

STATEMENT TO THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**Regional Disarmament and Security**

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I welcome this opportunity to open our discussion today on the theme of regional disarmament and security. The Committee will receive a briefing from the Deputy Chief of the Regional Disarmament Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, and hear statements by the directors of the Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament, and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, and the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific.

I can hardly overstate the importance of regional efforts in strengthening international peace and security, a level of importance that was well recognized even 63 years ago, as reflected in the language of Chapter VIII of the Charter. And in recent years, significant new initiatives have been underway to strengthen coordination and cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations.

At its meeting of 16 April this year, for example, the Security Council adopted resolution 1809, in which the Council expressed its determination to enhance this relationship further, in particular with respect to the African Union. The Secretary-General's report A/63/228 also highlighted the importance of this cooperation.

For its part, the Office for Disarmament Affairs (ODA) has been partnering with regional and other inter-governmental organizations in tackling a wide range of disarmament-related issues, including WMD disarmament and non-proliferation, WMD terrorism, illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and conventional arms transparency, as well as in promoting universality and full implementation of multilateral disarmament instruments.

The three Regional Centres for peace and disarmament—being the operational arms of ODA in the respective regions—are playing an increasingly active role in cooperation with governments, regional, and sub-regional organizations, and are servicing the needs of States in the regions in capacity-building and providing assistance upon request. Working with Member States and a variety of regional organizations, ODA attaches great importance to its efforts to strengthen the capacity of these Regional Centres.

I would like to emphasize that the three Regional Centres operate almost exclusively through voluntary financial contributions. On their behalf, I wish to express my deep appreciation for the contributions that the Centres have received from many Member States, and to remind all Member States of the importance of their continuing support in the years to come. The real beneficiaries of this investment are not the Centres themselves, but regional and international peace and security.

I wish in particular to express my gratitude to Member States—especially the African group—for adopting resolution A/RES/62/216, which took concrete action to strengthen the capacity of the African Regional Centre. I hope this action will inspire similar efforts by States in other regions on behalf of the other Regional Centres.

Members of this Committee are aware that the Regional Centre for Asia and the Pacific has successfully been re-located to Kathmandu, Nepal, as requested by the General Assembly. I wish to thank all Member States who provided support for this re-location, especially the Government of Nepal for its high level of commitment and close cooperation.

All of the Regional Centres stand ready to work closely with Member States, regional organizations, and civil society to achieve disarmament and non-proliferation goals.

In conclusion, I would like to remind all delegations of the importance that the Secretary-General has attached to promote global public goods in our world today—from combating terrorism, dealing with global warming, reducing the risks of international pandemics, and other such aims that benefit all of humanity. He strongly emphasized this issue in his address yesterday at Harvard University.

Regional efforts can make enormously significant contributions in advancing these global public goods. The Tlatelolco Treaty, which established the world's first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a highly populated region, has inspired the creation of five such zones around the world, covering virtually the entire Southern Hemisphere. New regional initiatives are underway to curb the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, to promote the universal membership in key multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation treaties, to promote cooperation in cyber-security, and to combat terrorism. Global public goods serve the interests of all, and efforts to promote them deserve the support of all.

Before turning to Mr. Wang, Deputy Chief of ODA's Regional Disarmament Branch, who will provide the Committee with further details on our work on regional disarmament and security issues, I would like again to encourage you to benefit from the presence, here today, of the senior staff of the Regional Disarmament Branch. They have come a long way to answer your questions and to clarify all matters of interest to you and your regions.