

A New Beginning for Burundi's Emergency Demobilization, Reinsertion and Reintegration Project in 2006

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2006 promises to be a decisive year for the Government of Burundi's National Commission for Demobilization, Reinsertion and Reintegration (known by its French acronym, CNDRR). Personnel of the Executive Secretariat of the CNDRR, the Secretariat of the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) and the World Bank held a retreat from January 16 to 19, 2006 in Ngozi, a town in northern Burundi, to discuss the strategic priorities and the annual work plan and budget for Burundi's Demobilization, Reinsertion and Reintegration Project (PNDRR).



Martin Nduwimana, First Vice-President (right), and Clotilde Niragira, Minister of Justice (left), greet participants

After analyzing the successes and challenges in the previous year, participants were pleased with the performance of the demobilization and reinsertion components of the project to date. Key areas of focus for improvement in 2006 will be the social and economic reintegration component, medical rehabilitation and customize reintegration assistance for disabled ex-combatants, and the communications activities of the PNDRR.

Meeting participants also analyzed the recommendations and conclusions of the external evaluation on the CNDRR Executive Secretariat's institutional capacity. The Executive Secretariat will now recommend to the national commission a number of initiatives to improve its ability to implement the PNDRR, including a streamlining of the commission and of the Executive Secretariat, reinforcing internal communication and cooperation, and strengthening measures for staff training.

The World Bank and MDRP Secretariat will continue to provide supervision and technical assistance as required.

Says Ingo Wiederhofer, World Bank Task Team Leader for the PNDRR, "The coming year will be critical for the success of the PNDRR. The program has successfully demobilized a large number of ex-combatants, yet the challenge of social and economic reintegration looms large, especially in an environment characterized by limited labor market opportunities and access to land. We look forward to working closely with the Executive Secretariat of the PNDRR and MDRP partners to tackle these challenges in 2006."

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Mr. Martin Nduwimana, First Vice-President of the Republic, made an appearance at the meeting to signal the government's support for the PNDRR, which it considers to be a key pillar of its efforts to restore peace and security in Burundi.

At a subsequent brainstorming workshop in Bujumbura, the MDRP Secretariat met with major stakeholders to discuss issues and options for the provision of support for child soldier demobilization and reintegration activities in Burundi following the planned closing of the MDRP special Project to support the Demobilization, Reintegration and Recruitment

Prevention of Child Ex-Combatants (administered by UNICEF and the National Child Soldier Project Office), which is scheduled for June 30, 2006. Several next steps were agreed to, including a beneficiary assessment, the harmonization of databases among stakeholders, and the establishment of a follow-up committee.

-- Article by Marie-Claire Nzeyimana, World Bank Burundi Country Office, with thanks to Ingo Wiederhofer for his kind editing assistance

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

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