays tribute to nearly one hundred professional women from the region, who dedicate their lives to advancing the women, peace and security agenda defined in GA resolution 65/69.

To assist States to address the impact of illicit arms trade on women and children, UNLIREC developed a risk assessment template to help States identify risks - specific to women and young people - associated with these transfers and whether these risks could cross the thresholds of human rights and international humanitarian law violations. This new tool was first made available to States at a regional seminar in Mexico and then again through the UNLIREC ATT Implementation Course.

**Small arms control and the rule of law**

Understanding that legal frameworks are fundamental to strengthening the fight against the illicit trafficking in small arms, UNLIREC provide legal assistance to the Dominican Republic to align its new small arms bill of law with international and regional instruments. Peru was also the beneficiary of the Centre’s in-house legal and technical advice through assistance in the drafting of its new regulatory framework to support the new arms legislation passed in early 2015.
Improving firearms ballistics tracing capacities and evidence management

UNLIREC has responded to requests by States in the Caribbean to strengthen their efforts to combat illicit firearms and ammunition trafficking. In this context, UNLIREC launched a project in eight Caribbean States to assist the government in enhancing their capabilities to gather, maintain and share information drawn from forensic ballistics evidence for identifying sources of illicit weapons and ammunition, as well as reducing impunity in cases of trafficking and armed violence.

The 8 Caribbean States (Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Guyana, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Trinidad and Tobago) received support in the elaboration of national action plans, the provision of basic laboratory materials and equipment, training, incorporation of standard operating procedures and the development of national competency testing frameworks for firearm examiners.

UNLIREC's assistance in this area - which has reached almost 250 people - also builds upon the work undertaken by CARICOM, INTERPOL and other international partners to rollout the Regional Integrated Ballistics Information Network for the Caribbean.

ATT

In keeping with the global momentum and focus on the ATT, UNLIREC implemented four ATT Implementation Courses to about 130 officials from the Central American States. These courses, now available in both English and Spanish, complement ODA's ATT implementation tool kit. These national courses target regulating and control authorities, such as customs, police, defence forces, as well as civil aviation and port authorities, to understand the provisions and obligations of the Treaty. In particular, national control authorities are introduced to risk assessment templates and proposed model end-user certificates with a view to standardizing the control measures and documentation needed for international transfers to be conducted in keeping with ATT obligations.

Promoting peaceful co-existence at the local level

Since 2014, UNLIREC has formed part of a UN multi-agency framework to promote peace and citizen security in northern Peru, supported by a grant from the UN Human Security Trust Fund. This effort has continued to make a difference in 2015 with the recent destruction of over 2,000 confiscated small arms in cooperation with the Government of Peru and local authorities.

This Joint Programme - a collaborative effort of UNLIREC with partners from UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC and WHO - aims to combat illicit small arms and armed violence by working with local governments. This multi-sectoral intervention is a prime example of how the UN can work as one to contribute to Sustainable Development Goals.

Strengthening oversight of the private security sector

UNLIREC cooperated with the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of the Armed Forces (DCAF) to launch a project to address the issue of the growth of private security companies offering armed protection services in the region and its impact on small arms-related issues.
Through the introduction of international standards in the handling of small arms, the project is aimed at reducing the risk of diversion of small arms to illicit markets and illegal actors.

The first project activity in 2015 concentrated on training Private Security Companies on improving the management of weapons stockpiles in El Salvador and Peru. The International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS) and International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATGs) which are adapted to the requirements of the private security sector were used in the training programmes.

It is hoped that this effort could evolve into a multi-year cross regional framework implemented with DCAF, where appropriate, in various regions where ODA’s three Centres operate.

1540: Strategic trade controls, voluntary national action plans and legal reform

UNLIREC continues to support five Caribbean States (Belize, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago) in their implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) through improved strategic trade controls and the update of legislative and policy frameworks. Building on last year’s activities, UNLIREC continues to assist these five States in updating their legislation and regulations. UNLIREC is particularly pleased to report that the Dominican Republic intends to present a new bill of law implementing resolution 1540 (2004) at a national level.

Part of this comprehensive assistance package entails supporting the elaboration of voluntary 1540 national action plans. With UNLIREC’s support and thanks to the previous legal analyses and consultations with national stakeholders – undertaken in conjunction with members of the group of experts assisting the 1540 Committee and CARICOM – this year, Grenada and the Dominican Republic have submitted their voluntary 1540 NAPs to the 1540 Committee. The Centre is currently engaging with all of the relevant stakeholders in Belize and Trinidad and Tobago to assist them in the preparation of national action plans.

UNLIREC also cooperated with several collaborators in the delivery of joint trainings with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in Grenada, and Trinidad and Tobago and next month in Belize to enhance risk management in the maritime domain, as well as with INTERPOL and other partners in Trinidad and Tobago and next month in Jamaica to provide law enforcement training on the detection and handling of dual-use chemicals and other substances.

In keeping with States’ requests for assistance, UNLIREC is currently seeking support from donors to expand the scope of its 1540 programme.

Conclusions

I wish to thank our donors (Canada, Germany, Guyana, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Spain, the United States of America, and the UN Trust Fund for Human Security) for their generous support without which none of the above mentioned activities would have been possible and
appeal to States — in particular those of the Latin American and Caribbean region — to continue supporting the Centre.

I reiterate UNLIREC’s commitment to continue developing and implementing innovative tools to counter the illicit arms proliferation and make our region a safer one. I look forward to receiving your feedback on the Centre’s impact in the field and how we can better focus our efforts to meet your disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control needs.

Thank you.