

## **Austria provides financial support to UN disarmament projects**

Austria announced on 5 May 2008 that it will contribute 100,000 euros to fund a UNODA project on combating illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons (SALW) in Asia and the Pacific. This project, developed by UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, is aimed at strengthening the capacities of States in Asia and the Pacific to effectively combat illicit brokering in SALW.

The Regional Centre, which will be relocated to Kathmandu Nepal in July 2008, covers 43 countries in the region and relies on voluntary contributions from donors for its staffing needs, operations and all activities and projects. UNODA has been actively engaged in mobilizing resources for the Centre and for its projects on pressing disarmament issues.

Since beginning of 2008, several other Member States have made financial contributions to the Regional Centre, including Turkey, Republic of Korea, Pakistan and Thailand. The Centre needs USD 1.2 million to implement its two disarmament projects about USD 1 million to build its institutional capacity. So far, the Centre has received about USD 220,000 in financial contribution from Member States, and thus still needs additional contributions of approximately USD 2 million.

In December 2007, Austria also contributed 530,000 euros to the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa to support its implementation of three small arms projects in various African sub-regions.

### **Background**

The UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific was established by General Assembly (A/42/39D) in 1987, and was mandated to provide, on request, substantive support for initiatives and other activities for the implementation of measures for peace and disarmament, and to coordinate the implementation of regional activities in Asia and the Pacific.

In July 2007, the United Nations and Nepal signed the Host Country Agreement on the relocation of the Regional Centre to Kathmandu, Nepal. Preparations are underway to inaugurate the Centre in Nepal in July 2008. In order to enable the Regional Centre to function effectively, the Regional Disarmament Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs formulated several substantive project proposals to attract funding from interested donors. They include "Enhancing international and regional cooperation to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons in Asia and the Pacific", "Promoting increased participation in, and improved reporting to, the UN transparency instruments in armaments in Asia and the Pacific". Another key project on building the capacity of the Regional Centre has also been developed with a view to enabling the Centre to function effectively in fulfilling its mandate and serving the needs of Member States in the areas of disarmament and security in the region and the international community at large.

ODA organized an informal consultation among interested Member States at the UN Headquarters in March this year to discuss ways and means to help build the institutional capacity of the Regional Centre in light of its relocation to the region. Member States, in particular those from the region, expressed their strong support for the Regional Centre and several countries made pledges of financial contributions during the consultations.

The project on combating illicit brokering in SALW in Asia and the Pacific envisages three sub-regional workshops, which will address the specific needs of States in the region in strengthening their capacities to effectively combat illicit brokering in SALW. Those needs include enacting and strengthening national legislation and administrative procedures, strengthening national licensing control systems; enhancing the capacity of law enforcement agencies, promoting information-sharing and judicial cooperation among States, and enhancing international and regional cooperation, as well as assistance for capacity-building for those States with such needs. Government officials, parliamentarians, experts from Interpol, the World Customs Organization, donors, the United Nations, other relevant international, regional and sub-regional organizations and member of civil society will be invited to participate in the workshops.

For more information contact:

Xiaoyu Wang, Regional Disarmament Branch, ODA [wangxy@un.org](mailto:wangxy@un.org) 212-963-9440

Ewen Buchanan, Information and Outreach Branch, [buchanane@un.org](mailto:buchanane@un.org) ODA 212-963-3022