

# MDRP and Interaction's DRC Working Group Meet, Discuss Operational Experiences and Challenges in the DRC

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On March 30, 2006, Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) staff attended the latest meeting of InterAction's Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) Working Group to discuss the operational challenges of working in the DRC in the current political climate.



**InterAction DRC Working Group members**

Among those attending were colleagues from the International Rescue Committee, IFES, World Vision, CARE, and the Catholic Relief Services.

Much of the discussion revolved around the obstacles and constraints that MDRP and NGO InterAction Working Group members all share in the DRC.

One major issue was the significant political uncertainty revolving around upcoming presidential elections. If post-election unrest occurs, it could have a direct effect upon program operations for all development and DDR programs in-country. Even if transition is peaceful, there will be a lag as the new government gets into gear that will likely lead to delays in program implementation.

Such delays would be of particular concern to MDRP, because a slow-down in delivery of services could result in unrest among beneficiaries.

# News & Noteworthy

CONADER, the national commission that leads the DRC's demobilization and reintegration efforts, was also a topic of shared interest for MDRP and Working Group members. Participants spoke of ways in which CONADER might enhance its operating transparency and increase its social accountability through greater inclusion of civil society. MDRP expressed interest in further investigating these issues and continuing the conversation with InterAction in the future.

The group also shared information concerning CONADER's operational and management capacities. For MDRP, enhancing these capacities is a major priority; the program has provided unprecedented support in the form of on-the-ground staff who provide significant technical assistance, as well as in the carrying out of frequent joint supervision missions. The last such mission found that the commission had made significant progress in accomplishing those capacity-building goals that had been set earlier, although much remains to be done.

Both InterAction and MDRP members were pleased with the frank and productive Working Group discussions.



Linda Poteat, Senior Program Manager for Disaster Response in the Humanitarian Policy and Practice Unit at InterAction, said that it was, "very helpful to hear the World Bank discuss the constraints and obstacles to implementing demobilization and reintegration programs in the DRC."

"InterAction and its relevant working groups look forward to expanding the discussion," she added. "And to working to find ways to improve civil society participation in DDR processes in the DRC as a way to deal with some of these issues."

Maria Correia, Manager of the MDRP Secretariat also expressed her appreciation for the exchange with InterAction Working Group members. "The meeting helped me understand that we at MDRP and those of the NGO community face many of the same challenges working in the DRC," she explained. "I hope that these discussions will further contribute to positive relationships with our NGO colleagues, and allow us to find concrete solutions and creative approaches to our work in the DRC and in other MDRP countries."

*For more information on MDRP, please visit [www.mdrp.org](http://www.mdrp.org) or contact Bruno Donat, Communications Officer, MDRP Secretariat, World Bank at [info@mdrp.org](mailto:info@mdrp.org).*