

**Multi-country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP)**  
**Gender Desk Study**

**I. Introduction**

1. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) processes have been a major component of post-conflict transformation since the early 1990s, with the first DDR experience in Central America under the United Nations (ONUCA, 1989-1992). A challenge arising within ONUCA and subsequent DDR programs was the effective integration of gender considerations into DDR programs. For example, in El Salvador, women ex-fighters, who filled 40% of leadership and 30% of combatant roles, were particularly neglected in the DDR process. Women were not considered legitimate beneficiaries, forcing these women to “self-demobilize”.<sup>1</sup> There has been a growing body of evidence and recognition that women are actively involved in fighting during conflict. Female combatants have been active in forces in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Namibia, Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Liberia and Algeria.<sup>2</sup> In the past ten years girls have been part of fighting forces in 55 countries and involved in armed conflict in 38 of these countries, all of them internal conflicts.<sup>3</sup> While the proportion of female participation in national armies, guerrilla or armed liberation movements has not been consistent, the range tends to be from 10 percent to one third of combatants.<sup>4</sup>

2. There have been various qualitative studies and lessons learned exercises concerning women and girls associated with armed groups. Such studies include, among others, Nathalie de Watteville’s “Addressing Gender Issues in Demobilization and Reintegration Programs,” Vanessa A. Farr’s “Gendering Demilitarization as a Peacebuilding Tool” and “Gender-Aware DDR Checklist,” Susan McKay and Dyan Mazurana’s “Where are the girls? Girls in fighting forces in Northern Uganda, Sierra Leone and Mozambique,” and Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf’s “Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts’ Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women’s Role in Peacebuilding.” In addition, the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on “Women, Peace and Security,” provided new momentum on the inclusion of gender perspectives in international peace and security work. Resolution 1325 specifically addressed these issues and reaffirmed the relevance of gender issues to DDR processes. In paragraph 13, the Security Council “encourages all those involved in the planning for DDR to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependents.” Resolution 1325 recognizes that whether they are combatants, citizens, educators or agents of change, women are an asset to the peace and DDR process and must be afforded their right to fully participate. Since Resolution 1325 and as a result of lessons learned, DDR planners are increasingly making efforts to address gender-related concerns.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Ilja Luciak, *After the Revolution: Gender and Democracy in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala* (2001).

<sup>2</sup> Tsjeard Bouta, “Gender and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: Building Blocs for Dutch Policy” (Conflict Research Unit, Netherlands Institute of International Relations, March 2005), 6.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> For example, Security Council Resolution 1590 (March 24, 2005) extending the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), establishes a DDR program, calling for “particular attention to the special needs of women and child combatants”, and references Resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.

3. In the light of the above, the Multi-country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) for the greater Great Lakes region<sup>6</sup> has undertaken to support demobilization and reintegration (D&R)<sup>7</sup> activities in a gender sensitive manner.<sup>8</sup> This study takes stock of the extent to which gender considerations have thus far been integrated into the objectives, design, performance indicators and initial development of the MDRP approach, through the national D&R programs and special projects. It assesses the approaches taken by the MDRP-supported activities and points out possible critical issues/areas with regard to gender that have not yet been appropriately addressed. This desk study finds that while several positive steps have been taken, additional opportunities exist for MDRP planners and implementers to include gender considerations in the analysis, design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and modification of relevant activities.

4. Two notes on this study are worth mentioning at the outset. First, this “gender” study primarily focuses on whether MDRP-sponsored D&R programs have adequately met the needs of women. However, this in no way negates the needs of men, as both are inextricably linked, as they are part of the same families and communities. Yet, gender issues not involving women/girl ex-combatants – especially regarding reintegration, man/women, communities, violence, etc. –remains insufficiently dealt with. Second, although this paper mainly refers to women, much of the context also applies to girls.

## **II. Overall Gender Strategy**

5. Essentially, the MDRP’s overall gender strategy for D&R is to provide equitable access of benefits to both male and female ex-combatants.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore it recognizes that “special target groups” (which could include women, children, disabled, chronically ill or other vulnerable groups) require “customized support” to address their “special needs.”<sup>10</sup>

6. While in principle, the strategy is comprehensive enough to effectively mainstream gender throughout the MDRP design, challenges arise from the lack of operationalization of key concepts. At the outset, eligibility criteria for female ex-combatants or women and girls associated with armed groups are not clearly defined, nor are there details regarding proactive measures for how they will be identified. This is acknowledged by the MDRP, which recommends the development of “generic guidelines and criteria for the definition of female ex-combatants.”<sup>11</sup> Although each country program may have different contexts regarding how many women and girls associated with armed groups require D&R assistance, there exists a general lack of clarification throughout MDRP documents as to which women may or may not qualify. The unintentional result at the implementation stage may translate either into inequitable benefits to women and men, or in some women entirely missing out on the processes.

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<sup>6</sup> The MDRP is currently operating in seven countries, with four national D&R projects already supporting the actual implementation (Angola, Burundi, DRC and Rwanda). National program structures have been established in all seven active countries. Nine special projects are effective and operational in Angola, Burundi, the CAR, the DRC and Uganda.

<sup>7</sup> Disarmament and repatriation are not funded by MDRP. The focus of this study is demobilization and reintegration.

<sup>8</sup> The World Bank undertook an extensive analysis of opportunities to integrate gender considerations into the implementation of DDR processes. Elements of the recommendations from this document can be seen to have been selectively integrated into the design of the MDRP country programs. Nathalie de Watteville, “Addressing Gender Issues in Demobilization and Reintegration Programs,” Africa Region Working Paper Series (Washington, DC, The World Bank, May 2002).

<sup>9</sup> Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program, “Guidelines for National Programs”, 3.

<sup>10</sup> World Bank, “Greater Great Lakes Regional Strategy for Demobilization and Reintegration”, Country Department 9, Environmental, Rural and Social Development Department, Africa Region (March 25, 2002), 19.

<sup>11</sup> MDRP, “Targeting MDRP Assistance: Ex-Combatants and Other War-Affected Populations” Position Paper (Washington, DC, World Bank, January 2004), 6.

7. On the national program level, the Technical Annex documents or special project proposals provide the blueprints for each country's gender strategy for D&R. Each country's strategy contains a similar framework, adapting selective aspects of the MDRP Guidelines for National Programs document. In order for each country to "own" their D&R program, it was up to each country to define its own priorities, program elements and activities related to gender, such as identification of partners, roles and responsibilities, and methods of data collection. All MDRP countries with D&R programs make efforts to integrate gender considerations into aspects of the design of these processes. While Burundi and Rwanda specifically include gender in their demobilization phase,<sup>12</sup> other programs place most emphasis on gender considerations in the reintegration phase.<sup>13</sup>

8. Each MDRP national D&R program developed its gender strategy in a different manner:

In *Angola*, the demobilization phase was completely Government run. As MDRP support has been limited to reintegration, gender considerations have primarily been present in the reintegration phase.<sup>14</sup> Angola's strategy included support to no more than 20% of women associated with the fighting forces<sup>15</sup> and a willingness to support widows of ex-FMU.<sup>16</sup> In Spring 2004, the Status Report recognized that the number of women was "grossly under-recorded among the registered and eligible ex-combatants."<sup>17</sup> The program reconsidered its strategy through a workshop on the definition of vulnerable groups (including women) and by hiring gender consultants.<sup>18</sup> A UNDP special project targeted women for business management training and micro-credit. The exclusion of men produced negative results.<sup>19</sup> Subsequently, twenty-four implementing partners were contracted for projects that included women as beneficiaries of socio-economic reintegration assistance.<sup>20</sup>

*Burundi's* gender strategy concentrated on providing female ex-combatants with demobilization and reintegration assistance. The Technical Annex referenced the need to take into account women's access and security in the demobilization process.<sup>21</sup> In addition, means were proposed for information gathering and sensitization to facilitate the inclusion of women, as well as a more elaborated approach to reintegration assistance.<sup>22</sup> A special project supported through UNICEF targeting children aims to consider the particular needs of girls.<sup>23</sup> In recognition that the gender strategy required further structure, it was agreed to hire a gender consultant to assist with the operationalization of gender equity principles included in the national program document.<sup>24</sup> Such a consultant will be fielded in July 2005.

<sup>12</sup> World Bank, "Technical Annex for a Proposed Grant of SDR 22.2 Million (US\$ 33 Million Equivalent) to the Republic of Burundi for an Emergency Demobilization, Reinsertion and Reintegration Project" (February 24, 2004), 66 and World Bank, "Technical Annex for a Proposed Credit of SDR 20 Million (US\$ 25 Million Equivalent) to the Republic of Rwanda for an Emergency Demobilization and Reintegration Program" (March 25, 2002), 26.

<sup>13</sup> There are various reasons for this. In the case of Angola, the demobilization phase was completely Government run, while the MDRP support is limited to the reintegration phase.

<sup>14</sup> World Bank, "Technical Annex for a Proposed Grant of SDR 24 Million (US\$ 33 Million Equivalent) to the Republic of Angola for an Angola Emergency Demobilization and Reintegration Project" (March 7, 2003), 30.

<sup>15</sup> World Bank, "Aide Mémoire: Project Implementation Support Mission, Angola Demobilization and Reintegration Program" (MDRP, April 22- May 1, 2004), 2-3.

<sup>16</sup> World Bank, "Aide Mémoire: Angola Demobilization and Reintegration Program, Luanda" (MDRP, July 15, 2003), 2.

<sup>17</sup> World Bank, "Status Report #3, Trust Fund and Advisory Committees Meeting" (Brussels, MDRP, May 2004), 20.

<sup>18</sup> World Bank, "Aide Mémoire: Project Implementation Support mission, Angola Demobilization and Reintegration Program, Support Mission" (MDRP, 19-30 June, 2004), Annex 2.

<sup>19</sup> World Bank, "Aide Mémoire: Project Implementation Support Mission, Angola Demobilization and Reintegration Program, Support Mission" (MDRP, February 19 – March 8, 2005), 8.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>21</sup> World Bank, "Technical Annex for Burundi" (February 24, 2004), 28.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>23</sup> UNICEF, Burundi Country Office, "Child soldier demobilization, social reintegration, and recruitment prevention in Burundi," proposal to MDRP, September 2003, 33.

<sup>24</sup> World Bank, "Aide Mémoire: WB/MDRP Secretariat Technical Support Mission" (MDRP, July 28-August 23, 2004), 8.

The notion of gender is recognized as a crosscutting theme important to the national strategy for DDR.<sup>25</sup>

*DRC's* strategy document recognized at the outset that female ex-combatants may constitute a sizeable group, and provided relevant context by acknowledging gender issues related to conflict such as sexual abuse and stigma. Provisions for female ex-combatants were suggested both for the demobilization and the reintegration stages. Dependents would not be considered direct beneficiaries. All of the special projects in DRC, particularly those addressing the needs of children in D&R, aimed to include provisions for the needs of girls. In 2003, UNDP and UNIFEM held a two-day meeting on gender mainstreaming of DDR in the DRC.<sup>26</sup> In 2004, an MDRP mission recognized that the DRC's gender strategy required further clarification.<sup>27</sup> By late 2004, 120 CONADER personnel in DRC were trained in gender issues.<sup>28</sup> In 2005, CONADER also recruited a gender expert for the program.<sup>29</sup>

*Rwanda's* strategy document also focused on support for female ex-combatants for both the demobilization and reintegration phases.<sup>30</sup> Rwanda acknowledged in March 2003 the need for guidelines for priority coverage of the female ex-combatants to facilitate implementation.<sup>31</sup> A working group with relevant partners including UNICEF and Save the Children was developed to address the extra care needs of child and female ex-combatants.<sup>32</sup> In June 2004, the RDRC acknowledged that its demobilization processes were biased against female combatants, and therefore took several steps to remedy this situation.<sup>33</sup> In August 2004, CIDA and UNIFEM supported a three-day workshop for the Ndabaga Association on the needs of women ex-combatants in Rwanda.<sup>34</sup> A mid-term review of the Rwanda program in December 2004 provided extensive analysis of challenges related to gender in its program.<sup>35</sup> The assessment methodology included consultations with female ex-combatants, MONUC, and RDRC staff and development partners, and a review of screening procedures and capacities regarding impact on partners of ex-combatants.<sup>36</sup> Issues covered in this gender analysis included appropriate facilities at demobilization centers, tracking dependents of ex-combatants, provision of vocational training, and reintegration assistance. The overall finding of the study was that RDRC delivery of program benefits has not been biased against female ex-combatants. Several recommendations were made for the remainder of the project cycle to enhance female participation, such as the development of a cross-border tracking mechanism for female ex-combatants, to fast track

<sup>25</sup> Republique du Burundi, "Rapport synthétique : CNDRR, Commission Nationale chargée de la Démobilisation, de la Réinsertion et de la Réintégration des ex-combattants" (Secrétariat Exécutif, Bujumbura- Burundi, 8 décembre 2004), 26.

<sup>26</sup> Participants included representatives of the Ministries in charge of DDR in the DRC, a Minister in the government of the Central African Republic, women's associations, MONUC and other UN agencies, human rights organisations, and selected donors. "Mainstreaming Gender in the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Combatants and those Associated with Armed Groups, A Joint Strategy Developed By UNDP/UNIFEM for the Democratic Republic Of Congo" (Kinshasa, November 2003).

<sup>27</sup> World Bank, "Aide Mémoire: Joint Supervision Mission Report" (MDRP, October 10-28, 2004), 50.

<sup>28</sup> World Bank, "Progress Report and Work Plan" (MDRP, October - December 2004), 3.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> World Bank, "Technical Annex for Rwanda" (March 25, 2002), 23.

<sup>31</sup> World Bank, "Aide Mémoire: Rwanda Emergency Demobilization and Reintegration Project Supervision Mission" (MDRP, November 2002), 3.

<sup>32</sup> World Bank, "Aide Mémoire: Rwanda Emergency Demobilization and Reintegration Project Supervision Mission" (MDRP, June/ July 2004), 6-7.

<sup>33</sup> World Bank, "Aide Mémoire: Rwanda Emergency Demobilization and Reintegration Project Implementation Support Mission" (MDRP, June 19, 2004), 4.

<sup>34</sup> Vanessa Farr, "Ndabaga Association and the Needs of Women Ex-Combatants in Rwanda" A Report for UNIFEM Rwanda (Kigali, 28 August 2004).

<sup>35</sup> World Bank, "Mid-Term Review: Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Program" (MDRP, December 2004), 14-25.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 22.

Vulnerability Support Window (VSW) screening of stage II (December 2001-December 2004) female ex-combatants, and for the M&E unit to complete its gender impact study.<sup>37</sup>

The gender strategy outlined in *Uganda's* special project proposal for the Amnesty Commission provided for female and male “reporters” to receive the same assistance, and that specialized partners would be charged with assisting special needs related to gender.<sup>38</sup> Uganda predicted the highest number of female beneficiaries of all of the MDRP-sponsored country programs, estimating 20% of reporters to be women.<sup>39</sup> Uganda clearly budgeted 20% for women on top of the minimum amnesty package, to be contributed to partners with specialized skills and experience to provide extra assistance to the children and women, such as CBOs and NGOs.<sup>40</sup> In October 2004, the MDRP Joint Supervision Mission report pointed out that gender issues required further clarification in Uganda, and expressed an interest in working more closely with gender experts in order to reduce the risk of exclusion of women from programs and the negative impact of the reintegration processes on women.<sup>41</sup>

The MDRP D&R national program in the *Central African Republic (CAR)* is currently in the form of a special project, implemented by UNDP. The proposed plan to reform the defense and security forces (DSF) includes the identification of special categories of personnel, including female soldiers.<sup>42</sup> There is little elaborated strategy regarding female ex-combatants, due to the view that “women combatants seem...not an issue in CAR.”<sup>43</sup> The UNDP proposal for ex-combatant reinsertion states that the spouses of ex-combatants will have a “crucial role” to play in this reintegration process.<sup>44</sup> At the national level, it is expressed that the national program could include women’s organizations.<sup>45</sup> In addition, regional Commissions will be inter-sectoral, incorporating women’s groups.<sup>46</sup> The UNDP strategy document elaborated on the context in CAR, that women and family members of ex-combatants may be the first victims of security incidents in their homes, and that their involvement in community life will be an important contribution to the implementation and to improve security.<sup>47</sup>

*The Republic of the Congo (ROC)* D&R program strategy document recognized that “appropriate mechanisms should be in place to provide assistance to any female ex-combatants and eligible widows.”<sup>48</sup> It was recognized that very little is known about girls with the fighting forces, with an estimation at about 5%, but that experience shows that this percentage is likely to be higher.<sup>49</sup> ROC provided some context of gender dynamics by acknowledging an increase in sexual violence among ex-combatants.<sup>50</sup> The strategy for ROC includes, in parallel with the normal reintegration support, that female combatants will be offered, psycho-social counseling and support, life skills, independent living skills, employment orientation and guidance; and based on the individual situation of the females, there

<sup>37</sup> World Bank, “Aide Mémoire: Rwanda Emergency Demobilization and Reintegration Project, World Bank and MDRP Secretariat Implementation Support Mission” (MDRP, May 8, 2005), 10.

<sup>38</sup> Amnesty Commission, “Special Project for Repatriation Rehabilitation, Resettlement and Reintegration of Reporters in Uganda, Project Proposal” (Revised April 2004), 28.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> World Bank, “Aide Mémoire: MDRP Technical Mission to Uganda” (MDRP, December 3-17, 2004), 6.

<sup>42</sup> UNDP, Central African Republic, “Special Project: Ex-Combatant Reintegration and Community Support Project” (February 2005), 9.

<sup>43</sup> World Bank, “Joint Supervision Mission Report” (MDRP, September 27- October 15, 2003), 48.

<sup>44</sup> UNDP, Central African Republic, “Special Project: Projet de réinsertion des ex-combattants et d’appui aux communautés (PRAC), période de mise en oeuvre: mars 2004 – décembre 2006” (February 5, 2005), 17.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>48</sup> World Bank, “Aide Mémoire: République du Congo, Mission MDRP” (MDPR, 12 au 23 Juillet 2004), 10.

<sup>49</sup> World Bank, “Proposal to the MDRP Trust Fund Committee for a Grant of US\$ 25 Million from the Multi-Donor Trust Fund to The Republic Of Congo for an Emergency Reintegration Program” (February 2005), 23.

<sup>50</sup> World Bank, “Aide Mémoire: République du Congo, Mission MDRP” (MDPR, 12 au 23 Juillet 2004), 6.

would be provision of life skills in child care and reproductive health.<sup>51</sup> A study is planned to identify critical needs related to gender and propose specific actions to ensure that both women and men play a role in the socio-economic reintegration of ex-combatants.<sup>52</sup>

9. In some cases community-based strategies are offered to mitigate the risk of excluding women from D&R programs. Such strategies would include community development mechanisms to appraise and channel assistance to ex-combatants as well as support to community – or area-based programs – and other broad development schemes – in areas where a large number of ex-combatants settle, and include conditions on the participation of a large proportion of ex-combatants in the implementation of such assistance.<sup>53</sup> Such an approach is crucial for reconciliation purposes, and can serve as an important complementary component to programs designed to address particular needs of female ex-combatants, supporters, spouses of combatants, or women in communities of return, when such specialized programs are deemed appropriate.

10. Due to lack of clarity or specificity, each country developed its approach to gender issues once the programs were already in motion, with the challenges subsequently becoming evident. As a result, most of the programs adapted by undertaking studies, attending workshops, or hiring gender specialists. The gender strategies of all the countries have tended to be *ad hoc*, growing out of a reactive rather than a proactive stance. As further sections elaborate, a more developed gender component at the outset could have pre-empted some of these challenges.

### III. Criteria: Identification of Target Beneficiaries of D&R

11. Identifying and defining the criteria for what constitutes a person to qualify for “combatant” status is key to ensuring that appropriate target groups will benefit from D&R process. Criteria are usually designed to include such categories as government forces, opposition forces, civil defense forces, irregular armed groups, and children associated with the fighting forces as defined by the Cape Town principles, depending on the context.

12. The MDRP has recognized a special target group, female ex-combatants, based on lessons learned indicating the likelihood that “significant numbers of women are part of, in particular, irregular fighting forces.”<sup>54</sup> All of the MDRP country programs identified female ex-combatants as “special target groups” for assistance. Two challenges in this regard have been recognized by the MDRP:

- (i) The definition of female ex-combatants does not address women supporters and other women associated with armed forces and groups, who play a variety of roles to sustain the force or group, but who may be deemed non-combatants; and
- (ii) Women are being under-reported by commanders at the “front-end of the process”<sup>55</sup> (the disarmament and combatant status verification stage).

13. There is no universal definition of the term “female ex-combatant” among the countries in the MDRP context.<sup>56</sup> The MDRP position paper on “targeting” explores the challenges related to the difficulties to establish clear criteria for women associated with fighting forces, and comes to a general position. According to MDRP, female ex-combatants should be guaranteed equal access to reinsertion

<sup>51</sup> World Bank, “Proposal for The Republic of Congo for an Emergency Reintegration Program” (February 2005), 23.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>53</sup> World Bank, “Technical Annex for Burundi” (February 24, 2004), 27.

<sup>54</sup> MDRP, “Targeting MDRP Assistance” Position Paper (January 2004), 3.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

and reintegration benefits, as well as be provided with gender-responsive arrangements at demobilization facilities.<sup>57</sup> MDRP's position is to assist "families" or dependents (spouses and children), of ex-combatants directly through demobilization, resettlement and reinsertion elements of a program, and indirectly through the reintegration support provided to the ex-combatants. Other categories of women and girls, including abducted women, unaccompanied children, war widows, women-headed households would receive assistance more generally through "community development programs," or through complementary programs by outside specialized agencies, so as not to "dilute the main purpose of the program."<sup>58</sup>

14. The term "combatant" is defined differently per country to allow flexibility with respect to local contexts. A universal definition for what constitutes a female ex-combatant may therefore not be helpful or appropriate. However, generic guidelines could be developed, rather than an "operational definition" per se, to facilitate the inclusion of appropriate women and girls on a case-by-case consideration. There are currently no mechanisms in place to convince or pressure commanders to reveal the presence of women combatants or associates and therefore no mechanism in place to facilitate women's safe removal from armed groups or forces and entry into reintegration processes. While it may be difficult to implement an operational mechanism in this regard, greater levels of awareness-raising of commanders regarding the qualifying status of females could be undertaken.

15. Female ex-combatants tend to be the main category of women receiving extra assistance in D&R strategies as part of a "special target group". As it is difficult for D&R programs to address all of the special needs of women and girls associated with armed groups, the engagement of complementary support programs by specialized agencies for abducted women, widows, and other vulnerable female groups could also serve as a means through which to address these needs. Examples of complementary support programs in the DRC encouraged access for women to improve their economic situations. A joint Volunteer Association for International Service and Doctors Without Borders project distributed seeds and implements for market gardening to women, and established eight one-hectare community plots for cultivation by widows and 'vulnerable' women with malnourished children.<sup>59</sup> In addition, the Red Cross trained 'vulnerable' women in Bunia to become hairdressers.<sup>60</sup> However, such programs could be "complementary" in a way that will not relieve the national D&R programs from being required to offer equal access to the full package of assistance to any women who joined armed groups in the conflict, as well as those in non-combat support roles.

16. A critical target group in D&R processes in the region is girls associated with armed forces/groups. There has been a notable difference in approach to how girls are included in each country's D&R strategy. Uganda's strategy document explicitly states that child mothers will require specific attention in their program,<sup>61</sup> and the DRC's special projects addressing the needs of D&R for children all include various specific strategies targeting girls.<sup>62</sup> While Angola and Burundi both reference the Cape Town Principles<sup>63</sup> in their D&R focus on children, girls in particular are not mentioned within the

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>59</sup> "DRC: Special Report On OCHA's Emergency Field Unit", (Kinshasa: IRIN News, 30 April 2004).

<sup>60</sup> Malu Mande, Roger and Tshibangu, Mamy H. "Bunia: un centre de formation en coupe et couture pour les femmes vulnérables," MONUC, Bulletin 96 (Kinshasa: MONUC, 25 June 2004), p. 25.

<sup>61</sup> World Bank, "Aide Mémoire: Joint Supervision Mission Report" (MDRP, October 10-28, 2004), 79.

<sup>62</sup> UNICEF, "Project Proposal: Support for the development and implementation of the PN-DDR of children involved with armed groups in the DRC" (November 21, 2003), 14-15.

<sup>63</sup> The Cape Town Principles and Best Practices on the Recruitment of Children into the Armed Forces and on Demobilization and Social Reintegration of Child Soldiers in Africa. The definition includes girls recruited for sexual purposes and for forced marriage. It does not, therefore, only refer to a child who is carrying or has carried arms.

context of their national programs. In Burundi, the child component has been sub-contracted to UNICEF, which does apply the Cape Town principles. Although the Rwanda program also adopted the Cape Town principles, the front-end process for armed groups (and their girls) is mostly under the authority of MONUC and UNHCR in the DRC.<sup>64</sup> MDRP is encouraging MONUC and UNHCR to take these issues seriously, in light of their regional implications. Based on lessons learned from D&R in Sierra Leone, it is important to have child protection agencies at the point of demobilization and to do everything feasible to gather and provide program information to girls associated with the male combatants.<sup>65</sup>

17. The second challenge related to criteria identified by the MDRP, in addition to definition of related terminology, is the exclusion of women and girls associated with armed forces/groups from the D&R processes due to under-reporting. A challenge at the outset is that the front-end of the process is often controlled by military commanders and UN peacekeeping operations, rather than by the MDRP-financed national programs. National programs generally have limited ability to influence the peacekeeping operation or military leaderships of the groups in question. Therefore, ongoing discussion between the MDRP Secretariat, World Bank, UN authorities and national governments and other national stakeholders is required to define and ensure access of women ex-combatants to D&R benefits. Even more problematic is the situation of armed groups involved in active combat and/or violent acts or insurgency as they cannot be approached. Indirect sensitization resulting in high-risk individual desertion is the effect observed. Those who report are often under-aged, but few are girls.

18. Angola, Burundi, DRC and Rwanda's strategy documents all state at the outset that female ex-combatants do not constitute a sizeable group. There were various factors for this. In Rwanda, there were not many women in the RDF or the FAR. In Burundi, it was known that the largest armed groups operated in male only groups, while their families remained as refugees in camps in Tanzania, with the women being classified as refugees, as per their legal status. Angola's strategy document cited that women represented less than 1% of all demobilized ex-combatants, as demobilization was already underway under the control of the Government of Angola at the time that the externally supported Program was elaborated. Outside actors, such as MDRP, have had little influence on the demobilization process. In the case of Uganda, the special project addresses "reporters" which is a broader concept than ex-combatants, and therefore it is the only country that predicts a sizeable number of female program beneficiaries (20%). While it is significant that other countries recognized the presence of potential female beneficiaries, perhaps the assumption that the number would be minimal contributed to the lack of priority given to clarifying which women or girls would be identified and included and how this process would take place. Angola and Rwanda recognized once their programs were underway that many eligible women from armed groups for D&R assistance were not being identified or encouraged to present themselves.<sup>66</sup>

19. Three factors may have contributed to the under-reporting phenomenon: (i) the criteria defining combatant status; (ii) the reluctance of women and girls to report themselves as combatants (see e.g. SCF study on girls in Eastern DRC) in combination with the absence of specific strategies and procedures to encourage women and girls to present themselves, or trained personnel to specifically focus on finding women and girls and aiding them; and (iii) a lack of will, or necessity, for commanders to report the presence of women and girls in their group or force. The third factor has

<sup>64</sup> World Bank, "Aide Mémoire: RDRP Mid-Term Review Mission" (December 10, 2004), 4 and World Bank, "Aide Mémoire: RDRP World Bank and MDRP Secretariat Implementation Support Mission" (May 8, 2005), 3.

<sup>65</sup> World Bank, "Sierra Leone Reintegration Study Tour Report" (MDRP, February 2004), 5.

<sup>66</sup> World Bank, "Aide Mémoire: Rwanda, Implementation Support Mission" (MDRP, June 19, 2004), 4; World Bank, "Mid-Term Review: Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Program" (MDRP, December 2004), 24.

been exacerbated when women or girls are forcibly recruited, as commanders may fear consequences for abducting them. In addition, such women may be put at risk for sexual exploitation by former soldiers from the group with which they are associated, if they must rely on men to confirm their status.<sup>67</sup>

20. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the under-reporting of women and girls associated with armed forces may be due in part to the absence of strategies to create an environment in which women will feel comfortable approaching officials for D&R assistance.<sup>68</sup> In recognition of this challenge, Burundi and Rwanda have taken mitigating steps. Burundi has a strategy specifying training and sensitization of D&R officials concerning the eligibility of female combatants.<sup>69</sup> In Rwanda, the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion is associated with the screening of all female candidates in order to help prevent gender bias. Other strategies to encourage women to report for D&R (thereby preventing self-demobilization) could include: the presence of women staff to receive and interview female ex-combatants; sensitization of all officials regarding gender-sensitive screening procedures; outreach to girls and women to increase awareness of their eligibility; the presence of specialized agencies at point of in-take; and active baseline data collection to determine how many such girls or women associated with armed forces should be gaining access to D&R.

#### IV. Special needs of Women and Children in D&R Processes

21. The MDRP Technical Annexes recognize that there is a need for equal access to benefits by male and female ex-combatants. In addition, it is recognized that women and children have additional “special needs” during D&R processes. Some examples of how to address such needs are suggested by MDRP and integrated into some of the country programs:<sup>70</sup>

- (i) ensuring that the special needs of female ex-combatants are taken into account in demobilization centers
- (ii) ensuring that all benefits for ex-combatants are equal for and equally accessible to men and women
- (iii) encouraging implementing partners to ensure that their reintegration support measures facilitate the participation of female ex-combatants
- (iv) encouraging female ex-combatants to participate in existing women’s associations and
- (v) monitoring the impact of the program on partners of ex-combatants and women in communities of return and bringing emerging problems to the attention of the respective authorities

22. While the above list addresses select special needs of women and girls, each country did not derive this list of services by undertaking an assessment of what the actual needs of this special target group might be (in addition to which civilian members of the population might be considered within this group, if deemed appropriate). A step-by-step analysis of gender considerations within the D&R process at the design stage could have produced a more detailed and clear means to address these special needs.<sup>71</sup> The absence of such an analysis (most likely due to a lack of preliminary data, resources, or time before undertaking the D&R processes) has meant that each country did not have the necessary contextual information to fully address the “special needs” of this “special target group.”

<sup>67</sup> Nathalie de Watteville, “Demobilization and Reintegration Programs: Addressing Gender Issues” Findings 227 (Washington, DC: World Bank, June 2003), 2.

<sup>68</sup> MDRP, “Targeting MDRP Assistance” Position Paper (2004), 3.

<sup>69</sup> World Bank, “Technical Annex for Burundi” (February 24, 2004), 27.

<sup>70</sup> MDRP, “Guidelines for National Programs”, 3.

<sup>71</sup> Studies undertaken by experts such as de Watteville, “Addressing Gender Issues in D&R Programs,” (2002), 26; Vanessa Farr, “The importance of a gender perspective to successful DDR processes,” Disarmament Forum 4 (Geneva: UNIDIR, 2003), 25-35 and UNIFEM, “Getting it Right, Doing it Right: Gender and DDR” (New York: UN Fund for Women, October 2004). This list is not exhaustive.

## 23. Summary of approach of MDRP to the “special needs” of women and girls in D&amp;R processes:

Special need of women & girls associated with armed forces	Strategy to address the special need	Included in country’s strategy
<b>Across the demobilization and reintegration phases</b>		
Information on special needs for whole D&R process.	Inclusion of women from ex-combatants, the local community and women’s NGOs/associations in the design and development of national programs.	Burundi, CAR, DRC, Rwanda and Uganda (include women during process, but none have permanent inclusion mechanisms)
Understanding/ political will to implement means to address these needs.	Increase gender awareness and capacity of implementing staff through gender training.	Angola, Burundi, DRC, and Rwanda.
Not be put at risk for sexual exploitation by MDRP implementing staff or by other ex-combatants.	Measures in place such as gender balance among implementing staff, codes of conduct, disciplinary measures, and sensitization surrounding the risk of this problem.	No explicit codes of conduct are articulated in the MDRP strategy documents regarding the prevention of sexual exploitation by implementing staff. Burundi and DRC reference the issue of sexual exploitation amongst ex-combatants, but do not mention mechanisms to prevent sexual exploitation.
<b>Demobilization</b>		
Awareness of combatants (male and female) that women and girls may in fact qualify for D&R assistance.	Pre-disarmament phase outreach to women and girls associated with armed forces. Informing male combatants of women’s eligibility, so that they will not be prevented from coming forward.	Burundi provided such information in pre-disarmament assembly areas.
Awareness and training on screening procedures for women and girls at earliest stages.	Provision of information and training to implementing officials concerning the eligibility of women and girls for D&R assistance.	Burundi.
Provision of social, economic and psychological support and alternatives for girls associated with fighting forces so that they will not be forced to return to their partners	Child protection agencies at the point of demobilization.	Angola, Burundi, DRC, Uganda and Rwanda.
Orientation/demobilization centers at which women and girls will feel comfortable presenting themselves.	Female staff on hand to facilitate the reporting of female ex-combatants; separate interviews for men and women; ability for women to register separately from men.	In both Burundi and Rwanda, the centers cater to the special needs of women (hygiene, security, separate sleeping and sanitation, etc.).
Encampment/ demobilization centers that are safe and secure, to prevent sexual violence, exploitation and harassment.	Provision of separate shelter for men from women.	Angola, Burundi, DRC, Rwanda and Uganda.
Separate and specific health care facilities for women and girls.	Provision of specialized and separate health facilities for women, including reproductive health, services for pregnancies, treatment for injuries resulting from sexual abuses, programs for sexual abuse trauma, treatment of STIs and drug addiction.	Burundi and Rwanda (some elements thereof). Several female ex-combatants gave birth in demobilization camps in Burundi, and received specialized on-site medical care.
Equal access to skills training/ programs offered at demobilization	Provision of child care so that women with children can participate.	No substantial skills training is provided in MDRP-supported

camps.		demobilization camps.
Creation of female-sensitive environment in post-conflict phase.	Gender training for men and boy ex-combatants regarding their attitudes towards women and girls.	None.
Awareness of pre-discharge issues related to reintegration.	Provision of pre-discharge information and gender training to both women and men, including clear information about gender equality, women's legal and land rights, prevention of sexual/domestic violence and human trafficking, and especially, the use of condoms to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDs.	Burundi (women's legal rights); none mention of sensitization related to domestic violence to male or female ex-combatants.
Safe transport to destination for reintegration; and the ability to choose one's own destination.	Provision of secure and separate transport so that abducted girls and women will not be forced to follow their captors.	In Burundi and Rwanda, ex-combatants are given allowances and make their own way. Thus female ex-combatants have some choice as to how and with whom they travel.
<b>Reintegration</b>		
Entry into the labor market and/or the establishment of self-employed livelihoods that may be biased against women.	Particular mechanisms to ensure women have access to skills/vocational training and receipt of a certificate upon completion. Scheduling of the training session sensitive to women's domestic work.	Angola (through special project), and Rwanda (to female-ex-combatants, through Vulnerability Support Window).
Supplies specifically relevant to the needs of women for reintegration.	Special needs kits (normally distributed during reintegration) designed for women including items such as sanitary napkins, cloths for diapers, supplies for birthing, etc.	In April 2004, Ms. Julia Taft of UNDP met with women's organizations in DRC to discuss necessary items for special reintegration assistance kits for women. <sup>72</sup>
Ability to cope with trauma and stress related to violence, sexual violence and reintegration.	Specialized psycho-social counseling for reintegrating women, coordinated with local women's groups that conduct traditional rituals and ceremonies.	Burundi, Republic of the Congo, and Uganda (although they do not specify through which mechanisms counseling will take place).
Prevention of isolation and facilitation of integration.	Participation in women's associations (such as female veterans associations, Combatants' wives associations).	Burundi, DRC, and Rwanda.
Gender considerations taken into account by implementing partners in reintegration support activities.	Gender training and expertise of implementing partners to ensure that their reintegration support activities facilitate the participation of female ex-combatants and supporters.	Burundi and Uganda.
Women and men in host communities understand, and are sensitive to social, economic and political challenges faced by returning women and girls.	Sensitization campaign for communities to be encouraged to hire women; on dispelling stigmas of women and girls associated with armed forces; and setting up community-level counseling activities and structures for reconciliation and dialogue.	Radio sensitization campaigns - DRC and Rwanda; Community-level sensitization and counseling - Angola, Burundi, DRC, Rwanda and Uganda.
Address the concerns of women and girls in receiving communities, to encourage their participation in reintegration activities	Gain knowledge of challenges faced by women and girls in receiving communities, through studies and dialogues to determine how to best design inclusive community strategies	Angola and Burundi.

<sup>72</sup> UNDP, "Reinsertion of Ex-combatants in DRC Begins with Distribution of Assistance Kits", (UNDP: Kinshasa, 24 April 2004).

	for reintegration.	
Self-sufficiency of widows/widowers of ex-combatants killed in action or suffering from HIV/AIDS.	Financial and material assistance, such as setting up income-generating initiatives, access to reintegration benefits of ex-combatant or financial assistance for education of ex-combatants' children.	Angola provides some assistance. Rwanda and Burundi do not target widows/widowers unless death occurs post-demobilization.

24. The above table is not complete, but it demonstrates that significant differences exist among countries in their approach to the “special needs” of women. This is despite extensive documentation from lessons learned from DDR processes regarding the “special needs” of women and girls, from which the elements of the above table are drawn.<sup>73</sup> The consultation of lessons learned, along with an early needs assessment could assist in providing general guidelines for operational provisions for national D&R programs.

## V. Approaches to Gender Aspects of Reintegration

25. Examples of three approaches of MDRP to addressing gender in the reintegration stage can be identified: specific targeting of women, family or collective approach, or community-based approach.

*Targeting of women:* In Angola, UNDP’s special project for pilot business management training and micro-credit directly targets wives or widows of ex-combatants during reintegration.<sup>74</sup> Ironically, this program resulted in the women taking on full responsibility for family income generation, while the male ex-combatants disengaged from reintegration activity. This case clearly demonstrates that “gender” considerations do not only refer to addressing the “special needs” of women. Rather, gender represents the social dynamics between both men and women, and focus on one to the exclusion of the other will no doubt have negative ramifications.

*The family or collective approach:* In the DRC, UNDP’s special project – funded by MDRP and other donors – for community reconstruction, ex-combatant reintegration and small arms reduction, integrates gender as a crosscutting theme.<sup>75</sup> The project, mainly intended to benefit ex-combatants, facilitates the participation of both ex-combatants and their dependents in decisions concerning reintegration options, implementation of community activities and the use of project benefits.<sup>76</sup> This collaborative approach could be expanded to other program areas such as income-generating projects, as it has the potential to promote gender equality, both in the family as well as the wider society, which have usually shifted significantly after conflict.

*The community-based approach:* All country strategies aim to undertake community-based approaches within their reintegration programs. The community approach to social reintegration is viewed as important to preventing the perception by certain community members that the reintegration process of ex-combatants is unfair. Community approaches can also help to rehabilitate the women and girls who have experienced sexual violence and rape, and who face stigma including by their families and friends. Burundi and Uganda include counseling with sensitivity to gender, so that all members of

<sup>73</sup> See de Watteville, Farr, McKay and Mazurana, and Rehn and Johnson Sirleaf for recommendations on the “special needs” of women and girls associated with armed groups.

<sup>74</sup> World Bank, “Aide Mémoire: Project Implementation Support Mission, Angola Demobilization and Reintegration Program, Support Mission” (MDRP, February 19 – March 8, 2005), 8.

<sup>75</sup> UNDP, “Community Reconstruction, Ex-Combatant Reintegration and Small Arms Reduction in DRC” Project Paper (October 7, 2003), 1.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 11.

the community can cope with past trauma and new challenges. There is not much information in the progress reports on how host communities are coping with the reintegration of ex-combatants and their dependents. However, a community sensitization study was undertaken in Rwanda to assess community perceptions and attitudes towards ex-combatants and their general reintegration.<sup>77</sup>

26. An ongoing discussion in the Rwanda context highlights questions surrounding how the special needs of women can best be addressed in reintegration. Regarding the issue of re-targeting women who have already received reintegration assistance, the World Bank/MDRP mid-term review mission expressed that such an approach is not justified, and may be counterproductive, by provoking resentment from other civilian women. In this case, broad-based community development programs (rather than specific targeting of women) are seen to be the most appropriate way to include gender concerns in the overall objectives of social reintegration and poverty reduction.<sup>78</sup> This discussion requires further consideration regarding the ways to improve the balance the special needs of women in reintegration with community benefits.

27. Another gender aspect of reintegration important to discuss is the difficulties men face in the reintegration processes. This is discussed at length in the UNDP proposal for a national program in the Central African Republic.<sup>79</sup>

Many young ex-militia are afraid of returning to their communities of origin, and are finding it difficult to adapt to the end of hostilities since the fighting was their only lucrative activity. Otherwise, they are burdened by a feeling of guilt and lack any social capacity to quickly adapt to life in the target communities. Lots of economic difficulties await them on their return, and they have no technical skills or work experience to help them settle down economically. Once back home in their communities, they also have to face the distrust of other community members who hold them responsible for past fighting and violence against the civilian population. Against this background, rumors continue to abound on the violent behavior of ex-militia, other combatants, and current members of the security forces.

The difficulties faced by ex-combatant men have important implications for the reintegration phase. The prevention of sexual violence and rape is closely linked to a successful political transition and D&R process.<sup>80</sup> Delays in reintegration increase women's insecurity, as they are more vulnerable to sexual attacks. In addition, DDR and complementary development assistance to all women and men who joined (ir)regular armies will reduce the chance of their re-recruitment, as well as contribute to a security environment in which general law and order can be established. Without viable alternatives to make a living and establish a future, these women and men may again be drawn into such forces/groups and become an increasing threat to security.<sup>81</sup> This reinforces the need for a successful D&R process, as stability in the MDRP countries will only be possible if these ex-combatants develop the means to live autonomously, in a peaceful and sustainable manner, with their respective host communities accepting them. The absence of an effective and inclusive DDR process would further increase the chances of maintaining an environment in which human rights violations are likely to continue with impunity.

<sup>77</sup> Republic of Rwanda, "Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Programme, Quarterly Progress Report" (October – December 2004), 37.

<sup>78</sup> World Bank, "Aide Mémoire: Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Program, Mid-Term Review Mission" (MDRP, December 10, 2004), 5.

<sup>79</sup> UNDP, CAR, "Special Project: Ex-Combatant Reintegration and Community Support Project (ERCS)" (February 5, 2005), 11.

<sup>80</sup> Pratt, Marion and Leah Werchick, JD, "Sexual Terrorism: Rape as a Weapon of War in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo," Assessment Report (Kinshasa: USAID/DCHA, 18 March 2004), 7.

<sup>81</sup> Bouta, "Gender and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: Building Blocs for Dutch Policy" (March 2005), 13.

## VI. Flexibility of Support Mechanisms for Women and Girls Associated with Armed Forces

28. The flexibility of support mechanisms in the national D&R programs for women and girls associated with armed forces seems to correlate with the extent to which such adequate human and financial resources were allocated. Funding for support mechanisms for women-specific programs or gender experts differ from one country program to another. For example, Uganda explicitly allocated funding for female beneficiaries (20%).<sup>82</sup> In the cases of DRC and Rwanda, resources have flexibly been made available as programs evolved to later stages. However, it would have been viable and useful for the national programs to allocate such funding sources for gender experts at the earliest stages to inform the planning and implementation of dedicated programs serving the needs of women ex-combatants.<sup>83</sup>

29. The under-reporting of women and girls for D&R programs and the absence of information on their needs or numbers, indicate that solid baseline data was very limited from the outset. Early allocation of resources to collect accurate information assessing gender roles, relations and identities in the country, as well as properly estimating the number, age and gender of combatants, would have greatly enhanced the ability to properly meet all of the beneficiaries' needs, to the extent possible.<sup>84</sup>

30. Country programs demonstrated flexibility regarding gender concerns, in that once it became clear that existing practices were not adequate, plans were made to undertake studies to better understand the situation of women and girls associated with armed groups. Burundi plans to undertake a study on strengthening gender in DDR implementation.<sup>85</sup> MDRP in DRC planned a study on the identification and inclusion of gender issues in the PN-DDR.<sup>86</sup> In the DRC, Save the Children (UK) supports a study of the identification of strategies enabling girls associated with the fighting forces to benefit from the demobilization process.<sup>87</sup> In Rwanda, next steps for 2005 include a study on the impact of RDRP on spouses of ex-combatants.<sup>88</sup> Since the context of gender relations is specific to each community, conducting research prior to the development of a gender program is essential.

31. In addition to studies, once it was realized by D&R officials that further mechanisms would be required, several funding sources presented themselves to meet this need. DFID is financing a study to identify potential patterns of exclusion of female child soldiers during the repatriation process from the DRC.<sup>89</sup> The European Community is supporting Angola with a grant of EURO 13.5 million for reintegration support for women, children and disabled.<sup>90</sup> CIDA supported a workshop in Rwanda on female RDRP beneficiaries.<sup>91</sup> Canada also expressed interest in contributing to the development of joint regional tracking procedures for dependents, child soldiers and female ex-combatants.<sup>92</sup> Although valuable at any stage of the process, the identification and integration of such funding at the design

<sup>82</sup> Uganda allocated 20% of its budget for "female reporters" but did not specify how such funds would be used, i.e. for female-specific activities or hiring of gender experts. Amnesty Commission, "Special Project for RRR&R of Reporters in Uganda, Project Proposal to MDRP (2004), 14.

<sup>83</sup> UNIFEM, "Getting it Right, Doing it Right: Gender and DDR" (2004), 5.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> World Bank, "Aide Mémoire: République du Burundi Mission de Supervision" (MDRP, 31 janvier – 5 février 2005), 4.

<sup>86</sup> World Bank, "Technical Annex for a Proposed Grant of SDR 68.1 Million (US \$100 Million Equivalent) to the Democratic Republic of Congo for an Emergency Demobilization and Reintegration Project" (May 3, 2004), 21.

<sup>87</sup> Save the Children (UK), "Support to the demobilisation and community reintegration of child soldiers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Quarterly report" (For the period from: January - March 2004), 2.

<sup>88</sup> Republic of Rwanda, "RDRP, Quarterly Progress Report" (October – December 2004), 53.

<sup>89</sup> World Bank, "Progress Report and Work Plan" (MDRP, January - March 2004), 2.

<sup>90</sup> World Bank, "Progress Report and Work Plan" (MDRP, January - March 2005), 2.

<sup>91</sup> World Bank, "Joint Supervision Mission Report" (MDRP, September 27 – October 15, 2003), 14.

<sup>92</sup> World Bank, "Aide Mémoire: Rwanda, Implementation Support Mission" (MDRP, June 18, 2004), 8.

stage, for the purpose of hiring gender experts and to undertake qualitative and quantitative research, would facilitate better planning and ensure the sustainable success of D&R processes.

## VII. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of the MDRP-Support Activities

32. Notably, a majority of the countries' progress and status reports make an effort to report on gender issues. Preliminary data in the countries' Technical Annexes and reports on the number of combatants are usually sex-disaggregated. In addition, all country strategies disaggregate the collection of socio-economic data by gender. Another positive trend of MDRP M&E is that every country program undertakes to monitor and evaluate the impact of the program on partners of ex-combatants and women in communities of return.

33. In practice, there seems to be a lack of clarity as to how such programs, beyond simply counting the number of female ex-combatants registered, will be monitored and evaluated for female inclusivity. In particular, there is an inconsistent approach to the development of relevant indicators to be monitored. "Special target groups" are included within all of the countries' performance indicators. For example, Burundi and Rwanda's indicators measure the "number of demobilized female ex-combatants received reinsertion and reintegration benefits under the Program in the same amount and according to the same procedures as demobilized male ex-combatants."<sup>93</sup> The DRC goes further with a time-specific indicator, "active program for female ex-combatants within 6 months of the start of the demobilization process."<sup>94</sup> On the other side of the spectrum, Angola does not refer to females in the performance indicator for "special target group" at all, specifying only the M&E element for children and the disabled.<sup>95</sup> None of the countries have developed indicators regarding partners of ex-combatants or for women in communities of return, thereby making it more difficult for the country programs to uphold their intentions to monitor the impact of the program on these groups. Gender-specific indicators could be included in the respective country Program Implementation Manuals (PIMs), such as indicators to measure the performance of female-specific interventions and to assess the level of gender-based violence.

34. Data collection is another area of M&E with gender implications. Most countries express in their strategy documents that there is a lack of preliminary data on the numbers of female ex-combatants.<sup>96</sup> Due to resource and time constraints, needs assessment studies were not undertaken until each program was already well into implementation. This absence of data at the onset of national programs is often due to refusal of access to the target populations due to mistrust, presenting a difficult challenge for D&R planners to overcome. Yet, with little context regarding the situation of these groups, it follows that the mechanisms to address them would also be under-developed. As current data collection techniques are not properly monitoring all of the women or girls who could be benefiting from D&R programs, new and expanded methods are required. A promising example of an innovative way to collect data is the discussion underway among several actors in Rwanda and DRC to develop an integrated cross-border system for the registration and tracking of dependents of ex-combatants.<sup>97</sup> The inclusion of dependents and associates in this survey would greatly improve the information in the DRC and Rwanda regarding how to deal with difficult issues such as cross-border (multiple)

<sup>93</sup> World Bank, "Technical Annex for Burundi" (February 2004), 45; World Bank, "Technical Annex for Rwanda" (March 2002), 42.

<sup>94</sup> World Bank, "Technical Annex for the DRC" (2004), 36.

<sup>95</sup> World Bank, "Technical Annex to the Republic of Angola" (2003), 57.

<sup>96</sup> Angola reported that the number was unknown, and the Central African Republic had not established whether female ex-combatants exist in their country, World Bank, "Aide Mémoire: Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program Joint Supervision Mission" (September 23 – October 4, 2002), pages 29 and 54 respectively.

<sup>97</sup> World Bank, "Aide Mémoire: RDRP Implementation Support Mission" (MDRP, May 8, 2005), 4.

marriages. This mechanism could possibly enhance the capacity to safely identify, remove and return abductees to their places of origin.

35. In general, MDRP's M&E processes could mainstream gender more systematically. Examples of gender-sensitive M&E tools for the implementation of D&R programs are suggested by de Watteville.<sup>98</sup> The first tool is a LogFrame Matrix, which could introduce two elements: a tool responsive to the objectives pursued by D&R and second, to introduce a gender sensitive approach. Specific objectives should be set up for each group of beneficiaries intended to be targeted by the DRP (male ex-combatants, female ex-combatants, dependents, etc.) Indicators would measure each objective, sensitive to each target group. Disaggregated data would be collected for each group of beneficiaries, as well as the contribution of program activities and inputs for each target group.

36. The second tool, the Beneficiary Assessment, which Angola, Burundi, DRC, and Rwanda plan to undertake. Opinions of beneficiaries are collected and integrated into the next phases of a program. This approach intends to provide reliable qualitative in-depth information on the socio-cultural and economic conditions of beneficiaries. The general idea is to include beneficiaries in the project design and implementation, and potentially to increase their participation in program activities. A gender component would be introduced for each step of the beneficiary assessment: setting of objectives, selecting institution and field researchers (ensuring a fair female representation), preparing terms of reference, sampling frames (representative samples for each sub-group of female beneficiaries should be selected), preparing interview guides, and performing an institutional assessment.<sup>99</sup> Gender-sensitive M&E is key to ensure that the commitment to include gender in programs' strategies is indeed implemented and adequately followed up on the ground.<sup>100</sup>

## VIII. Involvement of Women and Gender Experts in the Design and Development of National Programs

37. Civil society plays an integral role in the development of a culture of peace.<sup>101</sup> As women are the primary educators of families and communities, the consultation with and participation of local women – and their groups and networks – is integral for the decision-making and planning of all stages of D&R. Civil society's participation would not only increase the likelihood that a variety of needs would be understood and met, but that the fullest contributions are elicited and supported.<sup>102</sup> Although it is not clear how involved local women or women's associations were in the design process, efforts have been made to include them in implementation consultations and activities. Rwanda's progress report notes the participation of the Ndabaga Women's Association of Women's Ex-Combatants in implementation of the country's program.<sup>103</sup> The Central African Republic's special project aims to actively include women's organizations as implementing partners.<sup>104</sup> In the DRC, women's associations were included as participants at UNIFEM and UNDP's gender awareness raising workshop in 2003.<sup>105</sup> Uganda seeks to promote the participation of women associations in

<sup>98</sup> de Watteville, "Addressing Gender Issues in Demobilization and Reintegration Programs,"(2002), 26.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>101</sup> Agnès Marcaillou, "Gender Perspectives on D, D and R," Presented at "Gender Perspectives on DDR," UNIFEM Seminar (New York, 9 March 2004).

<sup>102</sup> UNIFEM "Gender-aware Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR): A checklist," (New York: UNIFEM, 2003), 3.

<sup>103</sup> World Bank, "Aide Mémoire: Joint Supervision Mission Report" (MDRP, October 10-28, 2004), 7.

<sup>104</sup> UNDP, Central African Republic, "Special Project: PRAC" (February 5, 2005), 18.

<sup>105</sup> UNIFEM and UNDP, "Mainstreaming Gender in the DDR of Combatants and those Associated with Armed Groups: A Joint Strategy Developed by UNDP/UNIFEM for the DRC," (Kinshasa, November 2003).

implementation, such as Kitgum Concerned Women's Association (KICWA).<sup>106</sup> A requirement to have representation of women's associations at consultations, workshops, MDRP mission visits, and as an implementing partner could ensure that their views were taken into consideration, thereby assisting with the modification of programs towards the goal of making them more gender-responsive. Including local women's peace-building initiatives contributes to the wider strategy of involving local communities and increasing the "participatory approach" that several of the country programs aim to achieve.<sup>107</sup>

38. The inclusion of ministries and governmental agencies concerned with women's issues in institutional mechanisms charged with designing and implementing D&R further inform the gender-responsive nature of the D&R programs. For example, Angola's executing institution does not appear to include a governmental Ministry related to gender.<sup>108</sup> On the other hand, a progressive recommendation in June 2004 for Angola is the establishment of a Technical Group that would include the Ministry of Women's Affairs to develop clear guidelines to address vulnerable women associated with the fighting forces.<sup>109</sup> UNICEF's special project in Burundi includes a focal point for addressing special needs of girls in demobilization.<sup>110</sup> In Rwanda, a collaborative partnership has been developed for D&R planning and implementation between the RDRC and the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF).<sup>111</sup> In DRC, the Ministry of Women and Family is included in the inter-ministerial committee to develop the national DDR program.<sup>112</sup> The inclusion of these relevant governmental ministries within the institutions of the D&R programs may increase the likelihood that such cooperation will be institutionalized in the security sector reform stages and establishment of stable governmental structures.

39. Although gender balance and gender equality is important throughout the entire process, the presence of women in the programs does not automatically equal gender expertise. All of the country programs aim to include gender as a topic for staff training. Yet, in order for D&R personnel to understand what gender mainstreaming entails, and its specific implications for their work, an institutionalized gender advisory capacity is key. With the exception of the DRC, none of the programs plan for an "in-house" gender advisor or gender unit as a permanent component of the programs. While some programs hire a gender consultant, it is often fairly late after the programs are underway, and may not be a permanent fixture, but rather to undertake research.<sup>113</sup> As gender advisors or units within the United Nations operations (such as in MONUC or UNMIL)<sup>114</sup> have demonstrated, gender advisory capacity impact may be limited on the process itself unless appropriate political will and human and financial resources are factored into the design.<sup>115</sup> A permanent gender advisor, or more realistically, a gender team as an institution within the national D&R program, could carry out a

<sup>106</sup> World Bank, "Aide Mémoire: Joint Supervision Mission Report" (MDRP, October 10-28, 2004), 7.

<sup>107</sup> The goal for participatory monitoring and evaluation is specified in the Angola, Burundi, DRC and Rwanda Technical Annexes, and the special project proposals of CAR and Uganda.

<sup>108</sup> World Bank, "Technical Annex to the Republic of Angola" (2003), 41.

<sup>109</sup> World Bank, "Aide Mémoire: Project Implementation Support Mission, Angola Demobilization and Reintegration Program, Support Mission" (MDRP, 19-30 June, 2004), 1.

<sup>110</sup> UNICEF: Burundi Country Office, "Child soldier demobilization, social reintegration, and recruitment prevention in Burundi" Proposal (MDRP, September 2003), 33.

<sup>111</sup> World Bank, "Aide Mémoire: MDRP. Joint Supervision Mission Report" (MDRP, October 10-28, 2004), 7.

<sup>112</sup> République Démocratique du Congo (DRC), "Décret No. 3/041, portant création du comité interministériel chargé de la conception et de l'orientation en matière de désarmement, démobilisation et réintégration" (18 décembre 2003).

<sup>113</sup> In Burundi and Rwanda, each hired a consultant with gender expertise to undertake a study on gender issues. In DRC, the purpose of the gender consultant was not specified. Angola hired a consultant to provide technical expertise for programming related to gender.

<sup>114</sup> See Gender Affairs Office websites, UNAMA (Afghanistan) <http://www.unama-afg.org/about/gender/gender.html>, MONUC (DRC) <http://www.monuc.org/Gender/> and UNMIL (Liberia) <http://www.unmil.org/content.asp?cat=gender>.

<sup>115</sup> Out of a current 15 peacekeeping operations, four have Gender Units (in Kosovo, DRC, East Timor, and Liberia), and two have Gender Advisors (Afghanistan and Sierra Leone - though not mandated to work on gender issues).

number of activities, including: develop an overall plan for gender mainstreaming; serve as a focal point for field personnel seeking assistance related to gender-concerns; research and analysis; document and share best practices; further develop codes of conduct and disciplinary measures relating to sexual exploitation; and ensure adequate monitoring, evaluating and reporting.<sup>116</sup>

40. In addition, involving the gender expertise of various actors from an early stage and in a more systematic manner would assist with greater integration of women's needs and perspectives in the planning and execution of MDRP's D&R programs. For example, UNIFEM has provided assistance including the facilitation of women's inclusion in the peace talks for the DRC, trained women on DDR-related issues in the DRC, has acted as a broker between Ndabaga Women's Association and the RDRC in Rwanda, and has helped coordinate regional meetings such as the Great Lakes Conference. Support also exists in the form of the UN's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), which has designated a gender specialist to work on DDR in DRC and conducted research on the impacts of small arms on women in Burundi. Collaboration with development agencies focused on implementing gender-related and/or female specific projects, serve as another mechanism to strengthen gender-related programming, particularly for reintegration programs.

41. Workshops and dialogues are an important mechanism through which the country programs have been consulting with women's groups, relevant ministries and other relevant actors. For example, November 2003, UNIFEM and UNDP coordinated a seminar on gender considerations for DDR in the DRC.<sup>117</sup> In Angola, a workshop was held to define vulnerable groups in need of assistance, including women and girls.<sup>118</sup> In Rwanda, a CIDA-led workshop for female ex-combatants of RDF, FAR and irregular forces discussed the special challenges of reintegration for women ex-combatants.<sup>119</sup> If given adequate attention and follow up, the insights offered from such dialogues offer important opportunities to ensure that the implementation of D&R programs are more inclusive and effective.

## IX. Relation between D&R Activities and Broader National Gender Concerns

42. There is a clear relationship between D&R activities and broader gender concerns in the post-conflict environment. Recognition of the "gender-deficit" and willingness to address it is an important opportunity to replace *ad hoc* measures with regular and routine inclusion of the consideration of different needs and capacities of women and men.<sup>120</sup> All of the national programs' Technical Annexes recognize that female ex-combatants who have become accustomed to a more independent way of life in the military may struggle to adapt to the expectations of traditional communities. In recognizing this important facet of fluid and changing gender dynamics, a key objective for D&R programs should be to support women to maintain the positive gains they may have made during the social upheaval of conflict.<sup>121</sup> At a minimum, MDRP programs could support women and men to sustain the roles, positions, skills, and opportunities gained during conflict in the post-conflict phase. Promotion of the value of gender equality and of women as assets to the peace and DDR process in the post-conflict stage may increase the likelihood that this issue will be a fundamental principle included in following recovery stages, such as the economic reintegration and upcoming democratic processes.

<sup>116</sup> Report of the Secretary-General, "Gender Mainstreaming in Peacekeeping Activities" (United Nations, 13 February 2003), 14.

<sup>117</sup> Republique du Burundi, "Rapport synthétique: CNDRR" (Secrétariat Exécutif, Bujumbura- Burundi, 8 décembre 2004), 26; and "Mainstreaming Gender in the DDR of Combatants and those Associated with Armed Groups" (UNIFEM/UNDP, 2003).

<sup>118</sup> World Bank, "Aide Mémoire: Angola Demobilization and Reintegration Program" (MDRP, July 15, 2003).

<sup>119</sup> World Bank, "Aide Mémoire: Rwanda, Implementation Support Mission" (MDRP, June 19, 2004), 7.

<sup>120</sup> UNIFEM, "Getting it Right, Doing it Right: Gender and DDR" (2004), 3.

<sup>121</sup> Tsjeard Bouta, Georg Frerks, Ian Bannon, Gender, Conflict and Development (The World Bank, 2005), 142.

## X. Conclusion

43. Additional opportunities exist for MDRP planners and implementers to include gender considerations in the analysis, design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and modification of relevant national D&R activities. In particular, the following gender considerations could be further integrated into national D&R strategies:

- Development of generic MDRP guidelines to assist in the definition/criteria for a “female ex-combatant” in D&R programs;
- Intensified operational planning regarding gender-specific challenges in the beginning stages of D&R, such as how the “special needs” of women will be addressed;
- Additional efforts in the identification process to help to prevent the under-reporting of women and girls associated with armed forces;
- Enhanced linkages between MDRP-supported D&R programs and other programs/projects/measures in support of war-affected groups, to ensure that non-combat groups associated with fighting forces are afforded assistance in reintegration;
- Systematic use of gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation tools to measure performance of D&R programs; and
- Earlier and increased involvement of women’s associations and gender specialists in all stages of national D&R programs.

44. With sustained political will and collaboration within the MDRP partnership, there are several policies, mechanisms, initiatives and activities in place providing ample points of entry to increase the extent to which the MDRP-sponsored national D&R processes can integrate gender considerations.

## Annex: Key Questions for Assessments of Gender Considerations in MDRP-Supported Activities

Based on this study of MDRP's approach to gender in supported demobilization and reintegration activities, several key questions can be articulated which are important for field assessments of how gender aspects are taken into account at the national level:<sup>122</sup>

### *Overall gender strategy*

- To what extent do D&R strategy documents such as Technical Annexes and special project proposals include particular articulation of gender strategy, identifying particular needs as well as mechanisms to address them at every stage of the process?
- To what degree have a variety of social players, including women's groups, relevant governmental ministries and gender experts and expertise been utilized in the planning, assessment and conception of operation phases of the D&R processes? Will programs be implemented and monitored with gender expertise on an ongoing basis?
- Has gender awareness and capacity-building been institutionalized into standard staff training so that implementing personnel are able to conduct gender analyses, reach and communicate with target groups, identify specific needs, and find appropriate solutions?
- Are measures in place to prevent gender-based violence and sexual exploitation throughout the D&R process?
- Are sufficient proactive tools such as operational procedures, gender-aware checklists, gender-sensitive registration forms and interview/survey questions available and actively employed to address the specific gender-related needs of women and girls in D&R?
- Have extensive baseline data been collected with gender as a crosscutting theme, where possible, to ensure that appropriate beneficiaries are identified?
- Has a clear (and sufficient) budget line and amount of funding been allocated at the outset for the special needs of women in the D&R processes? If not, are complementary support mechanisms with specialized partners in place to address their needs?

### *Eligibility criteria and targeting of women and girls associated with armed groups*

- Are criteria defining ex-combatant status designed without gender discrimination (for example, no weapon hand-in requirement)?
- To what extent are the criteria for "female ex-combatant" operationally applicable, to sufficiently include different and fluid roles of women and girls associated with armed forces?
- Are "special target groups" clearly defined to correlate with those women and girls associated with combatants who require assistance in the D&R context?
- Is it clear to what extent "dependents", including partners of ex-combatants, will be primary beneficiaries of D&R assistance? If not, what complementary measures, such as with specialized agencies, are provided to ensure that their special needs are met?
- Is it clear to what extent "dependents", including partners of ex-combatants, will be primary beneficiaries of D&R assistance? If not, what measures are provided to ensure that their special needs are met through other means?

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<sup>122</sup> These questions are also reflective of existing checklists and tools, such as the UNIFEM DDR Checklist and other work on gender and DDR, including de Watteville, UNIFEM, Farr, Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts' Assessment (New York: UNIFEM, 2002)., and UN Secretary-General Reports.

- Are strategies in place, where possible – and where MDRP programs are involved in the front-end process – to raise awareness among commanders to reveal the presence of women and girls in their group or force?
- Are outreach strategies and security measures in place to encourage girls and women to identify themselves for program benefits, both at the demobilization and reintegration phases?

*Special needs of women and girls in D&R processes*

- Have general needs assessments included a particular focus on gender concerns?
- Are interviews designed to collect socio-economic data specific to women's experiences?
- When health care is provided through D&R, are specialized and separate health facilities provided for women's needs, including reproductive health, treatment for injuries resulting from sexual abuses, programs for survivors of sexual violence, treatment of STIs and HIV/AIDS and drug addiction?
- Is childcare and other family support (such as elder care) available for women attending D&R skills and vocational training programs?

*Special needs in the demobilization phase*

- Are both female and gender-trained staff present to receive ex-combatants at orientation/demobilization centers?
- Does the encampment phase include separate and secure facilities for women and men, children and adults?
- Do women and men have the option at the initial stage of encampment to register and receive identification documents separately?
- Are demobilization centers adequately equipped to provide specific services to meet female needs, including physical security?
- Are pre-discharge information sessions and packages designed to address particular needs of women?
- Are women's particular security needs recognized when planning their transport home or to their new locations?

*Special needs in the reintegration phase*

- Are reintegration assistance packages relevant to women's needs?
- Do reintegration programs include viable options for women to generate economic income, including access to education, training, tools and employment opportunities?
- Do income-generating programs encourage collaborative approaches between the ex-combatant and partners, or do programs address only male or female ex-combatants in isolation?
- To what extent are resources provided for psychosocial counseling and rape-specific health assistance?
- Are D&R programs designed to ensure that reintegration will benefit wider elements of the targeted communities than the ex-combatants alone, if this is deemed to be necessary for reconciliation purposes?
- Are community-level counseling and awareness-raising programs targeting women and men in receiving communities addressing issues related to stigmatization particular to women associated with armed forces, tolerance and reconciliation?

- Are programs available in the reintegration stage to promote awareness-raising of civic duties of men and women, such as human rights campaigns, the functioning of decision-making institutions, political empowerment, and capacity building?

*Monitoring and evaluation of MDRP-supported activities*

- Do performance indicators for each countries' M&E designs adequately measure the impact of gender-concerns? Are such indicators required components for each reporting process?
- Are indicators included to measure the level of performance of female-specific interventions?
- Are separate indicators designed to measure the impact of D&R on female ex-combatants, supporters of armed forces, partners of ex-combatants and women in receiving communities, or are all women considered within one category?
- Are extensive qualitative studies being undertaken to inform gender strategies as well as assess impacts and consequences of gender-related activities?
- If current data collection techniques are not sufficient to measure the number of both male and female ex-combatants, are innovative approaches to attaining such data being developed?