

World Bank Management Response

End of Program Independent Evaluation

Multi-country Demobilization and Reintegration Program

July 2010

I. Introduction

1. World Bank management welcomes the Scanteam independent end of program evaluation of the Multi-country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP). The evaluation examines the MDRP's performance as a framework for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and in doing so, focuses on the key tenets of the program – partnership, regionality and national ownership. The report also reviews the financing and governance aspects of the MDRP and its approach to capacity building, and includes an analysis of results at the country level.

2. An evaluation of such a large, complex and long-running regional program was never going to be easy, particularly for a team external to the MDRP. However, the consultants succeeded in identifying many of the key achievements, challenges and setbacks faced by the MDRP. On the accomplishments of the MDRP, Scanteam points to the program's ability to process some 300,000 ex-combatants across seven countries, many in very difficult operating circumstances, to mobilize almost US\$ 500 million for DDR activities, and to structure a complex partnership around the common goal of DDR in the Great Lakes Region (GLR). Among the challenges identified, the consultants highlight: (a) the need for more attention to reintegration assistance, as well as a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system to support country DDR activities; (b) the difficulties in meeting the DDR needs of special groups, particularly female ex-combatants; (c) problems associated with making MDRP partners accountable to the program; (d) the inherent complexity of delivering on regional as opposed to country-level objectives; and (e) the need to consider capacity constraints at the country level early on in the program, given the national ownership model chosen by the MDRP. In general, however, practical familiarity with the realities of planning and implementing DDR programs would have strengthened the analysis and recommendations of the evaluation exercise.

II. Response to Specific Issues and Recommendations

2.1 FINANCING

3. As the Scanteam report points out, one of the most successful characteristics of the MDRP was its ability to pool donor resources of over US\$ 250 million and IDA funds of about US\$ 250 million and making these available under a common set of administrative procedures. Also noteworthy, was the MDRP's ability to facilitate an additional US\$ 68 million in IDA (as well as US\$ 68.4 million in donor funds and US\$ 25 million from the African Development Bank) to complete DDR operations in the region when the program closes. Mobilizing these funds even before the program got going provided a strong political signal to the parties on the ground, and a significant incentive to governments in the region to engage in DDR. Moreover, the MDRP generated important lessons for the Bank and the donor

community on managing emergency financing, including the risks of operating with a gap in the trust fund and of having one dominant donor. On the latter, the MDRP influenced the Bank's trust fund policies, which were subsequently revised taking into account the experiences of the MDRP.

2.2. PORTFOLIO RESULTS

4. Scanteam's suggestion that reintegration support should be an early consideration is well taken. However, it is important to note that extensive reintegration planning is not always possible in emergency programming, particularly if countries are in transition, elections are looming and a DDR program is operating under a tight timeframe. With regard to the comments on reintegration shortcomings, a deeper analysis reveals a more positive picture than the Scanteam report suggests. Indeed, if one takes into account Angola's system of recording reintegration, and the political impasses that delayed demobilization in RoC, Rwanda and Burundi, reintegration numbers would be close to 90 percent, compared to the 68 percent recorded in the last MDRP progress report and cited in the independent evaluation.

5. We fully agree with the Scanteam findings on the lessons in providing services for female ex-combatants and war wounded. For both these groups, future DDR programs would do well to consider a window that provides dedicated support for their needs, or encourage bilateral partners to assist these groups. An additional lesson, however, is the value of having a regional program dedicated to these issues, as the MDRP indeed established on gender (the Learning for Equality, Access and Peace or LEAP Program). Although LEAP was operationalized relatively late in the life of the MDRP, the program was at the forefront of new approaches to assist female ex-combatants and is continuing its support on gender and DDR in the region through its successor program, LEAP II.

6. Finally, we also concur with Scanteam that for programs such as the MDRP, special measures are required to improve the quality of M&E. But the report should also have emphasized that given the inherent weaknesses of post-conflict states and institutions and the emergency nature of post-conflict DDR operations, implementing the kind of robust results based frameworks that donors expect will not be possible, especially because national governments had overall responsibility for project level M&E. Also noteworthy is that the MDRP's successor program, the Transitional Demobilization and Reintegration Program, has established a quality enhancement facility for ongoing DDR programs in the GLR with a view to generating better data, analysis and lessons for future DDR.

2.3 PARTNERSHIP

7. Scanteam's findings that too little time went into the design of the MDRP Partnership, including defining the roles and responsibilities of partners, are indeed accurate. What needs to be acknowledged however, is the tight time frame in which the Bank and the international community were operating when the MDRP was designed. The regional peace process had opened up a window of opportunity for the illusive peace in the GLR that the world had been seeking; thus, MDRP architects were in a great deal of pressure to quickly launch the program, And once the program began in earnest, the tight time frame of elections in countries such as the DRC and Burundi meant a continuous focus on

implementation over other issues. Moreover, it is doubtful that establishing a results framework for the partnership would have been the answer, as Scanteam suggests. Ultimately, the Bank had no authority over its partners; persuasion and communications were the only way for the Bank to relate to these groups. The constraints notwithstanding, the MDRP should have paid much greater attention to the partnership throughout the life of the program. Among other things, dedicated resources and staff who specialized in managing inter-organizational relationships should have been put in place at the outset. This is an important lesson for future partnerships of the magnitude and complexity of the MDRP.

2.4 REGIONAL APPROACH

8. As the independent evaluation points out, MDRP's regional approach was effective in terms of pooled and flexible financing, and confidence building for mutual disengagement. It was also an effective mechanism for coordination and consistency of approaches, and for harmonization in the treatment of ex-combatants.

9. On meeting the goals related to regional cross-border activities and combatants on foreign soil, the report should have been clearer on the difficulties in delivering on this agenda, given the political stalemates in the region. There was little the MDRP could do in the absence of an international solution to the FDLR and other foreign armed groups that persist and continue to destabilize the region. The evaluation should also have detailed some of MDRP's accomplishments which while less visible, were nonetheless highly valued by the international community and country clients. This included, behind the scenes work to facilitate voluntary repatriation, and the compilation of some of the most comprehensive information to date on the leadership, structure, operational history, strategy and tactics of foreign armed groups operating in the eastern DRC.

10. The Scanteam report emphasized the inability of the MDRP to meet its goal of establishing a regional database of ex-combatants. An explanation of the problems associated with this unmet goal, however, should have been included. While originally conceptualized as a very desirable outcome of the MDRP regional program, the regional database proved impractical and unfeasible for a number of reasons. First, several DDR programs (and their respective management information systems) were already in place and therefore outside of the MDRP's control when the program began (e.g. in Rwanda). Second, not all of the registration systems were managed by MDRP financed activities (e.g. in Angola) and thus also out of the program's control. Third, the objectives and components of DDR programs varied across countries, with some systems only designed for identification and registration and not for reinsertion and reintegration. And fourth, a robust and consistent biometric registration system would have been required to generate a regional database but the technology was unavailable at the time the MDRP began.

2.5 CAPACITY BUILDING

11. As the Scanteam report rightly points out, much more attention should have been given to capacity issues of national governments responsible for implementing DDR activities, particularly given the MDRP's approach to national ownership and given that most recipient governments were emerging

from years of destructive war. A secretariat of less than ten dedicated staff was unrealistic given the needs in the region. However, the report also places too much currency on a capacity development plan, staff and monitorable results framework. Once the MDRP realized the constraints at the country level and put the staff in place, in the field, the reality was that much of the technical support was unwelcomed by country counterparts that preferred to implement the program on their own.

III. The World Bank and DDR: Looking Ahead

12. We concur with the Scanteam evaluation that the experiences of the MDRP revealed the need for the Bank to analyze its capacity to carry out a massive regional DDR program of the scale of the MDRP. Such an exercise would include a review of the Bank's policies and procedures related to DDR, its staffing and organizational structure, and its corporate support structures on DDR and post-conflict programming (e.g. sector board accountabilities). The Bank, however, is poised to address the key organizational and institutional issues uncovered during the implementation of the MDRP. The Bank's strong commitment to the post-conflict and fragility agenda is reflected in the following:

- First, the 2011 WDR is dedicated to the issue of violent conflict and fragility, with a view to contributing concrete, practical suggestions and approaches to addressing policy and operational issues such as those confronted by MDRP.
- Second, the World Bank is embarking on a review of OP2.30 on "Development Cooperation and Conflict," which *inter alia* deals with the principles of Bank involvement in conflict settings, partnerships, Bank support to countries in transition, and Bank engagement in areas affected by conflict. A rethinking of the Bank's role in the security sector will be part of this endeavor, and as expected, the experiences of the MDRP will inform the analysis.

13. A final word. It is important to reiterate that the MDRP was a massively ambitious and complex undertaking for the Bank and its partners. The Bank is typically criticized for being a risk-averse institution but in this case, in taking the lead on the MDRP, the Bank took a risk and it paid off: despite shortcomings and frustrations, the MDRP as a regional framework met its overall objectives. Moreover, what is often forgotten is that the MDRP was before its time, ahead of the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda that signified the mainstreamed push towards issues that the MDRP was championing, i.e. ownership, donor harmonization and partnership. Finally, at the start of the MDRP, the Bank as well as the rest of the international community was just figuring out how fragile states fit into a development framework. The MDRP thus had to learn by doing. As in the case of the Scanteam report, these points are often underappreciated in assessing the experiences of the MDRP.

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