First Committee Thematic Panel on Regional Disarmament and Security
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Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to address the First Committee under the Regional Disarmament and Security Cluster.

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies, distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to provide a brief overview of the work of ODA’s Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, in Asia and the Pacific, and in Latin America and the Caribbean. A complete account of the Regional Centres’ activities since the convening of the Committee last year can be found in the reports of the Secretary-General (A/74/112, A/74/115 and A/74/118), which are before this Committee for its consideration. My remarks will also brief on the work undertaken by ODA’s Vienna Office, especially in the field of education and outreach.

The Office for Disarmament Affairs, its three Regional Centres and Vienna Office continue to be guided by the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Secretary-General’s Disarmament Agenda, “Securing Our Common Future”.

The Regional Centres continue to work with Member States, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations to promote, facilitate and strengthen regional cooperation, dialogue and confidence-building. In partnership with these stakeholders, the Centres continue to provide capacity building and training as well as legal and technical assistance in support of efforts by Member States to implement regional and international treaties and other instruments. Furthermore, the Regional Centres support Member States in their efforts to prevent the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, in particular their diversion to non-State armed groups; enhance physical security and stockpile management of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition; undertake security sector reform; support the implementation of Security Council resolutions; and promote the role of women in peace and security. In a nutshell, their activities span the entire gamut of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control matters, ranging from conventional weapons to weapons of mass destruction and emerging issues.

Please allow me to say a few words about each Regional Centre and the Vienna Office and on the strategic focus driving their activities in the coming year.
Since October of last year, the Regional Centre in Lima, covering 33 States in Latin America and the Caribbean, carried out over 60 disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control activities. The Centre’s work during this period included training over 140 frontline law-enforcement officials in four States to mitigate the diversion of weapons and ammunition using specialized x-ray technology. The Centre also engaged with over 40 private security personnel, enhancing their capacity to apply relevant international physical security standards in managing weapons stockpile facilities.

International best practices and standards, most notably UN SaferGuard’s IATG, were incorporated into the Centre’s-led destruction of close to 1,000 pieces of light weapons ammunition and 400 different types of missiles in Peru. The aim of this project was to diminish risks of diversion and unintended explosions.

Additionally, with a view to boosting implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, the Centre engaged with 60 youth community leaders from South America to conduct over 5,000 surveys concerning engagement with SDG 16. The surveys were supported by a mobile app which was developed to facilitate data collection and analysis.

The Centre worked with national arms control and regulating authorities in South America and the Caribbean to develop gender-sensitive approaches to armed violence reduction. In related work, it collaborated with civil society representatives on efforts to counter violence against women.

Turning to the Regional Centre in Kathmandu. As part of its support to 43 Member States in Asia and the Pacific, the Centre collaborated with Japan, Singapore and the ASEAN Foundation to engage in disarmament and non-proliferation education as well as regionally focused work on responsible innovation.

As part of its revitalized Peace and Disarmament Education programme, the Centre conducted baseline assessments in nine countries in line with the United Nations Study on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education (A/57/124) and Action 38 of the Secretary-General’s Disarmament Agenda, calling for further investment in disarmament education. The findings of the assessments provide the basis for further work to address the needs of the Asia-Pacific region which will be a main focus for the Regional Centre in the coming year.

The Centre also provided substantive support to efforts bolstering the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), as well as to UNODC’s national and regional events series on countering terrorism and financing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In addition, the Regional Centre collaborated with the World Customs Organization’s Asia-Pacific Security Conference on Countering Terrorism, where it addressed issues related to the prevention of illicit trafficking in small arms and ammunition.
The regional Centre in Togo, for its part, continues to engage with the 54 Member States in Africa in implementing their commitments under various disarmament, non-proliferation, arms control and confidence-building instruments and treaties. The Regional Centre supports the work of States through disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform (SSR) related activities. Notably, the Centre is implementing projects in support of the African Union’s Initiative on Silencing the Guns by 2020, and the Kinshasa Convention as well as supporting a number of Governments in strengthening their physical security and stockpile management efforts to improve control over their arsenals and prevent diversion of weapons to illicit markets.

The Centre will continue to focus on these activities in the coming year in its work to combat violence exacerbated by the use of illicit small arms and light weapons in conflict zones. The Centre could also offer technical assistance in the prevention of violent extremism, cross-border cooperation, initiatives for community violence reduction and peace education (with a focus on youth).

**Vienna Office**

ODA’s Vienna Office, in addition to its main role as a Liaison Office with relevant disarmament organizations in Vienna, also serves as ODA’s education hub.

The Vienna Office hosts the Disarmament Education Dashboard, an online repository of courses on disarmament and non-proliferation and on cross cutting issues, such as youth and gender. The Dashboard includes numerous introductory and advanced modules, developed by ODA and its partner organizations. Some courses are designed for general public, while others are targeted towards disarmament professionals on specific topics. The Vienna Office is pleased to share these resources with interested Member States and collaborate on specific training activities, delivered online and/or in-person, capitalizing on its network of experts and relevant organizations. Learning modules are regularly updated while new ones are being developed on relevant topics.

Mr. Chairman,

In order to better support Member States, the Regional Centres and the Vienna Office will continue to work closely with States in their respective regions to identify the strategic priorities and gaps where support is needed and, in collaboration with these States, develop projects to effectively address current challenges. In doing so, the focus will be on developing multi-disciplinary, multi-partner projects to bolster national capacity.

Additionally, my colleagues at the Regional Centres and the Vienna Office will continue to foster existing partnerships and cooperation with longstanding partners within the UN family as well as with regional organizations and other stakeholders. They will also build new, collaborative relationships with non-traditional partners.
I would like to take this opportunity to express appreciation to Member States and organizations that have made financial and/or in-kind contributions to the Regional Centres and the Vienna Office. I also would like to register our gratitude to the Centres’ host countries—Nepal, Peru, and Togo—and Austria, home of ODA’s Liaison Office, for their longstanding support.

As you know, the three Regional Centres and the Vienna Office depend upon extra-budgetary resources to fund their substantive programmes and activities. I therefore encourage and invite all Member States to support the Centres and the Vienna office through voluntary contributions. Your financial and political support allows for the stability and continuation of the operations and activities of these Centres and the Vienna Office.

Thank you.