BEYOND MEN AND GUNS

Making DDR Work
for men and women alike in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

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P.O. Box 16334
2500 BH The Hague
The Netherlands
info@justitiaetpax.nl
www.justitiaetpax.nl

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Researcher: Sara Pavan
Editor: Vreni van Unen

Photo front cover: "Christine Karumba, Country Director of Women for Women International's Democratic Republic of the Congo program and participants"

Photo courtesy of Women for Women international

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Executive Summary

After years of political violence and amidst ongoing political turmoil, the Democratic Republic of the Congo saw the start of a peace process in 1999. In this context national and international efforts have merged to implement a Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programme.

DDR programmes are meant to curb the proliferation of weapons and to provide alternative livelihoods to soldiers formerly involved in militias and paramilitary groups.
The Congolese National Plan for DDR of 2004 underscores that DDR is a complex development programme. It offers assistance to communities regarding socio-economic reinsertion and raises awareness about issues such as environment, human rights and gender.

In line with the provisions of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, the Congolese National Plan also refers to the need for the creation of an inclusive post-conflict arrangement, where women have a role to play as contributors to peace and security.

Yet, field-based research already conducted on the DDR programme in the DRC has revealed that budgetary constraints and organisational issues have so far resulted in putting disarmament and demobilisation first and reintegration last. Furthermore, despite an attempt to gender mainstream the national and international DDR programmes, a number of weaknesses in the design and implementation of the programme have often prevented commitments from turning into action.

According to the definition given by the 52nd session of the UN Economic and Social Council in 1997, gender mainstreaming is the '*process of assessing the implications for women and men of any*

planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes, in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetrated'.

Or, in other words:
'The recognition of the differences between needs of men and women, boys and girls, requires thorough gender mainstreaming of the design and implementation of the programme'.

It has been estimated that women represented around 20% of all combatants (amounting to approximately 88,000 women) in the Congolese armed groups. Most of them were defined as 'dependents' or 'bush-wives', by 2008 only 3,000 had officially demobilised. But women involved with armed groups were not the only ones to largely miss out on the benefits of DDR. In fact, during the post-conflict period civilian women and girls have increasingly become the target of sexual exploitation and abuse. This has occurred as a result of failed disarmament and demobilisation, as well as by the specific political economies created by the presence of the United Nations Mission in Congo (MONUC).

Although it is difficult to produce accurate figures at the national level, several sources have pointed to the pervasive extent of mass rape. It often leads to sexual slavery, perpetrated mostly by members of armed groups still operating in the country and by government soldiers. In South Kivu, for instance, 2,773 women have sought medical care after rape, 2,447 of which had been assaulted by members of armed groups. The MONUC mission has also been accused of contributing to the establishment of a local political economy conducive to sexual exploitation. In 2008, approximately 300 allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse have been investigated.

This research report attempts to map the causes for such failure and suggests that violence against women in post-conflict DRC can be addressed by thoroughly gender mainstreaming the design and implementation of DDR programmes. Furthermore, the research suggests four pillars that contribute to creating an environment in which gender mainstreaming can be translated into practice. Ultimately, it provides recommendations as to how DDR programmes can be harnessed to promote positive peace (meaning not just absence of violence, but also active respect for human rights), in which women are included to 'build back better'.

'Build back better' signifies recovery from emergencies in a way that does not necessarily restore the previous order of affairs (that can be highly detrimental for women in particular), but rather harnesses the crisis to bring about transformational changes.

Funds and implementing agencies in the DDR programme

Both the Dutch government and institutions of the European Union have played major roles in funding post-conflict programmes, including DDR, in the DRC. The Netherlands has been the second biggest donor (after the World Bank) to the MDRP initiative and Dutch humanitarian aid was arranged specifically to promote good governance, good policy and pro-poor growth in the country. As recent as 2008, The Netherlands has donated 6.9 million Euro to the DRC through the Stability Fund, which *'finances activities that enhance security in poor countries where there is, or has recently been, a conflict'*.

The involvement of the European Union in post-conflict DRC has also been extensive. The EU-DRC Country Strategy Paper 2008-2013 has earmarked 56 million Euro to foster physical reconstructtion and good governance in the DRC. The European Commission has also offered additional funding from the humanitarian assistance budget. Finally, the Commission was one of the main

donors supporting the parliamentary and presidential elections of 2006.

Major changes have occurred recently in the organisation and the finances of the DDR programme in the DRC. In June 2009 the MDRP (Multi-Country Demobilisation and Reintegration) initiative has officially come to an end. Demobilisation and reintegration will be resumed under the *aegis* of the African Development Bank. Yet both the Dutch government and the EU are still involved to a high extent.

For instance, the 'Rapid Mechanism to Support Security Sector Reform', funded exclusively by the Dutch government and administered by UNDP, is still operating. The Netherlands are also the third biggest contributor to the DRC Pooled Fund. This engagement is the result of the political commitment expressed in the Dutch strategy document in 2008-2011 'Security and Development in Fragile States', which envisions a continued Dutch support to DDR programmes as well as a contribution to security improvements through creating positive conditions for further development.

Against this backdrop, both the Dutch government and the European Union may still exert an important role in promoting effecttive gender mainstreaming of DDR in the DRC. This applies to their bilateral relationships with the DRC as well as their role as members of international organisations.

Recommendations

Three sets of recommendations should be considered by the Dutch government, the EU, and by the implementing agencies of the programme.

a. Recommendations on DDR design

1. National and international sources of the DDR programme should set equally high standards of gender attentiveness. Currently, the Congolese National Plan of DDR is more thoroughly gender mainstreamed than the Security Council resolutions dealing with the programme. International obligetions on gender mainstreaming should, however, be fulfilled by national governments as well as the UN Security Council. It is therefore desirable that international documents and covenants set further requirements in terms of participation of women in post-conflict development. For instance, they should set requirements as to the gender-balance of UN missions' personnel, to the quality of the gender training provided to the peacekeepers and civilian staff both prior and during deployment, as well as to the adequate participation of women in any decision-making forum concerned with the peace process;
2. General commitments to the objective of gender mainstreamming must be translated into concrete plans of action that are properly budgeted. Their success should be measurable;
3. Women should be envisaged not only as contributors to peace, but also as political actors who need recognition and support. Positive action to support collective action in every step of the peace process should be considered;
4. The vulnerability of both ex-combatants and civilian women, in all phases of DDR, should be recognised and addressed in all aspects of DDR design.

b. Recommendations on DDR implementation

5. Harnessing social change for gender equality requires that power relations between men and women in armed groups be acknowledged. Timing and budget of DDR programmes shall thus allow for the implementation of measures to facilitate access to DDR for women involved in the rebel groups;
6. The phase of encampment should represent a chance to harness gender training, entailing programmes of gender awareness geared at male ex-combatants and non-discriminative division of domestic labour in the camp;
7. Devote more resources to reintegration (which appears the most important aspect of DDR) if the programme is to contribute to harmonious development which includes also the most vulnerable groups in society. Furthermore, if reintegration is to bring a distinctive contribution to gender equality according to the 'build back better'-principle, it should rightly be part of wider strategies to tackle material and immaterial disadvantages suffered by women;
8. One further recommendation, which entails both design and implementation of the programme, concerns the need to gender mainstream international missions in order to avoid or at least reduce the likelihood of the emergence of sexual exploitation and abuse.

c. Recommendations on conditions to contribute to DDR working for men and women alike

9. The incorporation of reintegration into wider development policies. This means that skills training and economic activities performed during this phase should be part of a strategy aimed at reducing poverty and fostering economic development;
10. The promotion of inclusive development. This means that the strategies for post-conflict development should be targeted specifically at groups that are more likely to be left behind, including women;

11. The central role of communities in restoring social solidarity. This implies that the target of DDR does not limit itself to ex-fighters, but also to their receiving communities. They also bear the brunt of past conflict and violence, and need support to provide for the special needs of returning soldiers;
12. The combination of exogenous and endogenous mechanisms of conflict resolution. This implies that external intervention shall take local structures of authority into account in order to translate (originally) alien concepts such as human rights into culturally adequate activities.

1 Introduction

Justice and Peace Netherlands has started working in the DRC in 2003, when the issue of sexual violence against women in the country was still unacknowledged by international institutions the way it is now. Justice and Peace collaborated with local human rights organisations and church-based groups, which worked to sensitise the Congolese population on the issue of sexual violence against women. These groups expressed their concern for the adversarial consequences of the peace process and in particular of DDR to women, especially in the eastern provinces of the country.

At the core of their preoccupations was particularly the observation that, while fighting between different rebel groups and the national army decreased, the use of sexual violence as a tactic to destabilise communities increased. Furthermore, looting had become a new strategy for survival of unemployed ex-combatants and was often associated with rape.

These observations from the field, and the acknowledgement that the burgeoning literature on the effectiveness of DDR is largely oblivious of gender considerations, represent the rationale for Justice and Peace to perform this study. This desk research is based on both literature review and observations of grassroots human rights and church-based organisations in the DRC. It is anticipated that this study will be followed by a field research to study the feasibility of the recommendations here included. The aim of this review is to contribute to policy-making on DDR in the DRC in a way that can turn the commitment to gender-mainstreaming into action and thus make post-conflict programmes serve better for men and women.

In 1999 the Lusaka agreement represented the first step in the peace process in DRC. Shortly after the adoption of this agree-

ment, the United Nations Security Council established the United Nations Mission to Congo (MONUC) and an international peacekeeping force immediately undertook disarmament and demobilisation, along with the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP).

Taking into account the danger of spill-over of instability in the greater Great Lakes Regions of Africa, in 2002 the Multi-Country Demobilisation and Reintegration (MDRP) Programme was launched under the auspices of the World Bank. A national DDR programme was officially inaugurated as late as 2004, under the remit of the national Committee for DDR (CONADER).

Despite national and international efforts, there is evidence that the peace process has not succeeded in improving the human rights record in the country. According to the 2009 Amnesty International report, for instance, the peacekeeping missions that intervened in the country have failed to make a significant impact in terms of protecting the civilian population, in particular in the eastern provinces of the country[1]. Human rights violations, including killings and abductions of civilians, are committed daily in that part of the country[2].

While an assessment of what went wrong and what went right in the process may be useful, Justitia et Pax is undertaking this research from a slightly different angle since it is concerned specifically with the consequences of the DDR programme in terms of the protection of women's human's rights. The investigation stems from the observation that a particularly heavy toll is still paid daily by girls and women. For instance, it was reported that in 2008, 6,700 cases of sexual violence were treated in South and North Kivu[3] alone. An Amnesty International Report from 2008 states

1 Amnesty International Report 2009, p. 3.
2 Ibid, p. 125.
3 Medecins Sans Frontieres 2009, p. 8.

that – like in war times – rape is still committed in public and in front of family members, including children[4].

The voices of the Congolese women reveal the atrocities that threaten their daily lives. Euprazi, a Congolese woman of 50 recounted: "*they forced my son to have sex with me, and when he'd finished they killed him. Then they raped me in front of my husband and then they killed him too. Then they took away my three daughters*"[5].

More to the point, this research report looks at the unintended consequences of DDR design and implementation that have proved adversarial to women's human's rights. In 2005, Human Rights Watch reported not only that women and girls were still sexually assaulted by armed militiamen, but also that *'they have been preyed upon by common criminals who are reportedly perpetrating acts of sexual violence increasingly in some areas of North Kivu'*[6]. Furthermore, cases of sexual exploitation by UN peacekeepers and increase of "survival prostitution", with women trading sex for food and shelter have also been reported in the post-conflict period[7]. The culture of "boys must be boys" that characterizes military operations has often resulted in a cruel irony: '*While peace-keepers are sent into post-conflict zones to provide protection to the most vulnerable, […] some use this position of trust to prey upon the vulnerable. Often, women and children, offer the only material asset they have to trade, their bodies, to the peacekeepers as a method of survival*'[8].

[4] Amnesty International 2008.
[5] The Guardian, 5 December 2008, "Aged one to 90, the victims of hidden war against women".
[6] Human Rights Watch 2005, p. 15.
[7] See Higate 2004.
[8] Refugees International 2005, p.1

This research finds cause for this wide-spread violence against women in post-conflict DRC in weaknesses in the design and implementation of the DDR programme. It further argues that combating violence against women in post-conflict DRC can be executed through effective gender mainstreaming the DDR programme. At the same time post-conflict policies, geared at promoting positive peace, inclusive and sustainable development are to be promoted. Ultimately, this research provides recommendations as to what steps to take for the DDR programme to serve as a vehicle for increased women's participation into 'building back better'.

The outcome of this research is to aid policy-making on DDR in the DRC. It is thus intended to support Justice and Peace Netherlands as well as its partner organisations in the DRC in their advocacy work to promote women's human rights, and to change attitudes with regard to sexual violence in the DRC. In particular, this research aims to contribute to the burgeoning literature on the effecttiveness of DDR, which is regrettably not always attentive to gender considerations. It is anticipated that this desk research will be followed by a field-based investigations to study the feasibility of the recommendations hereby provided in the local context of the DRC.

This research report is organised as follows:
Chapter 2 provides a background as to why gender mainstreaming DDR is necessary. It considers not only the most important international obligations that make gender mainstreaming mandatory, but also the reasons why gender mainstreaming DDR makes the success of DDR overall more likely.
Chapter 3 provides a background of the different sources of the DDR programme in the DRC, their characteristics and their relation to the broader security sector reform.
Chapter 4 assesses the design of the DDR programme from a gender mainstreaming perspective and provides recommendations on how to improve its gender attentiveness.

Chapter 5 adopts a gender-lens to evaluate the implementation of the Congolese DDR programme and provides recommendations for increased effectiveness.
Chapter 6 assesses the dangers posed to women's share in the peace process, as posed by the political economy that stems from the MONUC mission.
Finally, **Chapter 7** indicates four pillars addressing the structural context in which DDR takes place. These pillars may contribute to effectively gender mainstream the DDR programme.

2 The rationale for gender mainstreaming DDR

The post-conflict agenda in the DRC has so far proved unable to deliver negative peace, i.e. absence of violence to women: the amount of sexual and physical violence women still suffer is enormous. Between 2003 and 2007 at least 7,482 women have sought treatment after rape in the province of Ituri[9] alone. In North and South Kivu, 6,700 victims of sexual violence were treated in 2008 alone[10]. And so positive peace, i.e. justice and human rights, seems further away.

While it is not the objective of the DDR programme to address the roots of gender-based violence – that UNIFEM has identified as stemming from unequal power relations between genders – this research attempts to ascertain if and how the social change elicited by the DDR programme has proved conducive to increased violence against women. In other words, it wants to give substance to the claim enunciated at the Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security on June 19, 2008 by Maj. Gen. Patrick Cammaert, former UN Peacekeeping Operation Commander in DRC, according to which *"it is more dangerous to be a woman than to be a soldier in modern war"*.

The DDR programme implemented in the DRC so far has been very limitedly accessed by women. A few of those involved in the armed groups have been able to register. Furthermore, those who did were still met with hardship when returning to their communities for reintegration. On the other hand, the limited success of reintegration also for male combatants has led to an increase in

[9] Medecins Sans Frontières 2008. These figures refer exclusively to women who sought treatment in Medecins Sans Frontières hospitals. It is thus likely that the actual number of women raped is higher.
[10] Ibid.

banditry and loot, which has been associated with wide-spread rape. In 2005 the Special Rapporteur for the United Nations on Violence against Women, Yakin Erturk, testified that sexual violence was becoming *"rampant and committed by non-state armed groups, the Armed Forces of the DRC, the National Congolese Police and increasingly also by civilians"*[11]. The situation was worst for women in South Kivu, where also rebels from Rwanda operated.

Human Rights Watch reports in 2007 and 2009 testified that sexual violence carried out at the same time as looting activities was becoming a widespread trend in the DRC. Rape was committed by demobilised soldiers, members of rebel groups as well as by "mixed groups", i.e. former rebel groups incorporated in the Congolese National Army. The Bravo Brigade was identified as one of the "mixed" groups responsible of rape and crimes against women.

Again, the voices of Congolese women reveal the extent of atrocities they face: *"One woman from Kisharo was raped when four soldiers came to her house late at night in February to ask for money. Her husband said he had none and was taken from the house. The soldiers then raped the women and her three daughters: they hit us and beat us. Each of the soldiers took one of us. I could hear the screams of my daughters. After they finished with us, they looted our house and then left, taking my husband with them. I have not seen him since"*[12].

Assumption of the design and implementation of the DDR programme – as it has been implemented in the DRC so far – has been the consideration of combatants as non-gendered individuals, merely responding to material incentives. This means that combatants have been understood as individuals devoid of gender conno-

[11] See http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L30471668.htm.
[12] Human Rights Watch 2007, p. 36.

tations that would undertake DDR insofar as it provided them with an alternative livelihood. Providing opportunities for reintegration into original communities was thus considered sufficient to spontaneously bring ex-combatants (men and women, boys and girls) to disarmament points.

However, as the programme unravelled it became evident that combatants are gendered: they are women and men involved in armed groups that are part of wider social structures, characterised by definite power relations.

There are at least two courses of reasoning as to why gender mainstreaming is important. Firstly, gender mainstreaming post-conflict policies is important to fulfil international obligations. For instance, three UN Security Council Resolutions have remarked on the importance of focusing on gender differences when devising post-conflict policies.

In view of the 'important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and stressing the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security', UN Security Council Resolution 1325 of 2000 has called on *'all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual violence, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict'* (art. 10). It also encouraged *'all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependents'* (art. 13)[13].

[13] So far, 13 countries have developed a National Action Plan to implement 1325. The Netherlands did so in 2007; recently, Liberia joined the group, being the "*first post-conflict developing country in Africa to have undertaken an inclusive and participatory bottom-up process to develop and launch a*

In 2008 the UN Security Council issued Resolution 1820. The Resolution identified the systematic use of sexual violence in war as a matter of international peace and security and requested the Secretary-General to develop and implement appropriate training programmes for all peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel deployed by the UN in the context of missions as mandated by the Council. It urged countries contributing troops and police to take appropriate preventative action, including pre-deployment and in-theatre awareness-raising. Furthermore, it encouraged these countries to take appropriate preventative action, including pre-deployment and in-theatre awareness-raising. Finally, it encouraged these countries to heighten the awareness and the responsiveness of their personnel participating in the UN peacekeeping operations to protect civilians, including women and children, and to prevent sexual violence against women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Significance of gender mainstreaming during the peace process

On October 5, 2009, the UN Security Council voted for resolution 1889. Here, art. 8 explicitly urges '*Member States to ensure gender mainstreaming in all post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery processes and sectors'*. Moreover, art. 13 *'calls upon all those involved in the planning, demobilisation and reintegration to take into account particular needs of women and girls associated with armed forces and armed groups and their children, and to provide for their full access to these programmes'*.

Finally, gender mainstreaming in all areas of societal development is instrumental for the achievement of Millennium Development

National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325", (Introduction to the Liberia National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Resolution 1325).

Goal Three, which is 'to promote Gender Equality and Empower Women'.

But most importantly, gender mainstreaming is essential because it reinforces social change that is more attentive to human rights and it helps the collaboration of men and women to 'build back better'. Post-conflict societies generally undergo huge and rapid changes. During a war, women take on greater and more extensive responsibilities at the household level, while men relinquish theirs. But this change could backlash once the peace process gets started. It is therefore crucial that the DDR programme contributes to the ultimate objective of gender equality, i.e. to the assertion of equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys, while recognizing the diversity between groups of women and men[14].

This means that in the wake of a conflict, gender-sensitive DDR can help promote transformative and more inclusive practices. This is done by helping the Congolese society to achieve a new balance, where gender-based violence is redressed and the process of women's empowerment and equality is supported. This support takes place through action against gender-based stereotypes and women's poor access to the labour market. Providing female ex-combatants with the opportunity to support themselves and their children, as well as offering women affected by war skills and training that can help them attain a sustainable livelihood, can substantially contribute to build back better.

[14] "*Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development*", Gender Mainstreaming: Strategy for Promoting Gender Equality, document of the Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, OSAGI, UN August 2001.

3 A background of the DDR programme in the DRC

The DDR programme in the DRC was comprised of four concomitant programmes:

- The national DDR programme created in December 2003 under the remit of a National Commission for DDR (CONADER) after the establishment of the Congolese Transitional Government. CONADER took over the demobilisation effort that was previously the responsibility of MONUC and UNDP;
- The Demobilisation and Community Reinsertion Programme running in Ituri. Launched in September 2004 as a Rapid Response Mechanism, it was organised in seven centres and intended to demobilise a number of combatants ranging from 15,000 to 30,000;
- The Demobilisation Programme for child soldiers funded by the World Bank and UNICEF;
- Finally, the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration programme targeted at combatants on foreign soil. It was by the Multi-country Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme (MDRP) and carried out by MONUC and the Congolese government. This programme aims to support demobilisation and reintegration efforts not only in the DRC, but also in Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Rwanda and Uganda.

It must be noted that access to demobilisation and reintegration has been one of the possible alternatives that disarmed former rebels have been presented with. Those wishing to remain in the military and to join the new National Army were able to opt for *Centres de Brassage* - that is military encampment areas where, if considered suitable, they have been able to receive training before re-deployment.

In this respect, DDR must be understood as part of the broader Security Sector Reform, aimed not only at enhancing the stability of the country but also at redefining policies and enhancing good governance of security institutions. While the focus of this research is the DDR programme, it has to be acknowledged that there have been significant overlaps between DDR and SSR in terms of operation. Notably, financial resources earmarked for DDR have been spent on SSR-related tasks (such as transportation of disarmed soldiers to the Centres de Brassage).

Unintended consequences resulting in more violence against women

What is more important regarding the purpose of this research is to underscore the fact that SSR and the Centres de Brassage have also had unintended consequences in terms of spreading violence against women. It has been reported that members of the new National Army are still committing the same type of violence against women that was common during the war. For instance, the Congolese NGO *Action Sociale pour la Paix et le Developpement* has recently required the intervention of the United Nations Office for Human Rights of MONUC to bring to justice Colonel Kipanga. Colonel Kipanga is a former CNDP soldier now integrated into the new National Army. The colonel is accused of having raped five minor girls in Rusthuru, North Kivu, on April 25, 2009. While we do not intend to assess the success of the formation of the new National Army on one isolated case, several organisations have gathered consistent evidence with the one that we report. It thus ensues that mainstreaming SSR is as important as mainstreaming DDR in order to curb wide-spread violence against women.

For a more detailed chronology of the peace process, see the Annex of the paper.

4 The Congolese DDR programme in terms of gender mainstreaming: an assessment of the design

A gender mainstreamed DDR design is a necessary step to avoid unintended consequences that are detrimental to women's human rights.

Gender planning is not just a technical activity. It is also a political activity that involves transformational processes[15], meaning processes that *'attempt to transform existing distribution of power and resources to create a more balanced relationship among women, men, girls and boys by responding to their strategic gender needs'*[16].

Gender mainstreaming a programme means
'to identify how men and women can equally participate in and benefit from the programme' [17] and
'where women are currently seriously disadvantaged relative to men or are especially vulnerable, consider the design of women-specific activities and/or positive action measures'[18].

Assessing the gender balance of the Congolese DDR programme design entails looking at different sources, both national and international. In the next section, we will investigate if the several documents originating from the DDR programme have incurporated a gender-sensitive language. We will also investigate whether the timing, the identification of lead agencies and targets of the programme, the level and type of grassroots participation

15 Moser, C.: *Gender Planning and Development* (1993), London: Routledge.
16 UN definition of gender-transformative interventions.
17 International Labour Organisation : *Gender Mainstreaming: A How-To Manual,* 1999:
http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/mdtmanila/gender/gndef.htm#b.formulating
18 Ibid.

and the budget established in the documents have sufficiently factored in the gender dimension.

4.1 Gender mainstreaming the sources of the DDR programme: the use of gender-sensitive language

The first document calling for the implementation of the DDR programme in the DRC was the Lusaka Peace Agreement that was signed in 1999. This document preceded UN SC Resolution 1325. The text of the agreement is gender-oblivious: it only sets forth a number of objectives and technical steps to be taken in order to disarm and demobilise armed groups, as well as the need for a new National Army.

A comparative analysis of the national and international documents that were adopted following Resolution 1325, shows that progress towards incorporation of a gender perspective has been slow.

The Pretoria Accords of 2000 are still devoid of gender considerations, even though art. 14 of 1325 *'encourages all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependents'*.

Moreover, when analysing Security Council Resolution 1493 of 2003 and 1565 of 2004, both dealing with the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the mandate of MONUC, one can only find a reference to women and not to gender. While reference to women is by all means a positive step, the lack of a focus on gender downgrades the importance of relations between men and women and social sanctioning of what is appropriate for each of these categories.
Art. 8 of Resolution 1493 condemns sexual violence against women as a form of systematic violence against civilians, and art. 9

encourages MONUC to continue addressing the issue of violence against women as a tool of war. Resolution 1565 art. 5d mandates MONUC to support the Congolese transitional government. The support consists of facilitation of the disarmament of Congolese combatants and their dependents and of the demobilisation and voluntary repatriation of foreign combatants and dependents. Art. 5g calls MONUC to assist in the promotion and protection of human rights, with particular regard to women, children and vulnerable persons.

The most advanced document in terms of gender-sensitivity is the National DDR programme of 2004. Art. 56 of this document specifically mentions the need to adopt a gender perspective in the DDR programme, to recognise the different characteristics of men and women, to consider gender disparities in the process of reinsertion and to take into consideration the role that men and women are likely to play in the process.

A gender analysis is explicitly linked to a wider development agenda: *'gender analysis in DDR is […] to facilitate the rehabilitation of public institutions in a more just and equitable society'* (art. 56 National Plan).

4.2 Gender mainstreaming the timing of the DDR design

Since gender mainstreaming is a transformative process, it requires time and specific efforts. Adequate timing of DDR programmes therefore requires careful consideration in the design of the programme to avoid gender-adverse consequences.

In 2006 the UN has framed a set of policies, guidelines and procedures covering all different areas of DDR programmes. Within that framework the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS) provided a number of timing-

related recommendations to be taken into consideration when designing DDR programmes. None of these recommendations have been amalgamated in the DDR programme in DRC.

For instance, before the start of the DDR programme no specific provision has been made to allow calculation of the number and percentage of women in the armed forces, as well as their rank and category. This would have enabled assessment of the correct representation of women among the beneficiaries of the programme at a later stage.

Furthermore, neither time nor resources have been calculated to allow some baseline information on patterns of weapon possession among women and girls. The design of DDR was based on the assumption that women in the rebel groups did not carry guns, most of them being bush wives or dependents. However, in practice some women did serve as soldiers carrying weapons. Before the start of the disarmament phase, a survey on the extent of women's possession of weapons would have been needed to later assess the degree of access to the programme for female combatants. Since access to the DDR programme in the DRC has been regulated through the 'one man, one gun' criterion - meaning that the possession of a weapon is necessary and sufficient condition to enter the programme, the lack of information on women combatants has allowed military commanders to remove weapons from women and thus impede their access to the programme. Furthermore, this has given them the opportunity of caching weapons while officially undertaking DDR.

Another obstacle to women combatants' access to DDR has been the lack of specific time provisions to ensure that women and men have had the same access to information about the chances and modalities to join DDR. In its Gender-aware Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Checklist of 2008, UNIFEM has noted that, since women and girls often do not have access to radio and newspapers, word of mouth may be the only channel

trough which they can be reached. It goes without saying that flows of communications that rely on social networks require additional time before the target is met.

4.3 Gender mainstreaming the targets of the DDR programme

As mentioned earlier, access to the DDR programme in the DRC has been regulated by the 'one man, one gun' criterion. In Liberia, the necessity of presenting a serviceable weapon as a condition for eligibility into DDR programme has been waived for women associated with the fighting forces. In the DRC however, possession of a gun as the only criterion for admission into DDR has posed several problems in terms of ensuring equal access of men and women to the programme.

On the one hand, women involved in the armed groups as auxiliaries rather than soldiers have not been able to register for the programme. On the other hand there was no chance for abducted women soldiers to escape the armed forces. So called 'bush-wives' did not have the possibility of registering independently from their partner, thus being denied the possibility of finding refuge.

In the Congolese DDR National Plan, Operational Principle 55 is devoted to a 'specific treatment of vulnerable groups' and Operational Principle 56 to a 'gender perspective'. However, the princeples concerning the operational approach to disarmament do not contain any mention of women. The DDR National Plan demands that demobilisation cater for the need for gender awareness-raising, yet the targets and actors of such activities are not specified. Furthermore, women's potential role is only expressed in terms of their contribution to peace, reconciliation and humanitarian support. In the definition of reintegration, specific attention is called for only in relation to the handicapped and chronically ill.

The document generally acknowledges that extra attention must be paid to women's socio-economic fragility, but no reference is made to the need for avoiding additional care burdens to women (that may or may not be involved in armed groups). These burdens are added to the ordinary workload of women upon the return of men and children ex-combatants (some of them injured or chronically ill) to their home communities. The experience of Sierra Leone, where women as individuals and in groups have had to take responsibility for assisting the return of ex-combatants to civilian life, indicates the need to incorporate support to civilian women in the design of national and international sources of DDR[19].

4.4 Consequences of not gender mainstreaming the budget

Without proper budgeting no gender transformative activity, however well designed, can be put into action. It is therefore important to assess how high gender mainstreaming has been placed in the DDR agenda.

The 2006 UNFPA report on the Congolese DDR found *that 'the lack of a gender supportive budget is at the root of the exclusion of women associated with armed groups as a caseload within the National DDR Programme'*[20]. In the UN Department for Peace Keeping Operations 2004 -2005 budget, the goal of gender mainstreaming is mentioned, but there is no specific budget line for related activities. Furthermore, research has been pointed out that the Gender Unit of MONUC, founded in 2002, is understaffed and operates without budget[21].

[19] Mazurana & Carlson 2004, p. 2.
[20] UNFPA Report 2006, p.7.
[21] Nyende 2007, p. 7.

5 Gender mainstreaming the implementation of the DDR programme

In the previous section we have highlighted that a properly gender mainstreamed design of DDR is necessary to redress the potential for gender adverse consequences, albeit insufficient. Liberia is a case in point. Despite the fact that the gender agenda was granted a high level of importance in the country's post-conflict policies, it has been reported that a number of political, social, economic and infrastructural challenges have sometimes resulted in women being penalised by the way the DDR programme has unravelled[22].

So, in order to assess the gendered implications of the DDR programme, it is important to consider its implementation. In this section we shall analyse whether the different needs of both civilian and ex-combatant women in the DRC have been taken into consideration during disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration.

5.1 Implementing disarmament

UN Security Council Resolution 1445 of 2002 has defined disarmament (as well as demobilisation, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement) as a voluntary process. This definition reflected the assumption that the offer of material incentives would suffice to bring combatants (both men and women) to 'disarmament points'. Yet the reality on the ground proved different to what the Security Council Resolution envisaged. Women and men occupied different positions within the armed groups and steps were not taken to overcome or prevent the following problems:

[22] Amnesty International 2008b.

i. When DDR begins, commanders often (re)claim removed weapons from the possession of girls and women in order to either cache weapons or control access to DDR;
ii. Commanders may purposefully hide girls, either because girls are considered essential workers and the most desirable sexual partners within the group, or because they fear to face the legal and social consequences of having abducted them.
iii. Both (i) and (ii) may have resulted in a pool of women and girls unable to access DDR, even though they are theoretically eligible for it.
iv. Commanders may withhold information on eligibility and benefits offered within the context of the DDR programme from women and girls associated with armed groups or forces. As the IDDRS guidelines have suggested, this problem may be tackled by *'informing male ex-combatants that women and girls are participants in DDR and that they (i.e., men) face punishment if they do not release sex slaves'*;
v. There is no provision for women to register from their partners separately. As the IDDRS guidelines have recommendded, *'the physical layout of the reception centre should be structured so that women and girls may register separately from their male partner, and receive separate identity cards. This will help ensure the safety and autonomy of women and girls who are sex slaves or forced wives, for whom the assembly point may offer a rare opportunity for escape from their captors".*

Furthermore, as mentioned above, the adoption of the "one man-one gun" criterion has made it difficult for women involved in non-fighting activities in armed groups to access the programme.

Qualitative interviews reveal other sources of hardship in registering for DDR: for instance, some female ex-combatants have had their card as candidate for the programme stolen, and they

were no longer accepted. Others were not aware of the programme or had no understanding of how DDR could help them[23].

5.2 Implementing demobilisation

When analysing figures concerned with the demobilisation phase, the difference between women's and men's access to the programme becomes even more pronounced.

The figures show a marked difference from the Liberian experience of DDR, which showed that demobilisation can create opportunities for the participation of women's organisation in the implementation of the DDR programme. In 2004 the Liberian Women in Peacebuilding Nerwork (WIPNET), along with the Liberia Women's Initiative, the Christian community, and local NGOs, were asked by UN Personnel to intervene in the management of cantonment sites. Disorders in the Scheffelin camps were widely considered as threatening the future of the DDR programme in the country. Their success in restoring quiet in Scheffelin marked the beginning of WIPNET's collaboration with UNMIL in disseminating information on DDR.

In the case of the DRC however, demobilisation posed three sorts of problems for women: scarce representation of female ex-combatants, marginalisation of female dependents, and lack of measures for gender-sensitisation.

The MDRP report of July – September 2005 has found that, as of September 30, 2005, 17,549 men and 331 women had been demobilised. By October 2008, these figures had risen to respectively 102,000 and 2,600. The under-representation of women among the

[23] Interviews with female ex-combatants by Rosan Smits, ICCO, 2008. (unpublished)

demobilised is particularly evident if confronted with the estimation that 20% of all members of armed groups were women.

One explanation for this obvious mismatch between the estimated number of women involved in the armed groups and those actually demobilised could be self-demobilisation of women. Many of them feared rejection from their communities and have therefore returned outside the control of the DDR programme. This meant that they largely missed out on the benefits of DDR. Return to communities was hardest for single mothers with off-spring from ex-combatants. They were often refused by their families and have had to cater for their and their children's on their own[24].

Furthermore, it has been reported that *"dependents [were] not benefiting from any assistance in terms of temporary shelter, food and drinkable water. As a consequence, this situation [was] generating humanitarian crisis at the border of the encampments where thousands of dependents (women and children) wait for demobilisation of the spouse in deplorable living conditions"*[25] during the phase of encampment.

A point that deserves further attention is the failure of harnessing demobilisation to conduct gender-sensitisation activities. We must evaluate the commitment of the Senior Gender Adviser of MONUC's Gender Section to gender awareness briefings with civilian, military and civilian police (CIVPOL) in Kisangani and Goma positively. A blind spot, however, is the absence of gender sensitisation activities during encampment.

[24] Douma and Van Laar 2008.
[25] UNFPA report 2006, p. 7.

5.3 Implementing reintegration

Reintegration has probably proved to be the most difficult phase of DDR. The relatively few women who were able to register for the programme also had access to reintegration programmes. Yet return to their communities proved one of the most challenging aspects. Women were often met with outright discrimination. They reported being rejected by their families, and/or by the wider community. Some women self-reportedly started to be addressed as 'men' for having performed manly jobs.

Analysis of parts of the budget allocated to the different activities of the programme helps to identify some space for improvement. It has been calculated that, *'much money was spent on transporting soldiers to the various Centres de Brassage. This operation cost around 20 million US dollars, one-tenth of the entire MDRP budget. By the time that reintegration finally took off, most of the remaining funds have been spent on setting up and maintaining expensive DDR infrastructures such as the CO reception centres'*[26].

Eventually, the reintegration of each individual combatant was earmarked at US$ 200, US$ 150 of which were spent on exit kits and US$ 50 on a training course[27].

The insufficiency of the investment on reintegration was caused by the fact that infrastructure had been either destroyed by the war and only the informal sector was left to play a role in providing an alternative livelihood to ex-soldiers. Against this backdrop, it should not come as a surprise that an atmosphere of re-mobilisation rather than de-mobilisation was recently witnessed[28].

[26] Douma and Van Laar 2008, p. 29.
[27] Douma and Van Laar 2008, and Marriage 2007.
[28] Marriage 2007.

To conclude: we should look positively at the fact that some attempts at redressing gender issues in reintegration have been carried out. For instance, in June 2008 the MDRP initiated the LEAP (Learning for Equality, Access and Peace) programme. This programme targeted 200 beneficiaries, 140 female ex-combatants and 60 members of local communities – mainly girl-mothers, but also a few men. The project intends to raise awareness of gender issues. An additional aim is to support income-generating activities by training beneficiaries in basic skills, business management, household management and micro-credit.

6 A major threat to the positive effects of peace for women: the political economy of MONUC's mission

One issue that deserves special attention here is the emergence of a commercial sex industry as a result of the presence of international peacekeepers and peace workers. While prohibited by the MONUC Code of Conduct, different forms of sexual exploitation and abuse have been reported in post-conflict DRC[29]. These have been further identified as potential contributors to the creation of niches of sex tourism that are deeply endangering, especially to underage women in the DRC[30].

It has been found that '*girls as young as twelve years of age were involved in prostitution with peacekeepers in the DRC [...] A male UN civilian worker in an eastern region of the DRC had stated that in one class at the local secondary school at least two-thirds of the girls are paying their fees with money made from sleeping with peacekeepers, even though some of these girls were said to have regular local boyfriends as well'* [31].

This issue is not related uniquely to the DRC. Rather, it has already called for specific attention within the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), after the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and Save the Children UK released a report on sexual abuse and exploitation committed by *'teachers, individuals in the commercial sectors, refugee leaders…individuals with access to goods and money, humanitarian aid workers from various UN and international agencies, NGOs and UNAMSIL peacekeeping troops'* in 2002.

[29] Higate 2004.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Higate 2007, p. 108.

In response to the problem, UNAMSIL has set up the Personnel Conduct Committee to

1. implement a mass awareness pro-gramme on the UNAMSIL Code of Conduct targeted towards civilians and military personnel;
2. receive external allegations on misconduct and impropriety committed by the members of the Mission (including telephone hotlines for use by general public);
3. develop preventive and dissuasive strategies to all components of the Mission and
4. make recommendations to improve existing rules and regulations relating to personnel conduct and to the appropriate handling of allegations of misconduct.

The establishment of such a committee might be regarded as a positive measure, but the UNAMSIL experience has underscored that a reactive rather than preventive approach may contribute to the issue going underground instead of being tackled. The establishment of an Office of Gender Affairs (like the one established in MONUC), properly endowed with human and financial resources, may be a vital complimentary measure to prevent this.

6.1 Enhancing the conditions to make DDR work for men and women alike: the four pillars

This research has stressed that DDR is part of the wider and complicated post-conflict setting, which entails different types of intervention that are targeted at different objectives. We do not mean to stretch the objective of DDR so far as to directly promote development. We do, however, suggest that properly gender mainstreamed DDR is more likely to succeed for men and women alike if the following structural conditions – pillars – are also put in place.

1. The first pillar is the **immersion of reintegration projects into wider development policies.** In other words: DDR in itself is not enough to ensure successful transition from war to peace if it is not implemented in the context of revived economic growth. Only against that backdrop may women and men benefit from a peace dividend. For women in particular, high levels of unemployment can prove detrimental both directly and indirectly. On the one hand they are not given the opportunity to earn a living, which enables the emergence of survival prostitution. On the other, women become prey of demobilised ex-combatants who have nothing to do but loot to earn a living. Looting has often been associated with sexual violence.

2. The second pillar is the **promotion of inclusive development**, meaning development that includes the needs of the poor and the excluded. This means that post-conflict dynamics are geared at discarding patterns of exclusion of certain social categories and groups. Women in particular, must be both contributors and beneficiaries of post-conflict development. Participation of women's organised collective action can play a key role. This can push the women's specific needs and sensitivities higher on the agenda.

3. The third pillar is the **focus on receiving communities in making peace and restoring social solidarity**. The way DDR is currently implemented it can elicit resentment against ex-fighters. They may be perceived as a 'privileged group' despite having perpetrated violence. Furthermore, engagement of communities in setting up their own post-conflict policy agendas while actively monitoring their results is the premise for sustainable outcomes. Communities are also the only actor that can bring about social solidarity, which is in turn a condition for positive peace. Therefore, successful DDR programmes rely on

communities envisaged not only as recipients of aid, but also as responsible actors on the use of such aid to foster development according to their political priorities.

4. The fourth pillar is the **combination of endogenous and exogenous mechanisms of conflict resolution.** Advocating community ownership of post-conflict policies may spur gender-adverse consequences: communities may not put gender mainstreaming on the top of their agendas. In this context, external intervention may provide material for gender transformative action. Concepts such as human rights and human dignity were originally seen as alien ideas. If they are properly 'hybridised', however, these concepts can promote women's human rights by using culturally sound institutions and ultimately *'offer opportunity for subversion despite superficial compliance'*[32].

[32] Engle Merry 2006, p. 48.

Short chronology of the peace process in the DRC

June 1999
Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement call for disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration under the auspices of a UN peace-keeping and peace-enforcing mission. Parties to the accord are Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Many actors relevant to the conflict are excluded, such as the Mayi-Mayi Congolese self-defence militias, the Army for the Liberation of Rwanda, and the Burundian Forces for the Defence of Democracy.

November 1999
The Security Council Resolution 1279 of 30 November 1999 decides that personnel authorized under its previous resolutions is to constitute the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC).

February 2000
The Security Council Resolution 1291 calls upon MONUC to develop an action plan '*for the overall implementation of the Lusaka Cease Fire Agreement by all concerned with particular emphasis on the following key objectives: [...] comprehensive disarmament, demobilisation, resettlement and reintegration of all members of all armed groups*'.

October 2001
Inter-Congolese Dialogue officially opens in Addis Ababa.

December 2002
Global and inclusive agreement on transition in the DRC is signed in Pretoria. It includes all elements and entities involved in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (the Government of DRC, Congolese Rally for Democracy, the Movement for the Liberation of the

Congo, the political opposition, civil society, the Congolese Rally for Democracy/ Liberation movement, the Congolese rally for Democracy/ National and the Mayi-Mayi). The agreement represents a step forward in peace negotiations even though it is not fully implemented, since leadership and rank-and-files divide issues of representation at the negotiation table.

July 2003
UN Security Council Resolution 1493 tasks MONUC with assisting the '*Government of National Unity and Transition in disarming and demobilising those Congolese combatants who* ***voluntarily*** *decide to enter the DDR process within the framework of the Multi-country Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme'*.

July 2003
A transitional government, led by Joseph Kabila, is set up to conduct the country towards democratic elections.

October 2004
UN Security Council Resolution 1565 establishes that Monuc will *'support operations to disarm foreign combatants led by the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo'* through an augmented and fully deployed MONUC military presence in the Kivus. MONUC will also *'facilitate the demobilisation and voluntary repatriation of the disarmed foreign combatants and their dependents'*. In the same year, the Congolese government drafts a National Programme for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration. The plan envisages the creation of CONADER (Commission Nationale de DDR), the national institution in charge of all aspects of national DDR (planning, coordination, management, evaluation).

July 30, 2006
First multi-party elections are held in the DRC in 46 years. After run-off in November 2006, Joseph Kabila becomes President of the country.

List of abbreviations

Centre de Brassage	Encampment area for training into the new National Army
CIVPOL	Civilian Police
CONADER	Commission Nationale de Desarmament, Demobilisation et Reinsertion (National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration)
CNDP	Congres National pour la Defense du Peuple (National Congress for People's Defense)
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FLDR	Forces Democratiques de Liberation du `Rwanda (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda)
IDDRS	Integrated Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Standards
MDRP	Multi-country Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme
MONUC	Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies en Republique Democratique du Congo (United Nations Mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo)

RCD	Reassemblement Congolais pour la Democratie (Rally for Congolese Democracy)
UN	United Nations
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia

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