

## Republic of Congo Workshop Brings Partners of Future National D&R Program Together for the First Time

*N&N 2006, no. 9*

From February 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup>, 2006, the High Commissariat for the Reintegration of Ex-Combatants of the Republic of Congo held a workshop in preparation for the eventual launch of its *National Program for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration* (known by its French acronym, PNDDR). Attending were potential partner NGOs, PNDDR staff, and officials from the Office of the President and the Ministries of Youth, Foreign Affairs, Defense, Security, and Commerce, among others.



Aimé Emmanuel Yoka,

Chief of Staff of the President's office and President of the National DDR Commission, CONADER, opened the meeting, stating, "Thanks to this program, thousands of young people will be able to renounce the violence that undermines humanity. They can again become true human beings in a humanizing social environment."

As the first time that all DDR stakeholders had come together, the workshop served as a significant learning event. Speaking to participants, the High Commissioner for the Reintegration (*Réinsertion*) of Ex-Combatants, Michel Ngakala, called the gathering, "...an occasion to share our vision of the PNDRR, and to explain the program and operational documents in everyday language."



H.E. Michel Ngakala, High-Commissioner for the Reintegration of Ex-combatants

# News & Noteworthy



**Joseph Mbossa,  
National Coordinator of the PNDDR**

To that end, the National Coordinator of the PNDDR Management Unit, Joseph Mbossa, first gave a general overview of the future program to participants. This was followed by presentations on disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, vulnerable groups, including children, conflict prevention and resolution, administration and financial management, procurement, monitoring and evaluation, information management, and, finally, communications.

“The workshop gave personnel a good understanding of PNDDR execution procedures, and marked the start of sensitization activities that will encourage participation in DDR efforts, not only by targeted groups, but by their communities,” said Anatole Bansimba, PNDDR Coordinator for Former Child Soldiers and other Vulnerable Groups. “It also was a good opportunity to assure vulnerable groups that their needs are being taken into account.”

Additional sensitization activities concerning the PNDDR continue. On March 17<sup>th</sup>, the PNDDR spent a day focusing on the program in the Senate. Another day will be held in April for the deputies. Meanwhile, the program is also organizing awareness-raising days in the departments, to ensure that knowledge of the program is widespread at the local level.

Many participants felt that the February 8-10 workshop was highly useful. “The workshop brought those involved in the PNDDR in the Republic of Congo together for the first time,” stated Hervé Gonsolin, Principal Technical Advisor for the United Nations Development Program’s disarmament project. “This gathering should now become a regular occurrence, so that all can ensure that their activities are coordinated with those of other organizations.”



Gregory Alex, Senior Demobilization and Reintegration Specialist for MDRP, said that the World Bank was also generally pleased with the meetings. “But,” he added, “The actual program will not be able to start until the government fulfills its financial management requirements. We look forward to their doing this soon, so that we can help them begin the important work ahead.”

*-- Sincere thanks to Bienvenu Boudimbou, PNDDR Communications Assistant, for his collaboration and contribution to this article.*

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