

SECTION 1

TRENDS IN DDR IN PEACEKEEPING IN AFRICA

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration are not new concepts and their incorporation into UN peacekeeping missions extends back to 1989. Thus the first set of presentations was designed to reflect on what the trends are in peacekeeping and DDR in Africa and to identify the strengths and weaknesses of practices to date.

DDR as a requirement for peace¹

The need for DDR programmes to assist in restoring peace and security to post-conflict countries is an accepted reality. However, some of the underlying assumptions of DDR can pose challenges to countries emerging from war. For example, security forces in countries such as Sierra Leone or Liberia may simply not be in a position to absorb ex-combatants. This poses fundamental challenges to the requirement that these former combatants be reintegrated into society.

The question of how to deal with former combatants is as old as warfare itself. When Julius Caesar, the great Roman general, wanted to demobilize unwanted Gallic soldiers who had caused him serious problems, he had the right hand of hundreds of them cut off. The soldiers, if not put out of business, could have posed a grave danger to Caesar's emerging dominion, and Caesar had no time for a protracted programme of a more humane nature - these were cruel and turbulent times. Napoleon, the French revolutionary leader and a child of the Enlightenment, would have found Caesar's tactics too barbaric.

So, as soon as he was sure of his own imperial ambitions, he had thousands of his own soldiers, suspected of Republicanism, shipped to Haiti, there to be killed by the revolutionary forces of Toussaint L'Overture and the plague.² Less spectacularly, following World War II, demobilized servicemen in England were given a small payout and a suit constituting their reintegration benefit. Times and the nature of conflict have changed, however, making such straightforward solutions less practicable.

Where there is excess military capacity, the need to reintegrate the former combatants into civilian life becomes paramount. However reintegrating ex-combatants into societies cleaved by conflict can resurrect the fears and inequalities that initially led to conflict. The spate of civil wars in West Africa have a similar trajectory for combatants: they are hastily recruited, sometimes forcefully, trained to a specific set of standards that may not be recognised in a more orderly military environment and then, when no longer needed, expended to return to civilian life.

The experience of Sierra Leone illustrates this point. The war, which began in March 1991, led to a complete normative collapse of the country. By the end of 1996, an estimated 15,000 people had been killed and almost two-thirds of the country's population of 4.5 million displaced. By the end of 1999, casualty figures increased to over 70,000 people.

At the end of the disarmament process in Sierra Leone, about 70,000 combatants were disarmed and demobilized, mainly Revolutionary United Front (RUF) guerrillas and members of the Civil Defence Force (CDF). A new report on the aftermath of the DDR process, entitled *What the Fighters say: A survey of Ex-combatants in Sierra Leone, June – August 2003*, throws more light on the dynamics of the DDR process. On the whole, disarmament and demobilization of ex-combatants in Sierra Leone was a success, but the reintegration aspect of the programme still faces challenges.

It is also clear that the repercussions of DDR have an impact not only in the country where the programme took place, but also in neighbouring states. The swathe of conflict in West Africa for example, has been exacerbated by the movement of combatants from one conflict to another. Thus the lessons of DDR are also being learned by those who can exploit them – what benefits to hold out for, how to keep force and communication structures in place during demobilization, and how to provide the greatest benefit to the greatest number of combatants and associated groups.

Lessons from trends

Discussion and analysis of basic trends in DDR reveal a few core lessons.

One key lesson is that integrated planning and implementation of DDR programmes is critical. Thus, from the earliest planning stages, the principle actors in the DDR programme at, for example the UN level, must work together to develop plans and identify strategic competencies to lead to a collaborative approach that cannot be exploited by parties to the conflict.

Another lesson that has been identified is that the functional element of DDR should be conceptually joined, with the reintegration phase also incorporating other “Rs” such as repatriation, reconciliation, rehabilitation and relocation. Also, the conceptual shift should extend to talking about DDR, and not DD&R, where reintegration is viewed as an additional component done by others and outside the key focus of disarmament and demobilization.

A third is that the DDR process cannot be designed or implemented as a sequence of events. Each activity forms part of a continuum whose elements may overlap and which are related and mutually reinforcing. The success of the entire process is dependent on the success of each step. However it is not

always necessary to proceed linearly. For example, advantage should be taken of seasonal variations in combat, where some combatants may return to agriculture, to identify groups that could be demobilized quickly. Such occasions may especially arise with children and women.

A fourth lesson is a negative one that has been learned by those who participate in DDR – DDR is a way to make money. For example, it has been suggested anecdotally that some former combatants in West Africa have gone through demobilization centres multiple times, qualifying for reintegration benefits each time. This illustrates the need for more accurate and better shared databases of those who have registered for DDR, and for the tracking of former combatants to ensure that they do not exploit the system either within in their own country or, as has been suggested, by moving across borders - for example from Liberia to Côte d'Ivoire, where the cash benefit will be greater.

A fifth lesson is that in areas such as West Africa where the region has been militarized by armed groups selling their labour, there is a need for a sub-regional approach to DDR that includes coordination with other UN efforts in the region. Examples of this are taking place in West Africa, through the coordination efforts of the UN Office for West Africa and in the Great Lakes region.

Finally, the objective of DDR should be clear to all parties and communicated widely. Where DDR is subject to another process, for example the reorganization of the security forces, as in the DRC, the need for the two processes to move in concert must be planned and well communicated so that the expectations of participants in the DDR process can be managed.

Evolution of peacekeeping and DDR in Africa³

The evolution of the theory of DDR in Africa can realistically be assessed through an examination of peace agreements, the UN Secretary-General's reports and Security Council resolutions.

There have been about 17 African UN peace support operations from July 1960 (Congo) to Burundi (2004). These include Namibia (1989), Somalia (1992), Mozambique (1992), Liberia (1993), Rwanda (1993-1995), Angola (1997), Central African Republic (1998) and Sierra Leone.

Peace agreements precede DDR processes and in many ways are the most important part of the peace process. Peace agreements are negotiated documents that result in a cease-fire and a regulated process toward a peaceful solution.

Peace agreements are usually followed by reports of the UN Secretary-General, out of which mandates and operational plans for peace missions are prepared by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG). The Security Council resolution, which often draws its content from the report of the Secretary-General, provides the legal basis for the mission and hopefully, the moral basis which will drive international support.

DDR Development Timelines

1990-1998 – Mandates for DDR were extremely vague.

1998 onwards – Increase in detail and scope of DDR

2004 onwards – Extremely specific DDR programmes

Phases of DDR

Disarmament consists of the collection, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons from combatants, as well as in many cases from the civilian population. Weapons destruction is becoming the norm for disposal, generally after collection. The issue of who is eligible for disarmament is now being recognized as a key issue. And in this regard, the entire society including ex-combatants and civilians who took up arms for protection should be eligible.

Such wide-scale disarmament is not necessarily linear and some parts may occur inside the DDR process while others are organized by other groups, such as the national police. Arms management processes must follow from disarmament processes. Such arms management requires capturing information on weapons in the possession of security forces and civilians, the review of legislation and steps to bring the management of weapons in concert with international best practice.

Demobilization is the formal, usually controlled, discharge of active combatants from armed forces or from an armed group. Societal orientation and health information should be separated from this activity. There is the need to concentrate on non-violent conflict management.

Demobilization is one part of a processes and not an end in itself. In this phase of DDR, pre-discharge orientation must include information on rights and responsibilities, available services and options. There is the need for a balance in the process for issues to be properly addressed. The cantonment phase of demobilization should not be allowed to transform into a refugee camp.

Reintegration is the most difficult stage of the DDR process. This is the process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain access to civilian forms of work and income. It involves retraining and employment and, thus,

promotion of local ownership of the process is crucial. Because every situation is different, reintegration must be tailored for a specific economic and cultural mix. While a top-down approach must be adopted in an attempt at reintegration, this phase should be a more inclusive process, which is driven by central government but includes local authorities and communities. This is important to guarantee adequate security for development.

Community requirements should be weighed against individual requirements and priorities identified upon which to concentrate. Research must be conducted as to the kind of training required for the ex-combatants. Better integrated planning and financing programmes are important, for example, as is being tried in the DRC.

In effect, developed poverty reduction strategies must:

- (a) understand that security comes before development;
- (b) avoid economic distortions and skewed incomes; and
- (c) stress reality over expectancy.

UNDP/DPKO interagency collaboration on DDR

The UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations (UN DPKO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are working closely on a set of standard procedures/guidelines and policy planning on DDR issues. This is being carried out in an inter-agency group collaboration that also includes UNICEF and UNIFEM. The DPKO is leading on issues to do with disarmament and demobilization while UNDP is focusing on the integration component. There has not been much monitoring and evaluation in terms of lessons learnt on DDR. The failure of the initial disarmament and demobilization phase in Liberia under UNMIL spurred this initiative. Issues of transitional allowances, cantonment and veteran associations are being considered.

Lessons from peace processes and DDR

The first lesson is that the UN itself is learning from its experience with DDR. This is being reflected in more precise and inclusive mandates, better bridging of policy and practice and commitment to a coordinated collaborative approach. In addition, the focus of DDR has broadened, so that the need for national recovery strategies that focus on war-affected populations is included.

The second lesson is that ownership of the DDR programmes needs to be better identified and reinforced. It is not the UN's DDR programme, but one that is designed to benefit the country and which therefore must be led from a national perspective. The leadership of the programme needs to be central but the execution should be devolved to the competencies of different actors. A third lesson is that more needs to be understood about how to structure reintegration programmes and provisions so that qualitative indicators can be developed and used to measure progress. The lack of clarity in reintegration planning and execution remains the Achilles heel of DDR programmes. For example, market research should be conducted to identify training priorities, job opportunities that exist or can be created, and the specific needs of former combatants. To date, blanket training in one or two vocational areas creates a glut of entrepreneurs or artisans, with no market for their skills. Reintegration should increasingly be planned within the context of a recovery framework in which return to the rule of law, security sector reform and the resettlement of internally displaced persons and refugees take place within the context of economic growth.