

1st Committee – Regional Disarmament (28 October 2025)

UNREC

Your Excellency Vice Chair Jakub Jaros,

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

- It is an honour to address the First Committee in my capacity as Director of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC). I would like to highlight key challenges, opportunities, and progress in disarmament, arms control, and non-proliferation across Africa, complementing the Secretary-General's report.

Challenges and trends

- Despite important progress, Africa continues to face persistent security threats from the proliferation, diversion, and misuse of small arms and light weapons (SALW), which fuel armed violence, organized crime, and violent extremism. The humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences remain severe: unplanned ammunition storage explosions, armed violence, and the displacement of millions continue to hinder access to education, health, and livelihoods. Rising military expenditure diverts scarce resources from development and climate adaptation. Addressing these challenges requires redefining security through a human-centred lens aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 16.

Strengthened Regional Disarmament

- UNREC provides support to Member States and regional and subregional organizations to strengthen arms control, non-proliferation, and disarmament frameworks. The Centre collaborates closely with the African Union, ECOWAS, ECCAS, WAEMU, SADC, and RECSA to advance regional coordination. The AU–UNODA Cooperation Matrix remains the foundation for joint initiatives, including the AU Disarmament Fellowship and the Africa Amnesty Month, promoting voluntary weapons surrender and destruction while reinforcing national ownership of disarmament.
- Following an August 2025 mission to Abuja, UNREC and ECOWAS agreed to update their 2009 Memorandum of Understanding to address emerging security challenges such as the misuse of drones, cyber threats, and the linkages between arms control, climate, and technology.

- UNREC's technical assistance equips national authorities with practical weapons and ammunition management tools. The Centre deployed three MOSAIC missions to Burundi, the DRC, and The Gambia, supporting National Action Plans and contributing to the implementation of the UNSCAR-funded project that assists eight States and UN Country Teams in integrating arms control into development and peacebuilding strategies. Collaboration with UNIDIR and WAEMU strengthened coordination among SALW commissions and informed the design of a new initiative addressing SALW and IED threats in border zones.
- As mandated by the General Assembly, UNREC launched the first African edition of the UN Fellowship on Small Arms and Light Weapons, bringing together 19 fellows, including seven women, from across Africa. Women and youth inclusion remain central to UNREC's programming through regional workshops and webinars on gender mainstreaming and small arms control.

Looking ahead

- In the coming year, UNREC will support States in operationalizing the Global Framework on Ammunition Management, aligning national legislation with global instruments, and deepening partnerships to integrate arms control into peace, development, and climate-security agendas.

Appreciation and conclusion

- Finally, I express sincere appreciation to Member States and partners, especially our host country, Togo, for their steadfast support. We count on your continued engagement and cooperation as we work together towards a safer and more secure Africa. Thank you very much.

UNRCPD

Your Excellency Vice Chair Jakub Jaros,

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

- Thank you for the opportunity to address the First Committee in my capacity as the Director of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD). I would like to share key reflections on the Centre's work over the past year and highlight some of the trends shaping the security landscape in the region. Further details are available in the Secretary-General's report A/80/129.

Challenges and trends

- The Asia-Pacific remains one of the world's most dynamic and diverse regions, yet it continues to face complex security challenges that underscore the importance of disarmament and arms control. Persistent regional tensions, increasing military expenditures, and rapid advances in emerging technologies — including artificial intelligence, autonomous weapons, and cyber capabilities — are transforming the strategic environment.
- Proliferation risks linked to small arms, ammunition, and conventional weapons continue to undermine human security in several subregions. Illicit arms flows fuel armed violence, organized crime, and gender-based violence, while unregulated stockpiles threaten stability and development. These challenges are compounded by limited institutional capacity, data gaps, and the wider impact of the UN liquidity crisis on multilateral engagement. At the same time, Member States are showing growing commitment to preventive dialogue, confidence-building, and the integration of disarmament into national development agendas, including through youth and gender participation, education, and climate-security linkages.

Strengthened Regional Disarmament

- Despite financial constraints, UNRCPD has continued to fulfil its mandate through three main functions: facilitating dialogue, building partnerships, and providing technical support. The Centre hosted regional and subregional meetings on the BWC, GFA, UN PoA, and Women, Peace and Security agendas, as well as briefings on emerging technologies and the military applications of AI. Its flagship Disarmament Toolkit training continues to reach a wide network of practitioners.
- UNRCPD also strengthened partnerships, including joint briefings with Australia and Singapore on the OEWG-PAROS, and expanded the Asia-Pacific Regional

Mechanism on SALW, which now brings together over 45 entities from the UN, civil society, and academia to promote coordinated regional action.

- Technical assistance remains central to our work. Through SALIENT, UNSCAR, and ATT-VTF, UNRCPD provides expert guidance on treaty implementation and integration of arms control into national frameworks. Sustained extra-budgetary funding remains vital to this effort.

Looking ahead

- Looking ahead, the Centre will continue supporting preparations for global meetings, expanding joint programming with regional partners, and delivering specialized training on arms control, emerging technologies, and disarmament education.

Appreciation and conclusion

- We extend sincere appreciation to our host country, Nepal, for its unwavering support; to Thailand for its annual contribution; and to the Republic of Korea, the People's Republic of China, and the European Union for their voluntary funding. Predictable resources remain essential to sustain this work and ensure the continued success of UNODA's regional centres. Thank you.

UNLIREC

Your Excellency Vice Chair Jakub Jaros,
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

- It is an honour to address the First Committee and provide a brief overview of trends and challenges in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as some highlights of the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC), supplementing the Secretary-General's report in document A/80/122.

Challenges and trends

- The Latin American and Caribbean region continues to grapple with high levels of armed violence driven by illicit firearms and ammunition trafficking, organized crime, and gender-based violence. These challenges are compounded by regulatory gaps, limited institutional capacity, and insufficient data. Yet, there is momentum. States are translating political will into action through subregional roadmaps, capacity-building, and cross-sector partnerships. Increasingly, arms control is recognized not only as a security imperative but as a development priority. In this context, UNLIREC plays a vital role in promoting holistic strategies to prevent armed violence and bridge the gap between security and development.

Strengthened Regional Disarmament

- Firearms Roadmaps have become essential tools for translating international instruments into national action. With three subregional initiatives at various stages of implementation, Latin America and the Caribbean stands as the only region to adopt a comprehensive, coordinated approach to firearms control. The Caribbean Firearms Roadmap, now at midterm review, has catalyzed adoption of National Action Plans by several States. The Central American and Dominican Republic Roadmap, adopted in February, has entered implementation with countries developing coordination mechanisms and action plans. Following the recent adoption of the mandate to develop an Andean Firearms Roadmap, in collaboration with the OAS and the Andean Community of Nations (CAN), UNLIREC will support this new subregional initiative, which marks the formal launch of the process and further consolidates the region's coordinated approach to arms control.
- UNLIREC is also contributing to a more coherent UN response to armed violence by supporting Resident Coordinators in integrating arms control into Common Country Analyses and Cooperation Frameworks. Through initiatives such as SALIENT and our project supporting Haiti, and in partnership with CARICOM IMPACS, the OAS, and

others, we are advancing evidence-based, cross-sectoral responses and avoiding duplication.

Looking ahead

- Promoting the meaningful participation of women and youth in disarmament remains a core priority. This year, our flagship *Women, Forces of Change* symposium in Lima will mark the 15th anniversary of General Assembly resolution 65/69, celebrating women's contributions to peace and security. On youth, our *GenerAcción Paz* programme continues to expand, complementing ODA's global youth initiatives.
- UNLIREC is equally proud to be working with ODA's Weapons of Mass Destruction Branch and the BWC Implementation Support Unit to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention and the UN Secretary-General's Mechanism, with a new regional coordinator based in Lima.

Appreciation and conclusion

- Finally, I express sincere appreciation to our donors and partners — Canada, Germany, the United States, the European Union, Panama, and Peru — whose support makes our work possible. In this time of financial strain, renewed and expanded support is vital to sustain momentum and protect the progress achieved. Thank you.