

MDRP and Stakeholders Discuss Status and Future of DDR in Central Africa

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November 20-22, 2006 the World Bank office in Paris hosted the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) Advisory Committee (AC) and Trust Fund Committee (TFC) meetings, as well as consultations of the Technical Coordination Group (TCG). MDRP donors and partners received updates on program progress and discussed challenges and future strategies for demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants throughout Central Africa.



**Rory Keane
European Commission**

The gathering provided a unique opportunity for MDRP donors, partners and stakeholders to hear about program status and discuss where more work is needed. Equally important, they enabled participants to meet face to face, discuss issues and share experiences.

“These meetings strengthen the whole MDRP,” says MDRP Program Manager, Maria Correia. “They foster collaboration, learning and information exchange, ensure transparency with stakeholders, solidify professional relationships, and contribute to achieving the MDRP’s overall goals across countries and the region.”

At the Advisory Committee Meeting, participants gathered to hear updates by representatives from each of the countries supported by MDRP, namely: Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda.

The meeting also included discussions concerning partner capacity to strengthen the linkages between disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform (SSR), building on the initial findings of an MDRP pilot study recently conducted in the Central African Republic. Members of the Advisory Committee agreed that the World Bank and the MDRP partnership as a whole can and should continue to think through ways to support the SSR process while respecting existing legal and technical limitations.



**General Antoine Gambi
Central African Republic**

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“Without a long-term reform of security institutions in many MDRP countries, the gains of peace, security and development made through DDR programs will only be temporary,” says MDRP Senior Social Development Specialist, Madjior Solness

Dingamadji. “It is very important that the Bank and MDRP remain engaged in these issues.”

Partners also participated in discussions, led by Pablo de Greiff, Director of the International Center for Transitional Justice, on how transitional justice mechanisms and DDR can reinforce each other to contribute to long-term reconciliation and democratization.

Trust Fund Committee members then met to discuss current and future funding and program issues. Joining Canada, Belgium, Denmark, the European Commission, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom was MDRP’s newest donor, Ireland.

African government representatives meanwhile gathered in the Technical Coordination Group to discuss and exchange their experiences regarding gender in DDR programs, national ownership, and the DDR process itself. They also provided substantive input for further development of the Cape Town Principles on children associated with armed forces.

The three-day event resulted in numerous positive outcomes and highlighted the significant progress achieved by national programs, UN agencies, the World Bank and the other partners since the London meetings a year ago.

“With 271,092 ex-combatants demobilized to date and more ex-combatants entering reintegration activities in 2006 than all previous years combined, the MDRP has made tremendous progress overall,” says Correia. “This progress is reinforced by positive regional developments, including elections in the DRC, the cease-fire between the FNL and the Government of Burundi, and ongoing negotiations with the Lord’s Resistance Army in Uganda. MDRP will continue to work with national governments and its other partners to improve program implementation and ensure that lessons on DDR are generated and disseminated as the program comes to a close in 2009.”



Marie-Frédérique Roche
Canada

For more information on MDRP, please visit www.mdrp.org or contact Bruno Donat, Communications Officer, MDRP Secretariat, World Bank at info@mdrp.org.