

PART II

Case studies:

Central African Republic

Democratic Republic of Congo

South Sudan

4 Central African Republic

4.1 Level of human development

In 2010, CAR was ranked 159 out of 169 countries in the HDI, and has consistently experienced low levels of human development for more than 30 years. Therefore, livelihood choices for both ex-combatants and civilians have been severely inhibited. Table 1 and figure 2 provide further details on the dimensions of human underdevelopment in CAR.

4.2 Economic overview and livelihood support

Despite its significant natural resources, the economy of CAR is fragile. A history of armed conflicts combined with weak governance and crippling government debt have had a devastating effect on the economy, resulting in more than 70,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), 130 destroyed industries and businesses, and 3,000 lost jobs. This contributed to an increase in inflation, as well as a decrease in per capita income, exports, imports and state revenues.⁶⁶ Since the end of the most recent armed conflict there has been minimal investment in infrastructure.

Currently, CAR's significant mineral deposits, such as diamonds, gold and uranium are generally not being mined on a major industrial scale (despite diamonds accounting for 40% of CAR exports, second only to timber exports)⁶⁷, with non-mechanised, individual mining ventures being commonplace. In addition, the country's rich agricultural potential has generally not been commercially developed, despite agriculture (excluding forestry) having consistently generated a third of the GDP.⁶⁸ Forestry is estimated to contribute to 10% of GDP.⁶⁹

Farming (predominantly cassava, yams, groundnuts, honey, bananas, cotton, coffee, tobacco and maize) primarily takes place on smallholdings, often at subsistence level, while much of the country suffers from food insecurity. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) estimates that slightly more than 8% of the land is used for agricultural purposes, with more than a third of available land being covered by forest.⁷⁰ Meat is considered a high value commodity. Figure 3 provides details on the ranking of the top ten commodities in terms of production value.

Large manufacturing and industrial ventures are virtually non-existent, with the small exception of timber/saw-mill sector. There are budding developments in the manufacture of cigarettes and sugar, and the production of palm oil, but these are still small-scale initiatives, and most of the crops that are exported leave in raw form and are still processed outside of the country.⁷¹ The wholesale and retail trade (including hotels and restaurants) is noteworthy, and contributes about 13% to GDP.⁷²

The 2010 the national budget was estimated to US\$ 333 million, with the government typically generating 85% of its revenue from taxation and international development/humanitarian aid.⁷³ Publicly available data on the categories of government spending is limited, with combination of sources estimating that: 4.3% of GDP is spent on health; 1.3% on education; 0.9% on the military; 25% on services (due to the large government bureaucracy and high transportation costs).

Most of the residents of CAR live in poverty, with 62.4% of the estimated population of 4.4 million

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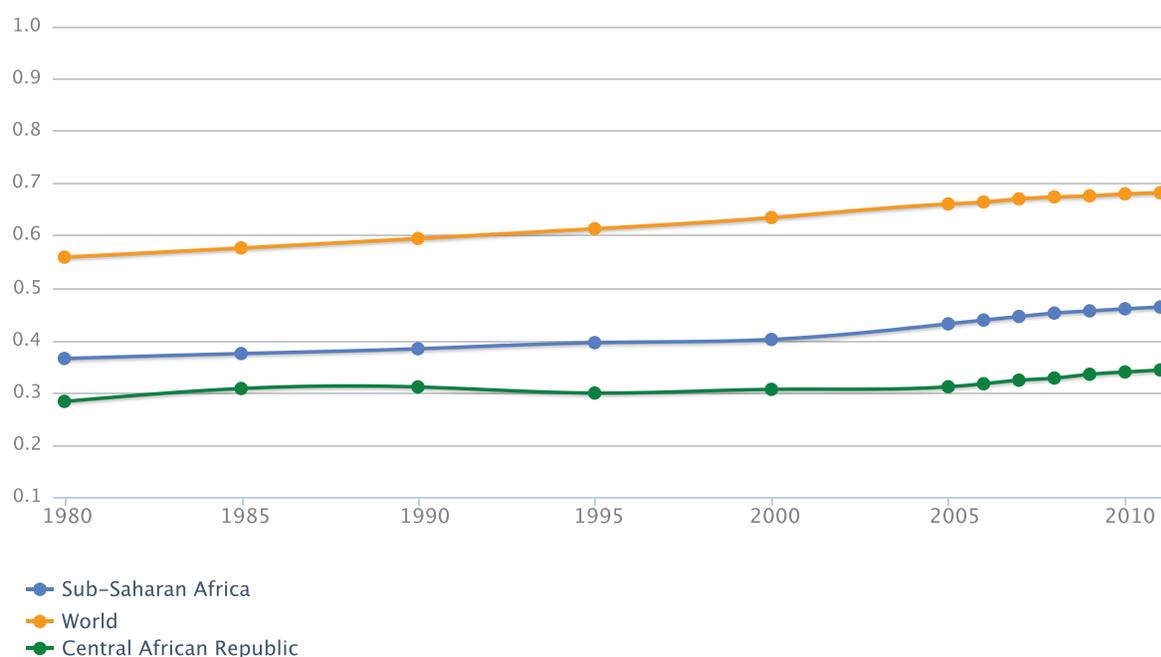
Table 1: Human Development Indicators: CAR	
Indicator	CAR
Health	
Expenditure on health, public (% of GDP)	1.4
Under-five mortality (per 1,000 live births)	173
Life expectancy at birth (years)	47.7
Education	
Adult literacy rate (both sexes) (% aged 15 and above)	48.6
Combined gross enrolment ratio in education (both sexes) (%)	28.6
Expenditure on education (% of GDP) (%)	1.3
Internet users (per 100 people)	0.4
Mean years of schooling (of adults) (years)	3.5
Expected Years of schooling (of children) (years)	6.3
Income	
GDP per capita (2008 PPP US\$)	766
GNI per capita (2008 PPP US\$) LN	6.6
Household final consumption expenditure per capita PPP (constant 2005 international \$)	497
Inequality	
Inequality-adjusted education index	0.163
Inequality-adjusted income index	0.17
Inequality-adjusted HDI value	0.183
Poverty	
Multidimensional poverty index (k greater than or equal to 3)	0.512
Intensity of deprivation	59.3
MPI: Headcount (k greater than or equal to 3), population in poverty (% of population)	86.4
Gender	
Maternal mortality ratio (deaths of women per 100,000 live births)	980
Population with at least secondary education, female/male ratio	0.393
Gender Inequality Index, value	0.768
Gender Inequality Index (updated)	0.763
Composite indices	
Multidimensional poverty index (k greater than or equal to 3)	0.512
HDI value	0.315
Gender Inequality Index, value	0.768
Inequality-adjusted HDI value	0.183
Source: UNDP, http://www.hdr.undp.org	

people living on less than US\$ 1.5 per day. The gross national product per capita is US\$ 410 and the gross national income per capita is US\$ 730 (2008).⁷⁴ There was no available data for the employment / unemployment rates, but it was estimated that close to 70% of the population sustain themselves through agricul-

ture.⁷⁵ In Bangui, the capital, close to a quarter of the economically active population were estimated to be unemployed.

Socio-economic indicators for the CAR are cause for grave concern. Only 55% of the adult population were literate, although school enrolment for primary school

Figure 2: Human Development Index Trends: CAR 1980-2010



Source UNDP, <http://www.hdr.undp.org>

was 87%. Interviews suggested that most people did not complete secondary school. The food security prevalence in the country was 18.9% and there was a 30.2% prevalence of food insecurity. Malnutrition measured by the percentage of children under five who are underweight was 21.8%.⁷⁶

4.3 Constraints and barriers to the formal economy

Although the government was taking steps to improve the economic environment in CAR, including facilitating the development of industry, agriculture and mining, as well as promoting international investment,⁷⁷ there were significant barriers to economic development. The lack of serviceable roads and reliable public transport, coupled with numerous military and rebel checkpoints, where bribes and ‘taxes’ are levied, constitute a significant barrier to economic development, as well as to safari tourism. CAR is landlocked, which makes it largely dependent on the road network with Cameroon, which is fraught with security problems (particularly banditry), which further restricts trade.⁷⁸ In 2008, the global economic crisis exacerbated the economic hardships already facing

the country, leading to a decrease in demand for exported produce.⁷⁹ The lack of electricity was another hindrance to growth.⁸⁰

Establishing and maintaining formal sector enterprises in CAR is highly challenging. It takes 22 days and 8 procedures to establish a business, and the cost is equivalent to 228.4% of income per capita. Registering a property takes 75 days, and costs close to 20% of the property value. Obtaining credit is exceedingly difficult, and there are very few commercial banks in operation (less than 1% of the population have access to banking services). The taxation process is burdensome and exploitative, and the protection of property rights is weak, especially in rural areas where government has not been able to assert its authority.⁸¹ The labour market is also highly regulated, especially with regards the dismissal of workers, which tends to act as a disincentive to entrepreneurs looking to set-up businesses.⁸²

Government bureaucracy and taxation procedures in CAR are also highly prohibitive towards cross border trade, as it takes on average 62 days, 17 documents and US\$ 5,554 to import a container of goods/raw materi-

als, and 54 days, 9 documents and US\$ 5,491 to export a container of goods/raw materials.⁸³ As with many other countries with weak governance, corruption in CAR is pervasive. Transparency International ranked CAR 154th out of 178 states on its Corruption Perceptions Index 2010, with a low ranking being equated to high levels of perceived corruption.⁸⁴ Corruption does not only misdirect public funds away from vital economic processes and initiatives, but also disrupts and constricts trade, as well as discourages investment in the formal economy.

In CAR, commercial interactions take place mostly on a small scale. For the most part, commercial interactions take place on a small scale. As an interviewee explained, “sugar is sold by the cube”. In sectors such as crop farming and livestock, over 90% of farmers are entirely using their own labour rather than mechanisation or animal traction, with the financial barriers to upgrading to more commercial methods being too great for most farmers.⁸⁵ In addition, further investment in, and expansion of businesses is undermined by the prevailing view that such businesses will be destroyed by the next bout of violence.⁸⁶

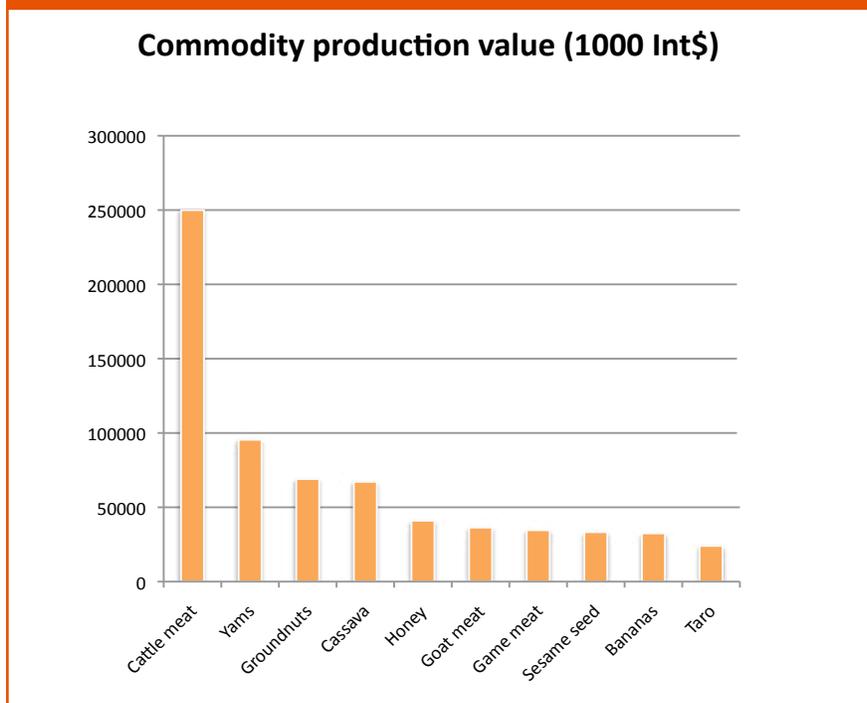
However, despite these barriers, the general sentiment is that the economy has shown some signs of improvement. In 2010 it was estimated that real GDP growth was 3.3%. International investment has recently gained momentum; some mining companies are conducting exploratory work; and there has been an increase in certain categories of exports.⁸⁷ However an international NGO employee pointed out that the sense in the economy is that those who are politically connected are building – “the rest are merely existing”.⁸⁸

4.4 The informal economic sector

Most of CAR’s economy is made up of the informal economic sector. As indicated above, agriculture is the primary means of support for the majority of the population, however, in order to survive, most households generate livelihoods from a variety of sources. An economist from the Ministry of Economy and Planning estimated that the informal economy probably makes up more than 90% of economic activity.⁸⁹ In a number of cases it is difficult to classify activities as either formal or informal⁹⁰, due to the flexible way in which economic formalisation has occurred in CAR. However, since the end of the armed conflict, almost no jobs have been created in the formal sector.

Apart from agriculture, informal sector economic activity in CAR typically includes petty trading in marketplaces, which has usually involved the selling of food, beverages, cell phone vouchers, household items, clothing and other consumables. The manufacture and sale of sorghum beer, and other types of alcohol, has also been a popular means of generating an income, particularly for women. Another significant economic activity is cross border trade with neighbouring states, which is undertaken by both women and men. The main products that are traded included: mining and forestry products and services; as well as agriculture and industrial products. Many of the constraints of that

Figure 3: CAR Top 10 commodities production value, 2009



Source: FAOSTAT, FAO of the UN, Accessed on July 21, 2011 <http://faostat.fao.org/site/612/default.aspx#ancor>

Table 2: Indicators of barriers to formal sector business development (CAR)		
Procedure	CAR rank	Sub-Saharan average rank
Ease of doing business	182	137
Starting a business	162	126
Registering property	142	121
Getting credit	139	120
Protecting investors	131	113
Paying taxes	182	116
Trading across borders	182	136
Enforcing contracts	173	118
Resolving insolvency	183	128

afflict the informal economy undermine the development of the formal sector, particularly excessive taxation; poor access to credit; security issues; and high transportation costs.⁹¹

As with most economies, there are less savoury and criminal components to the CAR informal economy. This includes poaching and the trade in bush-meat, as well as the smuggling of diamonds, endangered wildlife, animal skins, ivory, traditional medicine and cigarettes.

CAR has mineral wealth, mainly in the form of gold, diamonds and uranium, with only gold and diamonds being exploited on a significant scale, predominantly through low-level mining. Artisanal mining is a key component of the CAR informal economy, and is reported to provide direct livelihood support to an estimated 400,000 people. Taking the dependents into account, it has been suggested that 54% of the CAR population derives a livelihood, directly and indirectly, from informal sector mining.⁹² Miners and their dependents predominantly live in ramshackle mining camps where the standard of living is low in an environment characterised by insecurity and hazards.

West African middlemen (more commonly referred to as collectors) purchase the uncut diamonds from miners and sell them onto buying offices (bureaux d'achat), which in turn export the precious stones.⁹³ Artisanal and small-scale miners are highly dependent on collectors to finance the purchase/rental of

mining equipment. However, miners are obliged to sell the stones at process below market value. For example, in 2010 it was reported that a miner might receive 80,000 CFA francs (US\$ 160) from a collector for a one-carat diamond. The collector would then sell the stone to a buying office for between CFA 200,000 to 300,000 francs (US\$ 400 to US\$ 600). An additional drawback to this system is that most collectors, rather than investing their profits in developing the mining sector, remit it to their home countries.⁹⁴

CAR mining legislation provides for rigid control and excessive taxation. However, attempts by the CAR government to regulate informal sector mining have been largely unsuccessful. The disjuncture between the government regulations and reality has allowed for corruption and diamond smuggling (mainly into Cameroon) to flourish. By law, artisanal miners are required to pay annual license fees, with the first year's fee being CFA 158,850 (US\$ 518). Many miners have regarded this fee as exorbitant, and consequently, less than 5% of artisanal miners were operating with a license in 2010. There was a similar disregard for regulations by collectors and buyers, who were also required to pay high licensing costs. Consequently, the main stakeholders in the informal mining sector were vulnerable to extortion and exploitation by rapacious officials and some members of the ruling elite.⁹⁵

There were linkages between informal mining and armed groups operating in CAR, as the diamond trade provided such groups with the resources to maintain their powerbases and pursue their political and military objectives. The principal armed groups in CAR were the *Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement* (UFDR) and the *Convention des patriotes pour la justice et la paix* (CPJP). Both groups have occupied diamond areas and generated income through diamond smuggling. There have been reports of miners joining rebel groups for protection and access to mining areas.⁹⁶

Most households generate livelihoods from a variety of sources.

One reason for the dominance of the informal sector is the lack of government presence in large parts of the country. Economically, this absence has meant that the government does not collect taxes; does not develop infrastructure; and does not facilitate trade. Where there is government presence, an impression

among CAR inhabitants existed that the bureaucracy was parasitic, hindering rather than facilitating the formalisation of economic ventures. In areas where the state was less dominant, militias collected informal taxes, with an interviewee explaining that in these areas, “it’s a state in a state.”⁹⁷

4.5 DDR programming

CAR’s DDR programmes have been implemented in an unstable political, security and economic situation. Previous disarmament initiatives have only enjoyed limited success. Beginning in 2002, three distinct DDR processes were undertaken, including the latest programme, which is currently in progress. The DDR programmes worked with those armed groups that had reached agreement with the government about demobilisation. Below is a brief description of CAR’s two concluded DDR programmes:

National Programme on Disarmament and Reinsertion (PRDR) (2002-2003)

This programme aimed to offer livelihoods training to 2,000 people and to recover 10,000 small arms and light weapons. Unfortunately, the political and military events taking place in the country at the time prevented the programme from being implemented as planned. A failed military coup attempt in October 2002, the period of heightened insecurity that followed, and the successful coup of March 2003, affected and complicated the implementation of this programme, eventually leading to its early termination in 2003.⁹⁸

The PRAC demobilized 7,556 members of armed groups.

Ex-Combatant Reintegration and Community Support Project (PRAC) (2004-2008)

PRAC was implemented between March 2004 and April 2007, and 7,556 members of armed groups were demobilised.⁹⁹ PRAC had an operating budget of US\$ 13.2 million, which equated to an average cost of US\$ 1,758 per demobilised individual. US\$ 3 million were spent on disarmament and demobilisation (22.7% of funds) while US\$ 10.22 million were spent on reintegration (77.3% of funds).¹⁰⁰

PRAC’s overall objectives were to support the demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants and to enhance the capacities of communities receiving

the largest number of combatants.¹⁰¹ While combatants were being supported with training and start-up kits, a number of projects were also implemented in the communities into which they would settle.¹⁰²

PRAC was the structure that dealt with the implementation and operational management of the programme. UNDP took the lead in the execution of PRAC, although a number of national and government representatives also formed part of the PRAC structure.¹⁰³ The programme experienced a number of setbacks, mostly due to problems in planning, communication and monitoring.¹⁰⁴ It struggled with a limited budget, a lack of proper access and inexperienced staff who did not have experience in DDR.¹⁰⁵

The main government body responsible for coordinating DDR was the National Commission for Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration (CNDDR), a subsidiary of the National Defence Council. The CNDDR included two sub-commissions, one that was responsible for disarmament and demobilisation and the other that was responsible for reintegration and community support.¹⁰⁶ The CNDDR dealt with the political aspects of DDR and programme strategy.¹⁰⁷ The CNDDR received technical assistance from the World Bank and UNDP.

There were coordination problems between the UN and other parties involved in DDR, as well as coordination problems within the UN system.¹⁰⁸ An MDRP fact sheet explained that, “...differing management systems between implementing partner and donor, together with the absence of a realistic action plan for the duration of the project, contributed to the difficulties in planning.”¹⁰⁹

Former combatants were identified and registered, photographed and given former combatant identity cards and demobilisation documents in demobilisation camps. They participated in information and sensitization activities and were provided with counselling about their reintegration options. They were also given medical examinations, and if needed, appropriate medical care.¹¹⁰ With demobilisation, former combatants received a demobilisation kit consisting of blankets, sheets, soap, clothes, cooking utensils and other personal necessities.¹¹¹ Kits differed for men and women.

For reintegration, a feasibility study for DDR was conducted by a consultant in 2004 at the request of UNDP, and was submitted for comments at a stakeholder meeting.¹¹² The findings of this study fed into the planning of the DDR project documents. There was no initial socio-economic study conducted to explore the market and the economic opportunities available to former combatants.¹¹³

Former combatants were to be identified by their armed group leaders, who would propose lists of members of their groups. On the basis of these lists, DDR beneficiaries would be demobilised.¹¹⁴ There was alleged corruption in the process, and there were reports that local authorities manipulated the process to include family and friends.¹¹⁵

The major focus of the reintegration programme was on the economic component. Former combatants were permitted to choose an economic option, after which they were provided with training and a start-up kit tailored to that option. The options included agriculture, cattle breeding, small trade, school training, fishing, tailoring and certain types of professional training to become a mechanic, driver, plumber, carpenter or brick layer.¹¹⁶ A key problem was that there was no difference in the options provided from area to area, meaning that the choice of options did not take the economic opportunities in a specific area into account.¹¹⁷ In addition, the capacity of individuals was not prioritised, and former combatants were allowed to select options that may have been inappropriate for them.¹¹⁸

Once former combatants had chosen their options, PRAC identified national training institutions that provided training on the various options. For the most part, training institutions were located in the areas where former combatants resided, and beneficiaries lived at home while undergoing training. They were given World Food Programme (WFP) food items during the period of training.¹¹⁹ However, there was widespread criticism of the training provided.

For example, a tailor explained that he was given a one-month tailoring training, after which he still did not know how to do the job.¹²⁰ A female ex-combatant in Sibut echoed this sentiment, recalling that by the time the training had ended and they were provided with sewing machines, they still did not know how to use them, so they rented them out to others.¹²¹ A

former combatant working successfully as a tailor explained that those tailors that were successful after PRAC were those who had been working as tailors before joining armed groups and/or before demobilisation.¹²² A combatant who chose the cattle breeding option recalled that the training had been helpful in preparing them for the work, however it did not prepare them to deal with unexpected problems, such as cattle contracting diseases.¹²³

Once trained, former combatants were provided with start-up kits, consisting of money and the tools required for their trade, in order to assist them in setting up their income generation projects. Different options were provided with different kits, and the amounts of money provided varied depending on the option selected. Every former combatant interviewed said that the amount of money they had been given was not enough to successfully start up a business. Even a former employee of PRAC agreed that the amounts given should have been higher.¹²⁴

After the PRAC, tailors who were successful were those who had been working as tailors before the war.

Community based reintegration was one of the underlying pillars of PRAC, and PRAC's community projects formed a crucial component of the project. PRAC was therefore much broader than just DDR.¹²⁵ Forty-one micro-projects were implemented in communities. Examples included: the rehabilitation of socio-economic infrastructure; hospitals; dispensaries; schools; administrative offices; and wells. Most of the projects aimed to rehabilitate existing structures, although a few projects built new ones.¹²⁷ A key problem that emerged was the lack of involvement of communities in the implementation of these projects.¹²⁸ An additional problem was that little connection was made between the community projects and the reinsertion of former combatants.

4.6 Reintegration and the informal economy

In CAR the prevailing view was that the reintegration process, despite the assistance provided by PRAC, was ineffective. An independent evaluation of PRAC was carried out in October 2007.¹²⁹ The evaluation concluded that PRAC had not met many of the ob-

jectives it had set for itself, and that implementation was therefore not considered entirely successful.¹³⁰ The dominant view among ex-combatants in CAR was that the economic component of the reintegration process had ‘failed’, with one former combatant suggesting that “many former combatants died of failure”.¹³¹ However, Sakanoko Ndiai, former Executive Secretary of PRAC, stated that follow-up evaluations had shown that 72% of former combatants had succeeded in their economic activities.¹³² This assertion, however, could not be verified.

The former combatants’ strong views probably stem from unmet expectations that they would secure lucrative jobs as part of the reintegration process. For the most part, former combatants did not secure formal sector employment these were rare in cities and towns. In addition, according to a former PRAC employee, where job opportunities existed, ex-combatants did not have the necessary qualifications for these jobs.¹³³

Despite the widely held perception of reintegration failure, it is important to note that almost all of the former combatants interviewed were generating an income, through a variety of means. These livelihood activities replicated those of economically active non-combatants in CAR, and there were with seemingly similar levels of success and adversity.

The 2007 PRAC evaluation report found the cattle breeding and mechanics reintegration schemes to have been relatively successful (in terms of post-demobilisation livelihoods), and lesser degrees of success with fishing and commerce.¹³⁴ In the case of commerce, it was reported that former combatants had merely been given money, with very limited training.¹³⁵

It was noteworthy that many former combatants were not working in the fields for which they had received reintegration training/support. Rather, they were pursuing livelihood options that were more pragmatic given the prevailing limitations of the CAR economy. In the rural areas, for example, when economic reintegration ventures (such as small businesses) were unsuccessful, most former combatants eventually opted for subsistence agriculture.¹³⁶ Nonetheless, for those former combatants, who previously held positions of power and status within armed groups, working

in non-mechanised agriculture was an unappealing prospect.¹³⁷ There was widespread speculation that this situation might encourage former combatants to re-join armed groups.¹³⁸

4.6.1 Armed groups

There have been anecdotal reports of ex-combatants re-joining armed groups after DDR, with similar assertions having been repeated in former combatant focus group discussions.¹³⁹ Accurate information on such developments however was not available. The former Executive Secretary of the National Commission on DDR indicated that he was aware that some DDR beneficiaries had joined rebel groups in Chad and Sudan, and that fighters in the current rebellions within CAR were not part of the DDR (PRAC) process.¹⁴⁰

4.6.2 Obstacles to economic reintegration

For former combatants attempting to establish economic ventures in the CAR, the challenges were numerous and often insurmountable. The main challenge has been the high cost of doing business, especially input costs. For example, a former combatant working as a cattle breeder reported that the price of animal feed was often inflated.¹⁴¹ Similarly, a fisherman explained,

“If you want to get another person to help you fish, you need to feed them daily. This is an additional cost... Once you fish you need to dry fish and bring them to Bangui. If someone helps you, you have to pay. So often once you sell your fish, you end up getting less than it costs.”¹⁴²

The lack of infrastructure is an added constraint to economic growth. The conditions of the roads are poor, especially during the rainy season. Checkpoints also hinder business, limiting mobility and profits. For example, a female combatant used to travel to the north of the country in order to buy peanuts to re-sell in Bangui. There were numerous checkpoints on the route where she had to pay ‘customs fees’ to government soldiers as well as armed groups manning the checkpoints. It got to a point where her business was no longer profitable due to these costs, and she con-

sequently pursued other options.¹⁴³

Reliable and affordable access to equipment and capital to sustain economic ventures was a cause of frustration for ex-combatants. For example, a fisherman explained that freezers were needed to store fresh fish and these were often unavailable, which made it difficult to expand the business, and fish becomes unsellable if not refrigerated. Added to this, much of the equipment and goods for the fishing industry needed to be imported, and consequently expensive transportation costs were incurred.¹⁴⁴

Significant fluctuations in market forces, which were particularly pronounced for small-scale businesses, have the potential to undermine ex-combatant livelihood ventures. According to a female ex-combatant-turned-trader, during harvest period there was usually an oversupply of produce, which meant that goods were sold at lower prices. Conversely, during the low agricultural season, the cost of sourcing produce from farmers was high, which consequently affected the retail price. Consumers in urban areas were often loath to pay such high prices for agricultural products.¹⁴⁵

One of the problems repeatedly raised was that after DDR beneficiaries had set up their economic ventures, they had insufficient funds available to respond to problems that arose or to expand their ventures. This was compounded by the lack of accessible and affordable credit. While there were a handful of microfinance institutions supported by UNDP and some commercial banks, interest rates were considered to be too high.¹⁴⁶ In addition, micro-finance institutions were reluctant to provide loans to former combatants, as typically former combatants could not provide security for the loans.¹⁴⁷ Where credit was available, most former combatants were unaware of such a resource.¹⁴⁸

Traditions and cultural practices have also affected business performance. Throughout CAR a community-centred, altruistic way of life exists. That is, if a person generates income, or acquires wealth, that person was expected to share their good fortune with relatives and/or community members, often leaving little available cash to reinvest in the economic venture. A 'hand-to-mouth' approach to survival was common in CAR, with an interviewee suggesting that there

has been an exclusive focus on 'today's profit', which made it difficult to promote a tradition of saving and planning for the future. Each year, hundreds of people are accused of witchcraft, with there being speculation that in some cases the witchcraft incitements are borne out of personal jealousy of the relative economic success of the accused.¹⁴⁹

Persistent insecurity was an obstacle to economic development in CAR, not only for ex-combatants, but also for the population as a whole.¹⁵⁰ In insecure areas, particularly those with active armed groups and bandits, the movement of people and goods was restricted.¹⁵¹ According to the Prefect of Sibut, the proliferation of arms was a major security concern.¹⁵² This assertion was reinforced by published research on the transfer and misuse of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa.¹⁵³

There have also been suggestions that reintegration had been undermined by corruption. Reports suggested that there were several layers of corruption in the implementation of PRAC. Perceptions existed amongst former combatants that much of the money and benefits that were intended for them was siphoned off by officials.¹⁵⁴ Other forms of corruption allegedly included cases where local authorities enrolled their relatives and friends in the DDR programme.¹⁵⁵ In Sibut, for example, PRAC constructed a market from which former combatants were supposed to run their businesses. A number of former combatants alleged that the mayor's office took over control of the market and rented stalls to non-ex-combatants. In addition, former combatants had to pay rent to the mayor's office in order to work in this market, which they considered unfair.¹⁵⁶

Most of the 200 women who were beneficiaries of PRAC reintegration support established small businesses, raised cattle and engaged in tailoring.¹⁵⁷ Interviews suggested that female former combatants had a relatively negative reintegration experience. A key factor was that in the latter reintegration phases women were allegedly disqualified from the DDR process and

Significant fluctuations in market forces have the potential to undermine ex-combatant livelihood ventures.

had their names deleted from DDR lists. The reason for this, according to a former PRAC employee, was that the DDR authorities were sceptical that women could have been combatants, and therefore presumed that those who reported for DDR had merely received weapons from their families.¹⁵⁸ The responsibility of raising a family, often as a single parent, affected the ability of women to generate income.¹⁵⁹ According to one interviewee, “most females who were fighting didn’t have a chance to get responsible husbands. Therefore they had to look after children on their own.”¹⁶⁰ Female combatants were also not given the option to join the army and this disappointed many women.¹⁶¹

One of the key problems highlighted by former combatants was the lack of follow-up reintegration support. Former combatants indicated that they would have preferred to be ‘accompanied’ and further supported, in order to devise and implement solutions to the problems they encountered.¹⁶² It was emphasised that a six-month DDR programme was insufficient, and rather, interviewees suggested that DDR should be viewed as a longer-term development project.¹⁶³

Former combatants complained that the DDR programme had ignored practicalities of prevailing economic conditions, which had hindered their economic reintegration success. For example, some former combatants who selected the agricultural reintegration support received farming tools, but no land to farm on.¹⁶⁴ Some beneficiaries acquired driving permits, but did not have cars and therefore could not generate income. Added to this was insufficient access to credit and the lack of support services (such as veterinary services for livestock).¹⁶⁵

4.6.3 Mining

An area which was largely neglected by the CAR DDR programmes was mining. No significant training or support was provided for artisanal and small-scale mining, which was surprising given the important role that mining has played in the CAR economy. It is highly probable that some former combatants settled in mining areas to ply their trade as artisanal miners. The CAR government has reportedly taken steps to support groups of miners working together in co-operatives, providing them with materials and other support.¹⁶⁶

4.6.4 Small business

The CAR government has reportedly attempted to improve the conditions for doing business through reducing the bureaucracy and formalising certain economic activities. Whereas in the past it took close to a year to register a company, the process has supposedly been simplified to reduce the registration time.¹⁶⁸ A government ministry responsible for the promotion of small and medium enterprises and the informal sector has also been established.¹⁶⁹

There was some positive feedback from ex-combatants. For example, a former combatant who owns an informal sector shop that was not registered with the Ministry of Commerce indicated that government officials had granted him reprieve from taxation until such a time as his revenue increased.¹⁷⁰ Tailors, who received reintegration support, however claimed that they were required to be registered with the government offices, and that it was mandatory for them to display a registration certificate on the wall of their business premises.¹⁷¹