Mr./Ms. Chairperson,

Distinguished delegates from Member States

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for the opportunity to report to the First Committee. This presentation provides an overview of the activities undertaken by the UN Regional Centre in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD) for the one-year period since November 2017 up to now.

The Centre continued its project activities to support Asia-Pacific States to implement arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation agreements as mandated by the GA and streamlined by the recently introduced Disarmament Agenda. With all its activities in the region, UNRCPD contributes to achieving SDGs.

During the reporting period, UNRCPD implemented ten projects at both regional and national level reaching in total over 400 participants from the governments, parliaments, academia and civil society. It also engaged in six collaborative projects.

The Centre extended its commitment to promote dialogue between Member States. In November 2017, in cooperation with the governments and the Republic of Korea and Japan, it organized two annual conferences on issues and challenges facing disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. The conferences contributed to security and confidence-building and to the efforts to seek solutions of complex issues in the area of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control both globally and in the Asia-Pacific region.

In cooperation with UNODA Geneva Branch the Centre organized in March and September 2018 two Asian regional workshops on the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group consultative process in Thailand and Kazakhstan respectively.

With respect to building national capacity and providing technical assistance, UNRCPD carried out projects to assist States of the Asia-Pacific region to implement commitments relating to the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms, the Arms Trade Treaty, and UN Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

In December 2017, the Centre facilitated a South-East Asia Regional Seminar on Illicit Trafficking and Diversion of SALW, Conventional Arms and Ammunition held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The seminar facilitated regional dialogue to identify main trends and challenges related to illicit flow of arms and ammunition; strengthening sub-regional coordination and cooperation with the World Customs Organization and INTERPOL for preventing arms diversion and trafficking.
Representatives on national law-enforcement agencies also discussed advantages of developing national and regional action plans to prevent diversion of arms and fight their illicit trafficking. This project was funded by the Government of Germany.

The Regional Centre organized a regional meeting of Asian States to prepare for the Third Conference to Review the Implementation of the UN Programme of Action on SALW. Meeting held on 7-8 March 2018 in Bangkok.

This year, the Centre accomplished the joint UNODA-OSCE project to Support Regional Implementation of UNSCR 1540 (2004) in the Central Asia and Mongolia launched in July 2016. The main outcome of the project became the submission to the 1540 Committee of NIAPs by Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The project was funded by the EU.

The submission by Timor-Leste its initial report to the 1540 Committee following the national inter-agency meeting, held in October 2017, became another outcome of the UNRCPD activity to support the implementation of resolution 1540 in the region.

While attaching a great importance to promoting women active participation in decision making processes on arms control and disarmament at national, regional and global levels, UNRCPD launched in 2018 its regional project entitled “Gun violence and illicit trafficking of SALW from gender perspective”. The Centre conducted successfully two sub-regional workshops in Bangkok for South-East Asian, and in Kathmandu for South Asian countries.

These workshops, funded by UNSCAR, brought together representatives of NGOs, which focus on gender empowerment issues, and parliamentarians from States of the regions. They exchanged ideas and discussed joint initiatives to address the challenge of illicit small arms and their distinct impact on women.

UNRCPD remains seized with peace and disarmament education and advocacy activities of UN efforts to promote global agreements in the field of arms control and disarmament by engaging with Nepalese security forces officers and students of high schools and universities in Kathmandu.

In the framework of International Day of Youth, the Centre organized event for Peace and Disarmament Discussion with Youth. Over 80 students and teachers received a unique opportunity to discuss with the UNRCPD staff on what peace and disarmament means to youth and what they can do to actively engage in meaningful ways for their communities, country and region.

The Centre actively cooperated with other organizations and stakeholders in the Asia-Pacific region including other UN entities and parliamentarian and non-governmental organizations. The collaborative projects focused on:

i. providing training on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation;
ii. promoting confidence-building measures, implementation and universalization of arms control and non-proliferation instruments;

iii. enhancing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda;

iv. engaging with parliamentarians on achieving Target 16.4 of SDGs on reducing illegal arms flows.

The achievements of the Centre became possible thanks to the support of our sponsors – both donor States and countries of the region who assisted with in-kind contributions to our projects. We highly appreciate the consistent and generous support of the Centre operation by the host Government of Nepal. I would also like to take this opportunity and express our sincere gratitude to our donors – Australia, China, the EU, Finland, Germany, Japan, Kazakhstan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Thailand, and the members of the UNSCAR Trust Fund.

Bearing in mind our mission to support nations across the Asia-Pacific region to build their capacity to control arms, strengthen regional dialogue and promote confidence-building on disarmament and non-proliferation, UNRCPD keep working to conceive new programmes and projects that we plan to implement next year.

The Centre developed a programme to support regional implementation of UN SCR 1540 in South Asia, a series of project proposals to strengthen States’ capacity to control small arms and conventional ammunition and prevent their diversion, and a programme on disarmament education for youth in Asia and the Pacific in a view of its further application in other regions.

With support and commitment of regional States, our donors and other regional stakeholders, we look forward to continuing to carry out our mission on security matters in close working relations with the hosting Government of Nepal. The Centre keeps working with donor States and other funding bodies to secure resources for new projects, laying the groundwork for activities in 2019.

Thank you for your attention.