

## **Peacebuilding Commission – Working Group on Lessons Learned**

### ***Learning from a Regional DDR Approach in the Great Lakes Region of Africa***

Monday, 24 November, 2008  
Conference Room 4

#### **Chair's Summary**

##### **Introduction**

1. On 24 November 2008, the Peacebuilding Commission's Working Group on Lessons Learned (WGLL) convened a panel discussion on "Learning from a Regional DDR Approach in the Great Lakes Region of Africa".
2. The WGLL invited Mr. Bernard Harborne, Acting Program Manager of the World Bank's Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP), which has been in operation since 2002 and represents an innovative approach to multi-country and regional programming in the area of DDR. The panel also included the two co-chairs of the UN Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR, DPKO and UNDP, represented by Ms. Ayaka Suzuki, chief of the DDR section at the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions at the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (OROLSI/DPKO) and Ms. Sophie da Câmara, Senior DDR Adviser from the UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery. Mr. Mbaye Faye, chief of the SSR and small arms unit with BINUB, and Mr. Ould Sidi Zahabi, chief of the DDR section in ONUCI contributed to the discussion via video-link from Bujumbura and Abidjan, respectively.
3. In her opening remarks, the chair of the WGLL, H.E. Ambassador Carmen Gallardo-Hernandez noted that the WGLL's attempt to extract key lessons from a regional approach to DDR should contribute to the PBC's ability to advise on the extent to which regional factors, dynamics and implications could affect national DDR programmes. To this end, the Chair underlined the two key objectives of the meeting as: (a) to identify the unique features of MDRP in approaching DDR from a multi-country, regional perspective; and (b) to extract appropriate lessons from this experience for countries and sub-regions that confront similar problems in DDR or related peacebuilding challenges.

##### **Lessons concluded from presentations and discussions**

- The **experience** with regional approaches to and programming of DDR is still very **limited**. The World Bank is currently undertaking an independent evaluation of the MDRP which could inform a future PBC lessons-learning exercise.
- DDR can only succeed when backed by political settlement. Progress in and challenges to national and regional peace processes affect the pace and effectiveness of DDR programmes.

- There are real constraints in pursuing regional approach to DDR, given different political frameworks or stages of peace processes. In many situations, however, it should be seriously considered as a way to prevent spillovers of a conflict from one country to another.
- Regional DDR programming help **establish communications channels** on a variety of cross-cutting peace, security and socio-economic recovery issues across the concerned region.
- In many ways, a regional DDR approach may also help **harmonize key policy issues** that could otherwise undermine the effectiveness of a country-specific DDR programme (keeping in mind that armed groups often operate across State borders).
- To a large degree, the State sovereignty could affect regionally-based DDR on issues such as weapons management.
- Resource mobilization and capacities for **reintegration (“R”)** remain key challenges for successful DDR programmes. In particular, societies should be prepared to receive and accept demobilized combatants, including through addressing ownership and land issues.
- **Regional funding mechanisms for DDR** could help avoiding duplication by identifying finance gaps and needs assessment regionally, reducing discrepancies in benefits among combatants across a region, and resulting in greater funds predictability and enable flexibility in programming. At the same time, they could also result in gaps between political and operational realities and in competition between regional and national programming.
- There is a need to **explore lessons from successful regional DDR experience in Central America**, in particular at the operational level.
- Increasing the capacity of **regional institutions** would facilitate sustainability of regional focus on DDR

Prepared by PBSO  
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