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Emerging Human Security Issues in the Planned Implementation of MDRP Fund in the Republic of Congo (RoC)

Mini Case Study

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1. Background to DDR in the RoC and MDRP Funding

The last civil war in the Republic of Congo (RoC) was in 1998-99, that ended with the forces of President Sassou Nguesso emerging victorious and so, dictating the terms of the peace process. A cease-fire agreement in late 1999, laid out a plan for a national dialogue, demilitarization of political parties and the reorganization of the army, including the readmission of rebels into the security forces. Building on its significant military gains, the Government granted amnesty to all militia combatants on August 15, 1999 and, at the end of 1999, Cease Fire and Cessation of Hostilities Agreements were signed between the Government and key military commanders representing all warring parties, under the mediation of President Bongo of Gabon.¹ Since the end of the conflict in the RoC in 1999 and prior to the MDRP funded programme, there have been two DDR attempts: first, the one financed by the UNDP/IOM; and secondly, the one funded by the World Bank/IDA.²

The first attempt at DDR one took place from 2001 – 2004 through a loan provided by the International Development Agency (IDA). The essence of the programme was mainly to ensure the sustainability of the 1999 Ceasefire and Cessation of Hostilities Agreements, thereby consolidate peace and security. The process formed a strategic instrument for social and economic reintegration of ex-combatants. Its objectives were: (a) to finance micro projects focussed on income generation; (b) to equip the beneficiaries with basic formal training on their skills of choice; (c) to ensure medical and psychological rehabilitation of the beneficiaries; (d) to rehabilitate basic community infrastructure; and (e) to build the capacity of the trainers.

The second D&R process was as a result of a donation of Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (MDRP), an initiative of the World Bank and a number of other donor countries.³ The aim of MDRP is to support demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants in seven countries of the Great Lakes Region. There are: Angola; Burundi; the Central African Republic (CAR); the DRC; the Republic of Congo (ROC); Rwanda; and Uganda. While the negotiation between the government of the RoC and MDRP and the application process started in

¹ MDRP discussion documents provided to the author by MDRP staff during an interview with the author. Brazzaville, 24 July 2007.

² Both programmed focussed on reinsertion of ex-combatants. The UNDP/OIM, which helped to reinsert 8,019 ex-combatants, took place between July 2000 and November 2002 while the one financed by the World Bank through IDA started at the end of 2001 and ended in February 2005 having inserted 9000 ex-combatants. See PNDDR report to the Cabinet, December 2004.

³ MDRP is a multilateral fund operated by the World Bank, the European Union and the governments of Germany, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom and Sweden.

2004, the final approval of the fund took place in February 2005, followed by the signing of the agreement in January 2006.⁴ The RoC is the last country, out of the seven, to benefit from the MDRP fund. The programme is scheduled to close in February 2009.

The MDRP reflects a significant departure from the conventional approach to programming in terms of the demobilisation and reintegration (D&R) into civilian life of former combatants. Prior to this programme, D&R processes were typically designed and implemented at the national level. The rationale for this approach was that given that the armed conflict in the DRC was regional in nature, that is, that a number of countries and rebel groups from neighbouring countries to the DRC were directly involved in the fighting, a regional response was required. The mid-term review of the MDRP described the Programme as "...a radical innovation... a bold and experimental effort, one that is unprecedented in the post-conflict field."⁵

Since the signing of the agreement between the World Bank and the Government of the RoC in 2006, most activities have been centred on planning of the D&R project in which the main activities have been the setting up of the eligibility criteria, identification and enrolment of possible beneficiaries (as not everyone who qualifies and appears on the list may benefit) and the validation of the list - the list was sent to France for 'matching' of the beneficiary details to authenticate validity by eliminating cases of double registration. The list was brought back to Brazzaville in July 2007, after the 'matching' process.

Although the implementation phase of the MDRP funding is just starting in the RoC, the planning phase provides a framework of analysis against which the objectives of SIDDR and IDDR can be examined.

2. Programming of the MDRP Fund in the RoC

The MDRP fund for the RoC is \$17 million USD and it is managed by the *Haut Commissariat à la Réinsertion des Ex-combattants* (HCREC), henceforth known as the 'Commissariat'. A government section that deals with DDR projects. The MDRP fund is being implemented under a programme known as *Programme National de Désarmement, Démobilisation et Réinsertion* (PNDDR), which is also responsible for the planning of the process. PNDDR is targeting 30,000 ex-combatants, composed of: 5,000 Ninja rebels from the Pool region, and who are currently still armed and commanded by Pasteur Ntoumi; 6,000 composed of the national security forces; and 19,000 self-demobilised ex-combatants (*ex-combattants auto démobilisés*) who include former militias (e.g., Cobras, Mambas, Zoulous) and child soldiers. The figure of 30,000 was arrived at based on the budget constraints and those who will miss out in the current programme will be advised, through PNDDR's office on Conflict Prevention and Violence Reduction, to wait for future programmes.⁶ According to the information made available by PNDDR, a total of \$25,000 USD was envisaged if the programme were to reasonably cover its objectives and involve a much larger number

⁴ Editorial, "La première phase a tenu ses promesses," *Reinsertion*. No. 00 août-septembre 2006.

⁵ Development Alternatives, Inc. 2005. *A Partnership in Need of Reaffirmation: Midterm Review of the Multi-country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP)*, (Bethesda: Development Alternatives), p. 2.

⁶ Author interview with the planning staff of PNDDR. Brazzaville, 25 July 2007.

of beneficiaries. The shortfall (i.e., \$8,000 USD), according to PNDDR, is to be raised either by the government or through other bilateral relations with foreign donors.⁷

3. PNDDR Structure and Eligibility Criteria

PNDDR programme is composed of five sections: (i) Disarmament; (ii) Demobilisation and Reinsertion; (iii) Child Soldiers and other Vulnerable Groups; (iv) Conflict Prevention and Resolution; and (v) Security Sector Reform.

In its approach, PNDDR strictly envisages those who participated in the conflicts directly, and where children and women are considered, they have to qualify as having played an active role, for instance, as logisticians, etc. Women Accompanying Fighting Forces (WAFF) and Children Accompanying Fighting Forces (CAFF) as well as ordinary civilians and war widowers have been left out of the programme due to limited funds. This approach contrasts with the DDRR process in Liberia, which has largely adopted IDDRS standards by integrating wider community needs (see the Liberia case study). In a focus group conducted by the author in the *Arrondissement de Total BaCongo*, the participants wondered why the demobilisation and reinsertion programme was coming ten years after the war, and only to benefit those who took part in the conflict, "...if the aim was not to resuscitate civilian emotions towards those who committed atrocities against them?" posed one mama. In a similar focus group held in M'pila, north of Brazzaville and composed of five ex-combatants, three of who said had been registered by PNDDR and were awaiting a formal feedback on whether they had "succeeded", while another two had deliberately not presented themselves for registration basing their reluctance on the tediousness of going to look for their former commanders in order for them (i.e., their former commanders) to authenticate their eligibility.

3.1 Disarmament

While the other four activities are covered by PNDDR, 'disarmament' remains an integral part of PNDDR and is undertaken by UNDP through a project known as *Projet de Collect et destruction d'Armes pour le Développement* (PCAD) in coordination with other national security forces. PCAD aims at collecting an estimated 41,000 small arms circulating among Congolese civilians. This number was established by a study conducted by Small Arms Survey in 2001. The first phase of PCAD started in November 2005 and ended in November 2006. It operated with a budget of €2 million Euros donated by the European Union.⁸ In total, PCAD collected: 1,308 small arms; 626,503 rounds of ammunition; and 2,434 assorted explosives, in exchange for various tools (e.g., fishing nets, hoes, photocopiers, bicycles, flour-mills, etc), building material (e.g., cement, timber, iron sheets, etc), home equipment (e.g., mattresses, bed nets, shaving machines, clothing, etc).⁹ The figure of 1,038 weapons collected in the first phase is way below the expected figure of 15,000 weapons.¹⁰ The disarmament is voluntary and individuals are allowed to

⁷ "La premiere phase a tenu ses promesses," *Reinsertion*. Op.cit.

⁸ Author interview with PCAD operations staff. Brazzaville, 26 July 2007.

⁹ For a complete and detailed list of the disarmament breakdown, see La Lettre d'Information du Projet de Collect et destruction d'Armes pour le Développement (PCAD), UNDP Brazzaville. Dated 25 July 2007.

¹⁰ Proposal to donors - Republic of Congo Emergency Reintegration Program. February, 2005.

disarm individually, in groups or as communities (i.e., villages, etc). The procedure followed is that each weapon is weighted against a grid, as follows:

Table1: Weighting of Weapons Collected by PCAD

	Arms and Ammunitions:	Points Value:
Arms:	1 rocket launcher, machine gun...	400
	1 assault rifle (AK-47,...)	200
	1 pistol	100
Munitions and Explosives:	1 explosive (hand grenade, RPG, TNT...)	50
	1 high calibre munition	25
	1 cartridge or a firing element	1

Source: UNDP/CONGO: PCAD public information pamphlet on disarmament (undated).

For non-functional weapons and munitions, the points are divided by a three. Cartridges and ammunitions that require serviceable weapons are not accepted unless they are accompanied with the relevant weapons. The points correspond to a list of an assortment of tools and equipment. For instance, according to the PCAD list, a machete is worth 664 points; a pair of bed sheets is 395 points; a hoe is 321 points; a mattress is 2,005 points; etc.¹¹

Community or group disarmament occurs where the beneficiaries aim at consolidating their points in order to qualify for an item of benefit to them all, such as a flour mill. In such instances, the group/community forwards the request to PCAD and after the weapons are handed in and points allocated, PCAD purchases the equipment on behalf of the group. Where communities are involved, these requests often entail community projects such as rehabilitation of education, sports and cultural equipment.

PCAD allows the individuals, groups and community representatives willing to hand in their arms, the liberty to contact PCAD offices either physically or by telephone at HCREC and organise to arrange with PCAD staff on where and when the arms are to be surrendered. Often, especially in the case of individuals, this arrangement is enshrouded in secrecy for the fear of other community members identifying one another as being in possession of an arm. According to PCAD, the guiding philosophy is that *“les armes n’aiment pas le bruit,”* or “guns hate noise.” This is because of the belief among Congolese, and largely to most of the post-conflict society, that guns are not items that should feature openly in the daily life of individuals and therefore, not a topic to be discussed in public. The result being that mass media and other public campaigns only motivates those who have weapons and/or explosives to conceal them further. This phenomenon is more apparent within Congolese society, which emerged out of conflict ten years ago. It is aimed at avoiding resuscitation of emotions and fear within the community. “Imagine how traumatic it would be if one learnt that one’s neighbour of seven or so years suddenly pulled out a cache of arms in the name of disarmament. Such occurrences would traumatise the communities,” according to PCAD.¹² Therefore, in their awareness programmes, PCAD avoids open campaigns

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Author’s discussion with a PCAD officer-in-charge of operations. Brazzaville, 26 July 2007.

and instead used village elders, chiefs, religious leaders to quietly pass the message to their communities and congregation.¹³

The second phase of PCAD activities could not start immediately after the closure of the first phase in November 2006 due to financial constraints. With a new fund of \$2, 913,524 USD secured from the government of Japan, the second phase of disarmament is in its preparatory phase, and likely to start by November 2007. Unlike the first phase, which covered only Brazzaville, the second phase envisages to cover Brazzaville, Pool and other three departments to be chosen.

3.2 Ex-child Soldiers and Vulnerable Groups

Another concern related to eligibility criteria was that of child soldiers. It was conceived that close to ten years after the conflict ended, most, if not all, of those who were child soldiers during the war are now adults and therefore no longer eligible for the classification of a “child soldiers”. To tackle this anomaly, PNDDR chose 1990 as the cut-off date of birth for anyone presenting oneself for eligibility as a former child soldier, along with meeting other elements of eligibility. Such an individual, after being so confirmed, then joined the mainstream ex-combatant process. The number of the former child soldiers enrolled by PNDDR is 2,800. this figure excludes those in the Pool region, as Pasteur Ntoumi, is yet to give consent to PNDDR to access the area.¹⁴ The age limit for the eligibility of girl-ex-child soldier is set at 25 years, while boys are set at 21 years in order to allow for inclusivity. Disabled and/or chronically ill ex-combatants will be provided with special assistance under the PNDDR framework.

To the extent possible, disabled ex-combatants will be provided social and economic reintegration assistance, while chronically ill, including those afflicted with HIV/AIDS, will have access to medical services, counseling and sensitization, and reintegration support. In instances where an ex-combatant will be unable to take full advantage of economic reintegration assistance, PNDDR will seek to ensure that their dependents have access to the service or support. Finally, as such cases often require longer-term support, PNDDR will endeavour to make arrangements available in the local environment that could provide for this category of ex-combatant when the programme comes to a close.¹⁵

3.3 SSR as Part of D&R

According to DFID, Security Sector Reform is the transformation of the security system which includes all the actors, their roles, responsibilities and actions, so that it is managed and operated in a manner that is more consistent with democratic norms and sound principles of good governance, and thus contributes to a well-functioning

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Author interview with the in-charge of la *Composante ex-enfants soldats* (Section on ex-Child Soldiers) at the PNDDR headquarters, La Tour Mabemba, Brazzaville, 26 July 2007.

¹⁵ Author interview with the head of Ex-child soldiers and Vulnerable Groups, PNDDR. Brazzaville, 23 July 2007. Also see, MDRP Position Paper, “Targeting MDRP Assistance: Ex-Combatants and Other War-Affected Populations.” January 2004. At www.mdrp.org, accessed on 5 August 2007.

national security framework. Responsible and accountable security forces reduce the risk of conflict, provide security for citizens and create the right environment for sustainable development.¹⁶ Therefore, the overall objective of SSR is to contribute to a secure environment that is conducive to development.

The objectives of Congo's SSR strategy are: to align the security forces with the security needs of the country; to nationalise the country's armed forces and hence make it more operational; and to demobilise and reinsert those forces that do not meet the set criteria for being part of the national security forces.

Of the 30,000 ex-combatants, 6,000 are envisaged to come from the military (*Forces Armées centrafricaines*) (FACA), as a result of the security sector reform process in which the armed forces, gendarmerie and the national police are to be reorganised into a modern force. This process, according to the Commisariat, is necessary in order to cleanse the security forces of the irregularities that characterised the recruitment of the security forces in the aftermath of the war when militias were simply recruited without any formal criteria.

The SSR process therefore aims to disarm and demobilise the security forces that do not meet the following criteria:

(i) those ascertained to be illiterate or with insufficient basic education (according to the standards of the armed forces). Such education should qualify them for advanced training;

(ii) those who do not meet the basic age of recruitment. This is deemed necessary in order to cleanse the military of militias who were recruited in their advanced ages without observing cut off age for military recruitment. It is stated that if one was recruited at the age of 30 or more, such an individual, at the time of retirement, will not have met pensionable requirements of the armed forces; and

(iii) those whose state of health is declared unfit are also to be disarmed and demobilised. Similarly, those declared to be addicted to drugs and other addictive substances are to be disarmed.

3.4 Demobilisation Process

A complete demobilisation process to be administered by PNDDR is planned to follow the following format:

(i) Public awareness campaign aimed at sensitising the communities on the programme and its beneficiaries;

(ii) cantonment of ex-combatants in demobilisation centres for five days during which other processes take place such as;

¹⁶ See, Department for International Development (DFID) et. al. "The Global Conflict Prevention Pool. A joint UK Government approach to reducing conflict." London. 2003. P. 30.

- (iii) verification of identification, followed by orientation;
- (iv) provision of more information on the D&R programme, accompanied with civic and moral education;
- (v) provision of information on HIV/Aids;
- (vi) trauma and psychosocial counselling;
- (vii) issuing of a transitional safety net that entails \$150 USD as well as ex-combatant's immediate needs such as food, clothing and bedding;
- (viii) recording ex-combatant's socio-economic data; and
- (ix) transporting the ex-combatant to their localities.

The same process will be followed in the demobilisation of the security forces, although the cantonment process will be carried out in the military barracks.

3.5 Reinsertion Process

After demobilisation, the ex-combatants will be reinserted into their communities of origin, or of their choice, as the first step towards reintegration. Reinsertion, according to PNDDR, will take both 'economic' and 'social' forms. Economically it will entail exploring the possibilities of:

- (i) job placement of the ex-combatant, in line with either availability of vacancies and/or individual skills;
- (ii) direct support to beneficiaries in self-initiated micro enterprises;
- (iii) provision of technical and professional skills as a way of empowering the beneficiaries;
- (iv) placement of the ex-combatants, including the demobilised security forces in public projects such as road construction.

Similar attention will be given to former child soldiers that have attained adult age, as well as, ex-combatants incapacitated by the war.

On the other hand, 'social' reinsertion is envisaged to consist of psychosocial and medical rehabilitation under which regular medical reviews will be conducted and the necessary medication administered.

As a way of reinforcing reconciliation between the ex-combatant and their communities of return, PNDDR envisages rehabilitating some basic communal infrastructures that were destroyed during the war such as schools and clinics and/or their equipment. Ex-combatants will be involved in carrying out such renovations. The need to combine the demobilised security forces with the rest of the PNDDR beneficiaries was based on the argument that in order to lessen stigmatisation and the

risks of those demobilised taking up arms again, it was thought as wise, to put them under the PNDDR programme where, like the rest of the beneficiaries, they would also benefit from the process of destigmatisation, psychosocial counselling and reintegration packages. This decision was based upon an understanding that while most of the members of the security forces had a history of war, many also have links to the communities of their origin especially with their former militia colleagues who did not join the security forces.

3.6 Reintegration Programme

In the RoC, the body entrusted with the MDRP processes is called the Republic of Congo Emergency Reintegration Programme (RCERP) and it forms part of the regional MDR Programme for the wider Great Lakes Region. The general objective of RCERP is to consolidate peace and economic stability, while at the same time, supporting sustainable development in the RoC and in the wider Great Lakes region.¹⁷

To achieve the development and poverty reduction goals, the RCERP is modeled along the objectives of the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and the World Bank's Transitional Support Strategy. The larger objectives of the programme are: to establish favorable conditions in rural and urban areas that will encourage ex-combatants and the population at large to resume productive lives in the rural and urban economy; to free-up additional national resources for investment in social and economic sectors; and to invest in the human capital of ex-combatants and communities alike. Upon the adoption of the PNDDR by the Government of the RoC on 31 December 2004, PNDDR and RCERP adopted the approach of the earlier IDA-funded and government-executed Emergency Demobilization and Reintegration Project (EDRP) in order that the benefits provided to eligible ex-combatants under the RCERP would be comparable to those given under the EDRP. This was done in order to avoid a situation where different groups of ex-combatants received different treatment, which may have lead to unrest and undermined the objectives of the programme.

Eligibility criteria for demobilization and reintegration was set following consultations between MDRP Secretariat, the government and partners, in order to establish the 30,000 beneficiaries. An ex-combatant therefore qualified for the programme if s/he was able to prove:

- (i) Participation in armed combat or sustained logistical support during the civil wars;
- (ii) Having indicated a preference for training and/or a micro-project creating employment or income for the beneficiary (does not apply to those for whom job placement is available);
- (iii) Not included in labor intensive projects or receiving other salaried employment;
- (iv) Not having benefited previously from UNDP/IOM or HCREC reintegration assistance;

¹⁷ Author telephone interview with the staff of MDRP project implementation for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the RoC. Brazzaville, 24 July 2007.

In addition, the programme also takes into account whether the ex-combatant has also surrendered a weapon in the context of the UNDP-led disarmament programme or demobilization from the army. While this is not a necessary condition for reintegration benefits, the surrender of a serviceable weapon gives priority status in the processing of micro-project applications.

In the current programme, the verification of eligibility status has been significantly tightened in comparison to the previous IDA-funded D&R programme. For instance, ex-combatant status will need to be verified by the regional programme representatives (*Chef d'antenne*) as well as, a witness, certifying the dates and localities where the ex-combatant has been active including proof that s/he is not currently employed. Similarly, an internal control mechanism will be established to conduct random audits of eligibility decisions to ensure the strict application of criteria and fairness in the distribution of benefits across regions as well as to determine whether the recipient had previously received benefits under the UNDP/IOM programme. This is meant to check “double-dipping” or other unjustified receipt of benefits, which, if discovered will lead to recovery of funds and prosecution under applicable laws.¹⁸

The Programme will cover all ‘departments’ of the Congo, except three (i.e., Kouilou, Sangha and Likouala). The justification for this decision is that these three ‘departments’ are viewed as not having been affected very much by the war, which was mainly fought in Brazzaville. Even so, accessing the would-be beneficiaries would be hardly possible as some of the departments are not easily accessible. Another difficulty would be the burden of proof on authenticity of supposed ex-combatant. The argument is that inhabitants of these departments cannot bear witness to their youth’s participation in the war because they were not in Brazzaville during that time.¹⁹

According to the programme budget, the highest allocation of funding goes to socio-economic reintegration (64%), while Prevention / Reduction of conflict and violence has the least allocation (2%). This indicates that the programme’s emphasis is more on reintegration aspects and less so on addressing the root causes of conflicts. Similarly, there is less of a focus on community support (4%) than on project management (12.4%). The budget allocation can be analysed further in terms of the long-term human security impact and project efficiency considerations – both of which lie out of the scope of this paper.

¹⁸ Author discussions with PNDDR implementation staff. Brazzaville, 26 July 2007. Also see, RoC Proposal to the MDRP Trust Fund Committee of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund. February 2005.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Table 2: Demobilization and Reintegration Programme Costs

Component:	Average Unit Cost (USD)	Total Programme Cost (Millions USD)	Percent
1. Demobilisation and transition	80	2.4	9.6 %
2. Socio-Economic reintegration	533	16.0	64.0 %
3. Reintegration support to communities	33	1.0	4 %
4. Special Groups	33	1.0	4 %
5. Prevention/Reduction of conflict and violence	16	0.5	2 %
6. Programme Management	103	3.1	12.4 %
Sub-total	800	24.0	96 %
Contingencies	33	1.0	4 %
Total (estimated)	\$833	\$25.0	100 %

Source: RoC Proposal to the MDRP Trust Fund Committee of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund. February 2005.

The reintegration programme is modelled along the approach used in the previous reintegration processes. That is, that ex-combatants identify a project of their choice and presents it to PNDDR for validation before the funds are released. In this process, beneficiaries are encouraged to team-up into groups of not more than 15 people and identify a project of choice. Projects range from livestock keeping-to-fish farming.

According to the policy framework of the RoC funding proposal to MDRP, the objective of the economic reintegration is to create durable employment and/or income for ex-combatants and to reintegrate them into their communities with the ultimate goal of rendering a possible re-mobilization less by creating an environment in which war will be unattractive to ex-combatants as they will have something to lose in case they favoured conflict. Further to 'lessening of conflict' is the approach that envisages equal eligibility for the programme participants irrespective of rank, former affiliation, region or gender. However, beneficiaries are freely allowed to choose their communities of reintegration. To the extent possible, the provision of reintegration support will be based on the following criteria:

- (i) that it will lead to durable income for the beneficiaries;
- (ii) that it will use locally available technology and natural and human resources;
- (iii) that it will comply with environmental and social safeguards; and
- (iv) that the total amount of financial assistance available for reintegration support should not exceed \$400 USD.

Ex-combatants who are eligible for support under the PNDDR will be offered a choice of options, to be exercised individually or in groups of ex-combatants, such as:

- (i) placement in an existing or future employment;
- (ii) direct financial support to ex-combatants who opt to create a micro-enterprise or income generating activity;

(iii) technical or professional training, possibly in combination with the option above; and

(iv) placement in labor intensive projects.

Local civil society organizations are to be selected to act as ‘caretaker trainers’ (*Agences d’encadrement*) responsible for the initial evaluation of micro-projects on the basis of guidelines to be developed by PNDDR. These organizations are to assist in implementation by providing counseling and advice to ex-combatants where necessary.

In addition, to facilitate social reintegration and local reconciliation, the PNDDR also envisages the provision of support to communities that have suffered as a result of the war, as well as, to those communities where the ex-combatants settle. Such support will take the form of infrastructure repair, notably in the education and health sectors. Ex-combatants can be used for any employment this creates. This support will come in addition to any assistance provided to communities in the context of the disarmament programme implemented by UNDP.

Each beneficiary’s \$400 USD will be invested directly into the project in two equal tranches. The beneficiaries will first be trained on how to manage their project of choice. Regular follow-ups will be conducted in which the caretaker trainers will continuously guide the beneficiaries for a period of one year.

3.7 Prevention and Reduction of Conflict and Violence

The ‘conflict prevention’ aspect of this strategy receives the least amount of funding of all items as the budget estimates in Table 2, above illustrate. However, the inclusion of this aspect was as a result of a wish by both the government and the Congolese civil society to address the cultural and psychological aspects of the conflict. The Congolese civil society was of the view that while several years have passed since the end of hostilities, the potential for violence erupting as a result of poverty, ethnic tension, criminal behavior, as well as the trauma of war remains high across the RoC.²⁰ This component was therefore, included into the programme with the view to promote a national consensus on the need to reduce the potential for violence. It is the only aspect of the programme that is concerned with addressing factors that are known to fuel violent conflict in the RoC. Activities under this component include seminars and workshops aimed at promoting a culture of strengthening traditional community-based methods of conflict resolution and establishing modest monitoring mechanism to identify areas where tension may increase or problems remain unresolved. These mechanisms would also include an ‘ombudsman’ function that provides a feed-back mechanism on the effectiveness of the overall programme for target groups and the population at large. The section is also responsible for any allegations of benefit abuse or other improper use of PNDDR funds received. As such, it envisages working with internal auditors, who will be

²⁰ Author interview with the section head of the Prevention and Reduction of Conflict and Violence at PNDDR. Brazzaville, 25 July 2007.

assisted in this matter by an Independent Financial Management Agency. This unit will also be responsible for consoling those ex-combatants who will be excluded from the current D&R programme due to limited funding. The 'Prevention and Reduction of Conflict and Violence' component is expected to transmit messages to the communities informing them that those who have been left out of the current programme will most likely be considered for the next one.²¹

4. IDDRS and SIDDRS Approaches

From the foregoing analysis of the demobilisation and reintegration implementation plan in the RoC, it is possible to make an assessment of whether the planning is concomitant with the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards as well as the SIDDRS. The IDDRS have been drafted on the basis of lessons and best practices drawn from the experience of all of the UN Departments, Agencies, Funds and Programmes involved to provide the UN system with a set of policies, guidelines and procedures for the planning, implementation and monitoring of DDR programmes in a peacekeeping context. However, while the IDDRS was designed with 'peacekeeping' contexts in-mind, much of the guidance contained within these standards are also applicable for non-peacekeeping contexts, in-line with the three main objectives of IDDRS:

- (i) to give DDR practitioners the opportunity to make informed decisions based on a clear, flexible and in-depth body of guidance across the range of DDR activities;
- (ii) to serve as a common foundation for the commencement of integrated operational planning in headquarters and at the country level; and
- (iii) to function as a resource for the training of DDR specialists.

On the other hand, the Stockholm Initiative on Disarmament Demobilisation Reintegration Standards provide a holistic view of such programmes where opportunities and limitations are considered from the perspective of the overall approach to ensure the long-term personal security for people, rebuild post-conflict societies and lay the foundations for sustainable development.

SIDDRS takes cognisance of the fact that processes on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration have to be addressed through a comprehensive approach that supports the post-conflict society at large. It is critical to ensure that a combatant need not return to using violence to survive. The report, therefore, endorses the provision of what has come to be known as a 'transitional safety net' that enables the ex-combatant to survive, take care of his or her family and cope while adjusting to his or her new status as a productive member of society. SIDDRS also places an emphasis on the need for the immediate short-term focus to be on the ex-combatant through reinsertion, which should 'take care' of the ex-combatant before the longer-term phase of sustainable reintegration.

Similarly, SIDDRS advocates for the creation of alternative incentives to violence for

²¹ Ibid.

ex-combatants in order to make it less likely for them to disrupt ongoing peace efforts while awaiting a longer term, sustainable reintegration and return to, or start of, a productive civilian livelihood. Concurrently according to SIDDRS, local communities also need to be taken into account in order to build their capacity to absorb returning soldiers as well as minimising possibilities of new tension between ex-combatants and their communities of return.

Thus, the SIDDRS report endorses the idea of establishing parallel programmes early on to provide communities with support for receiving ex-combatants as a direct complement to the DDR programme.

Annex 1: Questions for Working Papers

Working paper 1: Current Thinking and Approaches to DDR

(1) What has been the influence (if any) of the IDDRS (UN integrated DDR standards) and SIDDR (Stockholm Initiative on DDR) on the design of the DDR process? If there has been no influence, why not?

The Congolese programme has so far strived to adopt the objectives of SIDDR through incorporating community development projects in their programming. Also, ex-combatants are to be offered a safety net as well as be assisted with training and possible job placement. Another important fact is that training programmes are targeted to the level of societal needs and standards. Thus, hopefully not creating a “super ex-combatant,” that would destabilise communal equilibrium by introducing a “new” standard.

(2) If there has been a significant influence, what have been the implications (both positive and negative)?

(3) What are the relationship and the nature of the dynamics between the MDRP process and other national DDR processes in the Great Lakes region?

(4) What do MDRP staff regard as the greatest successes achieved whilst implementing their respective national DDR processes?

The greatest success envisaged by MDRP staff is that the programme targets reintegrating ex-combatants who were left out of the former D&R processes, because failed reintegration of ex-combatants could jeopardize the peace-building process in the RoC. The inability of ex-combatants to establish new livelihoods and reintegrate into communities could result in a number of long-term costs for the entire society leading to new episodes of violent political opposition and the possibility of the society relapsing into violent conflict.

(5) What are the most significant problems/challenges that MDRP personnel have encountered in the implementation of their various projects, and how did they address them?

(6) With the benefit of hindsight, would the MDRP staff take a different approach to the design and implementation of the DDR processes in the future? If yes, why, and what would they do differently?

To-date, the MDRP staff seem satisfied with the manner in which the programme is running, and given the fact that ‘lessons’ have yet to be assessed, there is very little likelihood of changing their approach at the current time.

(7) What do the MDRP personnel envisage as the way forward for their respective national programmes, and what are their assessments of the effectiveness of the programmes they are administering?

(8) What is the assessment (positive or negative) of the MDRP by relevant government officials and civil society representatives? If it is a negative assessment, what do they think the MDRP should have done differently?

Most Congolese civil society seem to think that it is now time for the government to channel resources directly to the projects that would most directly benefit the community without privileging ex-combatants per se. They feel this way because it is now a long time since the war ended and most everyone has now adapted to various post-war lifestyles. In addition, many people indicated that talk of ‘DDR’ only serves to remind the society of the war and therefore, disrupting people’s coping mechanisms.

(9) Where possible, please compile an objective analysis of the effectiveness of the MDRP projects in facilitating sustainable DDR. In particular, what is the potential of the MDRP processes to achieve sustainable reintegration into civilian life of ex-combatants?

So far, the reintegration may not be fully sustainable unless the entire number of ex-combatants who except to benefit from the programme are included in it. Bitterness amongst those who may miss out in the current programme could engender a situation of instability. Also, it may be hard to ascertain the eligibility of an ex-combatant based on the given criteria (see the eligibility criteria listed in the body of paper). For example, the ability to ascertain that an ex-combatant is actually gainfully employed, especially, ‘self-employment’, will be rather difficult, as “employment” in an informal sector is a relative phenomenon.

Working Paper 2: Linkages between DDR and SSR

- 1. Have ex-combatants joined the police, military, militias or private security companies following the conflict? Where this has been managed through the proactive recruitment and vetting of ex-combatants as part of DDR or SSR projects, what procedures were used and what were the results (e.g. in terms of quality of personnel, their conduct while on duty, levels of crime and violence)?*
- 2. Have there been any efforts to link DDR projects with traditional justice mechanisms (e.g. involvement of tribal councils in reconciliation efforts with ex-combatants returning to their communities). Where links were not made between a DDR process and traditional justice mechanisms, what effects has the return of ex-combatants had on these mechanisms?*

There was no link between DDR projects and traditional justice mechanisms. Most communities considered the return of ex-combatants as a “blessing” from God that they were coming back alive, as many died in the war. Also, the phenomenon of ‘war fatigue’ seemed to bear heavily on Congolese society and everyone indicated that they ‘just wanted it all to be over’. Research indicates that there was very minimal amounts of resistance to the return of the ex-combatants to their communities.

- 3. Have there been efforts to incorporate SSR planning in DDR mandates and operations including estimates of the size of a future national reformed army and consequently the numbers of ex-combatants that need to be disbanded during DDR and absorbed into the security sector?*

No and yes. No, because the Congolese DDR planning is separate from the rest of the SSR processes that involve restructuring of the military. Yes, because the only component of SSR that is related to DDR is that of the demobilisation of 6,000 soldiers (see body of paper on SSR Section).

- 4. How have DDR processes dealt with the apparent trade-offs between justice and reintegration....?*

Working Paper 3: Linkages between DDR and SALW Control

1. *Have there been any SALW control programmes beyond the disarmament within DDR? If so, at what point was it decided to launch a SALW control programme, by whom, and according to what criteria?*

See paper.

2. *Have SALW programmes linked up with, or followed up on, shortfalls in DDR programmes such as lack of collection of civilian weapons including hunting rifles?*

This is ongoing. See body of paper.

3. *Have DDR and SALW control programmes been integrated / co-ordinated in terms of:*
 - *Sensitisation and education*
 - *Mandates*
 - *Civilian weapons collection*
 - *Implementing actors (local, national and international) and structures, including with regard to training and pooling of capacity*
 - *Implementation of national SALW control strategies (where they exist)*
 - *The collection and use of information as a basis for programme development*
 - *Public information campaigns*
 - *Infrastructure*
 - *Funding*
 - *Sequencing*
 - *M and E.*

See body of paper

4. *Has integration meant anything beyond putting it under the same umbrella - have there been real attempts to find further synergies, crossover etc - or are they still two separate entities, just under one roof?*

The planning of the Congolese D&R process is reasonably interlinked. The only issue is that it leaves out certain potential beneficiaries due to limited funds. The process is largely modelled on SIDDRS approach.

5. *If there has been integration, do people recognise that this is a conscious attempt to integrate, or has it been more spontaneous? What was the thinking behind the attempts to integrate them into one programme - whose idea was it and according to what mandate? Did they face any opposition? How much has it been driven by internationals and how much have local actors gone with it?*

The Congolese D&R process, although funded by foreign donors, was wholly conceptualised, planned and is expected to be managed by the Congolese themselves without the (if not very minimal) participation of foreigners. The weaknesses of the past DDR processes have had a negative effect on the community, having been seen

as avenues of money making by ex-combatants due to the non-restrictive criteria employed at that time.

6. *What is the general feeling on the ground: has this attempt to integrate/coordinate been successful? What has worked and what hasn't? What do the locals think of this? Do they understand the difference between the different programmes?*

Most local people are sceptical about the possible success of the current programme. Such apprehension is understandable given that, in the opinion of most Congolese, past DDR programmes did not quite deliver. As a result, the feeling amongst many people is that, "this is just another of such projects."

7. *How do funding levels for the initial disarmament of ex-combatants compare with funding for wider SALW control measures? (There's a line of argument that DDR gets lots of money whereas longer term measures are ignored - is this fair?)*

See body of paper. Also see Table 2 and the analyses that goes with it.

8. *Has there been clarity about the objectives of the DDR process and the SALW programmes, the different beneficiaries and targets? If yes (hopefully), has this made things any easier on the ground?*

See body of paper on Disarmament Section.

9. *Do people believe that DDR and SALW programmes are in any way dealing with the root causes of conflict, and therefore making it less likely?*

Most people consider DDR and SALW programmes only as interim measures that will lessen the lethality of conflicts if they do occur again. Many contend that the real causes of conflicts are political power, poverty and ethnicity. Issues not addressed by DDR and SALW programmes.

10. *How common is it, in fact, for ex-combatants to demobilise, hand over their weapon, and then (supposedly) reintegrate and soon get hold of weapons again? Are they any more likely to acquire, and use, weapons than other sections of society?*

The perception, and indeed, the reality to an extent, is that most people (including ex-combatants), own more than just one weapon. Therefore, disarmament does not lessen the suspicion that people have against one another. In general, an ex-combatant's interest in joining a DDR processes is understood to be based on a desire for 'quick cash' rather than a legitimate desire for sustainable reintegration. This has been a major contributing factor to "double dipping" behaviour.

11. *Have SALW programmes drawn upon local conflict resolution/dispute mechanisms to help deal with issues not addressed in DDR programmes? Does this suggest opportunities in linking DDR and SALW programming?*

Yes, this is an opportunity that has not yet been incorporated into the design of the PNDDR programme. However, it could play a major role in helping to address some of the root causes of the problems, especially in helping to reconcile the Larii and Mbochi ethnic communities in the RoC.

12. Have SALW programmes helped to address arms flows into communities including across borders – an area where DDR has often proved to be weak – and can this be incorporated into DDR planning?

This could be incorporated in DDR programming especially at a regional level such as the one covered by MDRP fund. For instance, the seven countries benefiting from the MDRP fund could agree to strengthen vigilance at their borders as well as share information and carry out coordinated operations to check the illegal movement of merchandise across their borders. This could be factored into the DDR budget.

13. Re MDRP programmes (in addition to the questions above):

- *Given that MDRP does not do disarmament, to what extent are MDRP programmes linked to disarmament processes?*
- *In such cases, what happens to SALW that are collected – are records maintained? Are SALW destroyed?*
- *In such cases, what are the incentives used to encourage ex-combatants to hand in weapons?*
- *How does MDRP ensure that ex-combatants have been demobilised before they enter the demobilisation and reintegration programme?*
- *If disarmament is de-linked from demobilisation and reintegration, what is the impact of this in terms of the success of the programme and in terms of human security?*

See Disarmament Section in the body of the paper.

Working Paper 4: Linkages between DDR and Other Transitional Assistance Programmes in the Reinsertion Phase

1. *Was any humanitarian / recovery programming undertaken in parallel with re-insertion (emergency relief, cash programming, assistance to civilian returnees, QUIPs, community rehabilitation projects etc) which might have been complementary?*

This is not envisaged in the present D&R process, as it is being implemented ten years after the conflict ended. Such approaches are more suitable in recently ended conflicts.

2. *What efforts (if any) were made to link the re-insertion phase of DDR to other humanitarian / recovery programming at a community level? If any activities were undertaken, what are some of the lessons?*
3. *Was there any community participation in the re-insertion phase (information, allocation of land, input into the programme etc)?*

Land is not a problem to the Congolese, as most of the country is uninhabited, consisting of huge equatorial forests. However, this aspect should be analysed with regard to Brazzaville, which formed the seat of the conflict. Communities easily reaccepted ex-combatants back.

4. *What are community perceptions of re-insertion packages (fact of it occurring, size, timing, targeting etc)?*

See body of paper, on Demobilisation.

5. *What are ex-combatant perceptions of re-insertion packages (reward for disarming, reward for fighting, compensation, size, timing, targeting etc).*

It seems that most ex-combatants are interested in the monetary aspects and very few care about the moral aspects of the process. Hence, the high chances for the falsification of identity to allow for repeated access to benefits. That is the reason why the PNDDR had to send the participants list to France for the matching process, so as to eliminate the opportunity for forgery.

6. *How long does a re-insertion package generally last for?*

The duration varies according to context. Most beneficiaries sell off the items as soon as an opportunity arises. This information is based on previous DDR processes and is also understood to be taking place in the current one.

7. *What people benefit from it?*
8. *What is it used for?*
9. *What supplementary support is found during the re-insertion phase?*

10. *When the package is spent, how are ex-combatants supported (self / re-integration?)*
11. *There is a recommendation to de-link the logistics element of the re-insertion package (travel, accommodation etc) from the resettlement element (entry and settlement into community). This would allow greater integration of the resettlement process with other community processes, in particular other return processes*
12. *What are community / ex-combatant / practitioner perceptions of the feasibility and usefulness of this recommendation?*

This may not have any impact on ex-combatants as to them, any kind of help coming their way is considered to be an opportune chance. As such, even if most of the programme benefits are denied to them and only one element is provided, they will still turn up to receive it. Very few (if any) combatants really tend to understand the long-term aims of a DDR process. Often, the arrival of a DDR project is accompanied by a wide range of rumours and misinformation as to what and who should expect to benefit. The result is that by the time the project is implemented there is usually a lot of anxiety across communities. This anxiety is intensified by the long period that DDR projects take to be implemented, due to the associated bureaucracy.