

Peacebuilding Commission Country-Specific Configuration
Meeting on Burundi

12 December 2008

Background note on the situation on DDR in Burundi

1. The return of the Palipehutu-FNL leader, Agathon Rwasa, to Bujumbura on 30 May 2008 appeared to inject a new momentum for the DDR of last active rebel group on Burundi Palipehutu-FNL combatants (with a reported strength of up to 21,100). However, since the return of the FNL to the peace process, progress on DDR has stalled due lack of agreement between the Government on a number of demands made by the FNL, including power-sharing arrangements in political and security spheres.
2. While a Joint Operational Plan (JOP) for the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of the Palipehutu-FNL combatants has been approved by both the Government of Burundi (GoB) and the Palipehutu-FNL on 2 June 2008, discussion between the GoB and Palipehutu-FNL have stalled as regards to the adoption of a Forces Technical Agreement (FTA) that would outline ratios of Palipehutu-FNL integration into the Forces de Defense Nationale (FDN) and Police Nationale du Burundi (PNB).
3. So far, only 2,155 Palipehutu-FNL elements have gathered in the Rugazi assembly area, and the identification details in the verification list of 21,100 names submitted by the Palipehutu-FNL continue to be insufficient. Furthermore, the ratio of weapons against combatants is too low (less than 40 for 2,155 combatants in Rugazi) for those FNL elements to be considered for normal DDR or integration into the national security institutions. In the meantime, discussions have started regarding the opening of a second assembly area for up to 8,000 elements in Rubira, in part to address the issue of Palipehutu-FNL elements increasingly becoming a security concern in the pre-disarmament areas. In addition, further to two Presidential decrees issues on 18 and 19 August 2008, the decision was taken to include 3,321 alleged Palipehutu-FNL dissidents who are currently encamped in Randa and Buramata (Bubanza Province) in the DDR programme under the protection of the *Forces nationales de defence* (FDN).
4. On an exceptional basis, the European Union, France and Switzerland have financed the feeding of the Palipehutu-FNL combatants in order to facilitate their movement to assembly areas, but there are concerns regarding maintenance (food and medicine) for all those currently gathered in assembly areas and/or pre-disarmament areas.
5. In addition to the stalled peace process, and its consequent implications for the conduct of DDR, three key issues have emerged as areas of concern: 1) the closure on 31 December 2008 by the World Bank of the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (MDRP), which had provided funding for Burundi's national DDR programme; and 2) the expiration also on 31st December 2008 of mandates of both the South African Facilitation and African Union Special Task Force (AU-STF) troops,

which have been providing security to DDR operations after the transition of ONUB into BINUB; and 3) the need for the availability of short-term funding to absorb FNL elements into the DDR programme has been recognized as an urgent issue by GoB, BINUB and other interlocutors in the recent weeks.

6. The Government of Burundi, with support from BINUB has been engaged in initial consultations in an effort to design a new national strategy for Disarmament, Demobilization, Reinsertion and Reintegration and Security Sector Reform (“DDR R & RRS”) that would address not only the demobilization and reintegration of the Palipehutu-FNL combatants, but also certain linkages between DDR and SSR, and the durable community-based socio-economic reintegration of all demobilized combatants including those who failed reintegration and could pose a threat to the stability of the country ahead of the 2010 elections and in the broader context of the absence of progress on critical issues such as land tenure conflicts, national reconciliation, as well as persisting insecurity at the national and regional levels.

7. The World Bank is in the process of establishing country-based single purpose multi-donor trust fund for the DDR programme to which it will be allocating a \$10 million grant, and has approached some donors to provide up to \$20 million to the trust fund. On 26 November, the World Bank completed a draft project paper entitled “Burundi Transitional Demobilization and Reintegration Project.” BINUB and the donor community received the document on 27 November and it is currently under review by the Government, the donor community and the UN country team. All parties are invited to discuss the proposed project with the Bank and the Government on 5 December. According to the paper, there will be no funding gap as the World Bank will provide retroactive financing for a hand-over stage from January-March 2009 and the GoB has agreed to make the necessary resources available, as part of their counterpart financing of the new project, to support a new implementation mechanism from 1 January 2009.

8. Following a series of consultations conducted by the CSM Chair, the UN and the World Bank in the past few weeks, the following points have emerged:

- As indicated above, according to the World Bank, there will be no major “funding gap” between the closure of the MDRP and start of the trust fund because its \$10 million grant is being allocated using emergency procedures;
- There will however be some gaps related to expenditures connected to the assembly areas (e.g. feeding of combatants) since these are not covered by the World Bank. Also, there are concerns that quite a significant number of combatants who will not meet the eligibility criteria. GoB is also concerned that instability might be caused by those disarmed and demobilized combatants who have not successfully reintegrated into society;
- The Government of Burundi, in the meantime, is developing a new comprehensive DDR R & SSR strategy to address some of these concerns. In particular, this new strategy reportedly will place an emphasis on “community-based” reintegration as opposed to individual-based approach undertaken by World Bank-supported DDR programmes. The strategy also apparently links DDR with the “right-sizing” of Burundi’s security forces (National Defence Force

and Burundi National Police). The official release of a new national strategy would help identify gaps, which will not be covered by the future World Bank-led transitional Demobilization and Reintegration project.

9. Points for PBC discussion:

- Reaffirm the role of timely DDR as an enabling contributor to consolidate the peace process in Burundi and support the Facilitation/ JVMM in the implementation of DDR related outcomes of the 4 December Declaration of the regional heads of States.
- Ensure that funds will be available to conduct DDR of FNL elements in particular and other outstanding caseload as not to disrupt the momentum in the peace process once the current impasse is resolved
- Achieve clarity of the GoB overall strategy for DDR in connection with the implementation of the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement and Call on the Burundian Government and other key partners to take into account fully the critical issues such as the need for stability (especially in view of 2010 elections) and peace consolidation, durable community-based reintegration and the nexus of DDR and Security Sector Reform
- Take note of the ongoing effort to develop longer term strategy for community-based socio-economic reintegration and stress the need to revert on this issue in the PBC, in order to assist in mobilizing resources once full implementation of the CFA is underway.
- Call on the Burundian Government and other key partners to ensure that no potential spoilers are left behind in this new DDR phase, such as those who may not pass the eligibility criteria to obtain DDR, previously demobilized elements who already benefited from PNDRR support but failed reintegration (the “ill-reintegrated”), and the demobilized under “right-sizing” (from National Defence Forces and National Burundian Police as the need for downsizing national defence forces remains but the support for their reintegration into civilian life may not be sufficient.

Prepared by the UN Secretariat (DDR/OROLSI, DPKO in consultation with BINUB, PBSO and the World Bank)
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