



DEMOBILIZATION

REINTEGRATION

PEACE & SECURITY

REPORT

from the

DDR POLICY FORUM



Thursday, March 12, 2009
The World Bank
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MDRP Partners, DDR experts and practitioners gathered at the World Bank on Thursday March 12, 2009 to discuss the MDRP in the context of current thinking on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR). The forum was attended by about 100 participants who came together to discuss their experiences, in particular how programs such as the MDRP fit into the broader context of peace and state building, regional stabilization, and how it acted as a response in post-conflict settings.

OPENING

Cyprian Fisiy, Director, Social Development, Sustainable Development Network at the World Bank, gave opening remarks. He underlined the preeminence that the work on conflict and fragility has taken in the World Bank. It is the second of the six strategic priorities defined by President Zoellick, and is also a core element of the World Bank's social development strategy.

As the MDRP closes, it may be easy to point out the shortcomings of such a vast undertaking that had as primary goal to contribute to peace and security in the Great Lakes region in Africa. But as the largest program of its kind ever attempted in the world, the MDRP has achieved significant results, and is also the repository of a wealth of experiences and knowledge that it can bring to the practice of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR).

The forum revolved around four themes:

- First, given an evolving policy environment – on state fragility, on security sector reform, on early recovery in post-conflict environment, on transitional justice – how would the design of a DDR program look like now?
- Second, how is comprehensive support for war-affected regions done and what are the constraints?
- Third, how do reintegration via individual benefits to ex-combatants and community-based reintegration compare?
- And fourth, what lessons can be drawn from the MDRP design features as a regional approach?

SESSION 1

The evolution of the global policy agenda on conflict, security and fragile states and its implications on future DDR programming and policy

See Annexes 1 and 2 for speakers' presentations

Ian Bannon, Sector Manager, Fragile States, Post-Conflict and Social Development, Africa Region, the World Bank, chaired the session.

Markus Kostner, Adviser, Fragile and Conflict Affected Countries, the World Bank, presented a retrospective of the past 15 to 20 years in post-conflict recovery and DDR. In the early 90's, Mozambique, Cambodia and Angola were going through DDR and agencies were starting to show interest in this field. GTZ, DPKO and UNDP were at the forefront of the DDR effort.

Over the last few years, a big push was made for harmonization and links with SSR. The global policy agenda started to focus on fragile states with for instance the OECD whole-of-government approach, UNDP's Post-Conflict Needs Assessment, etc. NATO later became an active player, and finally the Peacebuilding Commission was set up in 2005. On the World Bank side, it has been an "uphill" battle since the first operation in Uganda in 1992.

In 1997 a landmark study was published on the Bank's involvement in post-conflict settings. But the DDR agenda really took off with the MDRP in 2002. Although operational policies are strict (no involvement in peacemaking, peacekeeping, disarmament, or humanitarian assistance), there are still opportunities for Bank's engagement as illustrated by the new policy for rapid response to disasters or recent assistance in Gaza and Timor-Leste on SSR issues such as veterans pensions. In the future the Bank might engage more in rule of law. Despite the strict policies, there are grey areas where the Bank could be more active: police, prisons, etc.

Challenges remain on key questions such as:

- National ownership vs. service delivery;
- Reintegration is not a fail safe activity, and failure has to be accepted as part of DDR;
- Peace dividends: do they translate into economic gain?
- DDR / security sector reform (SSR) links.

Nicole Ball, Senior Fellow, Center for International Policy, talked about the linkages between DDR and SSR.

SSR has had an increasingly prominent role on the global policy agenda since the end of the 90's, after the cold war era. OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) has set the agenda for development-oriented SSR and it includes effective government, oversight, improved delivery of local leadership and sustainability.

Several governments now have SSR statements signed by their Ministries of Defense, such as the US army field manual from October 2008 that contains a chapter on SSR. If there is progress on the conceptual level, there is still a lot to do on the ground. Preference is still given to training and equipment, in part because of the war on terror. The World Bank made progress over the past ten years, but it is still lagging behind on financial management issues, which are very important in SSR. It is unfortunate that the World Bank does not take the lead.

The interpretation of the link between DDR and SSR can be minimalist or maximalist. MDRP's original project document made clear that SSR was beyond its scope. DDR programs cannot be used as vehicles for SSR because it would require even more political engagement from already reticent donors.

DDR does not automatically lead to lower military expenditures. Financial management is often weak in fragile states, especially in the security sector. It is however possible to undertake some foundational work. The Bank could do more on the analytical front; it is disappointing that it has not managed to include more financial management analysis in its security sector work. Lessons from Afghanistan show that this is possible and could be constructive.

Discussion

- The work of the World Bank in CAR with the defense ministry on public financial management review is a good example of opportunities in SSR.
- In the DDR concept the "R" is not very well handled. Most critics on DDR are on the results of reintegration.
- People often just look at the military level, but SSR goes beyond that, other services must be democratized, financial management must be overhauled, etc. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have not been able to force fragile states to publish their military spending, which are often political spending.
- Recent signing of an agreement on post-crisis assessment and recovery planning between the World Bank, the UN system and the European Commission represents great progress.
- Once a peace agreement is reached, there remains the entire question of how to implement it, which should trigger problem-solving attitudes from partners.
- The link of DDR with SSR allows donors to have a sort of guarantee that the programs they support are moving the country towards progress.

SESSION II

Early Recovery: Balancing Tensions and Building Linkages

The session was chaired by **Bernard Harborne**, Lead Conflict Adviser, Fragile States, Post-Conflict and Social Development, Africa Region, the World Bank.

Peter Batchelor, Chief, Conflict Prevention and Recovery Team, UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, discussed policy developments in early recovery. He defined early recovery as a multi-dimensional process that begins in the humanitarian setting but is guided by development principles such as national ownership, participatory and inclusive processes, or capacity development. Early recovery seeks to build on existing humanitarian interventions or programs. It also seeks to catalyze development opportunities and to act as an interface between humanitarian work and development.

Capacity in the humanitarian phase of recovery is often an issue; early recovery interventions can often help to stabilize a situation by preventing further deterioration and strengthening social cohesion. Early recovery happens most often before peace agreements are in place, and so most interventions involve local level actors.

A UN review of the global humanitarian framework led to a cluster approach to address gaps and issues of accountability. Out of this exercise, the early recovery cluster was created, led by UNDP. It has 29 formal members, including a number of NGOs. Through the cluster working group, support has been provided to recovery activities in 32 countries in the past few years. Early recovery includes work on both national disasters and conflicts.

One important difficulty in framing the concept of early recovery lies in its financing, where flexibility from the humanitarian and the development sides has been sought. A UK-commissioned study identified three gaps in early recovery in conflict settings: strategy, capacity and financing. The study formed the basis for several UN processes and debates aimed at clarifying early recovery work in conflict situations.

The Copenhagen Forum in October 2008 led to clarifying the conceptual confusion on early recovery. The forum put natural disasters back into the early recovery agenda. There was general agreement on the need to consider obstacles for financing early recovery. The OECD DAC created a new network on conflict and fragility at the end of 2008. Within this network, a new task team on transition financing is looking specifically at this issue. Finally, there is a process to map donors' policies and procedures to find ways to make humanitarian and development financing more flexible.

Linking early recovery and DDR activities is often difficult. A good entry point may be during reintegration into communities, since early recovery efforts also focus on building capacity at the community level.

Lars Waldorf, Director of Centre for International Human Rights, and Lecturer at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, made a presentation on how DDR and transitional justice can be linked.

The concept of transitional justice is recent, dating back to the early 90s. Transitional justice is how countries deal with human rights abuses as they transition from conflict to post conflict, or from authoritarianism to democracy. The process involves difficult choices between vengeance and forgiveness, accountability and reconciliation, remembrance and forgetting. Transitional justice relies on three mechanisms: internationalized criminal courts, truth and reconciliation commissions, and reparations for victims. It is largely a victim centered process.

Traditionally, DDR programs have focused on former combatants without paying attention to the needs of civilian victims of conflict. The question thus is: should DDR program take victims interests into account? Most DDR practitioners say no, while human rights activists answer affirmatively. The former argue that DDR cannot be effective if it takes on additional duties, and that it is better to isolate it. The latter argue that DDR can be undermined if victims' interests are ignored or neglected. Some middle ground between the two positions may be possible.

There is an evolution in the common thinking. The trend shows that DDR is paying more attention to victims and transitional justice. A report from the UN Secretary General in 2006 made recommendations in that direction. It is obvious that reconstruction requires both peace and justice; however the sequencing remains sometimes problematic. Finally, it is legitimate to want to protect DDR from overly ambitious expectations if it is to tackle also victims' interests.

There is a tendency to think that prosecution and DDR are mutually exclusive. But Rwanda offers a fascinating example of where an open ended threat of prosecution did not seem to defer DDR. In Rwanda, more than 12,000 community courts tried 500,000 cases. But *gacaca* has not led to trial convictions or imprisonment, because receiving communities were able to differentiate between legitimate and illegitimate acts of war. Some argue that prosecution could actually benefit DDR by removing spoilers from the DDR process. But a counterargument can also be made.

Another potential positive impact of prosecution is that it individualizes guilt to specific perpetrators, which may in turn reduce stigmatization of ex-combatants as a group. It serves to reassure victims and communities that the worst perpetrators are not benefitting from DDR.

The second transitional justice mechanism, truth telling, may be seen by ex-combatants as a prelude to prosecution or as a way to apologize and be reintegrated. There is evidence for both arguments. DDR programs could do more to share information with truth commissions, to help document conflict and look at the more systemic drivers of conflict.

Reparations are the only transitional measure that directly benefits victims. It could contribute to DDR reintegration efforts by reducing resentment and envy. Both the IDDRS and SIDDR refer to payments to ex-combatants as investments in security rather than special treatment.

In conclusion, the linkages between DDR and transitional justice are in infancy. More empirical evidence from micro and macro research is needed. In moving forward, policy makers should think about implications for transitional justice when designing and implementing DDR and vice versa. They should think about linking DDR and transitional justice, for example by offering reduced punishments conditional on demobilization.

Raja Jandhyala was conflict adviser in the Prime Minister office in Uganda from 2005 to 2007. She presented the process that led to the peace, recovery and development plan for Northern Uganda.

Before starting the recovery process for Northern Uganda, the country had spent 25 years in state building. It had made significant strides with very little external involvement in the political process. It is important to note that in Uganda, this process did not start from the idea of a peace agreement.

A national team was established to facilitate the involvement of the various stakeholders. The location of the process as well as its timing and sequencing were well studied. The recovery process was nationally owned and developed. The country carried out its own assessments and costing exercises without having to rely on international consultants.

The government overall strategy included five objectives: (a) to reduce the country's dependence on foreign aid to under 10% of the budget; (b) to become a middle income country; (c) to explore natural resources; (d) to alleviate poverty; and (e) to become a leader on the continent and in the East African community.

The recovery process for Northern Uganda had to be placed within this strategy. The government had to decide whether to extend the definition of Northern Uganda to include three other conflicts: the one with the LRA, the cattle disputes in pastoral areas, and the cross border issues with Kenya. In the end, the government could not limit the scope of the process to Northern Uganda.

The time was right to address the issue of Northern Uganda for various reasons. First, in 2005, an agreement between North and South Sudan was signed, making it an official counterpart for Uganda; second, the peace process in Congo was being revitalized; third, military operations could no longer be sustained; and fourth, the population was losing confidence in its government.

The strategy included a military operation, coupled with a stabilization plan to improve the lives of populations in the North. Peace talks came after the stabilization plan had started.

The stabilization plan had four elements: extension of state authority and administration, rebuilding and empowering communities, revitalization of communities, and peace and reconciliation. When the UN approached the government about an early recovery support, the government presented its stabilization plan and asked where the UN could contribute.

DDR was not a requisite for extension of state authority. It was included as part of the peace and reconciliation element because Uganda had the legal framework to conduct DDR.

The government faced difficulties in implementation, timing and sequencing of its plan. DDR was a critical element of the process, but it did not slow down the political process because the government could rely on a well established national strategy.

Discussion

- DDR always needs to be defined so that the objectives that one wants to achieve are clear.
- DDR might not always be the solution, and in some contexts may not even be appropriate.
- A DDR process needs harmonization as it is part of the early recovery process, the political process and all other ongoing processes. DDR should be a mainstreaming mechanism.
- Conflict prevention should be an essential part of the early recovery process.
- Lessons from the MDRP partnership will hopefully be gathered during the evaluation process as they will be important to any future DDR programming.
- In DRC, the decision was to do “peace first and justice later” but it is important to find ways to incorporate justice aspects into the DDR process.
- Clarification on the screening process of ex-combatants in DRC was given: every ex-combatant that is part of repatriation is screened. If warranted, a more in depth screening can be done. As a result some ex-combatants are rejected from the repatriation process and some are sent to justice. Moreover, the repatriation process is voluntary but does not guarantee that ex-combatants won’t have to face justice, even if after several years.
- Early recovery interventions are important. Their humanitarian aspects need to link closely with development needs.
- Some argued that re-building society should come first, then justice.
- In RoC, the peace process succeeded by having all the actors around the same table to establish an amnesty law. This has allowed the disarmament in the pool region to finally move forward.
- DDR programs may suffer from unrealistic expectations, as they usually start without the existence of a clear SSR framework. However, it may not be possible to wait to have all the puzzle pieces in place prior to doing DDR.
- In conclusion, the most important thing is to harmonize efforts and interventions in a more unified support.

Session III

Approaches to Reintegration: the Ongoing Debate

See Annexes 3, 4 and 5 for speakers' presentations.

Anthony Gambino, former Director of the USAID office in DRC, chaired the session.

Macartan Humphreys, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Columbia University, presented the challenges of evaluating DDR with case studies from Sierra Leone and Liberia. Humphreys identified the following challenges of evaluating DDR: (1) identifying measurable objectives, (2) identifying sources of variation, (3) selection biases, (4) spillover biases, (5) power relations, and (6) measures subject to biases and logistical challenges. To illustrate some of the challenges, Humphreys presented the methodology and results of surveying ex-combatants in Sierra Leone (2003) and Liberia (2006) to evaluate the effectiveness of individual and community-based DDR programs.

Multiple approaches were designed to overcome the above-mentioned challenges, and a field experiment approach that focused on behavioral measures produced the most comprehensive results. The results showed strong evidence that community level interventions generate social cohesion and have specific gains for both victims and for ex-combatants, who are more willing to make sacrifices on behalf of their communities.

Looking forward, Humphreys noted that many standard approaches are not well suited to determine whether a program had positive effects or not. There are approaches that work and there are scholars who are interested (and who work pro bono). However, these require thinking early about goals and measures, identifying an ethically and politically acceptable source of variation, and being willing to find negative results.

Aki Stavrou, Partner, Nordic Consulting Group, presented an argument for targeted reintegration assistance for ex-combatants. Targeted reintegration programs should ideally influence and contribute to a secure environment that can provide minimum basic conditions to enable long-term development without the immediate threat of violent conflicts. The reasons for maintaining a targeted program include: (a) the risk to peace and stability if combatants are not provided assistance as promised in political settlements, (b) the need to replace combatants' war-time sustaining strategies with more peaceful alternatives, and (c) limit to maximising impact of finite financial resources.

The impact of targeted assistance goes beyond ex-combatants and their families. Furthermore the reality is to create mechanisms for support to communities receiving ex-combatants based on principles of long-term developmental goals. These mechanisms need to run in parallel with targeted assistance to ex-combatants and people associated with the fighting forces. This set up would allow buying time for the peace process before long-term objectives can be fully operationalized and achieved.

Ted Morse, consultant, presented key questions to foster the debate on targeted versus community-based reintegration programs.

(1) What is the key variable in making the decision of supporting individual or community-based reintegration? Is it equity between perpetrators and victims of violence?

(2) What planning conditions should one take into account in choosing individual versus community-based reintegration? Three dimensions should be assessed:

- a) psychosocial needs: reconciliation processes at the community level can foster diminished discrimination and increased acceptance of ex-combatants if there is counselling by peer groups for example;
- b) the economic enabling environment: reintegration support should be relative to the aspiration and skills of the individuals, however individual approaches can be very complex; and
- c) local administrative absorption capacity, including an assessment of local government capacity to integrate victims and perpetrators, the availability and application of the rule of law, academic and vocational training institutions, well managed community development programs, and the involvement of private enterprise.

(3) What are the financial implications of selecting individual versus community-based reintegration?

Discussion

- Participants discussed the approaches of the UNDP and MDRP in supporting individual and/or community reintegration, agreeing that parallel activities (at the individual and community levels) are necessary to foster long term peace and security.
- There was also agreement among participants that there needs to be more rigorous evaluations of these two types of reintegration assistance, as well as additional research on the baseline assumptions of such programs to include the expectations of ex-combatants.
- A reframing of the debate to reflect operational realities may be necessary.
- Some participants questioned the debate itself. They wondered whether this should be an either/or question, and which issues lay at the heart of the debate: ideology, resources or institutions.

Session IV

Designing regional modalities to address fragile states and regional conflicts. Experiences and challenges

See Annexes 6 and 7 for speakers' presentations.

Maria Correia, Program Manager, Multi-country Demobilization and Reintegration Program, chaired the session.

Victoria Elliot, former manager of the World Bank Corporate Global Methods Unit of the Independent Evaluation Group, noted firstly that regional programs can deliver strong results, particularly in building knowledge and strengthening infrastructure. However, they work less well in fostering policy reform and often fall short in good practice for donor coordination.

Successful regional programs were generally those in which the World Bank operated at high level, all participating countries were committed, and mechanisms were in place to manage donor tensions. The program objective also should match national and regional capacities. For this reason, it is important to allow a program to evolve at its own pace, if necessary by first implementing pilots in a few locations where capacity is higher.

A successful regional program also requires a clear division of activities between regional and national levels. Governance arrangements require country voice and accountability. As such, a regional secretariat must balance its efforts so as not to obstruct national ownership while still promoting knowledge sharing and other regional activities. There is no single best model, she concluded, but sufficient planning is needed to sustain financing of regional efforts.

Laura Bocalandro, Coordinator of Regional and Public Goods in the Integration and Trade Sector at the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), told the audience that regional efforts can spread certain benefits through cooperation mechanisms, and increase trust through the horizontal nature of their structures and by fostering common ownership of a given issue.

The greatest challenges facing regional interventions are lack of ownership, weakness or instability, high staff turnover with attendant loss of continuity, and underfunding, particularly if there are too many non-contributing members. Lastly, many regional initiatives are conceived through legislation or other non-technical processes, which can result in structures and terms of reference that initially may be difficult to “operationalize.”

Despite these challenges, regional interventions can be justified when there are proper incentives for cooperation, and countries truly wish to collaborate and have the capacity to do so. There must also be sufficient substance behind the form of a partnership. Sustainability of regional efforts is grounded partly in national ownership. In the case of efforts associated with the IADB, ownership is present because states or entities must conceive an idea and approach the IADB together, and subsequently develop and implement

a regional plan as a group. Sustainability is also derived from the mix of flexible formal and informal institutionalism that roots implementation in individual participating countries. Regional efforts do not necessarily result in permanent structures – they may be institutions, affiliations or networks, physical or virtual, as is determined appropriate.

Examples of issues that might benefit from a regional approach would be monitoring alert systems to provide early warning in case of regional threats or crises, such as tsunamis, or establishing a common standard of law enforcement to reduce the permeability of shared national borders. Three cases were given to illustrate the possibilities for success of regional efforts: MERCOSUR, the Central American Food Fortification System, and the Latin-American Network of Educational Portals.

Lena Sundh, Ambassador and Advisor on Conflict Prevention and Management for Sweden’s Department of Global Security, presented her analysis of the advantages and pitfalls of using regional modalities to address fragile states and regional conflicts. In particular, she described from the donor perspective, the considerations in using DDR as a means to support fragile peace. She emphasized that before deciding to support DDR, donors must above all understand the context. Careful analysis and awareness of the situation in question and associated difficulties provide a fundamental basis for appropriate interventions. National ownership may be weak, the political security environment unstable, humanitarian problems may persist, there may be lack of trust or commitment among formerly warring parties, and the regional environment itself may not be conducive to national stability and recovery. National ownership itself can also exist at many levels, and be defined in many ways, she noted. The need for speed of implementation must furthermore be balanced with the potential or existing problems identified.

In her view, and from a brief history of DDR initiatives, it appears that the MDRP regional approach had some merits, allowing donors to harmonize to the extent possible in service of a shared goal. However, donors also struggled with this approach, and a true regional approach is more difficult to achieve than overall harmonization and general coordination.

If we consider the various initiatives to harmonize DDR-related approaches and concepts over time, DDR has shifted emphasis from the “DD,” anchored more within a military sphere, to the “R,” which is more anchored in longer term development issues, and has been found to be the greatest challenge to implement. DDR is sometimes the more ideal instrument from the donor perspective, but not necessarily the best response in context. The challenge for donors can be that some alternatives to DDR, such as security sector reform (SSR), may be better, but not eligible for development assistance funding. Nevertheless donors and stakeholders must look at the problem and determine the instrument, and not the reverse.

Discussion

- The concept of national ownership is inherent in DDR, given the implication of the state in the process.
- The state is paramount to enable regional approaches and actions, since without the assent of the former, the latter cannot exist.

- Examining the question of whether the kind of regional approach taken by MDRP offered any distinct benefit, some maintained that “regionality” maximizes security and stability, and added that regional mechanisms to discuss DDR and related issues should continue.
- Others deemed a regional approach the best way to address many issues, but acknowledged that it can have a negative impact. This is the case with Rwanda’s efforts to demobilize the FDLR, where some regional (and global) links allow armed group commanders to communicate easily at all times, but others allow for common responses to the challenges posed by these same groups.
- The kinds of institutions and frameworks appropriate for regional exchanges and approaches were discussed. There is sometimes overlapping or even contradictory sub-regional arrangements or alliances already in existence.
- Some suggested that using existing mechanisms was more effective in cost and implementation. It was noted that an evaluation of regional bodies found that building on existing institutions only increased chances for a successful regional approach if the pre-existing structure and mandate of the base institution was appropriate to the task in question.
- Citing the LRA as an example, others maintained that regional aspects of DDR may only emerge with time, and so concluded that no formal regional structure should be necessary. They suggested that it was more important that existing actors maintain the necessary flexibility and level of coordination to respond as a whole when necessary to issues affecting multiple countries or a region at once, or in series, as needed.
- Ms. Bocalandro of the IADB said that her experience had found that a “flexible ‘institutionality’” can be efficient and cheaper. Relevant bodies in this model come together differently, and often informally, depending on the issue in question, and without creating any standing structure.

CONCLUSION

Markus Kostner closed the Forum with a few remarks wrapping up the day’s sessions and addressing the MDRP on the eve of its closing.

The debate on reintegration will continue because there is a substantial amount of arguments over the equity issue – people should not be treated preferentially to others. Regardless, the various reintegration and recovery activities need to come together at the community level because that is where they are best absorbed, as long as the structures to carry them out are available. Whilst it is true that the urban dimension has been left out of reintegration, this is surprising because there was clear distinction between urban and rural reintegration in the 1990s.

Impact evaluations have not had a sufficiently prominent place in MDRP. In the future a premium should be placed on rigorous evaluations.

The issue of transitional justice remains complex. There are certain dimensions of transitional justice that a DDR program needs to recognize, though these will be country-specific. But DDR operations clearly cannot become “Christmas Trees” in which all stakeholders place their requirements.

Having a sense of the overall envelope for DDR in a region is useful. MDRP did well in that regard, as it set out a clear road map of resources available for the process in the Great Lakes.

Early recovery seems to be a positive way forward to put in place social and economic foundations for receiving ex-combatants, though this process should very much be community-driven and not agency-driven. Similarly, national ownership (to be distinguished from national implementation) needs to be politically led not by governments alone but by the wider national body of stakeholders, and not by the international community.

It takes a very long time to emerge from protracted conflict, such as in the case of Uganda which ended 23 years ago, and where not all the challenges have yet been met. Transition to peace will always take much longer than expected.

Timing of demobilization interventions should be as soon as an opportunity arises, but we should be willing to accept the risk of failure, as was the case in 1998 and 1999 in Sierra Leone.

A lot has been done on SSR over the last decade and yet there is still much more to do. Integrated approaches, in turn, should be properly analyzed with a framework that allows sufficient flexibility for country context, but also mutual accountability among partners in the international community.

Although a regional solution in post-conflict situations would be ideal, the programmatic element needs to remain country specific with an understanding of the individual contexts. Overall the MDRP program fared quite well throughout its lifetime in achieving its goals. The comment “Want to, Can do” regarding the possibility of beneficiary country working together in a regional context proved true.

In hindsight, and this is something to bear in mind for the future DDR transition program following MDRP, ministerial level committees, in addition to the technical committees that were set up in each country for DDR operations, may have helped to reach better results.

The simple but most important lesson from DDR successes and failures over the last 15 years is that DDR can and should complement peace agreements and political change but it can never substitute for either.

While three gaps were identified by the DFID study – capacity, resources, and financing – a fourth gap emerged today from the discussions, that is the **gap between rhetoric and reality**. It is time to move from talking to action.