

## DEMOBILISATION, DISARMAMENT AND REINTEGRATION (DD&R)

### *A key to peace in Côte d'Ivoire*

HENRI BOSHOFF

During the peace talks that finished in Pretoria on 6 April 2005, the parties to the Ivorian conflict agreed that the Chiefs of Staff of the National Armed Forces of the Côte d'Ivoire (FANCI) and the Armed Forces of the New Forces (FAFN) would meet immediately to ensure the implementation of the National Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration Plan (PNDDR). DDR has been a priority since the signature of the Marcoussis peace accord in January 2003, and the Accra III agreement in July 2004. In the absence of implementation of other key provisions in these agreements, DDR planners repeatedly have seen their efforts thwarted by the manoeuvrings of political leaders.

We must now consider the issues facing the parties to the Pretoria Agreement, as they relate to DDR and the national DRR plan. The Military Forces to be included in the DDR process represent both government and rebel forces. The main parties involved on the government side are the FANCI consisting of 14,000 soldiers, and various groups frequently referred to as "Young Patriots" who have some 100,000 members.

In the rebel camp, the FAFN comprise an alliance between three armed groups in the north, the Ivory Coast Patriotic Movement (MPCI), the Movement for Justice and Peace (MJP) and the Ivorian Popular Movement of the Great West (MPIGO). The FAFN is estimated to have some 20,000 members, including 3,000 child soldiers, a number very likely underestimated. Of this total, the principal militia in the western region

is MPIGO with an estimated strength of 7,000 fighters, MJP has about 1,000 and MPCI some 6,000 fighters.

Both the Marcoussis and Accra III Agreements specifically addressed the issue of DDR. After the failure to implement Marcoussis, the Accra III Agreement again confirmed the issues agreed on in the earlier accord. Accra III established that DDR was to begin on 15 October 2004 and that all militias and para-military groups would be included in the process. The National Commission for DDR suggested that the process start simultaneously in the east and west of the country. The Commission updated the roadmap, which was based on a previously developed joint plan covering six main areas: preliminary operations, awareness raising, regrouping of forces, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration. The process did not commence in October as stipulated, because the Forces Nouvelles were not prepared to disarm in the absence of progress with the implementation of the other aspects of the Accra III Agreement.

Early in 2005 the National Commission for DDR was restructured to ensure balanced representation, and FANCI and FAFN then resumed cooperation with the Commission. A seminar planned for February 2005 to finalise the national DDR plan was abandoned, however, because of clashes between FANCI and the French forces in Bouake.

As already mentioned, the most recent agreement of 6 April 2005 also emphasises the

importance of DDR to the peace process. The agreement makes provision for meetings to immediately start implement the PNDDR. It also calls for a seminar to confirm the joint operational plan. The Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, supported by officers from the South African National Defence Force, representing the mediator, will coordinate these meetings. It also mandated the Ivorian Chiefs of Staff to formulate specific recommendations in the respect of the formulation of one army based on the values of integrity and republican morality and the restructuring of the defence and security forces as set out in the Marcoussis Agreement. This process started with a meeting on 14 April 2005 attended by all role players including the Chiefs of Staff of FANCI and FAFN. It was then agreed that the DDR process would take place between 14 and 31 May 2005, though this remains subject to a series of conditions, including financial and technical constraints. A seminar planned for 2 to 6 May 2005 in Yamoussoukro, will confirm the roadmap and timetable for the implementation of the PNDDR.

The PNDDR plan covers six areas: preliminary operations, awareness raising, regrouping of forces, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration. The Government of National Unity will be responsible to regroup all the armed forces and militia with the support of the UN Mission in Cote d'Ivoire (ONUCI). The Government will also be responsible for social reinsertion of

all combatants with the support of international development agencies.

The *Commission Nationale de Demobilisation, Disarmement et Reintegration* (CNDDR) will lead the process supported by a coalition of international agencies and organisations. The CNDDR estimates that the process will cost some \$111 million, and has received commitments from the UN, World Bank and other international organisations. The DDR program targets all militia and armed forces including recruits enlisted after 19 September 2002. It is applicable to both FANCI and FAFN.

The Commission has already opened offices throughout the country. The DDR operational planned is to be implemented in three phases. The Commission is already preparing cantonment sites, obtained lists of soldiers to be demobilised and is also launching an education campaign to gather popular support. The seminar scheduled in accordance with the Pretoria agreement will give an indication of the roadmap and timetable for DDR.

What is happening in Cote d'Ivoire is not unique, as the peace processes in Burundi, DR Congo and Liberia have shown. The biggest obstacle for DDR in Côte d'Ivoire was the constant failure to implement the peace agreement reached in January 2003. Relying on peace agreements is not enough to get DDR in place. The hope now is that the all-important Pretoria Agreement will be successfully implemented.