



TDRP Experts Seminar
The Politics of Demobilization
DDR: The Interface between Diplomacy and Development
April 29, 2010 - Brussels

Meeting Summary

1. An experts' seminar on the Politics of Demobilization in the Great Lakes Region took place on April 29, 2010 in Brussels. The Transitional Demobilization and Reintegration Program (TDRP) organized the meeting. A diverse group of participants including representatives from African governments and civil society, bilateral and multilateral organizations, as well as DDR experts and academics, attended the event (see Annex 1 for list of participants). The meeting took place under Chatham House rules.
2. The meeting was aimed at discussing the policy and practice around engaging with nonstate actors and armed groups in negotiations and peace processes after the conflicts of the late 1990s/early 2000s in the Great Lakes region. The focus was on how engagement was integrated with security and development programming – particularly disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programs.
3. Specific objectives of the seminar were:
 - Analyze the incentives (political, economic) of leaders of armed groups – and their behavior/ conduct over the course of a peace process;
 - Analyze the interface between diplomats and development practitioners;
 - Provide any guidance or recommendations on how to strengthen policy and practice in the quest for strengthening voluntary disarmament processes.
4. The seminar was organized in three sessions.
 - The first session set the stage for the discussions by describing the aftermath of Africa's first "world war". Discussions focused on the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as a central actor in the conflicts of the Great Lakes and where the nature of peace agreements has evolved from peacekeeping to peace building and to stabilization over the past decade. The variety of armed groups covered by these agreements meant that different approaches were adopted, both for power sharing and DDR. Three phases of peace processes were analyzed (pre-conditions, conceptualization and

implementation), along with the incentives for or against voluntary demobilization among the different ranks of the military forces and armed groups.

- The second session delved into diplomacy efforts by third parties during peace negotiations, including security sector reform (SSR) considerations and justice. Key issues addressed included: incentives that shape mediation and result in voluntary disarmament; the interface between development and diplomatic actors on what those incentives should be; and justice considerations during negotiations.
- The third session looked at the post-negotiation phase once agreements have been signed and DDR has been launched. Participants discussed interferences between politics and DDR, and how politics affect DDR once implementation begins.

Summary of main points

5. The discussions resulted in a good exchange of views and produced a plethora of information. While not exhaustive, key points raised include the following:

- In general terms, the peace process in the Great Lakes region points to a problem with the Western template of conflict resolution and negotiations (i.e. winner takes all; negotiations seen as a zero sum game). Much more emphasis needs to be placed on process with a view to building trust, rebuilding relationships, and identifying and building on themes of common interest or agreement among warring groups. A positive example was the work done by the Woodrow Wilson Center in Burundi before DDR began.
- Typically too much investment is placed on technical preparation of DDR and too little attention paid to the political side. In the Great Lakes region, the international community came together to invest almost \$500 million on a DDR program. Furthermore, DDR often needs a functioning and funded parallel SSR process; however in the DRC and MDRP, DDR found an easy consensus and SSR did not.
- While the Regional Strategy on which the MDRP was based established an intricate partnership to address issues such as political obstacles and security sector reform, the political and SSR dimensions did not get the emphasis they needed during the design phase of the program and were presented more as “complementary” to, rather than as preconditions of, demobilization.
- For middle and high ranking officers in the DRC, the DDR package offered did not provide a sufficient incentive to demobilize. For rank and file soldiers who were ordered to demobilize, the demobilization package, including cash payments, was sufficient and may even have been overly generous in that they ended up better off than other community members. Incentives by rank need to be well understood during the design of a DDR program.
- Conflicts are multi-layered with different issues dividing different groups. But peace agreements and DDR programs tend to be tailored to deal only with the “outer layer” of the conflict, leaving many others to be revealed over the course of DDR implementation that may require different peace agreements and DDR approaches. In the DRC, the

PNDDR was too rigid to be able to respond to these changes. DDR programs thus need to be flexible enough in their design to adapt as the peace process evolves.

- DDR cannot operate successfully in the absence of development/reconstruction initiatives for the rest of the population. Truth and reconciliation, however, may need to be deferred in the interest of achieving peace in the short term.
- National ownership of a peace process is central to its success. If the political will and motivation for peace is there and as long as the right national actors are involved at the right time, who actually implements DDR is less consequential.
- In DRC the issue of DDR was considered to be a crucial part of the peace process. However the details of the DDR process were not discussed in detail at the time. Nor were the terms and conditions of the process discussed with the rank and file of the various groups.
- If you get the politics “right”, DDR is a relatively straight forward process. Also, although not necessarily the case in DRC, if politics is not properly sorted out, DDR processes can become a forum for unresolved conflicts, which is inappropriate. In DRC, non compliance with DDR was sometimes used by factions as a protest tool.

Next steps

6. Two publications will be derived from the seminar:
 - A short dissemination note summarizing the main points from the meeting and providing guidance on engagement and mediation with armed groups, with a particular focus on DDR;
 - A chapter into a World Bank legacy publication on the Multi-country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP – 2002/2009) looking at peace and security in the Great Lakes region over the last ten years.

Both publications will be shared with meeting participants and posted on the TDRP website (www.tdrp.net) and on the United Nations DDR Resource Center (www.unddr.org).

Annex 1
List of Participants

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| Last Name | First Name | Title | Organization | Email |
|---------------------|-----------------|---|---------------------------------------|--|
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