MANAGING FIGHTING FORCES

DDR in Peace Processes

Kelvin Ong

Managing Fighting Forces

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PRENEGOTIATION PHASE

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- DDR is a combatant focused program
- DDR programs need achievable parameters
- DDR programs meet only limited expectations
- DDR programs have potentially destabilizing consequences
- DDR definitions are only a guide

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- Adopt a problem-solving approach
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- Uphold international law
- Commence preliminary discussions

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QUICK REFERENCE

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- **Set out the institutional structures needed to plan and implement DDR**

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- **Include implementers in the negotiation phase**
- **Develop a mediation and facilitation strategy to support implementation**
- **Address implementation of key political provisions before starting DDR**
- **Anticipate and resolve DDR specific problems**
- **Build local capacity for mediation and conflict resolution**

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- **Build trust but understand that achieving absolute trust may not be possible**
- **Sensitize and educate parties on DDR issues**
- **Be context relevant**
- **Be flexible**
- **Make realistic assumptions**
- **Focus on implementation**
- **Ensure adequate and timely resources for all dimensions of the program**

Peacemaker's Toolkit

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Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War, mediated settlements of intrastate conflicts, codified in peace agreements, have included the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of fighting forces. In these peace processes, mediators have been confronted with intense negotiations between governments and rebel fighting forces to control, disband, or downsize their respective fighting forces; destroy collected armaments and munitions; and provide transitional support for demobilized fighters. Transitional security provisions have built confidence between former belligerents and prevented the easy resumption of armed conflict. Equally important, the DDR of fighting forces has provided a conducive environment for the implementation of vital aspects of a peace accord, such as the holding of elections; the (re)establishment of governmental authority and services; the return of displaced populations; the reconstruction of markets and infrastructure; and societal reconciliation. In turn, satisfactory resolution of key conflict issues, such as political power sharing, constitutional reform, wealth sharing, and redress for perpetrated crimes, have facilitated the willingness of former conflict parties to submit their forces to DDR programs. Thus, DDR programs have become central to the overall success of a peace process.

Yet there appears to be a knowledge deficit in terms of how to manage the political dimensions of DDR in a mediation process. For mediators, this shortage has resulted in a compromised ability to manage the misperceptions about and fears of DDR held by armed groups and their negotiating representatives. Furthermore, mediators have sometimes failed to fully assess the interests and positions of negotiating parties and accurately identify the strategies and tactics conflict parties employ to avoid disarming and demobilizing their fighting forces. An overtly programmatic approach—as opposed to a political one—by the mediator, coupled with unrealistic planning assumptions, have further compromised

the viability of DDR programs. For their part, conflict parties plagued by a lack of knowledge of this complex issue are insecure about negotiating DDR issues. Fearful of making inadvertent concessions on their military capability, negotiating parties either play it safe by refusing to negotiate the postconflict management of their fighting forces or adopt hard-line positions on DDR. Equally problematic, the lack of understanding of DDR issues has impeded the ability of negotiators to communicate the objectives of a DDR program to armed groups ("fighting forces" and "armed groups" are used synonymously in this handbook).

This handbook provides guidance on the mediation and negotiation aspects of DDR and proposes ways for mediators to establish appropriate linkages between DDR and other aspects of a peace process. Although special attention is given to the mediation phase of the peace process, the need for continued facilitation and mediation throughout the implementation phase is also emphasized. This handbook provides insights on how DDR is understood by armed groups and the strategies (or countermeasures) that they might adopt to delay, avoid, or manipulate the DDR program for political, economic, or security gains.

This handbook is intended for a wide range of mediators who play a role in addressing DDR issues in peace processes. External third-party mediators from the United Nations, member states, and regional and subregional organizations who continue to grapple with DDR issues are the primary audience. Different thematic and process experts with mediation teams who are responsible for designing the mediation process and substantive issues such as transitional political arrangements, amnesty provisions, transitional justice, and reconciliation will also benefit from reading this handbook. It is particularly important for team members, working on these different issues, to have a common understanding of DDR and the overall mediation strategy toward it. This awareness will help avoid incoherence within the mediation effort itself; such incoherence can jeopardize the overall mediation strategy on DDR and the broader peace process.

Another audience for this handbook is internal mediators (e.g., local leaders or representatives from religious groups) and mediators from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). These mediators are often the first to respond to a conflict but may mediate with less international support. For this category of mediators, it is worth pointing out that the

United Nations has established a Mediation Support Unit (and its Standby Team of Mediation Experts), which provides advisory support on DDR and other issues negotiated in a peace process.

The information provided in this handbook is pertinent to the plethora of advocacy groups working on issues such as child protection, gender concerns, and human rights. Advocacy groups, which perform critical roles alongside a mediation process, can benefit from a better understanding of the political and security perspectives of parties in a conflict. This knowledge can help advocacy entities and mediation teams better connect their respective efforts to attain a more coherent conflict management and resolution strategy. Issues that are particularly amenable to a close connection between advocacy groups and mediators are the early demobilization of child soldiers, the release of prisoners, the release of abducted and forcibly conscripted fighters, and the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence. Although these are important goals in their own right, agreement on these issues early in a mediation process has the potential to enhance confidence between negotiating parties. Where appropriate, mediators can and should use their influence to educate negotiating parties and support adherence to international law and international humanitarian law. When these issues are prematurely and/or poorly managed, the peace process can be set back.

Regardless of its precise form, a mediation process has three major phases: the preparation and prenegotiation phase, the negotiation phase, and the implementation phase. These phases are neither linear nor strictly sequential in nature, nor do they contain predetermined time frames. Mediators and conflict parties constantly adjust their approaches and strategies throughout these phases on both the procedural and the substantive dimensions of the peace process, making strict adherence to templates for DDR negotiations unwise and unrealistic.

With these caveats in mind, this handbook lays out eight steps that mediators can take as they address DDR issues. The first four steps broadly correspond to the prenegotiation phase, the next three to the negotiation phase, and the last to the implementation phase.

➤ *Step 1: Prepare to engage.* Mediators should familiarize themselves (and their teams) with a basic knowledge of DDR. Specific attention should be given to understanding the aims of DDR in a peace process, as well as

its potential and its limits in managing fighting forces and their weaponry.

➤ *Step 2: Assess the fighting forces.* Mediators should assess the nature of the conflict and conflict parties. This assessment provides important information about the strategic objective(s) of the negotiating parties, as well as the nature and composition of their fighting forces; the resulting information is vital to the formulation of an effective mediation strategy.

➤ *Step 3: Determine a mediation approach and strategy.* Mediators should organize an effective mediation strategy. Mediation and negotiation techniques that apply to DDR issues, such as timing DDR negotiations, establishing contact with credible interlocutors, and dealing with power asymmetry between negotiating parties, are covered in this step.

➤ *Step 4: Lay the groundwork for DDR negotiations.* Mediators should incorporate DDR in framework agreements signed in the prenegotiation phase. Framework agreements should avoid insisting on DDR as a precondition for substantive negotiations but should include all relevant armed actors and establish appropriate linkages to other aspects of security arrangements.

➤ *Step 5: Conduct and manage the negotiations.* Mediators should cover DDR issues throughout negotiations to manage and guide conflict parties through the mediation process and help parties overcome any reluctance to address DDR issues.

➤ *Step 6: Link DDR to other aspects of the peace process.* Mediators should establish linkages between DDR and related aspects of the peace process, understanding that DDR cannot be addressed in isolation. Mediators must carefully consider how negotiations on DDR issues relate to, and impact upon, negotiations on cease-fire arrangements, security sector reform, political arrangements, reconciliation, and reintegration issues.

➤ *Step 7: Put DDR in the peace agreement.* Mediators should clearly articulate the agreed-upon vision, approach, and desired outcome for the DDR program in the peace agreement.

➤ *Step 8: Facilitate implementation.* Mediators should develop mediation and facilitation strategies to support the implementation of the DDR program.

The Peacemaker's Toolkit

This handbook is part of the series *The Peacemaker's Toolkit,* which is being published by the United States Institute of Peace. The first in the series, *Managing a Mediation Process* by Amy L. Smith and David R. Smock, offers, as its title indicates, an overview of the mediation process, and may be read in conjunction with *Managing Public Information in a Mediation Process.*

For almost thirty years, the United States Institute of Peace has supported the work of mediators through research, training programs, workshops, and publications designed to discover and disseminate the keys to effective mediation. The Institute—mandated by the U.S. Congress to help prevent, manage, and resolve international conflict through nonviolent means— conceived *The Peacemaker's Toolkit* as a way of combining its accumulated expertise with that of other organizations active in the field of mediation. Most publications in the series are produced jointly by the Institute and a partner organization. All publications are carefully reviewed before publication by highly experienced mediators to ensure that the final product will be a useful and reliable resource for practitioners.

The Online Version

All the handbooks in *The Peacemaker's Toolkit* are available online and can be downloaded at www.usip.org. In the case of some handbooks, the online version presents not only the text of the handbook but also connects readers to a vast web of information. Links in the online version give readers immediate access to a considerable variety of publications, news reports, directories, and other sources of data regarding ongoing mediation initiatives, case studies, theoretical frameworks, and education and training. These links enable the online Toolkit to serve as a "you are here" map to the larger literature on mediation.
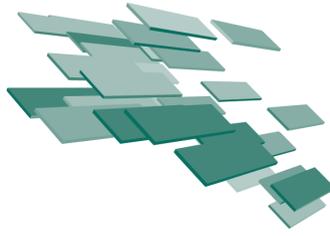
Prepare to Engage

Mediators should be familiar with the concept and objectives of DDR. The key contribution of a DDR program is its ability to open political and security space for other (unarmed) actors to participate in the postconflict political process. By doing so, a DDR program establishes an environment in which former conflict parties can make progress on more difficult political fronts, in particular power sharing and constitutional reform. Although a DDR program can make critical contributions to security and stability in postconflict situations, it focuses on achieving limited objectives and is imperfect in its implementation. Nevertheless, there is tremendous flexibility in DDR's terminology and application and, if it is managed properly, a DDR program can improve the prospects for a lasting peace. In this regard, six dimensions of DDR are particularly important for mediators to understand.

DDR Is Only One Security Instrument

DDR is only one security instrument for conflict parties to use to manage their fighting forces. Others include cease-fire arrangements, the early demobilization of child soldiers, priority release of abducted and forcibly recruited combatants, co-option of armed opposition groups, disbandment of fighting forces (sometimes without support packages), integration into existing security forces, and broader security sector reform (SSR). Depending on the conflict, some or all of these activities may be necessary, and many are undertaken within the political and security framework established at peace talks by the negotiating parties. Other related programs that address the collection of weapons at the community level and societal reconciliation may be established outside the framework of the peace agreement. The selection of activities should be informed by the objectives of the mediator and the conflict parties. For example, although cease-fire

arrangements may be a temporary measure to halt the fighting between armed groups, they are unlikely to fully demilitarize any given situation—more comprehensive and longer-term measures are required.

DDR Is a Combatant-Focused Program

DDR is largely a combatant-focused program, which is inextricably linked to issues of power and politics. DDR efforts have four major goals: (1) to improve the overall security situation (through the control and removal of weaponry) in a country; (2) to dismantle unit structures and loyalties of nonstatutory forces to prevent rapid regrouping; (3) to provide alternative livelihood opportunities through limited economic and social support; and (4) to contribute to the process of societal reconciliation. If a DDR program is attempted, mediators should strive for these goals while preserving flexibly on the terminology, precise sequencing, and nature of each of the program's constituent elements.

DDR Programs Need Achievable Parameters

Throughout the last two decades, the focus of DDR has been expanded gradually to include a wide array of unachievable objectives. In some cases, there has been a tendency to overemphasize the poverty reduction and social cohesion dimensions of a DDR program. In reality, economic reintegration programs that were designed to retrain and revitalize former fighters into productive members of society often fell short of goals in terms of ideas, funding, and options. Social reintegration programs designed to achieve forgiveness, reconciliation, and societal harmony were also easier to espouse at the peace table than to implement. In some circumstances, mediators hoped that DDR programs would guarantee community security by helping fighting forces put aside their weapons. Proponents of these schools of thought placed their faith in the full-fledged and rapid transformation of former belligerents into brethren as soon as a peace deal was struck. Many of these goals, while noble, have not been attained. Mediators are well-advised to set truly achievable and realistic objectives for a DDR program.

DDR Programs Can Meet Only Limited Expectations

DDR programs are imperfect. Disarmament programs rarely, if ever, collect all—or even the most serviceable—weapons in circulation.

Wartime identities and loyalties are almost never totally dissolved but rather are transformed into political and economic ties. Hard-core fighters tend to stay out of the early stages of DDR programs, while non-combatants are accepted into a DDR program at a high political, security, and economic cost. Moreover, a highly visible and resource-intensive DDR program has the potential to create tensions within communities, which often question the rationale of rewarding fighters for the mayhem they created during conflict times. Mediators should set out with limited expectations for a DDR program.

DDR Programs Have Potentially Destabilizing Consequences

DDR programs have some limitations that could have destabilizing consequences for a peace process. During negotiations, unrealistic promises and expectations may distract from the real issues of negotiating DDR while sowing seeds for future conflict. When DDR implementers have been unable to fulfill program promises made in poorly crafted DDR provisions of peace agreements, riots and clashes among armed groups have ensued. Mediators must take special care to avoid unrealistic timelines for DDR implementation.

DDR Definitions Are Only a Guide

In 2006, the United Nations released a comprehensive approach to DDR programs called the Integrated DDR Standards. These standards, which focus on the implementation dimensions of DDR, contain a set of definitions that can be used as a reference point (see the feature box "DDR Definitions).[1] In a mediation context, however, flexibility is required in the application of the actual term DDR and its precise definition. Dogmatic adherence to definitions or strict sequencing of DDR is unlikely to be acceptable to negotiating parties or helpful in advancing the peace process.

DDR Definitions

Disarmament is the collection, documentation, control, and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives, and light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population. Disarmament also includes the development of responsible arms management programs.

Demobilization is the formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces or other armed groups. The first stage of demobilization may extend from the processing of individual combatants in temporary centers to the massing of troops in camps designated for this purpose (cantonment sites, encampments, assembly areas, or barracks). The second stage of demobilization encompasses the support package provided to the demobilized, which is called reinsertion.

Reinsertion is the assistance offered to ex-combatants during demobilization but prior to the longer-term process of reintegration. Reinsertion is a form of transitional assistance to help cover the basic needs of ex-combatants and their families and can include transitional safety allowances, food, clothes, shelter, medical services, short-term education, training, employment, and tools. While reintegration is a long-term, continuous social and economic process of development, reinsertion is a short-term material and/or financial assistance to meet immediate needs and can last up to one year.

Reintegration is the process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income. Reintegration is essentially a social and economic process with an open time frame, primarily taking place in communities at the local level. It is part of the general development of a country and a national responsibility, and often necessitates long-term external assistance.

Bearing in mind the above six considerations, mediators should avoid concluding prematurely that a DDR program is (or is not) the most appropriate means of managing fighting forces.

Approaches to this program, its terminology, and its component strategies should be context specific and based on a solid understanding of mediators, negotiating parties, their fighting forces, and the broader international and local community. The multifaceted aspects of a DDR program may require the mediator to discuss DDR issues broadly and with nontraditional political or security actors, including members of the community to which fighters will reintegrate into. The private sector, where it exists, may play a useful support role by providing incentives for adherence to a DDR program.
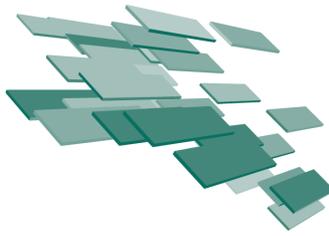
Assess the Fighting Forces

Once a mediator is fully familiarized with DDR concepts and issues, he or she needs to develop a solid understanding of the fighting forces. Mediators should carefully engage the negotiating parties on the appropriateness of DDR and/or other security issues to analyze the reactions of the negotiating parties and their fighting forces. By doing so, mediators will be in a better position to assess the best *time* and *manner* in which DDR issues should or could be raised in the peace process. This section outlines the key issues that need to be assessed, the possible ways of engaging armed groups, and the strategies for exposing fighting groups to the issue of DDR.

Understand the Strategic Objectives of the Conflict Parties

Mediators should, at the outset, identify the strategic objectives of the conflict parties. Central to this inquiry is the study of the character of the fighting forces themselves. What are the parties trying to achieve through the use of force? Have these objectives been achieved? Why have they decided to engage in negotiations now? Do they have a political platform or are they predatory in nature (i.e., are they exploiting the conflict to profit illicitly from the country's resources)? Do they need assistance to articulate the rationale for their armed struggle? The objectives of the armed groups will affect the manner in which the mediator will engage them on DDR issues.

The liberation movements in El Salvador, Namibia, Nepal, Northern Ireland, Mozambique, South Africa, South Sudan, and Zimbabwe all had clear political objectives and were well organized. These characteristics allowed mediators and their negotiating counterparts to engage the

movements in substantive discussions regarding the political future that they sought for their countries. Conversely, in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Darfur, the wide array of armed groups, most of which have no clear political objectives, has confounded contemporary mediation efforts. To make matters worse, these armed groups have the tendency to splinter into rival entities, often based on personalities rather than on clear political objectives.

Even relatively well-organized armed movements are often not monolithic. Therefore, mediators should be sensitive to the power balance *within* armed groups, specifically between the political and the military wings. Mediators should understand that some of the most difficult negotiations will be within parties themselves.

Some armed groups may have connections to terrorist groups, which complicates how mediators engage with these groups to assess their true political objectives for participating in a peace process. (Some of these groups may be on terrorist lists, prohibiting some mediators—from the listing country or organization—from making contact with the groups.) Mediators should clarify if connections to terrorist groups are purely for logistical and financial support or if armed groups actually espouse the radical objectives of terrorist groups. Are there moderate elements within these armed groups that may be engaged, or is the entire group committed to a terrorist agenda? Answers to such questions are important so that the mediator can ascertain if mediation and negotiations are indeed appropriate means of engaging these groups and addressing the conflict.

Such difficult questions are at the heart of international mediation and negotiation strategies involving the Taliban in Afghanistan, the al-Shabab and Hizbul Islam in Somalia, and the Abu Sayaf in the Philippines. In each case, mediators have been challenged in the task of ascertaining if moderate elements within these groups are viable partners in the search for peace. Moreover, the covert nature of these groups has made it difficult for mediators and negotiators to be sure that they are in contact with genuine elements of the fighting forces.

Some armed groups have been established primarily for criminal purposes. DDR programs are not the most effective means of dealing with the security challenges these groups pose.

In 2004, the United Nations Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) established a DDR program in an attempt to deal with street gangs, former soldiers of the Haitian National army, paramilitary groups, and private security entities. In absence of a peace process, credible deterrent, or other critical prerequisites, DDR implementers found themselves negotiating with individual armed gangs in an effort to persuade them to join the DDR program. The DDR program failed to achieve its objective of reducing violence in the streets of Port-au-Prince. In 2007, a new violence reduction program, coupled with tougher police action (on the part of MINUSTAH and the Haitian National Police), made better progress in dealing with the criminal gangs in Port-au-Prince.

Identify and Include Key Armed Groups

A mediator must identify and include in the peace process the key armed groups needed to implement the peace agreement. The absence of vital groups and their armed elements from the peace process could result in them becoming spoilers in that process.

In Afghanistan, while progress was made in dealing with the Afghan military forces as part of the Afghanistan New Beginning (DDR) program, the most destabilizing illegal armed groups controlled by warlords and drug lords, as well as Taliban fighters, were not included in this process, which was established in the Bonn Agreement in 2001. These illegal armed groups, estimated at 850 groups with more than 65,000 members, continued to be a destabilizing factor in the search for peace and security in Afghanistan.

In contrast, the 2003 Accra Peace Agreement provides a positive example of including all major fighting forces involved in a conflict. To comprehensively end the Liberian civil war, fighters from the government of Liberia, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) all agreed to submit their forces to the DDR program.

Analyze Characteristics of the Fighting Forces

A solid understanding of the characteristics of the fighting forces will help the mediator consider the appropriate approach to and focus of DDR negotiations, the type of DDR program that may be called for, and—

equally important—who will be eligible for inclusion in the DDR program. Some key characteristics of fighting forces include the type of fighting force in the conflict (are they regular statutory forces, irregular forces, or guerilla forces?), their numbers,[2] how they are organized, their command and communication structure, where they are deployed, and the frequency of their engagement in combat.

As part of this analysis, mediators should assess the extent to which fighting groups rely on child soldiers, adult fighters, abductees, foreign fighters, mercenaries, and the various roles women play in the fighting forces. This information can be used by mediators to design their strategy (e.g., by identifying and engaging countries supplying foreign fighters), develop confidence-building measures (e.g., through the release of abductees or a halt in forcible recruitment of child soldiers), and adopt a gender perspective so that the DDR negotiations respond to the roles (fighting or support) that women play in the conflict and support the particular needs of female ex-combatants, and support parallel demobilization processes (e.g., release of child soldiers).

In strategizing about DDR in (North-South) Sudan, the mediator conceived of three basic groups for planning purposes: the regular armed forces, including the police and other security forces; paramilitary and self-defense groups, including all groups under central or community command; and other armed groups, including unstructured or illegal groups. In addition, it was important to note that many of the fighters, especially in the South, joined the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/ Army (SPLM/A) on a seasonal basis and were in fact based within their communities. Cognizant of the numerous armed groups in the country and their close connection to either the National Congress Party (NCP) or the SPLM/A, the mediator was able to base negotiations between the two Sudanese parties on the fact that the two negotiating parties represented all armed groups under their control.

In the Sudan peace agreement, the parties who were quietly aware that there would be no major DDR of the main North and South fighting forces, before the referendum on the future of South Sudan, prioritized demobilization of children, women, aged people, and veterans as confidence-building measures. Moreover, because of the overwhelming numbers involved in the DDR program in Sudan, responsibility for the DDR program was spilt by creating a North Sudan DDR commission and

a South Sudan DDR commission. Finally, the seasonal and community-based character of fighting forces in the south led the mediator and the parties to avoid a cantonment-based approach in South Sudan. The carefully calibrated DDR agreement in the Sudan Comprehensive Peace Agreement is an example of precise management on the part of the mediator and his team. The effort resulted in an agreement on DDR issues that was in sync with the political realities of the situation between North and South Sudan.

Map the Evolution of the Fighting Forces

Mediators should be aware that conflict parties and their fighting forces often evolve over the course of a conflict. Alterations may include the establishment of new formal or informal security elements, changes in size and composition of fighting forces, changes in military strategies and tactics, and changes in support that forces command internally and externally. These considerations will affect the appropriateness of a DDR program and the need for other connected programs such as SSR.

During the decade-old conflict in Nepal with the Maoists, there was a dramatic growth in the ranks of the Nepal army from 46,000 to 96,000, which necessitated a considerable demobilization of state security forces following the signing of the peace agreement, especially because the expanded military could not be sustained by the limited national budget. Moreover, the Nepal army's close association with the monarchy and the government led to a call for the Nepal army to be democratized as part of the peace process, in addition to the reduction to its numbers.

Postconflict reductions in the size of state security forces and calls for professionalization of state security forces will ultimately have consequences on other peace implementation activities, such as reform of the management of the state budget as well as legislative and constitutional reforms that address democratic oversight and governance of state security forces.

Assess Reliance on External Support

The extent of external support for fighting forces is another key consideration for mediators because it directly affects access to and communication with these forces and their willingness to engage in a peace process and discuss disarmament issues.

The case of engaging the Rwandese Interahamwe in the eastern Congo is an example. In 1994, the members of the Interahamwe who carried out the Rwandan genocide took refuge within the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR) in the eastern Congo. Access to the FDLR and the Interahamwe was difficult to achieve and largely regulated by Congolese community-based militia groups (called Mayi-Mayi). This situation complicated the efforts of the UN Mission in the Congo (MONUC), which was responsible for negotiating the return of these foreign Rwandan fighters to Kigali. The limited access made it extremely difficult for MONUC to communicate with the fighters (estimated to number between six and fifteen thousand) and inform them of their options under the Rwandan DDR program as well as the details of the justice and reconciliation program.

External support for fighting forces may include safe havens for rest and recuperation from front-line fighting and lethal (arms) and nonlethal military (communications, transportation and fuel, funding) support. Armed groups benefiting from such support have demonstrated a reluctance to engage in negotiations; if they are in negotiations, they are less willing to make concessions.

In the Darfur conflict, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), which received critical support from Chad and a rear operating base in Chadian territory, was able to refrain from engaging the Sudan government in direct negotiations from 2007 to 2010. The 2010 Chad-Sudan rapprochement, which drastically reduced JEM's military capability and operating space, changed the equation. As a result, JEM rejoined the Darfur peace process in Doha, co-led by the United Nations and the African Union.

The assessment of the external support environment for fighting forces should be used to inform the mediator's strategy. Wherever possible, mediators should enlist international, regional, and local support for the peace process, or at the very least mitigate the spoiling effects of external support for fighting forces on the peace process. External actors may be able to exercise considerable leverage through the use of carrots and sticks that are unavailable to a mediator.

Realizing that the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) rebels were using diamond profits to finance their

weapons purchases, the UN Security Council imposed an embargo on uncertified diamond exports from Angola. In addition, a travel embargo was imposed on members of UNITA so that they were unable to gain support abroad. The Security Council lifted the sanctions when it saw that UNITA was becoming engaged with the peace process.

Understand Weapons Ownership and Other Cultural Cues

Before attempting to engage armed groups in discussions about DDR issues, mediators should understand the specifics of the conflict and the role that weapons play in the country's history and society. For example, in some societies, weapons ownership is symbolic and associated with adulthood. Fighters from societies like these are likely to resist efforts at disarmament.

The presence of a warrior culture in Afghanistan has been used to explain the wide prevalence of weapons in that society. This recognition led DDR planners to design a reintegration program that encourages insurgents to return to their communities without the need to formally disarm. The reintegration program offers incentives to individual insurgents and their communities to side with the government. Some armed groups may have precise prohibitions about giving up their weapons. In Northern Ireland, the constitution of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) specifically lists the use of violence as a means of furthering the IRA's struggle; this clause has been interpreted as prohibiting the group from accepting disarmament proposals.

In some societies, weapons are not held by individuals but are communally owned for the protection of tribes or clans. Communally owned weapons are even more important in societies where the state provides little security, a situation that is particularly relevant for nomadic and pastoralist communities in Sudan. In such situations, it may be unrealistic for mediators to seek complete disarmament of communally held weapons. Mediators need to carefully consider the use of weapons as the only criteria for entry into a DDR program.

In other cases, weapons are not individually held or owned jointly at the community level, but are centralized under the control of individual commanders.

In Afghanistan, weapons that had been delivered to the mujahideen during the jihad years were considered the property of commanders, rather than of individual fighters, and these commanders often had more weapons than they did fighters. This arrangement poses several threats for the disarmament process. Some commanders have expressed concerns about a redistribution of weapons after the official disarmament process or about the power they will retain once their units are officially disarmed.

Language also affects the conflict parties' perception of a DDR effort. Language in the draft Bonn Agreement threatened to derail negotiations; some participants took offense at the word disarmament. Mediators should understand the literal translation of the word disarmament in different languages. The Arabic translation of disarmament connotes forcible removal of weapons, a very different conception than that embraced by a voluntary DDR program.

In the Bonn Agreement example, eventually the word disarmament was removed and more acceptable (and general) language was inserted. The final reference to disarmament in the Bonn Agreement reads: "Upon the official transfer of power, all mujahideen, Afghan armed forces, and armed groups in the country shall come under the command and control of the Interim Authority, and be reorganized according to the requirements of the new Afghan security and armed forces."
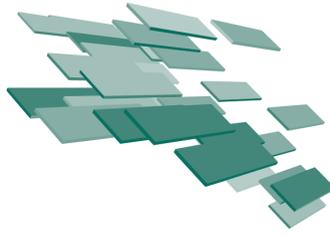
Determine a Mediation Approach and Strategy

A well-thought-out mediation strategy is essential if the procedural and substantive dimensions of a peace process are to be adequately addressed. Although DDR should not be raised as a precondition for peace talks, mediators should carefully consider when, how, and with whom to discuss the future management of fighting forces and their weapons. In addition to poor timing, mediators often make the mistake of imposing preconceived DDR approaches and programs onto negotiating parties and their fighting forces. Poorly prepared presentations about DDR are counterproductive and may engender knee-jerk rejections from negotiating parties and their armed groups. Mediators should engage representatives within the conflict parties who are authorized to speak and to make commitments on behalf of the fighting groups. A well-thought-out approach and strategy for engaging the right interlocutors will go a long way toward minimizing distrust in the peace process as well as facilitate implementation of promises made.

A considerable amount of work on DDR is informal and done well before negotiations officially begin. This section provides some guidelines on how the issue of DDR might be raised with conflict parties and the type of substantive issues that mediators can discuss with fighting forces.

Adopt an Approach of "Nothing Is Agreed until Everything Is Agreed"

In many cases, DDR issues are not detailed in prior framework agreements and are not accepted as preconditions for the peace process by negotiating parties. This omission underscores the sensitivity and importance of the issue for negotiating parties. Fighting forces, and their ability to intensify or

resume their military campaigns, represent considerable leverage for parties at peace talks. Nevertheless, parties should be encouraged to deal with the issue of the future management of their forces in the event that a full-fledged political settlement is reached. One way to approach such a discussion is for conflict parties to agree that although they may discuss this issue, nothing is finalized until all aspects of the peace process are completed.

Under the guidance of Lieutenant-General Lazarus K. Sumbeiyo, the mediator for the North-South Sudan peace process, the government of Sudan and the SPLM/A addressed security issues up front. This discussion included the future of both armies as well as questions of downsizing and DDR. The 2003 security protocol was one of the first substantive agreements following the framework agreement of 2002. While broadly agreeing to key security elements, the parties committed themselves to immediately resuming negotiations on the remaining outstanding issues and subsequently negotiating a comprehensive cease-fire agreement. All previously negotiated and signed protocols were to be valid only when there was agreement on all issues and a final, comprehensive peace agreement in Sudan was signed.

In other words, although both parties mapped out their thinking on key security issues, nothing in the security agreement would be implemented until all other outstanding issues were resolved and the final cease-fire negotiated. The final comprehensive agreement was signed on January 9, 2005.

Find Credible and Appropriate Interlocutors

In dealing with DDR issues, mediators should take great care that they are liaising with entities that have the authority to commit the military forces to concessions made at the peace table. Some of the most difficult discussions on this issue may be between the political and the military wings of the same movements. Understandably, military entities are often extremely reluctant to discuss their disarmament and demobilization.

In the case of Northern Ireland, though Sinn Féin was the political representation at the peace talks, it had no authority to discuss or commit the IRA to any disarmament process. The IRA insisted that any discussion on fighters and weapons had to be directly with the IRA.

Given the hard-line position that military entities tend to adopt, some mediators advise that extra effort should be made to strengthen the voice of

the political wings of rebel movements and civilian members of governments within conflict parties. However, mediators should ensure that commitments made by these political and civilian interlocutors during the peace processes will be honored in the implementation.

In Nepal, in the lead-up to the 2006 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, negotiations were largely among political parties. Although the Nepali Congress was thought to have represented the interests of the Nepal army and committed the Nepal army to an integration and rehabilitation process with the Maoist army, this commitment was not followed through in the implementation phase of the agreement.

Identify Methods of Contacting the Fighting Forces

A key part of the mediation strategy is to figure out how to contact credible interlocutors to commence discussion on the issue of fighting forces and their weapons. Initial contacts are best made through discrete methods. Below-the-radar contacts allow mediators to engage the real decision makers in political or armed movements. These approaches are relatively low risk for mediators as well as for the leaders of armed groups (fearing for their personal safety) and are good ways of testing the willingness of fighting forces to engage in peace talks and to establish key areas of concern.

In Northern Ireland, back-channel communications were used to initiate discussions between British intelligence services and members of the IRA. These informal communications continued even during periods when the IRA abandoned its unilateral cease-fires.

Mediators have employed a variety of strategies for establishing contact with those who wield the power to negotiate on hard-core security issues, including using go-betweens to establish a rapport with armed groups.

This tactic was done in the Sierra Leone peace process, where young staffers were used by the mediator to establish contact with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). Members of the RUF could identify with these intermediaries; this strategy facilitated a trusted channel of communication between the mediator and the RUF fighters.

The use of family networks to establish contact with fighters is a technique employed extensively in the Nicaragua conflict, where family

members were used to persuade fighters to give up their weapons and engage in dialogue. Yet another conduit for mediators is the diaspora, exemplified by the Aceh peace process: exiled leaders in Sweden were the contact points for civil society actors and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in the mediation eventually undertaken by President Ahtisaari.

Where there are field presences (be they of the United Nations, regional organizations, or member states), military or civilian field-level assets can be sources for establishing local contacts with relevant commanders of a fighting force. These contacts may also be a valuable information-gathering source and two-way communication conduit for a mediator.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, MONUC military observers and civilian staff were used to liaise with Mai-Mai intermediaries to establish contact with FDLR fighters to facilitate the repatriation of foreign fighters as part of the DDR program.

Facilitate Safe Passage and Movement for Negotiators

The mediation strategy should encompass the movement of rebel forces to and from a negotiation venue. If rebel commanders are limited to negotiations only at the venue of the talks, their connection to their forces will be reduced and their capacity to negotiate meaningfully on behalf of their fighters will be weakened. Moreover, conflict groups often change the composition of their negotiating teams as the process evolves, reserving hard-core and more senior members of their delegations for later, more serious stages of negotiations. Military commanders may be sent to discuss security aspects while political actors may attend discussions on power sharing. In addition, negotiators need to keep their constituencies aware of progress in the negotiations so that supporters are prepared to accept the eventual compromises that will be required. For all these reasons, negotiators must be able to move back and forth between the peace talk's venue and the field.

In the Aceh peace process (1999–2003), the Free Aceh Movement (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka, GAM) field commanders were able to feed information on and insights into the process through commander-to-commander meetings between GAM and the Indonesian military. These meetings gave the parties opportunities to identify and implement ways to reduce violence, establish zones of peace, and eventually implement the

Cessation of Hostilities Agreement; the meetings also facilitated negotiations on the disarmament components of the peace agreement.

In the 2003 Accra peace talks for the Liberia conflict, the political and military leadership of LURD and MODEL failed to effectively keep in touch with their rank and file in the field during and after the peace talks. As a result, their fighters were not well-informed of the DDR program and did not understand the actions that they were expected to take after the signing of the Accra peace agreement.

Third-party (the mediator or another party) support is extremely helpful in facilitating such travel. The assistance may include issuing travel documents, chartering aircraft or other forms of transport, and guaranteeing safe passage and transit points. In many cases, restrictions on the movement of rebel commanders are lifted on the condition that these commanders do not take advantage of their enhanced mobility to engage in hostile propaganda, fund raise with diasporas abroad, or open new supply lines for their fighting forces.

Consider Women's Roles

A gender-responsive approach should be built into all aspects of a mediation strategy, including deliberations on DDR issues. Mediators should ensure that the design of the mediation process facilitates the proper representation of women's needs, including through the direct participation of female representatives at the negotiations.

Negotiations on DDR issues should attend to the following categories:

➤ *Female combatants:* Women and girls who participated in armed conflicts as active combatants using arms.

➤ *Females associated with armed forces and groups:* Women and girls who participated in armed conflicts in supportive roles, whether by force or voluntarily. Rather than being members of a civilian community, members of this group are economically and socially dependent on the armed force or group for their income and social support (e.g., the females serve as porters, cooks, nurses, spies, administrators, translators, radio operators, medical assistants, public information officers, camp leaders, sex workers/slaves).

➤ *Female dependents:* Women and girls who are a part of ex-combatants' households. Members of this group are mainly socially and financially dependent on ex-combatants, although they may also have other community ties (e.g., wives, children, mothers, female siblings, and female members of the extended family).

Careful consideration of these roles during the conflict can contribute positively to effective implementation of the DDR program. *A major weakness of the failed DDR attempt in Liberia in the mid-1990s was its focus on gun-carrying combatants, which excluded many women (and children) from the process. DDR eligibility tests based on similar "one man, one gun" tests or proficiency in handling weapons may exclude many women and children from entry into DDR programs. The lack of adequate consideration of the needs and roles of women was a key cause of the limited eligibility criteria. The second DDR process in Liberia (2003) was better at incorporating women's perspectives and needs. Mediators attempted to involve women in collecting relevant DDR information and paid greater attention to women-specific information for program planning purposes.*

Capacity building should be provided to female representatives (if needed) at peace talks to ensure that they can fully participate in DDR negotiations. In cases where the participation of women is not possible, mediators should hold consultations with women's groups during the different phases of the peace process to ensure that the views of these groups are represented at negotiation forums. To facilitate women's participation, the mediation teams should carry out a risk assessment to evaluate the threat posed to women who assume a public role in the peace process and the need to provide additional security to ensure their safe participation.

Mediators should be guided by the following resolutions from the United Nations Security Council when addressing the gender dimension of the DDR issue:

➤ S/RES/1325 (2000), which addresses the impact of war on women, their contribution to conflict resolution and sustainable peace, and the gender-related responsibilities of the international community in different political and programmatic areas.

➤ S/RES/1889 (2009). which emphasizes the need to increase women's participation and inclusion in peacebuilding and improve the participation of women in political and economic decision making.

➤ S/RES/1820 (2008) and S/RES/1888 (2009), which recognize the serious threat that conflict-related sexual violence poses to international peace and security, as well as S/RES 1960 (2010), which provides the accountability architecture needed to list and de-list perpetrators, as well as to report on patterns and trends in conflict-related sexual violence.

Adopt a Problem-Solving Approach

Mediators should have a clear strategy for introducing the parties to the concepts, approaches, and comparative experiences of how fighting forces are managed in a peace process. Mediators sometimes incorrectly assume that negotiating parties are well versed about the objectives, approaches, and terminologies of DDR and related security arrangements programs. Instead, mediators should assume that misperceptions and fears abound about the intent of the mediator and others who seek to take from the parties a major source of negotiating leverage (i.e., their weapons). This fear is especially the case where there is a legacy of failed peace processes and DDR programs. Rather than focusing on the need for a DDR program, the mediator should adopt a problem-solving approach with the conflict parties. Such a calibrated approach will also help the mediator assess if a DDR program is indeed appropriate to the context at hand, and if so, how it should be designed and implemented.

In the Abuja and the Doha rounds of the peace talks on Darfur, the mediator embedded security arrangements experts with the Darfuri movement's negotiating teams. This approach provided members of the movement with a good understanding of the DDR issues so that they could negotiate with confidence rather than reject an issue because of a lack of understanding. These experts also provided in-depth capacity-building training and comparative models for representatives of the negotiation teams. The close interaction between the mediation and the negotiating parties had the salutary effect of building greater trust in the mediation process. The efforts were welcomed by the delegation from the government of Sudan.

Negotiating parties should be asked to reflect on some common dilemmas confronting political and military elites once a conflict has ended. These include (a) how to disband and downsize a fighting force in a dignified manner that preserves respect for its wartime contribution; (b) how the elites will provide some form of personal

and economic security once former fighters are discharged from their security roles (jobs) or if their primary means of fending for themselves (i.e., through the use of their weapon) are to be removed; (c) the specific expectations midlevel commanders and the rank and file hold with regard to their postconflict life; (d) how the elites will manage the reality that they have done well for themselves by achieving political office or senior military position in the power-sharing deals struck at the peace talks while the peace dividend for lower-level military commanders and their rank and file appears less attractive; (e) how former fighters will be accepted back into their societies, especially if widespread violations of human rights and atrocities have been committed; (f) who will be held accountable for these crimes and violations and what the consequences will be; and (g) the future function, form, and size of the country's security forces.

This gradual problem-solving approach is especially useful when multiple related security issues must be synchronized in the peace process, such as reform/transformation of the security architecture; reform of the security service; integration of different fighting forces into a separate or new army, police, or other security forces; and vetting processes.

Minimize Asymmetry between Parties

Mediators should be aware that negotiations on DDR issues can have a direct impact on the condition of a mutually hurting stalemate; that is, the so-called ripeness for mediation that brought conflict parties to the table in the first place. It is necessary to develop a mediation strategy and to reach agreements on security issues in a way that does not adversely affect the mutually hurting stalemate. If one party is relatively weak compared to the other, the stronger party may assume that it can dictate agreement terms. In such cases, mediators should seek to reassert the benefits of mediation and to use other means to create power symmetry.

In the Guatemalan peace process, the United National Revolutionary Group (UNRG) was militarily weaker than the government. Seeing this imbalance as a threat, mediator Jean Arnault used the voice of civil society to bolster UNRG's power at the negotiation table.

Of course, any form of mediation support must be provided in a manner that has the consent of all negotiating parties. The mediation

efforts should not be interpreted as favoring one negotiating party at the expense of another.

Uphold International Law

Mediators must carefully structure their approach on issues governed by international law (see feature box "International Legal Instruments"), which may have been violated by the fighting forces. The United Nations has established clear principles for its mediators on the types of war crimes for which there may be no amnesty: "genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity or gross violations of human rights." Being party to a peace process does not in itself protect negotiating parties from accountability for these violations of international law.

> *In the 2006–08 Juba talks between the government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), the LRA insisted on the retraction of indictments issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) against LRA leaders for war crimes. Instead, agreement was reached on the establishment of a special section of the High Court of Uganda to try these crimes. Unfortunately, this agreement was not acceptable to LRA leader Joseph Kony who insisted on immunity from any prosecution.*

Mediators should be aware that international law that prohibits the recruitment and use of child soldiers. The recruitment and use of children under the age of fifteen is prohibited by the Conventions on the Rights of the Child,[3] the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions, and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. These rules apply equally to international and noninternational conflicts and to state and nonstate armed groups.

> *In 2006, the ICC issued an indictment against Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, a Congolese warlord, for allegedly conscripting children into his militia, while the Special Court for Sierra Leone convicted Alex Tamba Brima for the recruitment and use of child soldiers during the Sierra Leone civil war, sentencing him to no less than forty-five years of imprisonment.*

Understanding this legal framework, mediators must consider if the release and demobilization of minors (appropriate in its own right) can help build confidence between the parties, as might the release of prisoners and those forcibly conscripted into the armed group. However,

care must be taken to assess the real intention of the armed groups to genuinely end their use of children in their ranks rather than simply re-recruiting new ones once existing ones are released. The mediator should have a deliberate strategy on how efforts on these issues relate to other actors such as the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, UNICEF, the Office of the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, and the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Conflict Related Sexual Violence. The listing and delisting by the UN Security Council of armed groups using child soldiers (via Security Council Resolution 1612/2005) and those engaged in conflict-related sexual violence (via Security Council Resolution 1960/2010) are instruments that mediators should be aware of and employ as elements of incentives and disincentives in the mediation strategy.

International Legal Instruments

Key international legal instruments that mediators should be aware of when facilitating negotiations include the following:

International Humanitarian Law

➤ The four Geneva Conventions (1949)
➤ Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions (1977)
➤ Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998)
➤ Customary international humanitarian law

International Human Rights Law

➤ Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and its optional protocols (2000)
➤ UN Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
➤ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)
➤ International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (1966)
➤ Regional human rights instruments

Commence Preliminary Discussions

Early substantive discussions may focus on issues that do not immediately threaten the power base or vital interests of the parties. Gradual progress will help build confidence as well as momentum on the issue of DDR. Armed groups may require an overall vision of what their future looks like before they are willing to commit to negotiating DDR. In the meantime,

however, symbolic agreements may be negotiated to put a certain number of weapons and combatants under some (regional or international) monitoring regimes. An alternative interim step is to attain agreement to DDR on a small portion of the fighting forces, including women, children, veterans, and the disabled.

Gradual introduction of related processes such as reconciliation issues, economic opportunities, and livelihood considerations into discussions should commence at this stage. This evolutionary approach may be helpful in establishing linkages to broader elements of the peace agreement. Dialogue on the future of combatants may ensue in relation to the future shape and size of the country's security forces or the economic revitalization of the community. Increased discussions on DDR and weapons control issues are desirable. The more sensitized the parties are to related elements and concepts, the greater the prospect of coherent provisions in the final agreement, including on DDR issues.
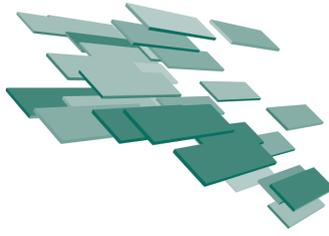
Lay the Groundwork for DDR Negotiations

The preparatory, or prenegotiation, phase of a peace process sets the stage for substantive discussions. In step 4, mediators should prepare themselves and negotiating parties for both the procedural and the substantive dimensions of the peace process. This preparatory phase may result in a framework agreement between negotiating parties. Framework agreements come in many forms, but their main purpose is to detail the fundamentals of the peace process, such as who the negotiating parties are, who the mediator will be, what role the mediator will play, where the peace process will take place, the extent to which civil society may or may not be included, and, most important, the key issues to be discussed.

Avoid DDR as a Precondition for Talks

Framework agreements can be used to list the principles upon which negotiations will be based. At this early stage of the peace process, trust between parties is likely to be tentative and confidence in the process is likely to be shaky at best. It is important for mediators to stress that trust is not a prerequisite for negotiations. The possibility of the resumption of open conflict is high because the parties have yet to commit fully to achieving their political or economic ends through peaceful means. Because substantive issues remain unresolved, the conflict parties are not likely to engage in discussion about the final status of their fighting forces and weapons. Thus, it would be a mistake to predicate continued engagement in the peace process on the DDR of the armed groups in the conflict. This approach is neither politically nor programmatically realistic.

In 2009, following a setback in its drawn-out peace process with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of the Philippines decided to refocus any new phase of negotiations with the MILF within the context of DDR. This policy, combined with a decision to shift dialogue to communities instead of MILF commanders, stalled the peace process for a considerable period of time.

In contrast, Senator George Mitchell's (1996) six principles for the Northern Ireland peace process, which were broadly accepted, did not precondition participation in the talks on complete disarmament prior to negotiations. Instead, parties had to commit themselves to a future total disarmament of all paramilitary organizations; such disarmament must be verifiable to the satisfaction of an independent commission. Sinn Féin's acceptance of the principles was strongly criticized by more hard-line Republicans and led to resignations within the party.

Link DDR to Other Transitional Security Arrangements

In some circumstances, transitional security arrangements (such as the cessation of hostilities, unilateral cease-fires, or monitored cease-fire arrangements) may be in place; these can facilitate framework agreements. However, these kinds of arrangements are not prerequisites for progress at the peace talks.

During the El Salvador peace talks, the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) requested that negotiations focus on political objectives before the cessation of hostilities. The government agreed to this request despite its overriding objective of the cessation of fighting. The first issue negotiating parties dealt with was the future role of the country's armed forces. The FMLN adopted the view that all other discussions would be futile without agreement on the future of the armed forces.

Include Key Armed Groups in Framework Agreements

Mediators should be cognizant of the need for key armed groups to be involved in the negotiations; therefore the participation of armed groups and the consideration of their issues should be incorporated into the framework agreement. Mediators must approach this issue of inclusion

extremely carefully. Parties possessing a critical power base but left out of the peace process may obstruct progress in the peace process or render an agreement meaningless simply by their lack of participation. Armed groups with such power must be accommodated in some manner.

Critical armed groups were missing from the United Nations–African Union managed Doha peace process on Darfur between the government of Sudan and the Liberty and Justice Movement. The JEM, a militarily significant armed group, and the Sudanese Liberation Movement (Abdul Wahid) refused to participate in the many rounds of negotiations in the Qatari capital. Moreover, there was little clarity with respect to how the government would deal with the issue of the janjaweed, the government-allied fighting groups in the Darfur conflict. The absence of key armed groups from Doha undermined the credibility of the process until the JEM joined the talks in December 2010.
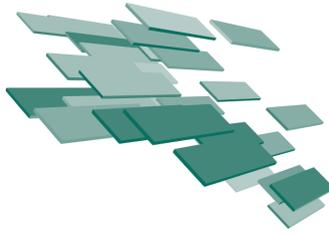
Conduct and Manage the Negotiations

In this step in the peace process, the mediator offers negotiating parties an opportunity to establish a new vision for the country and society; mediators should encourage conflict parties to comprehensively address the fundamental causes of the conflict. In dealing with their fighting forces, conflict parties need to take a long-term view of how security will be established in the country as a shared responsibility among former enemies. Transitional support for the disbandment of fighting forces and issues relating to accountability for wartime crimes (if any) will be major themes of the negotiation phase. This section outlines key DDR programmatic details that should be developed, discusses the major approaches to negotiation that have been used, and provides insights into common negotiation techniques employed by conflict parties.

Negotiate Key DDR Details

Once it becomes clear that a DDR program is indeed desired and has been accepted by the conflict parties, mediators should commence discussions about the DDR program. Parties should consider the number of fighters who will be in the DDR program, the specific number of weapons that need to be surrendered and destroyed, and the relationship between the DDR program and other security programs.

Key programmatic elements that should be discussed at this time include the eligibility criteria for entry into the DDR program (which armed groups and which government forces will participate; how to manage noncombatants; whether or not to create a separate program for children and women; which fighters from which conflicts in the

country's history can be accepted; and whether cross-border combatants will be accepted into the national programme or simply repatriated to their home countries), as well as the weapons acceptance policy for the program (relating to small arms and light weapons, heavy weapons, ammunition, and the like). Equally important is the discussion of implementation. In some peace agreements, implementation annexes are developed that codify agreements on the above issues, the role of implementers, and the DDR frameworks required.

Considerable flexibility and creativity are needed on the terminology, scope, and models used to accomplish the objectives of DDR programs. Four major approaches have been attempted by mediators, each with its own desired outcome: simultaneous DDR, regular integration followed by phased demobilization, cantonment prior to further negotiation, and DDR synchronized with key political milestones. The problem-solving methodology discussed above should inform the approach taken for each conflict; there are no one-size-fits-all situations.

Common Negotiated Outcomes on DDR

Simultaneous DDR

The first approach seeks an outcome in which all fighting forces submit to a DDR process and undergo the program simultaneously. This approach works best when parties feel that key political issues have been satisfactorily managed or resolved in the peace agreement. This outcome occurs when confidence in the implementation of the agreement is high, and the presence of an international security guarantor of the peace process (either a peacekeeping mission or an international force) can ensure security for all parties as they submit their forces for the DDR process. The key advantages of this approach are the reduced likelihood of renewed hostilities between fighting forces that may negatively impact the political process and a better chance for a fresh start to the SSR process. However, experience has shown that problems on the political front may quickly be imposed upon the DDR program, which could stall the entire DDR process and threaten the security situation.

In the Accra Peace Agreement (2003), it was agreed that all fighting forces of the government of Liberia, LURD, and MODEL would simultaneously be submitted to a DDR program. The agreement called

for the establishment of a new Liberian Armed Forces, but there was no formal connection between the DDR program and the new armed forces.

Integration Followed by Phased Demobilization

In the second approach, the aim is to integrate fighting forces into an enlarged national army before a phased demobilization program commences. This approach may be an option if participation or representation in the security forces (often the military) is a key cause of the conflict and a more representative security service is a required outcome of the peace process. In this scenario, a two-stage process may be envisaged: first, the amalgamation of fighting forces in a national army or security force, while details on the size and composition (e.g., ethnicity) are negotiated; then, a plan for a gradual DDR or downsizing of the enlarged national security institution to an acceptable and affordable security sector. Key to this approach is the ability to financially sustain a large force structure until downsizing occurs.

The peace process in Burundi adopted this approach to the issue of fighting forces. In Burundi, the government decided to expand the military in order to integrate ex-combatants with the intention of downsizing the military in a gradual manner later on. This approach allowed the government to provide ex-combatants a stake in the peace process and a means to a livelihood, while buying time to establish the vetting procedures for future downsizing. The approach also allowed for the creation of training programs and jobs to absorb those who left the military during its downsizing process.

This approach has the benefit of being able to control most, if not all, fighting forces in a single process. It can be helpful in containing a security situation when the political process is stalled; difficult decisions on downsizing issues can be deferred to a time when the political and economic situations are better. Disadvantages of this approach include the upfront high cost of cantonment of an enlarged force structure, high (and often unrealistic) expectations among combatants of their future in the security services, intensive planning and logistics for the process of assembly points and merging of former enemies into barracks or cantonment sites, and potentially contentious discussions on rank harmonization issues (especially if rebel forces are integrated with a regular army).

Cantonment Prior to Further Negotiation on New Security Architecture

The third approach leads to an outcome where conflict parties agree to separately canton their fighting forces while they await decisions about national security structure and resolution of key political issues. This approach has been considered when the fundamental issues relating to the conflict have yet to be resolved because it maintains some oversight over (some of the) fighters and (some of their) weapons while the political process continues.

The 2006 Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Nepal included a process in which the first security phase was a cantonment of the Maoist army (with a certain amount of their weapons), while the Nepal army was confined to its barracks. This arrangement was lightly monitored by the United Nations as an interim measure, while longer-term processes like the integration and rehabilitation of the Maoist army and the democratization of the Nepal army were implemented.

Some advantages of this approach include a demonstration of some commitment, on the part of negotiating parties, to the peace process as exhibited by the cantonment of their troops (especially under international monitoring) and the enhancement of confidence in the process, which may facilitate political progress. This approach provides the international community with an early opportunity to commence preparatory DDR activities such as verification and mapping processes, while allowing time for planning on reintegration issues as well as for dealing with difficult SSR questions (e.g., rank harmonization, eligibility criteria). However, there is little guarantee that those cantoned are the real fighters, and there is a high chance that a large number of serviceable weapons remain outside the process. This approach can be expensive to maintain for a lengthy period of time and does not contain a clear exit strategy from temporary cantonment sites as long as there is no resolution on outstanding political issues.

DDR Synchronized with Achievements of Key Political Milestones

Some peace processes synchronize security arrangements dealing with fighting forces with political milestones. Such a phased approach is useful for enhancing confidence in the implementation of the agreement and is

useful when trust among the parties remains low. It provides sufficient time to plan and implement the DDR program and provides opportunities to make programmatic adjustments as required. However, such a phased approach may require longer cantonment of fighting forces and often brings problems related to the lengthy encampment of troops.

The Salvadorian peace negotiations, which culminated with the signing of the El Salvador Peace Accords on January 16, 1992, are an example of this approach. The accords specified a complex timetable for the implementation of DDR provisions, linking institutional reform measures with the reintegration of FMLN fighting forces into civilian society. Such synchronization can be explained by the strength of the FMLN (both militarily and politically) throughout the negotiations; the armed group was unwilling to commit to any DDR program that would not be implemented alongside other political and security-related agreements.

Anticipate and Manage the Negotiation Techniques of Fighting Forces

Regardless of the appearance of progress made at the negotiating table or the negotiated outcomes, mediators should be aware that parties hedge their bets when discussing DDR issues. Several tactics should be expected.

Delay Tactics

Negotiating parties often delay a commitment to DDR as they rely on their military assets for leverage (i.e., the threat of a return to armed conflict) in the negotiating process. On the one hand, if a party is making progress on the battlefield, it may not wish to reduce the momentum gained by prematurely discussing DDR issues. On the other hand, a party may seek to delay discussions on security issues (especially DDR) if it has recently suffered a defeat on the battle field. In this situation, the party may want to regroup, rearm, and be resupplied in order to consolidate its position on the battlefield and strengthen its position at the negotiating table. Other causes of delay in discussing DDR include the lack of internal control over fighting forces, internal discord over how to negotiate this issue, and a lack of information about one's own forces' structure, composition, location, and weaponry. This latter point is particularly salient for poorly organized armed groups with weak command and control structures.

Inflating Troop Strength

At the outset of the process, negotiating parties are likely to inflate the numbers of their fighting forces so as to enhance their bargaining position. The creation of "ghost soldiers" and the use of forcible conscription to boost the number of fighters are not unusual tactics. *Most, if not all, of the Cambodian factions involved in the country's civil war are widely believed to have exaggerated their force numbers by about two-thirds.*

Parties also inflate their troop strength because they anticipate that the DDR process will confer benefits on all those who participate in it. *While negotiations were ongoing in the North-South Sudan peace process, the regional black market value of serviceable and unserviceable AK-47s increased rapidly. This rise was traced to the expectation that a large DDR program was being planned and that an AK-47 was likely to be the ticket to participation in that program.*[4]

Moreover, negotiating parties sometimes manipulate entry into a DDR program to reward supporters, regardless of whether these supporters are actual combatants. Mediators should be attentive to the spontaneous demobilization or release of fighters (primarily children and women) by armed groups, who may work to replace released fighters with noncombatants close to the political or military elites. For some or all of these reasons, negotiating parties are likely to resist a mediator's requests for the parties to provide lists of the names of their fighters or to submit to verification processes to ascertain troop strength or the combatant status of individuals within the fighting forces.

Hiding Real Fighters

Warring parties may conceal their hard-core fighters from any actual disarmament and demobilization regimes in the early stages of a peace process to protect themselves from peace process failure and enable a rapid return to conflict if necessary.

In Aceh, GAM claimed during negotiations that it had a force of 3,500 fighters. It was discovered later that GAM had 10,000 fighters. In Nepal, some observers are skeptical that that the 19,602 Maoist combatants being cantoned in the previously UN-monitored cantonment sites are all hard-core fighters. Some assert that the real Maoist fighters have been sent out of these sites and have been reorganized as members of the Youth Communist League, which has been used to disrupt the peace process.

Hiding Violations

A party in conflict may be reluctant to provide information on the composition of its fighting force, an account of its conduct during the conflict, or access to its fighting forces because such information could provide evidence that the party has violated international law and thus compromise its ability to negotiate amnesties during peace talks.

On November 12, 2006, LRA leader Joseph Kony in a meeting with UN under-secretary-general Jan Egeland stated, "We don't have any children. We only have combatants." In September 2009, after a period of stalled negotiations, Kony indicated a willingness to resume negotiations provided that he was granted immunity from prosecution by the ICC, which had charged him with thirty-three counts of crimes against humanity and war crimes, including the use of child soldiers, murder, enslavement, sexual enslavement, and rape.

The reports of the UN Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict provide an authoritative account of armed groups that systematically recruit and use child soldiers. These reports, and the related resolutions of the UN Security Council, may be used by mediators both as a source of information and as a source of leverage for further discussions on the release of child soldiers. Recent attention paid to the conduct of fighting forces, especially in relation to conflict-affected sexual violence, will likely affect the willingness of fighting forces to openly discuss their conduct during conflict.

Burying Weapons

Fighting forces are often unwilling to surrender their most effective weaponry in the beginning of the DDR process. Negotiating parties often bury caches of serviceable weapons, while providing improvised or unserviceable weapons as a contribution to the DDR process.

In the 1990s, in Eastern Slavonia, the Croatian government and the United Nations Transitional Authority in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) DDR program collected an impressive amount of small arms and light weapons (9,680 firearms, 2,325,378 rounds of ammunition and ignition devices, and 106.16 kilograms of explosives), and oversaw the removal of a large number of tanks, armored personnel carriers, antitank systems, artillery pieces, mortars, and

antiaircraft guns. Nevertheless, a demobilized commander estimates that twenty-two large caches of hidden weapons were never surrendered to the Croatian government or UNTAES.

Because of their understanding of the inclination to hedge against peace process failure, mediators should not move too quickly or too early on DDR issues, nor should they have much trust in information provided by the conflicting parties. Mediators must be aware of the need to leave room in the agreement for parties to undo some of their early actions in the negotiation phase that may have resulted in real combatants and weapons being kept outside of the DDR program.

Sell DDR Commitments to the Troops

Mediators need to understand that accepting DDR can, in some situations, be perceived as acceptance of defeat, loss of prestige, or a sign of weakness. This message may not be one that negotiating parties are willing or able to convey to their constituencies in the fighting forces and beyond. In other situations, DDR may be perceived as an investment in peace; where the peace process is guaranteed by the international community, DDR can be insurance against future attack. In any case, conflicting parties will need political and moral courage to enter into any discussion that seeks to dismantle their fighting forces. A successful mediator helps negotiating parties define and communicate agreement to a DDR process as a positive outcome for their overall group interests.
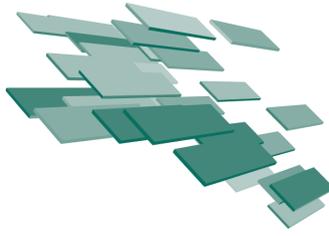
Link DDR to Other Aspects of the Peace Process

Peace processes (and conflict drivers) are multifaceted. As a result, the effective management of fighting forces requires mediators to establish appropriate linkages with the relevant political, economic, and security dimensions of the entire peace process. These linkages are important for two reasons: DDR is a transitional security program and does not resolve key political, security, or economic problems of the conflict; and the implementation of DDR programs requires, from conflict parties, considerable political commitment and a high degree of confidence in the peace process.

For mediators, understanding these connections is vital. Armed with this understanding, mediators can better assess when to commence discussions on DDR issues, how to calibrate their engagement and mediation strategy, and how to leverage incentives, disincentives, and trade-offs on related issues to encourage parties to genuinely negotiate and eventually disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate fighters. Cognizant of these connections, mediators should facilitate conflict parties' internal understanding of DDR issues and the relevant linkages to other dimensions of the peace process. Key linkages that should be explored include cease-fires arrangements, political arrangements, economic reintegration, and SSR.

Cease-Fire Arrangements

Cease-fire arrangement—dependent on their timing, scope, and management—may be a useful opportunity for negotiating parties and their fighting forces to establish the confidence needed to manage

subsequent DDR processes. If a cease-fire is negotiated *prior* to the establishment of a formal peace process, it may be one of the first opportunities for negotiating parties to discuss security issues and consider ways to jointly manage their security with the support of external facilitation.

In addition, cease-fire arrangements provide the space and opportunity to address important DDR-related issues:

➤ Monitoring activities may be helpful for the establishment of baseline information about the composition, location, and command structure of fighting forces, which is helpful for subsequent discussions on DDR issues.

➤ The break in fighting may provide political, military, humanitarian, and protection agencies the opportunity to commence outreach and education on human rights standards and humanitarian principles. Fighting forces should be made aware of the consequences of human rights violations on their future participation in DDR and SSR processes, as well as the denial of amnesty for certain crimes and violations.

Political Arrangements

The quality of agreements on key political issues in the peace process has a direct impact on how negotiating parties approach, negotiate, and implement DDR. Power-sharing and constitutional arrangements that continue the politics of exclusion (including exclusion from an equitable share of national wealth) instead of promoting a fairer and more predictable distribution of political power and representation will not facilitate confidence in the political process and are unlikely to encourage armed groups to lay down their weapons and demobilize their fighters.

In Nepal, more than four years after the 2006 Comprehensive Agreement, the political parties struggled to form and sustain a workable national government, agree on a power-sharing arrangement, and resolve key constitutional questions (such as the form of government and the federal structure and the use of official languages at the federal and provincial levels, citizenship, and the judiciary). The lack of resolution on these fundamental issues impeded progress on the integration of Maoist army personnel into the Nepal army and their rehabilitation into civil society.

Similarly, political arrangements that emphasize a winner-take-all electoral approach or that exhibit a lack of clarity on electoral systems and standards will impede DDR discussions during the peace process. Conflict parties uncertain of their political fate after planned elections are likely to hedge their bets by delaying disarmament of their fighters or hiding them from DDR programs.

The 1991 Bicesse Accords included an ambitious DDR program for the Popular Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola and the Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola that included the creation of a new integrated army of 50,000 troops. The program failed following the resumption of war in 1992, which was sparked by a disputed election result and unfulfilled political and security arrangements, including the failure to establish the new integrated army prior to the elections as called for in the agreement.

Mediators should be aware of the need for negotiating parties to carefully address political arrangements prior to setting a timeline for the DDR program. Moreover, political settlements should provide assurance to fighting forces that promised reintegration provisions (such as socioeconomic support, integration into security forces, and the freedom to participate freely in the political life of the country) will be carried out in good faith and without political prejudice by the victor of future elections. Legal frameworks can protect demobilized veterans from abuse, discrimination, manipulation, and exploitation by political leaders.

Economic Reintegration

As discussed in step 1, DDR programs are highly imperfect and promises about reintegration often lag behind commitments and implementation. Nevertheless, fighting forces will be particularly concerned about the longer-term dimensions of the negotiations and international support. A solid understanding of the available reintegration options and their limitations (what may be promised and what may be achieved) will help the mediator manage the expectations of fighting forces and militate against disruptions to the peace process.

Mediators should be especially aware of two dimensions of reintegration. First, it is important to give commanders of fighting groups special incentives (above and beyond what the rank-and-file fighters

receive) to participate in the DDR program. Doing so may facilitate their commitment to the program.

In the Afghanistan DDR program, a commander-specific reintegration program was created to bolster leadership support of the DDR process. Since its inception in mid-2004, the Commanders Incentive Program (CIP) has been focused on designing reintegration packages for commanders at the regiment level or above. It was designed to reintegrate field commanders and generals in the Ministry of Defense. The CIP developed reintegration packages to maintain minimum income levels for former military commanders as they reintegrate into Afghan society and join business management training and trips abroad.

Second, significant tensions and dilemmas are created by *individually focused* reintegration programs for fighting forces and *community-based* approaches that take a more holistic approach and consider the needs of other segments of society (e.g., members of the community who remain *in situ* during the conflict, the internally displaced, and returning refugees). The latter are desirable but difficult to finance or implement at the early stages of the postconflict period. The former are often perceived as rewarding those who have perpetrated crimes, but are necessary to get the fighting forces to buy into the peace process.

The individually focused DDR program in Sierra Leone provides an example of one reintegration program. Former combatants were given four packages from which to choose: enlist in the army, return to school with fees covered, receive training for six to nine months in vocational skills and a stipend and skill-appropriate set of tools, and receive training in farming practices and a package of tools and seeds. To address the time lag between demobilization and the commencement of a reintegration option (because it took time to establish the four options), a stop-gap program was developed to manage the ex-combatants in the most volatile areas. These interim measures included the opportunity to participate (alongside other members of the community) in small-scale public works or infrastructure projects, coupled with other peacebuilding activities to lay the groundwork for social reintegration.

Attempts to minimize disparities, as well as promote greater sustainability for reintegration efforts, have led some observers to call for a community-

based approach to reintegration (as opposed to individually targeted programs) that facilitates the reintegration of all returning groups and not just former fighters.

In Liberia, East Timor, Aceh, Indonesia, and Afghanistan, programs were developed where communities were given funding to prioritize their own needs for postconflict reconstruction. This approach has been applied to receiving communities and former combatants in a holistic reintegration approach.

Although such community-based approaches are useful in promoting social cohesion, they do not replace the individually focused programs for fighters that encourage them to lay down their arms. In most postconflict countries, community-based approaches commence much later in the implementation schedule, long after the initial phases of the DDR program are completed.

Key to negotiations on economic reintegration is empirical information on what former fighters want, what is achievable, and how best to develop reintegration options that can lay a sustainable basis for livelihood. To obtain this information, mediators will have to reach out to the research and development community, which may have a better knowledge of the socioeconomic realities of the country and region of concern than the mediators do. For example, in his study on Uganda and Ethiopia, Paul Collier established that former combatants with greater access to land (as part of the reintegration program) are less likely to resort to criminality.[5] With greater access to land, former combatants can better participate in the legitimate sectors of the economy and have greater incentives to shift toward productive economic activities.

Key preliminary work in preparing for negotiations on reintegration issues includes a basic survey and profiling of the fighting forces to ascertain their postwar livelihood plans, a survey to map existing and potential economic opportunities, and an assessment of potential service providers to assist in the training of demobilized fighters. These preparatory steps—which will inform the mediation—can also be helpful in managing the expectations of participants in the DDR program and contribute to better use of the limited funding available for the reintegration portion of a DDR program.

Security Sector Reform

DDR issues are closely linked to SSR issues. Both initiatives are designed to prevent the resurgence of armed conflict and to create the conditions necessary for sustainable peace and longer-term development.

In Côte d'Ivoire and Burundi, both the DDR programs and related SSR activities (the establishment of new armies and police services) were aimed at addressing the preconflict ethnic and regional imbalances in security forces, a key driver of the conflicts.

The linkages between DDR and SSR quickly become apparent since it is often the poor management and conduct of the security sector that are drivers of conflict, and changes to it are necessary components of the peace process.

Alvaro de Soto recalls that in the El Salvador peace process, the FMLN insisted that the first issue that needed to be addressed was that of the armed forces. The FMLN argued that, given the role of the armed forces in the conflict, it would be pointless to address anything else unless there was agreement on what to do with the armed forces. As a result, the issue of the armed forces was first on the agenda as well as at the forefront of the signed peace agreement.

Given that DDR and SSR are highly related, their joint success is dependent on the extent to which both programs are appropriately addressed in the mediation phase. The major linkages between the two programs that should be considered at the outset of the peace process are

➤ the extent to which each program may be helpful in addressing key causes of the conflict;

➤ establishing a vision of the security sector that could provide the basis for decisions on force size and structure as well as the DDR program;

➤ the extent to which DDR should or can shape the terrain for SSR by influencing the size and nature of the security sector;

➤ the extent to which DDR can free up resources for SSR activities that may in turn support the development of efficient, affordable security structures;

➤ how SSR considerations should help determine criteria for the integration of ex-combatants in different parts of the formal/informal security sector;

➤ the DDR and SSR linkages that can offer complementary approaches to the reintegration of ex-combatants to enhance community security; and

➤ types of capacity-building for security management and oversight bodies that might provide a means to enhance the sustainability and legitimacy of DDR and SSR.

Related issues include the degree to which the old security services need to be disbanded and new ones created; the extent to which armed groups are integrated into a reformed security force; the agreed vetting processes to ensure that those with a record of human rights violations are not accepted into new security services; the composition of new security services and their constitutionally mandated functions; how these new security services will be democratically governed; and the financial and logistical support that each security service receives.
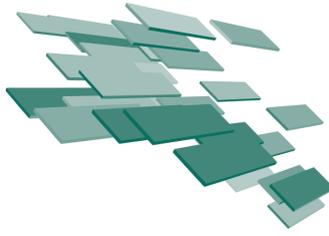
Put DDR in the Peace Agreement

Peace agreements vary in the level of detail on DDR issues. Although clarity on key dimensions of the program is helpful when trying to minimize disagreements during implementation, such clarity is not always possible. DDR provisions in a peace agreement should at the minimum cover the following areas.

Craft a Clear Vision, Approach, and Desired Outcome for the DDR Program

The peace agreement should clearly reflect the vision, approach, and desired outcome(s) of the DDR program. Although DDR will contribute to the broader reconciliation, return, and repatriation of the displaced, as well as economic reconstruction, the most important outcome of DDR negotiations is often related to the reestablishment of security and the organization of related state security structures. *The vision for a new security sector is clearly articulated as a major outcome in the Liberia 2003 Accra Peace Agreement; combatants of all the conflict parties had to submit themselves to the DDR program.*

In some cases, conflict parties cannot agree to fully commit all of their forces for a DDR process because key political issues have yet to be fully resolved. In these situations, the approach to DDR issues may be more limited, consisting of agreement on some limited DDR activities and establishing the mechanisms for further DDR planning pending the full resolution of outstanding issues.

In the Sudan Comprehensive Agreement, pending the referendum on the status of South Sudan, there was no clear roadmap for the DDR of the main forces of the north and south. Instead, DDR planning institutions

(DDR commissions) were established in the agreement to commence preparations for DDR programs. Preliminary DDR activities for a small group of participants were agreed to, mainly as a confidence-building measure. The initial participants in the early DDR program were women, children, veterans, and the disabled.

Detail Who and What Are Covered by the DDR Program

The agreement should be clear on which armed groups (statutory and nonstatutory) and their numbers are covered by the DDR program; which groups are not covered by the DDR program; and how they will be managed (e.g., as part of a voluntary weapons collection program or an SSR program), as well as the numbers of and types of weapons to be collected and/or destroyed in the DDR process. These considerations are important to ensure that the right participants are included in the DDR program as well as to maintain control over the high cost of implementing DDR programs. There should be mention of the need for specific approaches to women and children associated with the fighting forces, the disabled, veterans, and foreign combatants. If possible, the eligibility criteria for the DDR program should be detailed. Regardless of the specific details of the overall DDR plan, the release of abducted women and girls from within the ranks of an armed force or group should be prioritized in the peace agreement.

Mediators should recall that experience has shown that in most cases—whether the result of hedging or otherwise—realistic and accurate numbers of fighting forces and weapons are hard to come by. This understanding must be kept in mind throughout the negotiations, and contingency strategies should be built into the DDR implementation plan that reflect this reality.

Establish Realistic Timelines

Timelines for the DDR program must be realistic, especially if the international community is expected to verify, monitor, or implement the program. The imperative for quick action of the management of fighting forces is central to progress on the political front, and timelines may be established that are beyond the capability of the international community

to support. In these cases, interim or stop-gap measures should be agreed to when possible.

Set Out the Institutional Structures Needed to Plan and Implement DDR

Clear national institutional frameworks will help negotiators and mediators lead and manage the planning and implementation of the DDR program. In most countries, frameworks have called for the formation of national DDR commissions. In addition, the agreement should establish the support role of the international community in the DDR program. The requirement for the representation of women in institutional frameworks established to manage DDR processes should also be included in the peace accord. Information about the DDR program and process should be made available to any subsidiary bodies or subcommittees established to facilitate the participation of civil society in the peace process.
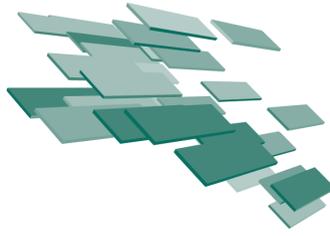
Facilitate Implementation

No matter how well it is mediated, an agreement that is not implemented is useless. For this reason, the mediator should consult or even include potential implementers of DDR programs early in the process. Consultations should not constrain the creativity or flexibility of the mediator, but they will serve as reality check, helping the mediator determine if he or she is on the right track.

Just as mediators should be attentive to the realities of implementation, implementers should not assume that mediation ends with the signing of an agreement. Program implementers should be aware of the need for continued facilitation and mediation during the implementation phase of the program and should be ready to assume these political tasks. Implementers should be particularly careful about sequencing DDR implementation vis-à-vis other political provisions of an agreement. Implementers often tend to adhere to timelines established in an agreement, even when delays occur on other political fronts. Such an approach fails to see the political nature of a DDR program and is doomed to failure.

The long-term success of a DDR program, and indeed of an entire peace agreement, will rely on the ability of the local stakeholders at all levels to manage the inevitable conflicts that continue into the implementation phase of any agreement. For this reason, efforts must be made to enhance the ability of national and community leaders, clan and tribal chiefs, and nongovernmental and faith-based actors to mediate and manage conflicts. Such capacity-building activities will require external support, in particular financing.

Include Implementers in the Negotiation Phase

Mediators should carefully consider the implementation dimensions of DDR throughout the negotiation phase of a peace process, not just after the signing of an agreement. Early attention to implementation can facilitate a smooth handover from the mediator to the implementers as well as provide continued facilitation/mediation during the implementation process. One way of ensuring a smooth handover from mediators to implementers is to keep potential implementers apprised of DDR negotiations throughout the peace process. Draft agreements, especially in relation to timelines, should be reviewed by implementers to ensure that they are achievable.

During the Sudan peace process facilitated by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the United Nations (considered to be the potential implementer of the eventual agreement) was invited to participate in the peace talks as an observer. This inclusion allowed the mediator to cross-check draft proposals on different dimensions of the peace agreement, including the DDR aspects, with UN experts to ensure that there would be no gap between the mediation phase and the implementation phase.

Develop a Mediation and Facilitation Strategy to Support Implementation

In the implementation phase, thought must be given to a continued mediation and facilitation strategy to help signatories maintain goodwill and fulfill pledges made in an agreement. Peace agreements are often incomplete or necessarily vague. Implementing these agreements may rekindle old conflicts or generate new tensions as implementation creates winners and losers. In addition, the implementation process may see the emergence of new stakeholders (communities, marginalized groups) not included in the initial mediation. As for third-party supporters to a peace process, gaps in institutional memory may be created when responsibilities are transferred from the mediation team to the implementation team. More important, personal relationships established during the mediation phase may be lost in the transition from mediators to implementers.

Bearing these factors in mind, mediators and implementers should develop a coherent strategy to continue mediation and facilitation, including deploying available strategic and operational assets to manage

potential disagreements. These assets might include the continued good offices of the mediator, regional actors, member states, or a UN mission. If there is a UN mission, operation-level assets such as civil affairs officers or the military component of a peacekeeping mission can play useful roles in facilitation and mediation at the local level.

At the conclusion of the 2003 Liberia civil way, a variety of mechanisms and actors was leveraged to support implementation of the peace agreement, including a large UN peacekeeping mission authorized by the UN Security Council, an International Contact Group for Liberia (retaining a key role for the Economic Community of West African States, the mediator of the Accra Peace Agreement), and the prominent role of the United States in supporting implementation of the agreement.

Address Implementation of Key Political Provisions before Starting DDR

Mediators and implementers should be aware that key political provisions set the scene for DDR implementation, and not vice versa. Specific attention should be given to developing responsive mediation and facilitation mechanisms and strategies to deal with differences on key political questions. These mechanisms could include the continued involvement of the mediator, groups of friends, or donor groups, or the use of an international contact group with responsibility to act as a troubleshooter to continue mediation and facilitation.

In Côte d'Ivoire, the failure to implement the political and security dimensions of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement (2003), such as the issues of identity/nationality of immigrants residing in the country; changes in land ownership laws to grant these immigrants access to land; inclusive, free, and fair elections; a reorganization of the army; and the granting of amnesty to militia forces, led the Force Nouvelles to resist cooperating with the DDR process.

Anticipate and Resolve DDR Specific Problems

There should be a clear strategy to address DDR-specific disputes and differences that may arise during the implementation phase. This strategy should anticipate issues where conflict will arise (as a result of interpretation or reinterpretation), such as the numbers to be disarmed and demobilized,

the numbers to be integrated into security services, accountability for human rights violations, compensation to victims and eligibility criteria, the real political and economic loss to the conflict parties as a result of the loss of fighting forces, and the territory that they might control. This strategy should assess the seriousness of disagreement and its threat to the political and security environment, as well as find ways to resolve these differences so that they do not jeopardize the peace process.

Mechanisms included in the peace agreement can provide opportunities for dealing with conflicts. In the security arena, cease-fire, DDR, and SSR commissions are potential forums for managing issue specific challenges. However, implementers should also consider broader mediums, such as peace process assessments, evaluation commissions, and international contact groups, to deal with political issues that might have an impact on programs such as DDR. Other mechanisms that can be used to implement this mediation and facilitate strategy include roundtables, implementation councils, and joint committees to hear grievances, mediate disputes, and make adjustments in implementation.

During the early stages of implementing the General Peace Agreement (GPA) in Mozambique, it was clear that Afonso Dhlakama, leader of the Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (RENAMO), was intent on keeping his forces mobilized and in hiding. He thought that by maintaining a force, he would have a stronger bargaining position within any new government. Aldo Ajello, special representative of the UN secretary-general in Mozambique during the GPA implementation, encouraged Dhlakama to agree to demobilize by alleviating Dhlakama's concerns about transforming RENAMO into a political party.

Build Local Capacity for Mediation and Conflict Resolution

Successful DDR programs require communities to agree to receive returning combatants. Invariably the return of combatants will generate tensions that need to be addressed. Focused support should be provided to build a supportive environment for the reintegration of former fighters.

In 1995, the U.S. Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) promoted public debate in Angola on reintegration issues, along with other support for community revitalization, in areas with a large number of ex-combatants;

in Burundi (2004–06), the OTI invested in a community-based leadership training program for influential community members related to conflict resolution, vocational skills training, and small community grants. These activities were focused on areas where large numbers of ex-combatants were expected to resettle. The small grants component aimed to foster cooperation among divided populations.
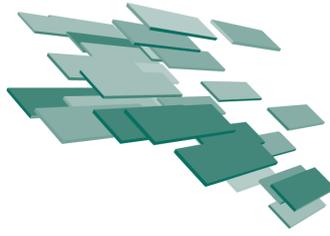
Conclusions: Guiding Principles

Bearing in mind the considerations provided for the different phases of the peace process, the following principles are offered to guide the management of DDR issues in a peace process.

Build Trust but Understand That Achieving Absolute Trust May Not Be Possible

Successful negotiation (and implementation) of DDR issues in a peace process is highly dependent on the faith that conflict parties have in the peace process. Therefore, there must be sufficient trust (absolute trust is unlikely) between negotiating parties prior to commencing discussions on DDR issues, which will deal with troop strength, locations, weaponry, use of children associated with fighting force, abductees, and war crimes. Common ground on humanitarian issues (discharge of injured and disabled, exchange of prisoners of war) and protection issues (release of children, the abducted), while important in their own right, can provide an early bridge to the later discussion of more hard-core issues of men and weapons. Such an approach requires close cooperation between the mediation team and relevant humanitarian and protection agencies.

Sensitize and Educate Parties on DDR Issues

Today, DDR is a relatively well-understood international concept among United Nations and the donor community. However, this complex program, its linkages to other political and social aspects of a peace process, and the flexibility that needs to be adopted in relation to this activity may not be well understood by mediators and negotiating parties (from the political to the military, from elites to the rank and file). As a result, mediators must familiarize themselves and the negotiating parties with the concepts, objectives, terminologies, and linkages to other security

arrangements (such as the integration of rebel forces into national security apparatus, issues of rank harmonization, vetting issues, SSR) of DDR programs. Useful ways to convey such information include the deployment of security advisers to these negotiating parties and their armed groups, targeted capacity-building (training) activities, and study tours that focus on learning from the experiences of other countries.

Be Context Relevant

Even as attention is given to learning from comparative DDR cases, mediators must make every effort to customize a DDR program to the context at hand—a process facilitated by early work on understanding the armed groups and their motivations. Care should be taken at the outset to ascertain if DDR is even relevant to the conflict, and, if so, what DDR approaches should be adopted in the particular situation. In some cases, it may be more appropriate to start with the integration of armed groups prior to the commencement of DDR (as in Burundi); in other cases, lengthy cantonment (only one phase of a DDR program) may be required because of the lack of confidence in the peace process.

Be Flexible

Mediators should be flexible and creative in conceptualizing and synchronizing DDR programs within the overall peace process. Sometimes the term DDR can undermine a peace process because of how DDR is perceived by negotiating parties or even what the term means when translated into the lingua franca. If possible, the term DDR should be adjusted to social and political circumstances without undermining the overall objectives of the DDR concept: that is, the removal of weapons from armed actors, the promotion of political discourse, and the sustainable reintegration of former fighters in all sectors. However, mediators need to ensure that any terms used do in fact result in DDR. Equally important, in particular for DDR programs in a peacekeeping context, terminologies used should not impede funding from the budget for disarmament and demobilization (including reinsertion).

Make Realistic Assumptions

Mediation efforts have a long history of making unrealistic assumptions about DDR issues. Three faulty assumptions that recur in peace process

are worth mentioning. First, the expectation that parties will commit to DDR before key political issues are resolved, or—worse—the insistence on DDR as a precondition to the peace process. Second, the assumption that political and military commanders are willing or able to provide accurate lists of fighters, their locations, and their weapons. Experience has shown that in most cases, actual numbers of fighters and weapons are difficult for even the negotiating parties to ascertain. Even if they have such information, parties have little incentive to provide it until details of the agreement become clear. The third assumption is that a DDR program will effectively deal with all fighters and collect all weapons. DDR programs are highly imperfect. In most cases, the real combatants to a conflict are the last ones who enter a DDR program (if at all), and most DDR programs collect only a small percentage of the actual weapons (and often the least battle-worthy ones). Therefore, mediation should continue during the implementation phase of a peace process to ensure that negotiating parties have little incentive to resort to buried weapons and hidden fighters. Mediators and implementers should be aware of the challenges that "hiding" these fighters have for the negotiating parties later in the implementation phase of the peace process, and should calibrate a program to enable hard-core fighters to enter the program at the later stages.

Focus on Implementation

For a peace agreement to succeed, mediators should focus the attention of the parties on the implementation phase of the program. Parties should address the political context in addition to policy, technical, and logistical issues. Where possible, implementation annexes for the DDR program and other related security issues should be developed to facilitate effective implementation. One key to fashioning a successful agreement is to write into the agreement strategies for implementation and for monitoring and (if possible) enforcing compliance with the terms of the agreement. It needs to be clear who is to do what by when, how performance is to be measured and by whom, and what will happen if targets are not reached. When these specifics are left vague, conflict parties can too easily procrastinate or evade their responsibilities. Provisions can accommodate future changes in the terms of the agreement and in the conflict parties themselves.

Ensure Adequate and Timely Resources for All Dimensions of the Program

The implementation of successful DDR programs requires significant financial support, often from the international community. Signatories and financial supporters of a peace agreement should be fully aware of the cost implications of a DDR program. Once DDR is agreed to and codified in an agreement, parties and the international community have committed themselves to implementing all phases of the program. The shortage of funds or the failure to deliver adequate resources in a timely manner can have serious political and security consequences for the peace process, whereas adequate and timely deployment of financial resources can boost confidence among conflict parties that the international community is committed to the full implementation of the peace agreement and assuage the longer-term livelihood concerns of the demobilizing fighters. Therefore, mediators should be cognizant of the requirement to craft political viable and financially realistic DDR provisions. Utmost attention must be paid to the mediation stages of DDR, the negotiation tactics of conflict parties, and the early involvement of donors and implementers.

Notes

1. The first edition of the Integrated Disarmament and Demobilization Reintegration Standards (IDDRS) document was released in 2006, and available in printed and CD-ROM formats. The latest version of the IDDRS document, which may contain changes that do not appear in the CD-ROM version, can be found at the UN DDR Resource Centre, http://www.unddr.org.

2. Numbers are significant; the cost of a DDR program can be extremely high. Estimates for the DDR support for fighters range from $1,000 to $1,500 per person, not counting administration and logistics cost.

3. The 2003 Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict goes further and stipulates state parties "shall take all feasible measures to ensure that persons below the age of 18 do not take a direct part in hostilities and that they are not compulsorily recruited into their armed forces."

4. Participation in DDR programs often confers considerable financial and other support on ex-combatants, support that is not available to others affected by the conflict, such as the internally displaced and refugees. Often criticized as unfair, DDR programs provide some form of upfront cash assistance (often as an incentive to encourage disarmament), psycho-social support, training, and promise of short or longer-term employment.

5. See Paul Collier, *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2003).

Acknowledgments

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Before joining the United Nations, Ong worked for two years at the International Peace Academy (IPA), a New York–based think tank, where he directed a research program on the United Nations and regional organizations. Prior to working at the IPA, he served in the Singapore Armed Forces (Airborne Rangers) for eleven years.

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