

MDRP-Supported Activities in the Republic of Congo

March 2009

National Program: Programme National de Désarmement, Démobilisation et Réinsertion

Administrator: Haut Commissariat à la Réinsertion des Ex-Combattants

Financing: \$24.2 million (Multi-Donor TF: \$17 million, European Union TF: \$4.2 million, Counterpart Funding: \$3 million)

Status: Closed February 28, 2009

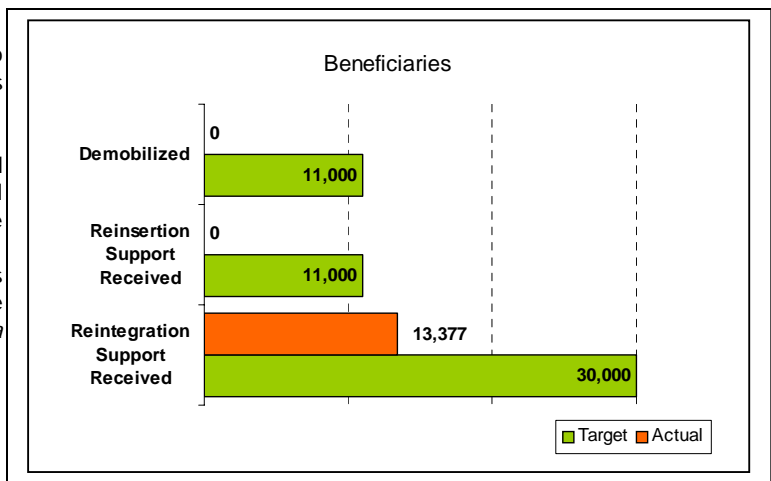
Objective:

The objective of the project was to help consolidate peace and economic stability, and support sustainable development in the Republic of Congo and in the greater Great Lakes region by:

- Contributing to the improvement of security through disarmament and demobilization of up to 11,000 combatants
- Supporting social reintegration through rehabilitation of social infrastructure, conflict management and reconciliation
- Supporting economic reintegration through income generating activities to ex-combatants.

Progress:

- Reintegration support has been provided to 18,973 self-demobilized ex-combatants (99.9% of the project target of 19,000)
- While the project's demobilization and reinsertion targets related to the Pool combatants and the *Forces Publiques* were not realized during the life of the project, disarmament of the Pool combatants was launched in February 2009 under the auspices of the *Haut Commissariat à la Réinsertion des Ex-Combattants* (HCREC).



Future Activities

- Demobilization and reintegration of the Pool combatants by the HCREC are expected to follow the conclusion of the ongoing disarmament process in the Pool and should be greatly facilitated by the purchase of demobilization kits for the Pool combatants during the life of the MDRP-supported project.
- The conclusion of the DDR process in the Pool would be expected to promote the future demobilization of 6,000 members of the *Forces Publiques*.

BACKGROUND



The Republic of Congo has weathered four successive conflicts: 1993/94, 1997, 1998/99 and 2001/2003. In 1993, disputed parliamentary elections sparked bloody inter-ethnic fighting between pro-government forces and the opposition. Relative peace returned until 1997, when former President Pascal Lissouba announced that he would run against incumbent Denis Sassou-Nguesso, touching off a struggle that escalated into a full civil war from June to October 1997. The army split along ethnic lines, with most northern officers joining Sassou-Nguesso's and most southerners backing Lissouba. The conflict was further fuelled by competition for the country's offshore oil wealth.

In October 1997 Sassou-Nguesso assumed power with Angolan support, but Lissouba formed a government-in-exile that continued to support armed opposition throughout 1998/99. By the end of 1999, the rebels had lost their key positions and most agreed to a cease-fire. When Nguesso was re-elected as President in March 2002, remnants of the civil war militias in the Pool region, known as Ninjas, increased their violent activities. A cessation-of-hostilities agreement was signed on March 17, 2003. Negotiations between the Ninjas, led by Pasteur Ntoumi, and the Government led to an agreement in October 2007. The disarmament and demobilization (DDR) process in the Pool was officially launched in June 2008, though disarmament only began in February 2009.

Population: 4.1 million
Area: 342,000 sq km (132,047 sq miles)
Life expectancy: 52.8 years
Main exports: Oil, timber, plywood, sugar, cocoa, coffee, diamonds
GNI per capita: US \$950