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## **Avoiding Disarmament Failure: The Critical Link in DDR**

An Operational Manual for Donors,  
Managers, and Practitioners

*By Peter Swarbrick*



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Small Arms Survey  
Graduate Institute of International Studies  
47 Avenue Blanc  
1202 Geneva  
Switzerland

Published in Switzerland by the Small Arms Survey  
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First published February 2007

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Copy-edited by Alex Potter  
Proofread by Donald Strachan

Typeset in Optima and Palatino  
by Richard Jones (rmjones@onetel.com), Exile: Design & Editorial Services

Printed in Switzerland by coprint, Geneva

ISBN 2-8288-0078-4

## The Small Arms Survey

The Small Arms Survey is an independent research project located at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, Switzerland. Established in 1999, the project is supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, and by sustained contributions from the governments of Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The Survey is also grateful for past and current project support received from Australia, Denmark, and New Zealand.

The Small Arms Survey collaborates with research institutes and non-governmental organizations in many countries, including Brazil, Canada, Georgia, Germany, India, Israel, Jordan, Norway, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

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## Acronyms and abbreviations

BICC	Bonn International Center for Conversion
CONADER	Commission Nationale de Désarmement, Démobilisation et Réinsertion
DDR	disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DDRRR	disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement, and reintegration
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FARDC	Forces Armées de République Démocratique du Congo
FDLR	Forces Démocratique de Libération du Rwanda
MilObs	military observers
MINUSTAH	United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti
MONUC	United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MDRP	Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme
RCD	Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie
SOP	standard operating procedure
SRSG	special representative of the Secretary-General
SSR	security sector reform
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDPKO	United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNPOL	United Nations Police
WFP	World Food Programme

## About the author

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## Acknowledgements

The Small Arms Survey is grateful to the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs for providing financial support for this report.

The author gratefully acknowledges the significant contributions to this manual by Desmond Molloy, Head of DDR for the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), and Tim Reid, former MONUC Team Leader of DDRRR in South Kivu Province, DRC. In addition, the author thanks Joshua Marks, who provided helpful information about the context for DDR efforts in the DRC.

The Small Arms Survey would like to thank Ryan Nichols for his editorial contributions.

## I. Introduction

The disarmament of combatants from warring groups in armed conflict is vital to establishing the state's monopoly over the use of force in a country. The dissolution of fighting forces and the reintegration of their former members into society are likewise essential for long-term peace and stability, and the development of the country's national economy.

Each phase of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) is fraught with pitfalls that threaten the transition to peace. But perhaps the most delicate and urgent component is disarmament, which encompasses the handover of weapons and ammunition to the government or a designated authority, their registration, their safe storage, and, if required, their destruction. All of these steps have political, legal, administrative, organizational, financial, logistical, and security aspects that must be taken into account.

The disarmament literature is already replete with technical manuals and other publications designed to help experienced practitioners and donors implement disarmament projects, and this manual does not attempt to duplicate them. It is hoped that the value of this publication is to highlight for the engaged but largely uninformed reader some of the most important obstacles to disarmament in DDR. Most usefully, the manual uses real-world examples to suggest ways to navigate those obstacles effectively.

Given the strong links that disarmament shares with both demobilization and reintegration activities, some of the analysis in this manual inevitably touches on the process of DDR as a whole. When doing so, it focuses heavily on the DDR programme in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where the author is the Head of DDR operations for the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), and draws on examples from several other countries, such as Burundi, Cambodia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Haiti.

This manual does not cover all types of disarmament scenarios, but is limited to considering contexts with particular common characteristics. Firstly, the state in question has recently undergone, or emerged from, serious armed

challenges to its authority, and so still lacks complete control over its territory, where in poorly accessible areas armed groups may still be present. Secondly, the disarmament exercise is essentially voluntary, undertaken either in accordance with a formal agreement or in the wake of the military victory of the government or the emergence of a new government. Thirdly, the recent conflict may have involved neighbouring or other foreign countries whose position remains equivocal. Fourthly, the central government is beset by various weaknesses, including financial and logistical deficiencies, yet enjoys the recognition and support of the international community. Finally, the state is a functioning entity and possesses sufficient legitimacy to make it capable of taking part in a supported process of disarmament.

Under the circumstances described above, it is typically necessary to engage a large number of national and international actors in the planning, financing, conduct, and evaluation of a DDR operation. The breadth and variety of these operations make it unlikely that any central authority has at its disposal all the necessary expertise. In fact, maintaining coherence, let alone harmony and coordination, among the various actors involved in DDR can in itself present daunting challenges. ▣



## II. Overall context of disarmament in relation to DDR

### Defining armed actors and managing expectations

The context in which disarmament occurs has many implications. Disarmament and DDR operations as a whole are often conducted pursuant to a formal written agreement among the parties concerned. Typically, this takes the form of an agreement between the government and one or more former rebel groups who have either entered into a political accommodation, or acknowledge some kind of conditional military surrender. When this is not the case, and often even when it is, there may still be substantial disagreement over the number and identity of the groups concerned, the number of fighters and weapons they have—particularly so in relation to women and children associated with the fighting groups—their precise locations, and other information vital to the DDR process. In general, the more substantial the benefits, including cash, to be offered to former combatants, the more numerous the applicants.<sup>1</sup> This is especially the case when the international community is providing funding or otherwise guaranteeing aspects of the process. Since the political process that follows the signing of a peace or ceasefire accord often represents a continuation of the conflict by other means, it is also possible that the signatory groups will mutate, split, or otherwise transform themselves in unpredictable ways. In the DRC peace process, the rebel group originally known as RCD (Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie) suffered a series of internal schisms that resulted in the emergence of four separate groups with distinct leaderships and agendas.

Partly for these reasons, and partly for security-related reasons, many programmes offer benefits not directly to the former combatants, but to the communities expected to host them following their demobilization. Such a system also has the advantage of avoiding the appearance of ‘rewarding’ armed combatants who, whatever their motivation, are invariably implicated in the civilian casualties, rape, looting, and property damage that accompanied the conflict. Investing in the communities can also be a more effective method of

creating employment than, for instance, a one-off cash grant to an ex-combatant with limited experience in the management of personal finances.

Providing benefits to communities that host former combatants—instead of directly to the ex-combatants—can avoid a number of common problems.

### International and national support

Many DDR operations are conducted in the context of a UN peacekeeping operation, which will typically deploy its own armed force, comprising armed contingents capable of providing area security; unarmed military observers capable of negotiating with armed-group commanders under field conditions on military-related matters; helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft; and limited logistical, technical weapons-handling, and communications support. A peacekeeping operation will also provide a ready interface with the UN Security Council and a forum for discussions with interested UN member states, typically some combination of the Security Council’s permanent (P-5) membership plus one, two, or more former colonial or key regional powers.

The World Bank is also increasingly involved in certain aspects of DDR operations, in particular through its Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (MDRP)—a four-year (2002–06) initiative that currently targets 450,000 ex-combatants in seven countries in Africa’s Great Lakes Region. Importantly, however, the MDRP does not include direct financing for disarmament, security sector reform (SSR), or expenses for military personnel prior to demobilization. Consequently, all disarmament components of a DDR programme must be funded independently of the World Bank.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, so close is the connection between disarmament and the ‘downstream’ functions of demobilization and reintegration—where the World Bank intervenes—that the World Bank is a major interlocutor for all aspects of the DDR process.

Whatever the level of international peacekeeping or other actors, the central government will need to establish its own dedicated organs for DDR. These will be its necessary interface with the World Bank and other international institutions likely to be engaged, including UN bodies such as the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) (for children

Box 1

### A different view of DDR

A new definition of DDR is emerging that has a number of implications for programming goals and activities. The new proposal is that DDR be considered ‘the placing of surplus and offending weapons beyond use, in the context of improved Community Security by enhancing livelihood opportunity through social and economic investment in the community’ (Ljunggren and Molloy, 2004). This conception opens a broader range of options to violence reduction beyond simply the physical collection of weapons. It projects DDR as a holistic, longer-term development process rather than a discrete and time-bound activity with disarmament as a logistical component. It therefore brings DDR further into the realm of social engineering. The notion of ‘placing . . . weapons beyond use’ allows for an option other than the surrender of weapons to a victor or third party, and offers a face-saving and confidence-building mechanism to overcome a potential hurdle in the implementation of a peace agreement. It requires demonstration of good faith supported by credible verification mechanisms.

associated with armed conflict), the World Food Programme (WFP), other humanitarian agencies (for serving the civilian populations newly accessible after a protracted conflict, including host communities), and international and local NGOs.

As an example of an institutional set-up, in the DRC the National Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (Commission Nationale de Désarmement, Démobilisation et Réinsertion, or CONADER) is responsible for the disarmament and demobilization of all Congolese troops, while the Congolese national army (Forces Armées de République Démocratique du Congo or FARDC) is responsible for the disarmament of these troops. The Congolese army is also responsible for the first three phases of disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement, and reintegration (DDRRR) of foreign rebel groups on its territories, and receives significant support from MONUC. Once repatriation of foreign combatants is complete, the resettlement and reintegration phases become the responsibility of the country of origin. 📄

## III. Preconditions and preparations for disarmament in relation to DDR

### Negotiations and peace agreements

In theory, a DDR programme should be included in the text of any peace or ceasefire agreement on the basis of thorough negotiations involving not only the parties, but also those international organizations (UN, World Bank) likely to participate in the programme. Moreover, an ideal DDR programme should be constructed ‘back to front’, with sound reintegration programmes well on the way to being in place before the disarmament event begins. This rarely happens.

DDR is rarely part of a signed peace or ceasefire agreement, and reintegration is often deferred until too late in the process.

Part of the problem is that those who are engaged in negotiations bear less than full responsibility for the implementation of the signed agreement. It is not uncommon, for instance, for the parties to a conflict to draw up, behind closed doors, an agreement that commits some outside body—often the UN or the ‘international community’—to providing substantial assistance and/or resolving the most intractable political or security problems. Without consulting the UN, the parties will then announce their agreement and present the international community with a *fait accompli*. This was the case with the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement for the resolution of the conflict in the DRC, where signatories decided to make the UN responsible for the forced disarmament and repatriation of foreign armed groups in the DRC—a responsibility that the UN never accepted.<sup>3</sup>

Those who are engaged in negotiations are rarely responsible for the implementation of the signed agreement.

By contrast, the October 1991 Paris Agreement to resolve the situation in Cambodia was a model of how such agreements should be constructed. Negotiations involved not only the four Cambodian parties and all the permanent members of the Security Council, but also regional powers (Japan and Australia). The Paris Agreement very carefully and clearly spelled out exactly who was supposed to do what. It must be acknowledged, however, that the negotiating process lasted several years, and that, even with the full commitment of the international community and the deployment of a very large UN force, the success of the mission was often in doubt and widely regarded as incomplete.

The 'back to front' approach to DDR, however, may be unable to accommodate former combatants in the later stages of the process. A disarmament programme can be functioning relatively quickly. One of the quickest stages of the process—the surrender of a weapon—can be accomplished in a matter of minutes, from accepting the weapon from the combatant, to ensuring that it is safe and verifying its usability, registering it, disabling it if necessary, and placing it in a container for storage or destruction. The reintegration of former combatants into society, on the other hand, can take years and be incredibly costly. To put in place a workable system for reintegration into society, with soundly based funding, often in a country that never had much of an economic and social structure to begin with, is in itself a very daunting task. To do so under timetable pressures, when tens of thousands of armed men are, at least nominally, ready to hand in their weapons, is in practice usually impossible. Waiting until later processes are ready to accommodate the combatants could create further problems. In the Congolese DDR process, combatants eager to hand in their weapons sometimes waited for weeks until they could disarm. Bored, bereft of supplies, but armed, these restless combatants were prone to kill, rob, and rape in nearby communities, and sometimes never did disarm.

**Although 'back to front' DDR has its advantages, it may mean that later-arriving ex-combatants will be excluded from the process.**

On the other hand, seizing the moment when armed men present themselves with their weapons creates another set of problems. With the reintegration pro-

gramme unable to accommodate them, the disarmed former combatants find themselves jobless (and often homeless, unless they are confined to a 'temporary' camp), and can become extremely aggrieved when the promised food or work are not available, or the modest benefits provided under the programme expire. There is an obvious risk that, lacking a better alternative, they will return to the bush and reacquire arms, perhaps from caches whose locations are known to them, or else be recruited by other rebel groups. In 2005, for example, over one thousand civilians and former combatants were believed to have been recruited into the ranks of General Laurent Nkunda's rebel group in the eastern Congolese province of North Kivu. According to a 17-page letter he had issued to the Congolese government, Nkunda threatened to attack the DRC government, which according to him was planning a genocide against Tutsis (an ethnic group found in Rwanda, Burundi, and the DRC that was the main target of the 1994 Rwandan genocide). Nkunda used a similar justification for attack one year earlier when his troops laid siege to, occupied, and pillaged the strategically important eastern city of Bukavu.

**Disarmament must be quickly followed by the delivery of promised reintegration incentives, or ex-combatants will be tempted to rearm.**

Regardless of the timing of the disarmament process, expectations must be managed and the process must include all relevant groups. Management of expectations cannot be limited to those of the beneficiaries. In planning negotiations for conflict resolution, actors at all levels must understand that disarmament cannot be the only solution to political problems. Disarmament is the result of political solutions. The situation in Haiti, where a conventional and comprehensive DDR process was demanded by Security Council resolutions 1542 and 1608 without due consideration of the absence of political space, a national commitment to either reconciliation or disarmament, or any of the other basic prerequisites outlined in the lessons-learned documents of recent processes, is typical of general misunderstanding of the scope of DDR and of how the uninitiated can have undeliverable expectations of it.

Women associated with and affected by the conflict should ideally be as fully engaged as possible in the development of the DDR process at difficult levels.

## Box 2

### **The importance of timing**

The issue of timing is critical in a conflict and post-conflict environment. Peace agreements, more so than political agreements, are fragile and likely to go sour if not implemented quickly. Party leaders change their minds or die; their deputies might change their mind and scuttle the process; and other unexpected incidents occur. This must be kept in mind at all times, and maximum efforts must be made to use all possible measures to accelerate the process and avoid delays. UN and other international organizations are often bureaucratic and slow, but this varies from one agency to another. The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the WFP are arguably among the most rapid, while UNDP is often the slowest. For example, in the DRC, UNDP was initially given the lead role in national DDR. With the World Bank, it was supposed to have a 'rapid response mechanism' in place in early 2003, but despite the presence of numerous groups already prepared to lay down their arms, no actual presence on the ground was in place until mid-2004 and no actual reaction mechanism until 2005, when the regular programme was supposed to have already begun. The World Bank can also be very slow, as most of its plans are devised in Washington, DC rather than on the ground. Crucially, DDR and SSR are usually the foundation of any post-conflict situation. In order to kick-start them, the maximum of resources need to be frontloaded to the peacekeeping mission and then gradually handed over to the longer-term agencies.

Though every case needs to be examined individually, it is usually more prudent to let the international peacekeeping mission act as the main motor of the initial phases of the DDR process. This allows demobilizing combatants to benefit more quickly from essential activities, such as the supply of tents and food before they die of harsh living conditions, as happened in the DRC. This also gives a chance for the national government, usually newly formed after decades of misrule and years of civil war, to build capacity and gradually take on more responsibility without sacrificing the entire peace process.

As participants in the violence, victims—often women and children—are strong vectors of peace, yet their need for inclusion and potential contribution is usually neglected, even in matriarchal societies such as in Sierra Leone and Haiti. They can strongly influence the success of the disarmament process and play clear roles in the community reintegration and longer-term reconciliation phases. Their inclusion in the negotiation and accord-building process would ensure that their specific needs are addressed comprehensively, rather than with the cursory reference found in documents such as the Lomé Accord for Sierra Leone. Women tend to relate more than men to the needs of the most vulnerable in the community, and to contribute most to community security in addressing them.

**Women associated with and affected by the conflict should be engaged as fully as possible in all aspects of the DDR development process.**

### **Legal framework associated with disarmament**

The DDR process must be promulgated as a national programme under law. If a general amnesty has not been agreed, the existence of some form of prosecution waiver in relation to weapons surrendered under the provisions of the DDR programme is critical. The provisions of any transitional justice mechanisms must be clearly spelled out and disseminated. For example, it must be clear that the International Criminal Court or national intervention will seek out only those most responsible for crimes against humanity or children.

**The DDR process and any transitional justice mechanisms must be established as national programmes in law.**

Where a UN peacekeeping mission is deployed in the area of operations, its activities in disarmament and related matters will be governed by the mandate from the Security Council, which under international law is responsible for the maintenance of peace and security. The government and former rebel groups will then undertake their disarmament activities in accordance with the agreements to which they are party. Although the agreements affecting the government's activities and the mandate governing the UN peacekeeping operations are separate and distinct, they are often related. UN resolutions articulating MONUC's initial peacekeeping mandate, for example, closely followed the 1999 Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement's request for a UN peacekeeping force. Acting in accordance with subsequent agreements, the government may establish by decree or through parliamentary action the necessary organs to plan and conduct disarmament and other aspects of the DDR programme. Children associated with armed groups should be dealt with in accordance with the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the associated protocols of 1977, as well as the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Cape Town Principles, relevant resolutions of the Security Council, and applicable national law should also be considered.

The disposal of weapons and ammunition is also subject to legal constraints that are mostly within the province of national law. However, sea dumping of weapons and ammunition is prohibited under the international Law of the Sea. While ammunition is usually destroyed by detonation or burning, a variety of methods exist for the disposal of destroyed weapons. It is often effective to use the disposal process as a community sensitization exercise as part of community disarmament programmes, which can include art competitions, the conversion of weapons to tools, the use of gun metal in reinforcing community buildings, and other activities that are both symbolic and useful.

## Budgeting and financing

Funding is available from a variety of sources for many aspects of DDR.<sup>4</sup> Though it is assumed that the government concerned is one of those sources, it is also safe to assume that government funding will be inadequate, and must be significantly supplemented by donor contributions, whether bilaterally or from some kind or variety of international financing. If there is a UN peacekeeping operation in the country, it will normally be funded primarily by assessed contributions (i.e. member states of the General Assembly will already have assessed themselves for the contributions necessary to support the armed contingents, military observers, civilian personnel, and logistical and communications assets, including aircraft). The peacekeeping operation will therefore be self-funding with respect to all the disarmament-related activities stipulated in its mandate. A recent (laudable) exception has been made with the assessed budget of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), where the General Assembly has granted funding for operational aspects of the 'reinsertion' phase of the DDR process. This newly articulated phase is seen as the critical link between demobilization and reintegration, covering a 12-month period, which is often a volatile and under-funded phase of any DDR process.

**It is usually safe to assume that government funding for DDR and disarmament will be inadequate, and must be significantly supplemented by donor contributions.**

This system usually leaves gaps in the form of unfunded or unbudgeted activities, which are often last-minute or emergency requirements. But often the most important under-funded activity is the payment of the national regular armed forces by the government. In many countries, the irregular payment, under-payment, or non-payment of soldiers' wages is a major and chronic source of instability and the erosion of state authority. Yet donors are traditionally deeply reluctant to fund directly the payment of armed soldiers, even the armed forces of the legitimate government. In the DRC, deficiencies in the regular payment of wages to the Congolese army aggravated the situation of the notoriously undisciplined troops. Without their paltry salary of roughly USD 10 per month, rank-and-file soldiers had few choices but to live off the local population. Here, the issue was not necessarily the absence of money available, but the constant diversion of the money at various points along its route to the troops. The practice of simply stealing the salaries was commonplace. As one of several examples, the deputy military regional commander in North Kivu (an eastern Congolese province) was suspended after stealing USD 200,000 in salaries for his soldiers (ICG, 2005, p. 17).

**The irregular payment, under-payment, or non-payment of soldiers' wages is a major source of instability and the erosion of state authority, yet donors are deeply reluctant to pay soldiers directly.**

Where this is an issue, and no bilateral donor can be found to rectify it, it may be necessary to consider the deployment to the government of army pay experts, or the funding of a transport company that would lodge a bond with the government to deliver funds directly to the pay parade, or similar measures to remove a potential source of serious instability. The operation, to be sure, is no easy task. Given the level of corruption in the DRC, for example, at least one former DDR team official estimates that army pay experts would be required at every single transit point for the payrolls, totalling more than 100 experts.

The World Bank, UN agencies, and individual government donors will each have their own oversight, reporting, and transparency requirements in respect of any funds provided to the government, or to local or international NGOs assisting the government on various aspects of DDR. These can prove cumber-



some individually, and collectively require a considerable expenditure of time and effort by DDR practitioners. Negotiating these various funding procedures calls for a great deal of patience and also a regular appeal for greater cooperation among the various donors, who may have different priorities. It was considerations of this nature that delayed the census-taking of the Congolese army. Various people in MONUC had sought to interest donors in supporting a national census of the army, yet many donors balked at the idea, considering other aspects of SSR more important. After some delay, however, a less extensive census was undertaken, which helped reduce the number of phantom soldiers. (See below for more on census.)

**Donor oversight, reporting, and transparency requirements require a considerable expenditure of time and effort on the part of DDR practitioners. This problem is increased when multiple donors with different requirements must be served.**

Where possible, the DDR programme should not rely on a hodgepodge of various funding arrangements, which often have different reporting requirements, restrictions, and priorities, and can lead to needlessly duplicative activities. The World Bank MDRP was a solution to these problems in donor coordination and response. Unlike other donor-funded DDR initiatives, the DRC MDRP boasted a clear initial strategy and upfront funding at the beginning of the process.

While it scored several successes, the MDRP had its own set of problems. In the DRC, it was hampered by financial and management problems on the part of the national DDR programme it was supporting. In Ituri, a district in north-eastern Congo bordering Uganda, civilian officers also reported that their reintegration caseload—in this case, of 11,200 ex-combatants—was overwhelming. According to some involved in the process, the planning for the MDRP-supported reintegration phase of DDR failed to consider the logistical and procurement hurdles of working in an area with little or no infrastructure. Trucks loaded with reintegration kits were sometimes caught in the crossfire between militia and Congolese army troops, and supplies sometimes failed to arrive for no reported reason.

## Normative structures and physical infrastructure

A basic minimum of physical infrastructure is necessary for the disarmament procedure. This typically comprises a camp-type environment capable of accommodating several hundred or more combatants. Separate arrangements should be made for children associated with the armed group or force, as well as for female combatants. It is also prudent to make provisions for family members of combatants, perhaps in a nearby camp. For planning and budgetary purposes, it is reasonable to assess the ratio of dependents to combatants at about 3:1, although this depends on various factors such as place of origin of combatants. If it is necessary to construct new camps rather than use existing army barracks, they should be placed as close as possible to existing concentrations of troops and in areas accessible to useable roads and/or airstrips. It is also prudent to ensure that measures are in place to protect demobilized combatants from being fleeced of any benefits they receive on leaving the camp; or of being immediately re-recruited (particularly common in the case of child soldiers), as has happened in the DRC and Liberia. In accordance with the usual logistical requirements, the camp will need to have a water source and accommodation such as tents or plastic sheeting, as well as latrines, kitchen facilities, and firewood or another fuel for cooking. While not necessary, proximity to a daily market for food will also help. In some instances, even more elaborate facilities may be required, depending on the expectations of the caseload. For example, the absence of air conditioning was a sticking point in some early Cote d'Ivoire negotiations for DDR. The importance of thorough preparation cannot be over-emphasized. Without proper resources and preparation, ex-combatants may find themselves unpaid, unfed, and unhoused for long periods. In such cases, they are prone to turning to pillaging and banditry in order to survive. Often, they turn to pillaging even if they *are* paid. This is another example of why speed is critical, especially during the early phases.

**The rapid yet thorough planning and preparation of adequate physical infrastructures are of paramount importance.**

The camps should also provide accommodation for the DDR teams, typically comprising three to four persons each (plus local-language interpreters, as

necessary). Terms of reference for the teams would include identifying combatants by asking or assisting them to fill in a form in greater or lesser detail, depending on the design of the programme and the level of commitment of the disarming authority. Ideally, the forms will include a photograph and perhaps even a retinal scan or scannable fingerprint, depending on budgetary considerations and the level of capacity or support available to the programme. Since this process can take seven to ten minutes per combatant, the number of teams and team members should be calculated accordingly in order to establish the size of their accommodation and the amount of equipment needed.<sup>5</sup> One or more generators will be required to provide power for security lighting at night, as well as to operate equipment such as photocopiers. Fuel, and a secure camp store in which to keep it, will also be required. The camp premises should also include sandbagged areas or pits to dispose of weapons and ammunition. Weapons registration teams will also need tables, chairs, and stationery. One or more containers should be pre-deployed for the secure holding of the weapons, with either one or two padlocks (for a dual-key system, if necessary). Standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the handling and destruction of weapons and ammunition should have been circulated beforehand to the registration teams.

Much of the site preparation can often be done at a lower cost by engaging a local NGO of the kind that often works with UNHCR, but international NGOs and other UN agencies should be asked about the reliability of possible candidates. Once an NGO is selected, it should be closely supervised. The DDR logistics and/or administration officer (ideally two different people) should be involved in supervision, though the ultimate responsibility lies with the senior DDR person in the area. It is best that all relevant stakeholders (DDR team, UN military, local military, local officials, local NGOs) be involved in the site selection. Left to their own devices, local officials may make dubious choices, either because of 'other interests' or simple lack of experience. Great care must be taken to confirm who actually 'owns' the land, since this is often a cause of many problems. The DDR administrative officer should ideally take care of this. The site should be prepared starting about three weeks in advance (depending on the speed with which things typically get done in the region), but not too far in advance, since once completed, the site must be

secured—which takes up resources that either the military will be reluctant to provide or the UN administration will not want to pay for. Of course, if a military base or abandoned warehouse is already available and well situated, then that should be chosen.

The site selection should not be left to local officials, but involve all relevant stakeholders (DDR team, UN military, local military, local officials, local NGOs).

## Site selection and security

It is assumed that combatants will be ordered to assemble at agreed points in order to disarm. These assembly points should be selected taking into account a number of criteria, including:

- defensibility against possible attack;
- availability of water;
- proximity to existing concentrations of combatants;
- proximity to roads, ports, or airstrips; and
- capacity to support the accommodation and movement in and out of several thousand persons.

As with other aspects of DDR operations, the selection, construction, and maintenance of camps require a skill-set similar to many other types of related activities, such as the care of refugee populations. Though refugee camps may have much in common in some respects with reception centres for disarming combatants, there are also important differences that could affect decisions regarding site selection, size, and security aspects. One important difference is that demobilizing soldiers are mostly men, while refugees are primarily women and children. It is advisable to keep the demobilization camps relatively small in order to ensure tighter control and discipline over the former combatants. A case in point is the experience of UNHCR in eastern Zaire (now the DRC) in 1994–95, when it essentially lost control of the camps to Interahamwe and former Forces Armées Rwandaises (ex-FAR) soldiers and militia. The ex-FAR/Interahamwe extended their intimidation from the unarmed camp

inhabitants to the UNHCR staff themselves, and effectively turned the refugee camps into rear bases to support cross-border attacks on the new Rwandan government.

**It is advisable to keep the demobilization camps relatively small in order to ensure tighter control and discipline over the former combatants.**

Since many ex-combatants may have dependents, it will also be necessary to consider constructing family accommodation alongside the reception centre. On the other hand, if a decision has been taken not to split up families to the extent possible, the entire camp could be designed as family accommodation.<sup>6</sup>

The determination of camp size and facilities, and possibly location, could also depend on how long that former combatants are expected to remain there. In principle, they should spend as little time as possible in the camp (as the example of eastern Zaire underscores), and, once disarmed, those who enter the army should be redeployed to a barracks or training camp, while those who re-enter civilian life should proceed to their host communities. In practice, however, whether because those communities are not ready to receive the ex-combatants, or the latter do not wish to go, or no transportation can be found, the camps may have to accommodate the former combatants for a much longer period than planned. This was the case, for instance, in Cambodia and Sierra Leone. In Cambodia, the disarmed combatants were officially allowed to take 'agricultural leave' to return to their fields for the harvest season. This became informally known as 'banditry leave' because of the suspicion that that was how the former combatants actually spent it. If there are too many men in the camp, control cannot be guaranteed. They take leave when they please—they are not prisoners, and DDR staff members are not camp guards. The conclusion is that camps should be kept as small as possible, and ex-combatants should be in them for as short a time as possible, otherwise the problems that will certainly arise will be the responsibility of the DDR authorities.

**Camps may have to accommodate former combatants for a much longer period than planned, but if the camp is overcrowded, control over ex-combatants will be lost.**

## Phasing and security guarantees

Proper phasing is essential to ensuring the orderly entry of armed combatants into disarmament reception centres free of violent incidents and the misunderstandings that can lead to them. The ideal would be for the high command of each armed group and force to draw up schedules and timetables for disarmament and onward deployment, whether to training camps or barracks for the future integrated army, or into the first stages of reintegration. Preferably, these schedules should be drawn up in a coordinated manner.

Where a UN peacekeeping operation is deployed, it may be in a position to provide a military presence at one or more disarmament sites as a security and confidence-building measure. UN military observers (MilObs) are also traditionally engaged in such activities as receiving weapons and ammunition, registering them, storing the weapons for handover to the legitimate authority, or destroying them in accordance with established SOPs.<sup>7</sup>

If there is no peacekeeping operation deployed, and the government lacks the strength or authority to guarantee the security of the combatants to be disarmed, an alternative approach would be to create mixed units, in accordance with a formula agreed in the context of the original peace or ceasefire agreement, to perform the same functions. A bilateral donor acceptable to all parties could play this role, if one is available and is able and willing to deploy a military presence in-country.<sup>8</sup> This could be a regional or former colonial power, or a permanent member of the Security Council. However, in addition to bearing the costs and risks of such a deployment, the power concerned would probably also require its own security guarantees from the parties to the agreement. It therefore entails quite a high degree of commitment. The same would be true of a regional organization such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the European Union (EU), or the Southern African Development Community. There are numerous examples where individual countries have become engaged at a heightened level to shoulder greater financial and political responsibilities for shepherding the process, such as France for the Central African Republic and Côte d'Ivoire, Germany for Namibia, the United States (to a lesser extent) for Liberia, and the United Kingdom for Sierra Leone. Canada is also aspiring to this type of relationship in Haiti. By way of counter-example, no country has filled such a role for the DRC.



Where a peacekeeping operation is not present, a bilateral donor may be needed to guarantee the security of the combatants to be disarmed—but this requires a high degree of commitment from the donor.

## Baseline assessments

The government and other parties to a ceasefire agreement ideally should be able provide detailed information on the locations, numbers, armament, command and control structure, communications, leadership, and order of battle of the forces under their command. They usually cannot provide these details, however, and often the information they do provide is suspect and incomplete. In the DRC, for example, the original number of soldiers declared was 220,000, even though the number of soldiers for payment lists totalled 340,000 (ICG, 2005, p. 17). By March 2006, a nearly completed census of the Congolese army funded by the EU estimated that the actual number of troops could be as little as 100,000, at least three times *less* than initial figures.

In the absence of reliable information on the numbers of armed combatants, a census should be conducted whenever possible.

One important step, therefore, is to conduct a census of military personnel covering all the armed groups and forces party to the agreement. Conditions permitting, the census takers could use an identity card, a photograph, or another identifying mark such as a retinal scan for identification purposes, which then would be part of a national database used for payment. It is often helpful to insist that any combatant wishing to be registered must also register his/her weapon, which he/she would then have to produce at each pay parade. This can help avoid the creation of phantom soldiers and the caching of working weapons for future illegal use. Ideally, the whole census effort could be planned, financed, and undertaken by a single bilateral donor with experience in this field, in the broader context of a DDR oversight body to which it would make regular progress reports. The census of Congolese military personnel conducted in the DRC by a South African team with British funding has greatly improved the security climate. Soldiers surveyed now carry an identity card

in full view, giving their name, rank, photograph, and other information, which is required in order to be paid. This has considerably deepened the sense that the armed forces are accountable and under control. The South African team also found that the number of armed personnel in each location they surveyed turned out to be about half that originally predicted, and this finding allowed the government to reduce the estimated size of its future national armed forces, as well as allowing it to double the soldiers' pay without adding to the defence budget. The fate of the government money paid out to the non-existent troops for several years is, however, unknown. Much of it probably went into the pockets of government and military officials.<sup>9</sup>

Insisting that a combatant wishing to be registered must also register his/her weapon would avoid the creation of phantom soldiers and the caching of working weapons for future illegal use.

If it is not possible to conduct a census before DDR begins, then budget and planning activities have to proceed on the basis of scant and often unreliable information provided by the parties. Under such circumstances, donors can find themselves with incomplete information, a situation that requires a flexible and rapid response in the planning and budgeting process once the reality of the situation becomes clearer. Getting a diverse group of donors, often with different priorities, to react flexibly and quickly, however, is notoriously difficult, and can often lead to belated and ineffective changes to the programme.

The registration of weapons itself must be conducted with care, and should include the make, model, and serial number. The unique distinguishing feature of a weapon should be its serial number, but sometimes different factories supply identical numbers, which can lead to confusion, as occurred in DRC when MONUC military recorded multiple instances of the same serial number.

## Caseload selection and risks

Criteria governing the acceptance of disarmed elements must relate both to the weapons and/or ammunition to be surrendered and to the numbers and status of the individuals concerned. As regards the individual, he/she should

be identified as a member of the relevant armed group who, if not included in the DDR process, could pose a threat to security and to the success of the programme.<sup>10</sup> It is preferable if the individual is presented for disarmament under the command of the leader of the group disarming. During pre-disarmament negotiations, leaders of armed groups should ideally provide verifiable lists of individuals to be disarmed. Allowing for a narrow margin of expansion, they must be held accountable for the numbers projected, though DDR planners should always be sceptical of any figures produced, and should be prepared to allow a degree of flexibility in their budgetary and security planning. Verification of the status of individuals as members of the armed group can be through leader confirmation, written evidence, and/or community affirmation. This is not always so obvious, however, in the case of multiple irregular groups.

**DDR planners should always be sceptical of numbers provided by armed group leaders, and should allow a degree of flexibility in their budgetary and security planning in light of this.**

Weapons criteria for acceptance into the DDR programme should be based on the operational reality of the conflict, and must be sufficiently strict so that only genuine combatants can meet the criteria. Calculation of the number of combatants per weapon/numbers of weapons per combatant or the numbers of the team for the various types of group weapons should be based on sound military intelligence. Incentives and criteria are explored further below.

**Weapons criteria for acceptance into the DDR programme must be sufficiently strict so that only genuine combatants can meet them.**

## Identifying appropriate incentives

The selection of incentives for combatants to hand in their weapons depends on a wide range of factors, including the overall security situation; the level of authority and control enjoyed by the government throughout the country; the nature of command and control over the various armed groups; the amount and kind of funding available, including restrictions placed on the use of funding; and the absorptive capacity of the country for reintegration.

Where the government or central disarmament authority is clearly in control and the various armed groups are easily identifiable and relatively disciplined, there may be no need for incentives other than those provided in the DDR/army integration package. Combatants remaining in the armed forces will, at least in theory, enjoy job security, regular pay, and social status, among other things, while those re-entering civilian life will receive the package prescribed in the plan.

Where government authority is shaky and combatants are insubordinate or scattered in remote terrain, it may be necessary to supplement the disarmament package with more explicit incentives. One obvious enticement for combatants is a one-time cash payment. This requires an equivalence scale, establishing the worth of, for example, one working rifle, so many rounds of ammunition, or a certain number of hand grenades or mines. Crew-fed weapons (light weapons), such as mortars, can be considered the equivalent of two to three small arms, whereas one working rifle might equal 500 rounds of ammunition, two hand grenades, or one mine. In Haiti, the criterion for former military to enter DDR is a minimum of one weapon of war per five beneficiaries, based on the estimation of the dispersion of such weapons among the former military. In Liberia, entry criteria were set differently, as outlined in Table 1.

If weapons buy-back programmes are to be used, then a study needs to be done beforehand to determine the market rate for each item. The buy-back price should be slightly below the market price so that an incentive exists to hand the weapon in but not to create an import industry. Children associated with armed groups must be accepted into the process without reference to weapons criteria, in accordance with the Cape Town Principles. Their bona fides are verified by the child-focused specialist agencies.

**Weapons buy-back prices should be set slightly below the market price in order to create incentives without encouraging an import industry.**

The DDR process in the DRC illustrates the hurdles in providing a cash-based incentive package. Combatants who arrive at orientation centres in the DRC are first offered the choice of joining the integrated national army or returning

Table 1  
**Qualification for entry into Liberia's DDR programme**

	Description	Qualifying number of people for each	Remarks	
Approved weapon	Rifle / pistol	1	Serviceable weapons only (unserviceable = parts missing & cannot be made functional)	
	RPG launcher	1	–	
	Light / medium / heavy machine gun	2	Belt-fed weapons only	
	60 mm mortar	2	Tube, base plate, and stand	
	81 mm mortar	3	Tube, base plate, and stand	
	106 / 120 / 155 mm mortar / howitzer	6	–	
	Anti-aircraft gun	4	–	
	Description	Qualifying number of people for each	Number of munitions required	Remarks
Approved ammunition	Grenades	1	2	–
	RPG (rocket & grenade) mortar bomb (120 / 60 / 81 mm)	1	1	Together or no entry (not to be handed in as separate items)
	Smoke grenades	1	4	–
	Ammunition	1	150	Single or linked

Source: Nichols, 2005, p. 117

to civilian life. If they accept leaving their armed groups, they receive USD 110 (USD 50 for transportation, USD 10 for food, and a USD 50 subsidy) and then USD 25 monthly plus vocational training for one year. For a country where the average income is about USD 100 a year, according to International Monetary Fund estimates, the package may seem attractive. But since the USD 50 for transportation is often inadequate for them to return to their homes, former combatants find themselves marooned in the orientation centres for weeks. Once they manage to return to their homes, national officials have difficulty

locating them. Because disbursement facilities are virtually non-existent, the reintegration process is greatly compromised (ICG, 2005, p. 4; *The Economist*, 2005).

Cash-based incentives may be attractive, but come with significant risks that can threaten both disarmament and reintegration. Because of this, many donors do not support cash-for-arms programmes.

Moreover, there are risks with a cash-payment system. Without proper control, the weapons handed in are of poor quality, and the exercise does not result in true disarmament, but something closer to an inventory clear-out (with the better-quality weapons cached for future use). It is important to insist that the weapons be in good working order. MONUC and the DRC government have had perennial problems collecting functioning weapons in the disarmament phase for Rwandan combatants on Congolese territory. In one disarmament ceremony in October 2005 involving several Rwandan combatants, most of the weapons handed in were in poor condition, while the small arms and light weapons of the Rwandan combatants not disarming appeared to be in much better condition.

The transport of large amounts of cash into remote and impoverished areas with numerous armed combatants whose intentions are uncertain can make the operation vulnerable and spark clashes among the combatants themselves. The buy-back programme in Liberia had to be abandoned and restarted when it led to riots in December 2003, following confusion and disagreement over cash payments. Simple misunderstandings or unchecked rumour can create the impression that some combatants are receiving more money than others, causing resentment and inflaming a precarious security situation. Cash incentives can also encourage combatants to acquire additional arms from neighbouring countries, so that the disarmament programme itself fuels the influx of more arms into the country, not all of which are handed over. Finally, the former combatants' cash payment, which is often spent unwisely, tends to be unpopular with the communities the combatants have brutalized, and can be seen as a 'reward' for their violence and lawlessness. For all these reasons, many donors are uncomfortable with programmes that offer cash for arms.<sup>11</sup>

In parallel with the offer of positive incentives to disarm, the government may also technically have the authority and the strength to carry out forced (coercive) disarmament. In practice, however, this is unlikely for several reasons. Firstly, the government army sometimes lacks the political will and competence to disarm combatants forcibly. The Congolese army undertook several operations to forcibly disarm the Forces Démocratique de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR), but with little success. In the territories of Mwenga, Walungu, and Kabare in South Kivu, Congolese troops undertook operations to forcibly disarm the FDLR in 2004 and 2005, yet in some instances the undisciplined troops simply caused the rebels to scatter and unwittingly created support for the FDLR by harassing, raping, and pillaging local villagers. Some of the brigades had previously cooperated with the FDLR, and lacked the will to attack their former allies.

Secondly, the rebels that are the target of forced disarmament can retaliate by attacking the civilian population. This happened in July–October 2005 in eastern DRC, when a series of joint Congolese and MONUC operations tried to forcibly disarm and repatriate Rwandan rebels. In response, Rwandan rebels burnt or hacked to death over 50 civilians over the course of several night-time attacks.

Forcible disarmament can only work when the government has the strength and political will to carry it out.

Finally, forced disarmament might not be an option because the existence of an accord between the parties introduces a voluntary element, with the implication that further incentives might be needed to encourage the less-enthusiastic signatories or their followers. Disarmament in the DRC is one of those cases. Though there is no agreement with the Rwandan armed groups in the DRC, there are in fact incentives for their disarmament and repatriation in the form of the MDRP programme in Rwanda, which would provide them with a measure of retraining, and USD 300 in cash, among other things. The Ugandan Amnesty Commission offers similar, rather modest, incentives for Ugandan armed combatants in the DRC. These are clearly not enough in themselves to overcome the obstacles that face the combatants who wish to return, including retaliation

from their commanders who do not wish them to leave. In Cambodia the Khmer Rouge combatants remained outside the disarmament process that the other three factions entered, despite the fact that the Khmer Rouge had signed a comprehensive international agreement underwritten by the permanent members of the Security Council and important regional powers such as Australia and Japan. But to increase the positive incentives could run the risk of appearing to sanction blackmail or rewarding the men of violence for their intransigence.

As noted earlier, the most prudent use of reintegration funding is to support the communities expected to host the former combatants and their dependents, including through the creation of jobs, such as road-building and maintenance, and well-digging. The practical difficulties of doing so in a society that never had an economic and social structure before the conflict are well-known. ‘Reintegration’ is often a misnomer, in that young men who find themselves in the bush under arms were never integrated into society in the first place, which is the main reason why they joined the armed groups. This is a problem encountered in most DDR exercises in developing countries, and even some developed ones, where returning veterans experience difficulties in re-entering civilian life.<sup>12</sup>

‘Reintegration’ is often a misnomer, because the young men who find themselves in the bush under arms were never integrated into society in the first place.

## Registration, counselling, and referral

Disarmament and reintegration should go hand in hand with the consolidation or creation of a unified post-conflict national armed force. In other words, any eligible combatant entering the process will first have to decide whether or not he/she wishes to remain in the army. So it is necessary at the earliest possible stage for parties to agree on the criteria for eligibility. These should include membership in an agreed list of armed groups and forces, age, willingness to serve, competence, and absence of any evidence of commission of serious crimes. Initial screening criteria typically exclude all combatants under the age of 18 and above an agreed upper-age limit; the chronically sick and disabled; those suspected of crimes, including crimes against humanity; and all foreign

combatants. A properly constituted DDR plan makes provisions for dealing with each of those categories, including the prosecution of those suspected of crimes.<sup>13</sup> Though it would be within the power of the government to offer amnesty to some categories of criminals, no amnesty should be offered to those suspected of crimes against humanity and other crimes of universal jurisdiction. The plan should also provide for the repatriation of foreign combatants to their countries of origin, preferably in consultation with those countries and/or in the context of an overarching plan by one or more entities of the international community, such as the World Bank/MDRP in central Africa.<sup>14</sup>

In reality, agreeing on such criteria and procedures is difficult. Deciding whether to integrate or demobilize former rebel soldiers can be a particularly thorny issue, since stripping them of their status and rank, which is often self-assigned, can anger them and risks revolt. Yet integrating them into the national army can perpetuate a climate of impunity for those soldiers accused of human rights violations, which has been the case in the DRC. The integration of the former Ugandan-backed rebel leader Jerome Kakwavu into the national army sparked outrage from civil society and international human rights groups, and signalled to rebels accused of gross human rights violations that they could negotiate a smooth entry into national government. On the other hand, attempts to discipline and integrate former Mai-Mai rebel commanders in South Kivu province resulted in their open revolt against the Congolese government.

**The establishment of eligibility criteria for inclusion in the new national army is a thorny issue and requires careful consideration.**

In a separate exercise, the government needs to determine the size of the armed forces, in light of its expected resources, internal and external threat, and political considerations that might influence the armed forces. The latter should include prior commitments to accommodate combatants from former rebel groups, ethnicity, language, and origin of soldiers that might influence the perception of legitimacy of the new national army.

Once these eligibility criteria had been established, and all ineligible persons discharged, it would be necessary to determine, from among the eligible combatants, which of them freely chose to remain in the armed forces. It is

important to ensure to the extent possible that every single individual combatant be given the chance to decide freely. The time and space to make this choice should represent a discrete stage in the DDR process. In the original planning in the DRC (though subsequently amended by a series of emergency alterations), it was envisaged to construct *centres d'orientation* in which all members of the various armed groups and forces would enter, after voluntarily disarming, in order to reflect on their future in light of the information provided by the government and donors, and to make their choice of a return to civilian life or retention in the armed forces. In order for this entire process to happen properly, options should be made available to the combatants at the time of orientation. In the DRC, little had been done. Furthermore, due to the UN's hesitancy to work with the private sector, in the case of the DRC, an effort to provide solid jobs (in the mining sector, for example) was not vigorously pursued.<sup>15</sup>

**The time and space for individual combatants to consider their options for remaining in the new national army should represent a discrete stage in the DDR process.**

The subsequent process of moulding unified national armed forces from members of the former armed groups and forces, including their organization, training, equipping, deployment, supply, and pay, is in principle the sovereign responsibility of the government, but may include the help of one or more bilateral donors. In some cases, however, various entities of the international community, such as the UN peacekeeping operation, find themselves obliged to render assistance if this process results in threats to the security of the local civilian population or of the state itself. This is an area where reputable private security companies can be cheaper and more effective. Less encumbered with bureaucracy and more accountable for their results, they can get things done more quickly.

**Private security firms can play a valuable role in constructing safe and secure spaces for the creation of the new national army to take place.**



Those combatants who decide instead to return to civilian life must then enter the next phases of the DDR operation.<sup>16</sup> The level, nature, and duration of counselling and referral services will depend principally on the number and quality of personnel available to perform these functions, as well as the complexity of the post-demobilization programmes established and, ultimately, the absorptive capacity of the economic and social structures of the country concerned. Given that most countries undergoing DDR programmes have poor economic and social structures, the options available to demobilizing combatants are often limited. In such cases, significant investment is required in the absorptive infrastructure or in the development of temporary infrastructural support. This was the case in Sierra Leone, where the DDR programme was obliged to invest in educational and vocational institutions, new or established, in order to provide reintegration options.

**Successful reintegration often requires investment in the absorptive infrastructure of the host country or in the development of temporary infrastructure support.**

## Information collection and analysis

Information collection can take place in many ways, but the most efficient and effective way of establishing measures for the disarmament and reintegration process is to establish a strong data system from the start. As noted above, it is a good idea to start at the very beginning of the mission by sending out teams to do a census of the combatant population. Knowing the exact size of the problem and the needs of the DDR operation allows for the creation of benchmarks. It is then necessary to fill out forms identifying each combatant and his/her weapon,<sup>17</sup> which then must be regularly collated into reports that can be analysed to monitor progress. Ideally, the DDR operation should have its own data-collection specialist to work on preparing this data system and then keeping the records up to date. Failing that, outside help should be sought to set the system up. Wherever possible, competent local staff should be found to help maintain records.

## Public information and awareness campaigns

In principle, the main conduit for information and instructions in military-type armed groups should be the military chain of command. However, in many cases this is inadequate or dysfunctional, particularly where discipline is poor and/or the combatants are scattered over large areas with poor transportation and communications. In these cases, the issuance of orders has to be supplemented by other means, such as a public information campaign or through civil society organizations. The mobilization of influential practitioners in music, art, and culture and the use of travelling road shows, including culturally appropriate drama and comedy, can also help raise awareness. The main authority transmitting information and instructions should be the government or its demobilization and reintegration organs.

Many countries where DDR operations are conducted do not have extensive television access outside the major cities, and newspaper circulation and literacy levels can be low, factors that place a premium on the use of radio for mass communication. Where a UN peacekeeping mission is deployed, the mission may have its own radio station, which can be used for this purpose. The UN radio/public information operation may have better national coverage than the government enjoys. UN missions in Namibia, Cambodia, the Central African Republic, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and the DRC had radio coverage of the entire country. The absence of an independent radio capacity can have a critical impact on the ability of the mission or the international community to deliver its message broadly. This is the case in Haiti, where the mission depends on local and national radio stations, but where the media are all owned by various specific and often belligerent interest groups. The result is that the message is widely manipulated and subverted. Donors, including the World Bank and related organizations, may be encouraged to funnel public information funding into these channels rather than risking duplication or even conflicting messages. In such cases, it is helpful to create a central public information board to devise information strategies and outreach modalities to present a coherent, factually accurate picture of the programme being implemented and to answer questions identified by field operatives as requiring a public response. Such a board may also have a role in answering press questions as

they arise. Examples include UN peacekeeping mission radio stations in Cambodia, the Central African Republic, the DRC, and Sierra Leone.

**Radio is often the best means of reaching the widest audience with information about the DDR programme. But it is important that the messages be crafted independently of station management.**

Though it is always useful to have an independent, credible radio station, even a local one, it is important to have dedicated international resources to develop a radio programme solely about DDR. The programme should be directed not only at combatants, but at the larger community, to inform them of activities and how they can participate in the DDR process. Though this effort should work with the government, it is best that it remain independent, so as to have credibility with the combatants. Its resources must be independent of other agencies or divisions. Otherwise, as in the DRC, there is a risk that other parties will decide programming priorities. The best approach is to combine international and national assets, including to subcontract to national and international NGOs. To reach areas that have poor radio coverage or to beam specific messages during an operation in a particular area, mobile radio transmitters are needed. This requires dedicated human resources (probably local). Again, in order to be able to count on these resources, they must be directly under the control of the DDR operation, and therefore need to be included in the initial planning.

### **Selecting benchmarks and process/performance indicators**

Achievement indicators, such as measures of caseload and numbers of weapons, must be based on sound intelligence. Poor intelligence coupled with adverse conditions for implementation can result in poor results. Such is the current case in Haiti. However, in a more traditional DDR environment, the number of disarmed elements and the number and quality of weapons collected and destroyed provide effective benchmarks. Other indicators, depending on the type of DDR being implemented, can include the reduction in incidents perpetrated by coordinated armed groups; the re-establishment of functional state

authority in previously occupied/subverted regions; epidemiological evidence such as reductions in the number of people with gunshot wounds received in main hospitals and clinics; and social indicators such as voter turnout, participation in community social and economic programmes, school attendance, the attitude of communities to reinserted caseload, and the level of sustainable engagement of caseload after reintegration support, among others. Benchmarks provide 'triggers' that can be used to mark the achievement of programme phases. Benchmarks can include the completion of disarmament in each region, the completion of the destruction of weapons, the completion of demobilization orientation, the payment of reinsertion benefits, the relocation of caseload to communities, the absorption of caseload into reintegration options, the completion of reintegration options, and the completion of reintegration benefits. 🗨

**A wide range of indicators and benchmarks are available to mark progress in disarmament efforts, but they must be based on sound intelligence.**

## IV. Roles in and responsibilities for disarmament in relation to DDR

### Ensuring coherence and coordination in ‘integrated’ missions

The purpose of integration must be to develop synergy by optimizing the input of the strengths of engaged organizations and agencies. This can be achieved by developing integrated teams, under unitary direction, such as with the Integrated DDR Section in Haiti, where MINUSTAH and the country office of UNDP have established a formal institutional integration. This allows for the short-term stabilization objectives of the mission to be combined with the longer-term community capacity-building and developmental vision of UNDP. Each agency is thereby contributing to the programme in its area of relative strength. For example, the mission brings administrative, logistical, and human resources strength; focuses international attention on the issue; and brings assets from the assessed budget. UNDP brings the developmental view, financial management, and fund mobilization. It also brings a tradition of implementation skills. Other DDR environments favour a more loose form of integration governed by memoranda of agreement, where agencies maintain their individual structure, but agree to cover different aspects of the process.

Integration also opens space for collaboration with a wider spectrum of competent agencies or NGOs. In Haiti, the Integrated DDR Section is either working with or in discussion with UNICEF, WFP, the World Health Organization, the International Labour Organization, the UN Office for Project Services, the International Organization for Migration, the International Action Network on Small Arms, and Viva Rio. Regarding UN mission implementation of an integrated DDR process, the practice of double- or triple-‘hatting’ the UNDP resident representative ensures coherence and brings a developmental view and sustainability to the mission inputs. This was done successfully in Sierra Leone, for example, where Alan Doss served as the deputy special representative of the Secretary-General for the UN Mission in Sierra Leone, and concurrently as the UN humanitarian coordinator and UNDP resident representative. However,

great care must be taken to not ‘over-meet’ (and risk excessive talking with no results to match) and especially to not allow ‘over-vetoing’.<sup>18</sup>

The disposition and personalities of the individuals tasked with ensuring the coherence and coordination of an integrated process are vital to its success. The main interlocutors in the integration must be ‘believers’ in the process and demonstrate, at minimum, a professional relationship, patience, and a willingness to compromise in protecting the interests and agreed objectives of all partners. Formal and informal lines of communication must be constantly open and exercised.

One of the most important factors in the success or failure of an ‘integrated’ mission is the commitment and disposition of the individuals tasked with ensuring coherence and coordination.

### Role of state and national bodies

The concept of national ownership of DDR programmes is fairly widely accepted, yet some national authorities are more able and willing than others to assume the related responsibilities. National ownership assumes that a government is capable of establishing the necessary DDR organs under responsible staff who are sufficiently competent to render prompt and transparent accounts to donors for the disposition of their contributions, as well as to move the process forward in a professional manner. It cannot be assumed, however, that the majority of governments engaged in DDR are capable of discharging these responsibilities, even when, as is often the case, they are funded to recruit expatriate officials to support the heads of the national DDR organs. It is often necessary for groups of key donors, working with other partners who may include a UN peacekeeping operation, to take on more responsibility than prudence may suggest for moving the process forward. Yet this should be planned for, rather than making heroic assumptions—only to be forced to clean up the mess later.

In these situations, the international community walks a very fine line. To take too much responsibility from a weak and badly organized government impairs that government’s chances of developing the necessary self-confidence and expertise, and risks fostering and perpetuating a climate of dependency,



in which the government holds the outsiders responsible for success. On the other hand, donors responsible to their taxpayers for the efficient and effective expenditure of aid funding must be aware of the risks of corruption and incompetence in a fledgling government with only shaky control over its territory and the armed groups it is dealing with.<sup>19</sup>

The DDR programme in the DRC may be taken as a case in point. By presidential decree, the DRC government created three structures in December 2003: an inter-ministerial committee with nominal responsibility for the implementation of the national DDR plan; a committee to manage funds to be received from the World Bank/MDRP international donor community ('Comité de gestion'); and an implementation body (CONADER). In October 2004, the World Bank released USD 200 million to the Comité de gestion for demobilization and reintegration activities, but no activities were undertaken and no funds were expended. An open dispute broke out between the Comité de gestion and CONADER, in which each accused the other of mismanagement. The inter-ministerial committee remained inert throughout the process. Under pressure from donors alarmed that international funds were sitting idle and that no action was being taken to carry out the national DDR plan, the government finally dissolved the Comité de gestion and transferred its powers to CONADER, the implementing agency. However, confusion among a number of government military and civilian bodies and a proliferation of 'emergency' DDR plans has forced donors to exercise constant vigilance over expenditures in a management culture well inured to corruption. For instance, it was discovered during a census of military personnel conducted in 2005 that the number of combatants in the various armed groups and forces throughout the country was approximately half that estimated, including in the government armed forces. It became evident that for several years, the government had been providing salaries for phantom soldiers, half of which salaries had presumably been diverted along their route from the bank vaults to the pay parade. Only the fact that those salaries were often never paid in the first place had limited the damage.

Perhaps the most important single function of national bodies is to demonstrate a major aspect of national ownership of a programme that is, often enough, conceived, planned, funded, and even largely carried out by foreigners. Yet despite, or even because of this, national ownership is crucial. The disarm-

ament and demobilization of combatants and their reintegration into civilian society and its counterpart activity, the creation of a unified national armed force following a national conflict, are core functions of national sovereignty. For these activities to be successful, all parties must recognize the primary role of the state and the government in accomplishing them. This is all the more important if foreign entities are known to be playing crucial roles.

**All parties must recognize the primary role of the state and the government in DDR, even if it is largely carried out by external actors.**

The national body or bodies concerned with DDR should ideally be created at the highest level of the state, whether directly by presidential decree or act of parliament or some similar formal process. These bodies should bear responsibility for the receipt, expenditure, and accounting of funds, whether from the national government or international (including bilateral) donors, as well as for the planning and implementation of DDR activities. They should be directed at the highest level by senior responsible nationals of the country concerned, though it is generally accepted that some of the working-level and technical staff may be foreigners, whether funded by donors through the government, or seconded directly from donor governments. Donors may find it helpful to create their own body, if it does not already exist in some form (e.g. MDRP in the DRC), to follow closely the proceedings of these government organs. A UN peacekeeping operation deployed in the country might also be mandated to work closely with these government organs, though it would not normally be responsible for ensuring the transparent disposition of donor funding. The holding of regular coordination meetings and the institution of internationally accepted methods of financial reporting and accounting are the norm.

The body responsible for drawing up and implementing the national DDR plan needs to work closely with a wide variety of partners, including, but not limited to, the relevant government ministries (defence, family or social affairs, finance, foreign affairs, interior, and the office of the president). It should also work directly with donors and with any consultative or advisory or oversight group established by donors, whether acting in concert or in a bilateral capacity; with the UN peacekeeping operation, especially its DDR section; with the

political and military leaders of all the parties to the ceasefire or peace agreement; and, on the ground, with combatants, their families, and the surrounding communities. Its main task can be described as ‘selling’ the national DDR plan to all those entities, and ensuring its prompt and trouble-free implementation.

## Role of civil society organizations

Civil society can be helpful in carrying out a DDR programme in several ways. Firstly, having the support and cooperation of civil society can quickly break down barriers between the local population and DDR officers, and win the confidence of combatants who are sceptical of the DDR process. Since combatants often reside in the same area as their dependents, civil society can provide an important conduit to the local population and, by extension, the dependents of the combatants. In the DRC territories of Walungu and Kabare in South Kivu, for example, members of civil society were important to establishing contact between the FDLR and outside organizations.

Civil society also has important knowledge of the local area that DDR officers often lack. This knowledge makes them an important source of information about the activities of combatants and the dynamics within armed groups that DDR programmes might need to exploit. In 2002 the civil society organization Synergie V.I.E., based in eastern DRC, used its local contacts and field knowledge to assess the willingness of FDLR and other Rwandan combatants to participate in the DDRRR programme, something MONUC officials had trouble doing. Similarly, local contacts and grassroots knowledge of another NGO led to meetings between the Mai-Mai leader General Padiri and MONUC officials in late 2002 to negotiate the disarmament and repatriation of Hutu combatants in Mai-Mai ranks.

But the involvement of civil society in the DDR process is double-edged, since organizations can often represent the vested interests of certain constituents, to the exclusion of others. The eastern province of South Kivu in the DRC, for example, has traditionally had a vibrant civil society since the era of Mobutu, but it also has had its prejudices. Bias against the Tutsi ethnic group runs strong, and some organizations in the province’s capital, Bukavu, favour one of the dominant ethnic groups in the area, the Bashi. Given the generous

financial support many civil society groups receive from international organizations, several groups have sprouted in South Kivu with little or no technical capacity or knowledge of the area. The Pakistani South Kivu brigade, for instance, purposely distanced itself from several civil society organizations in the Walungu territory during its DDR operations in 2005 after developing doubts about either their capacity or their impartiality, or both.

Civil society organizations can bring valuable knowledge and local expertise to bear in DDR programmes, but they also have their risks. They may present political, social, ethnic, or religious sympathies, and may operate without standards of oversight and coordination.

Moreover, SOPs, oversight, and coordination that are part and parcel of larger organizations are sometimes absent in civil society initiatives. A local organization’s weapons-for-bicycles disarmament programme in the south-eastern province of Katanga in the DRC initially appeared to be very successful. It avoided rewarding former rebel combatants with cash by providing them with bicycles, which could lead to a sustainable, alternative livelihood. According to news reports, the organization had distributed 1,300 bicycles in exchange for over 2,000 weapons from Mai-Mai rebels in early 2005. By March of that year, however, Mai-Mai who were dissatisfied because they had not received bicycles went on a rampage, killing an estimated 30 people and displacing 2,000. To make matters worse, CONADER discovered that the same civil society group had installed competing demobilization programmes before CONADER had a chance to start its DDR programme, which further complicated the national demobilization and reintegration process.

Haiti is another example of how civil society organizations can sometimes represent a very narrow set of interests. In that country, the space created for ‘civil society’ has been held exclusively by the bourgeoisie and would-be bourgeoisie, representing less than 15 per cent of the people, while 85 per cent of the population remain marginalized and voiceless, even in current international interventions. A disarmament programme must therefore reach deep into the community in seeking authentic civil society representation and participation. The development of community violence-reduction and development commit-

tees with accepted representation for all sectors of that community as the community-based vehicle for programme implementation is a method being piloted in ensuring civil society participation in Haiti.

## Role of peacekeepers and national military

A peacekeeping mission, whether deployed by the UN or by a regional or sub-regional organization (such as the ECOWAS Monitoring Group), can provide various forms of assistance in the implementation of a DDR programme in a post-conflict society. In the case of the UN, the precise forms of assistance should be explicitly stated in the mandate handed down by the Security Council in order to ensure funding, through assessed contributions, from the General Assembly.

A UN peacekeeping operation typically comprises a special representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG); civilian political, human rights, humanitarian, and child protection sections; an administration responsible for human resources management, air operations, logistical support, and communications throughout the territory; formed infantry units and specialized military services such as airfield crash and rescue, logistics, and communications (sometimes provided by civilian contractors engaged by the peacekeeping operation); unarmed MilObs and liaison officers; UN Police (UNPOL); public information personnel and a spokesperson, with access to local and international media and a radio station; and, increasingly, a DDR section. Examples of the latter include the DRC, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.

The SRSG provides the main senior interface between the mission and UN Headquarters in New York, including the Secretary-General himself and the Security Council, as well as with the ambassadors of all countries represented in the territory, and with any contact group they decide to form, in order to work with the government on various aspects of the mission's mandate, including DDR. The DDR section, if there is one, normally provides the main interface with donors, including the World Bank, and with interested NGOs, relevant UN agencies, and with the DDR organs of the government. The military and UNPOL components of the mission deal with their counterparts in the government and the other parties to the ceasefire or peace agreement on which the DDR programme is based. Depending on the mandate, the UN troops, MilObs, air assets (helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft), communications, and logistics

support can be placed to a greater or lesser extent at the disposal of the DDR programme.

UN action in support of DDR programmes continues to evolve, and future mandates may enable missions to perform an ever-wider range of activities. A typical mandate might permit the mission to provide security support for some or all disarmament centres, access to its aircraft on a space-available and/or reimbursable basis for government officials and others dealing with DDR-related matters, technical expertise in programme planning and project proposal development, and some forms of logistical and communications assistance. Examples include Cambodia, the DRC, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. The political and all-inclusive nature of the UN will also usually permit access to the wider international community, and can serve as a kind of informal guarantee or imprimatur for requests for funding that the UN itself cannot provide, but for which it can seek assistance from those who can.

A UN peacekeeping mission, sometimes working alongside special commissions or groups of experts created by the Security Council, may also have responsibilities in the monitoring or enforcement of arms embargoes imposed by the Security Council on the territory concerned, or parts of it, and may have links with neighbouring countries whose foreign or defence policies have implications for the effective implementation of the national DDR plan. The implementation of a DDR programme by a country recently emerging from conflict almost always has sensitive implications for its relations with one or more neighbouring states.

## Role of UNPOL and national police

The primary role of UNPOL in a mission is usually to fill the gaps existing because of the absence of a functional civil police force in the host country or to support the reform of the national civil police force. In Haiti, where MilObs are not part of the structure, UNPOL also have an information-gathering and negotiation role, in close coordination with the Integrated DDR Section. This is an area where more coordination could be beneficial, since one potential destination for many ex-combatants is as part of the police, border security forces, etc. This is particularly the case if they want to remain part of the security forces, but not have to be deployed far from home. 📌

## V. Conclusion

Too much concentration on the everyday difficulties and complexities of a DDR process can sometimes obscure how much real progress has been made in an activity that, until quite recently, did not form part of the traditional range of tasks performed by UN peacekeeping operations or by the international community in general. And though every DDR operation is different—and some, like the DDRRR operation in the DRC, are more different than others—managers, donors, and practitioners are now slowly beginning, on the basis of the experience of the past few years, to see the emergence of common problems and practical solutions that can be applied in a wide variety of apparently dissimilar operations. It is hoped that this modest manual might assist in this endeavour. 📄

## Endnotes

- 1 It is not only a question of individual combatants getting their piece of the pie. Often, as in Burundi, the final composition of the new army was at least partially dependent on how many fighters each side could prove it possessed. In the interim, as in the DRC, the amount of money paid out to commanders depended on how many combatants they claimed; hence the need for a proper census to be taken as soon as possible. Instances of having too many applicants can also arise, such as in Liberia, when acceptance criteria for entry into the process are ill-considered or poorly defined.
- 2 See <[http://www.mdrp.org/about\\_us.htm](http://www.mdrp.org/about_us.htm)>.
- 3 In July 1999, many of the warring parties signed the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, which paved the way for the UN peacekeeping mission in the DRC, MONUC. Under art. III, para. 11 of the accord, the signatories agreed to a Chapter VII UN peacekeeping force that was supposed to help implement the accord, collect weapons, disarm civilians, and ‘track down all armed groups’, including former Rwandan army soldiers and Ugandan rebels. Significantly, the ceasefire did not include the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR), a Rwandan rebel group composed of former Rwandan army officers, Interahamwe, and Hutu refugees that was officially formed in 2000. To add to the UN’s requested responsibilities, Chapter 8 of Annex A stipulated that the UN force would also forcibly disarm the rebel groups on Congolese territory, a request that the UN has never accepted. Art. III, para. 22 also committed all signatories to finding and disarming all armed groups on Congolese territory.
- 4 While the cost of disarmament and the other DDR activities can be extremely high, the return on investment is such that donors and governments continue to deem such activities worthwhile. Indeed, the peace dividends resulting from disarmament in particular may include the facilitation of expansion of state authority, savings as result of reduced medical costs from gun-related injuries, freeing up of manpower resources, regularization of state income in relation to strategic natural resources (e.g. diamonds and minerals), reduced security costs, facilitation of international investment, quicker implementation of poverty reduction strategies, increased scope for NGO and humanitarian investment, and a major impact on the quality of life due to improved community security.
- 5 Profiling in preparation for the design of individual reinsertion options takes considerably longer (60–90 minutes), but need not be done during the disarmament phase. In the DRC, the most efficient way of going about routine form completion was to have many well-trained local assistants, rather than undergoing the time-consuming process of interpreting both the questions from international staff members and the responses to them.
- 6 In Sierra Leone, largely with this problem in mind, in addition to the fact that the Civil Defence Force faction tended to be ‘of the community’, the ‘cantonment’ or disarmament period was fast-tracked or ignored altogether in many cases. The residential cantonment or disarmament camp is a major security and logistical consideration that should be avoided if local conditions permit.

- 7 MilObs are not necessarily the best military assets for most of the tasks involved in this sort of work, especially as the tendency in African peacekeeping missions is to send higher-ranked officers (senior lieutenant-colonels and even colonels) instead of the captains and majors who traditionally did this sort of work. The rationale is that it is necessary to have high-ranking officers to impress the parties that are being disarmed, though it is also true that for an officer from a developing country, a MilObs position pays very well and therefore these postings are coveted. Unfortunately, many such officers are perhaps less motivated and less 'fresh' on weapons handling and other basic skills. They may also be more reluctant than their more junior peers to do what is (correctly) more properly a job for the weapons specialists of the army, i.e. non-commissioned officers (NCOs). They are the ones that master how to sort and store firearms properly. It is therefore recommended that at least some NCOs (if not the majority of the military staff) be sent to assist with DDR weapons-handling activities.
- 8 The option also exists of using a private security company.
- 9 As one former MONUC official comments: 'It was enormously difficult to get this census off the ground in the DRC and we had no support from the MONUC military despite the fact that the first person to come up with this idea was the Bukavu Military Coordinator. A pilot project was done in Bukavu Town which was quite successful. When we proposed extending it nationwide in Kinshasa, UNDP was against it. They did not understand how it might be useful to have information on the client base before designing projects, nor the general benefits to discipline and financial management. The head of the foreign military cooperation mission also saw it as an unnecessary and unfortunate initiative since "even if the platoon commander in the Kivus did not know how many men he had, 'they' in Kinshasa knew how many men he had" [the Congolese Colonel with him had a more realistic view]. After that, the idea was batted back and forth between donors, each one saying that the other was doing it. When it was finally announced that the South Africans were providing some assistance, they were under-equipped and poorly supported by the Congolese Army. In South Kivu, there was no support available from MONUC military, not even providing minimal security escort. The DDR Team provided the only assistance in terms of vehicles, internet access, printing of forms, etc. This again highlights the need for independent assets.'
- 10 In the event that there are multiple groups, as in the DRC or Burundi, it is very likely that combatants from non-signatory groups will present themselves for disarmament. These combatants cannot simply be refused and left to prey on the local population and return to war. To avoid problems, provision for the care of all stray cases should be made from the beginning so that anyone who fulfils the criteria of combatant can be at least minimally dealt with. In Bukavu, DRC, MONUC accumulated about 200 Burundian combatants over the space of a year because Burundi refused to take them, and then when it did, had no proper programme to take care of them.
- 11 Cash incentives have been known to have a positive impact in more developed and stable environments, with strong security sectors and controls, rather than in immediate post-conflict situations. Such examples could be the Boston (USA) buy-back programme and the process of community weapons buy-back in Brazil.
- 12 Recent academic literature has questioned the effectiveness of traditional demobilization and reintegration strategies. Using results from a survey of former combatants in Sierra Leone, for example, Macartan Humphreys and Jeremy Weinstein (2005) argue that a micro-level

analysis of a combatant's DDR process needs to be emphasized in order to design successful DDR programmes, and that UN operations have no positive effect in facilitating DDR. In particular, they argue that a combatant's wartime experience is the most important determinant of acceptance back into the community. This analysis overlooks the possibility that many of the young men were never properly integrated into their communities *before* they joined an armed group, as noted above. Secondly, more traditional DDR programmes (such as in the DRC) have not had an opportunity to work properly. Providing ex-combatants with their regular monthly payments and regular vocational training could greatly improve their reintegration.

- 13 Of note is that the worst criminals may be those occupying ministerial posts in the new government, and therefore it is unlikely that they will let any of their collaborators be prosecuted. Witness the cases of Jules Mutebutsi, Laurent Nkunda, and others in the DRC.
- 14 As one DDR official has noted, in the case of the DRC, extreme difficulty was encountered with neighbouring countries who, for different reasons, did not want their combatants back, despite what they officially claimed. Rwanda would accept them once presented at the border, but did everything it could to delay the process before then, mostly through its Congolese proxies, the RCD-G. It was believed that Rwanda did this in order to have a pretext to continue pillaging the DRC. In the case of Burundi, it did not even accept ex-combatants at the border because the then Tutsi-led government felt that every combatant who came back would be tallied for the opposition in the composition of the new national army.
- 15 Where possible, better partnerships with the private sector should be pursued, especially in resource-rich countries, so that the combatants receive real jobs and participate in the legitimate rebuilding of the country. There is much room for the UN family to work with the private sector to try to ensure transparency, synergy, and the right type of investment.
- 16 Demobilization should not be seen as a process that is successfully achieved in a time-bound fashion once a combatant disarms. Command and communications structures are dissolved over time, and combatants must learn to survive without the coping mechanisms offered by the camaraderie and umbrella of a fighting unit. These time-consuming processes are products of successful reintegration.
- 17 Basic versions of these forms are available in most DDR handbooks.
- 18 In the opinion of one DDR official, though in an ideal world, everyone should cooperate and work as a team, often this is not the case, as the DDR operation found in the DRC. Depending on who was in charge, the public information office (PIO) was either extremely helpful or positively obstructive. The same went for the military, who were generally much more helpful, but from time to time a single commander could decide to halt all support. For this reason, though one needs to try and cooperate with everyone, in the interests of making life easier and more pleasant for all, it is better that the DDR/SSR operation has its own integrated logistics and PIO staff.
- 19 It should be noted that the establishment of government institutions such as a national commission for DDR does not necessarily constitute 'national ownership' of a DDR process. The acceptance of a DDR process and participation by 'the community' constitutes real national ownership. This is a product of sound design that leads to the development of a programme that is relevant to the community. It must also be supported by a strong sensitization and public information campaign that draws the community into the process by demonstrating the benefits of social and economic investment in an environment of reconciliation.



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