

Assessment of the Ituri Disarmament and Community Reinsertion Program (DCR)

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Contents

Abbreviations	5
Summary	7
Introduction	9
Background	11
DCR Programme in a Nutshell	13
Current State of Affairs	17
Numbers and Figures of Disarmed Combatants	17
Institutional Linkage Between PNDDR and Ituri DCR Programme	19
Gender Dimensions of the DCR Programme	21
Challenges	23
Appointing Ituri Militia Leaders to Posts in the FARDC	23
Incorporating all Rank-and-File Militia Members into the FARDC?	25
Improving the Community Reinsertion Trajectory	27
Paying Greater Attention to Gender Dimensions of DCR Programme	32
Moving From Voluntary to Forced Disarmament and Demobilization	33
Annexe I: Organizations Interviewed	37
Annexe II: Programme (27 January – 4 February 2005)	39

Abbreviations

AIP	Africa Initiative Programme
CLAP	Local Committee for Project Approval
CONADER	Congolese National Commission on Demobilization and Reintegration
COPI	Cooperazione Internazionale (Italian non-governmental organization)
CPTC	Technical Committee for Pacification and Coordination
CSO	Civil society organization
CTO	Transitional and Reorientation Centre
DCR	Disarmament and Community Reinsertion programme
FARDC	Congolese Armed Forces
FAPC	Popular Armed Forces for the Congo
FNI	Nationalist and Integrationist Front
FPDC	Popular Front for Democracy in Congo
FRPI	Revolutionary Front for Ituri
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Networks
MDRP	Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme
MemisaB	Memisa Belgium
MONUC	United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo
MoU	Memorandum of understanding
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PNDDR	National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programme
PUSIC	Party for Unity and Safeguarding the Integrity of Congo
SALW	Small arms and light weapons
SMI	Integrated Military Structure
TNG	Transitional National Government
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDP-ComRec	UNDP Unit for Community Recovery
UNDP-MRR	UNDP Unit for Rapid Response Mechanisms
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPC-K	Union of Congolese Patriots (Floribert Kisembo)
UPC-L	Union of Congolese Patriots (Thomas Lubanga)

Summary

- i. This report analyses the current state of affairs of the Ituri Disarmament and Community Reinsertion (DCR) programme. The programme started on 1 September 2004 with the aim of disarming and demobilizing the Ituri militias in order to stabilize the region. Officially, the programme's voluntary disarmament and demobilization phase was to end by 1 April 2005. So far, about two thirds of the estimated 15,000 militia members, have been disarmed. Some of the key challenges that the DCR programme faces are outlined below. They are probably not unique to the Ituri situation, and could well apply to other disarmament and demobilization programmes as well.
- ii. The DCR programme has faced the challenge of getting the **commitment of the militia leaders**, and thus of the militias as a whole. The programme has tried to withdraw the militia leaders from Ituri to Kinshasa by offering them high-ranking positions in the new Congolese army (FARDC), in the hope that this would prompt the leaders to order their militias to join the DCR programme. The effect of this move remains doubtful, particularly because the militia leaders have not been all that willing to instruct their militias to lay down their arms, and because it is questionable whether they still have any influence over their militias in Ituri.
- iii. However, the DCR programme has also developed a strategy that **offers the rank and file a viable alternative** to their life in the militias: it has offered them the opportunity to **join the FARDC**. The fact that by the end of March 2005 only 135 ex-combatants have opted to join the FARDC is mainly due to the lack of communication and cooperation between the key stakeholders involved in the DCR programme. For a long time, it was unclear whether rank and file would be welcome at all in the FARDC. Then there was talk of allowing a certain number of rank and file from each militia to join, and only recently has it seemed possible for all militia members to be incorporated. This, together with other ambiguous messages that have been given out by the Transitional National Government (TNG), United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) and the FARDC, has made militia members reluctant to join the FARDC, and has made FARDC incorporation a less viable alternative.

The other alternative that the DCR programme has offered the militias is **reinsertion assistance** to enable them to return home and resume civilian life. The programme provides assistance not only to returning ex-combatants, but also to receiving communities. Yet, up till now, the militias, ex-combatants and receiving communities are far from satisfied with the assistance being provided. They are not given sufficient information about who gets assistance, what assistance is available, how they can ask for assistance, or about the fact that their requests for assistance can also be turned down. There is the suspicion that unless the situation improves, militias will not give up their arms and return home; instead, ex-combatants will consider returning to the militias, and communities will become less willing to receive ex-combatants as this brings them more trouble than benefits. Therefore more reinsertion staff, more information,

more coordination, and more longer-term planning are urgently required, if the DCR programme is to get the most out of the reinsertion trajectory.

- iv. The DCR programme has also attempted to address the **specific needs of women and men in the militias**. However, there remains a gap between how it deals with gender issues on paper and how it deals with them in practice. Therefore the DCR planners need to be encouraged to: identify how many women there are, and in what positions, among the militias; treat women associated with the armed forces not as indirect but as direct programme beneficiaries; refer women that do not receive DCR assistance to complementary assistance programmes; extra-sensitize women in the militias to sign up for safe assistance instead of opting for self-demobilization; and be aware of women's and men's specific demobilization and reinsertion needs, and provide for them accordingly.
- v. Finally, the DCR programme has to make the rather difficult decision as to whether to move from **voluntary to forced disarmament and demobilization**. Officially the voluntary disarmament and demobilization phase is over, and there is talk of starting to **forcibly disarm** the remaining militias in Ituri. While forced disarmament may contribute to the stabilization of the Ituri region, its limitations should also be acknowledged. For instance, it will only marginally reduce the number of arms in the region, and thus needs to be complemented by longer-term small arms and light weapons (SALW) initiatives. More fundamentally, forced disarmament may bring military security, but not necessarily human security for the Ituri communities. It cannot replace 'software' activities such as long-term reconciliation activities and intra- and inter-communitarian dialogues as a means of achieving stability in Ituri. These are some of the factors that should be considered when deciding whether or not to start forced disarmament.

Introduction

1. This report discusses the present situation of the Disarmament and Community Reinsertion programme (DCR) Ituri. It is largely based on the situation observed and the information collected by the Clingendael Institute and the Africa Initiative Programme (AIP) in Ituri between 27 January and 2 February 2005. The report describes the background of the DCR programme, the current state of affairs, and the challenges that are currently encountered. The report also pays specific attention to the programme's **gender** dimensions.¹
2. The report is written for donors that participate in the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (MDRP) and/or the Congolese National Plan for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (PNDDR), and that are specifically interested in the DCR programme for Ituri. It informs these donors about the background, the present state of affairs, the gender dimensions, and policy considerations for strengthening the implementation of the DCR programme. The lessons derived from this report may be of relevance not only to the DCR programme, but possibly also to the PNDDR and MDRP.

¹ Regarding the gender dimensions of the DCR programme, this report builds on an earlier report: T. Bouta (2005) *Gender, Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration: Building Blocs for Dutch Policy*. The Hague, Clingendael Institute. <http://www.clingendael.nl/cru>

Background

3. In 2003, the long-suppressed inter-ethnic conflict in Ituri flared up. Hundreds of civilians were killed in Bunia town and many more were displaced. Since then, the Ituri region has been the scene of regular fighting between several militias. To date it is estimated that some 50,000 people have been killed and half a million uprooted from their homes.
4. The current conflict situation in the Ituri region (Oriental Province) in north-eastern DRC is a consequence of the regional conflict situation in the Great Lakes. Local grievances (land issues) did exist beforehand, but the divide-and-rule politics of neighbouring countries led to a continuous disintegration of militia groups and an important influx of weapons. Besides political considerations, the economic riches of the Ituri region attracted the sponsors of conflict from neighbouring countries.
5. The first incidents leading to the current crisis developed in 1999, and it was only at the end of 2002 and beginning of 2003 that the international community got involved in the situation. In the summer of 2003, after the final retreat of the Ugandan forces, this resulted in the first European Union-led military mission, 'ARTEMIS'. This intervention provided MONUC with an opportunity to reinforce its position in the area.
6. It was not until May 2004 that the Transitional National Government (TNG) officially invited the Ituri militia groups to the negotiation table in Dar es Salaam in order to come to a **military** solution for Ituri. There, on 14 May 2004, the leaders of seven Ituri militias signed the 'Dar es Salaam Accords' in which they committed themselves to a disarmament and community reintegration programme in Ituri. The signatories were the Popular Armed Forces for the Congo (FAPC), the Nationalist and Integrationist Front (FNI), the Revolutionary Front for Ituri (FPRI), the Popular Front for Democracy in Congo (FPDC), the Party for Unity and Safeguarding the Integrity of Congo (PUSIC), the Union of Congolese Patriots (Thomas Lubanga) (UPC-L), and the Union of Congolese Patriots (Floribert Kisembo) (UPC-K).

DCR Programme in a Nutshell²

7. Following the signing of the Dar es Salaam Accords, the DCR programme was launched on 1 September 2004 as a contribution to the demilitarization of the Ituri region. Its aim is to disarm **15,000 combatants, including some 6,000 children**, and to facilitate their reinsertion into civilian life or into the new national Congolese army, the FARDC. The goal is to disarm and demobilize about 15,000 combatants³ (see table below).

Militias	No. of Adults (estimated)	No. of Children (estimated)	Total (estimated)	Transit Site
UPC ⁴	3,000	2,000	5,000	Nizi
FAPC	2,000	1,000	3,000	Mahagi
FNI/FPRI	2,000	2,000	4,000	Kpandroma (FNI) Aveba (FPRI)
PUSIC	1,500	1,000	2,500	Kasenyi
FPDC	300	200	500	Mahagi
Total	8,800	6,200	15,000	

8. The DCR programme has an overall **financial** requirement of US\$ 10.5 million: US\$ 4.5 million for setting up the transit sites, and US\$ 6.0 million for assisting host communities to recover from the conflict.
9. The DCR programme **targets** combatants and the war-affected population in the communities to which ex-combatants return. The combatants should be members of groups that are signatories to the Dar es Salaam Accords, and are subdivided into: children associated with the armed forces, adult combatants, and wounded combatants. The war-affected population is split into: direct dependants of the combatants; vulnerable groups within the communities, such as orphans and female survivors of sexual violence; and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Perhaps it is worth noting that communities and specific target groups such as IDPs receive assistance not only through the DCR programme, but also via other relief and rehabilitation initiatives that take place in parallel to the DCR programme.
10. The DCR programme has three phases. The first phase, the **preparation phase**, entails sensitization activities to prepare the militias and the population for the forthcoming disarmament

² This description of the DCR Programme is largely based on the following two policy documents: Gouvernement de la République Démocratique du Congo (2004) *Plan National de Désarmement, Démobilisation et Réinsertion*, and Comité Technique de Planification et Coordination DDR/RDC (February 2004) *Plan Opérationnel pour le Désarmement et la Réinsertion Communautaire en Ituri*.

³ Figures derived from Comité Technique de Planification et Coordination DDR/RDC (February 2004) *Plan Opérationnel pour le Désarmement et la Réinsertion Communautaire en Ituri*, p.5.

⁴ Separate estimates for UPC-L and UPC-K were not available.

and community reinsertion programme. During this phase, the programme also identifies and establishes the transit sites.

11. The second phase, the **transit phase**, concentrates on the disarmament and demobilization of combatants. The combatants are expected to come to the site, and go through a standard procedure of reception, disarmament, registration and identification, division into subgroups (children, adults and disabled), briefing about what to expect from the transit phase, collection of a transit kit, referral to separate quarters, sensitization training with attention paid to issues such as HIV/AIDS to prepare them for what to expect after leaving the transit site, allocation of identity cards, and distribution of reinsertion kits, which include food and tools. Finally, adult ex-combatants get a US\$ 50 transport allowance to ease the introduction into civilian life. Children stay at the site for a maximum of 48 hours. They are not given an identity card before they return home, to avoid stigmatization. Those children who are unable to go home directly are referred to transitional and reorientation centres (CTOs) and then they either go home or are placed with foster families. The disabled combatants are directly referred to health centres in the region. The other adult combatants stay for a maximum of five days at the site. They have two options: either return to their community, or to be incorporated into the FARDC and go to a centre de brassage.⁵
12. The third phase is that of **community reinsertion or else incorporation into the FARDC**. After having selected and screened those ex-militias that opt for reintegration into the FARDC, the DCR Programme hands them over to the Integrated Military Structure (SMI) that together with the FARDC is responsible for the transport of these ex-militias to the centres de brassage. After that the FARDC takes further care of the military training and the actual reintegration into the new national army of these ex-militias. The DCR programme focuses on the community reinsertion of ex-militias. The aim of this phase of the programme is to actively involve communities in smoothing the return of ex-combatants, and to balance the reinsertion benefits offered to returning ex-combatants with those made available to members of the community to which they return. There are specific reinsertion activities for children and disabled ex-combatants who return home, while returning adult ex-combatants and their dependants are offered assistance in the form of help with income-generating activities, employment in labour-intensive projects (such as road-building schemes), and vocational training. There are two types of reinsertion assistance available. First, there are short-term micro-finance projects exclusively for ex-combatants. These micro-credit projects lend each ex-combatant a maximum of US\$ 600, and require that the ex-combatants organize themselves in small groups, that they develop their funding proposals in cooperation with a local non-governmental organization (NGO), and that they implement their activities within within six months of the loan being approved. Second, there are medium-term socio-economic reinsertion activities for communities in general. These require that 70 per cent of the project beneficiaries are ex-combatants and thus that no more than 30 per cent are 'ordinary' community members, that the project budget does not exceed US\$ 30,000, and that the project time span is about 1-3 years. Each proposal passes before a Local Committee for Project Approval (CLAP). The CLAPs are specifically established for the DCR programme and consist of community representatives and ex-combatants, whose task it is to

⁵ Centres de brassages are places where militia members are brought together, tested and trained before they actually enter the FARDC.

make a selection of the proposals that community members put forward. The staff of the DCR programme finally decides whether or not the proposals selected by the CLAPs are to be funded.

13. Various agencies are involved in implementing the DCR programme. Key agencies are the Congolese National Commission on Demobilization and Reintegration (CONADER), MONUC, FARDC and the Integrated Military Structure (SMI), the local authorities, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). CONADER is in charge of the PNDDR and therefore is responsible for the coordination of the DCR programme in Ituri. CONADER is in charge of all transit sites in Ituri. MONUC deals with issues of security and logistics, and it assisted UNDP in selecting and establishing the transit sites. To date it guards the transit sites, and receives and disarms combatants there, in cooperation with the FARDC. MONUC is also active in informing and sensitizing communities and combatants about the DCR programme (e.g. through Radio Okapi). Besides disarming combatants, the FARDC together with the SMI is responsible for the referral and transport of ex-combatants to the *centres de brassages*. It is also envisaged that the FARDC eventually will be able to provide security in Ituri, without the presence of MONUC. The UNDP in its role as lead agent for the PNDDR is involved in the formulation and implementation of the DCR programme. It provides technical and financial assistance to CONADER and implementing agencies. The UNDP Unit for Rapid Response Mechanisms (UNDP-MRR) deals with all issues relating to the transit sites. Together with MONUC, it has constructed the transit sites and provided the basic infrastructure including tents, water supply, sanitation, communications and logistics. UNDP-MRR is also responsible for a database for the registration of ex-combatants, which entails identification by iris recognition. The UNDP Unit for Community Recovery (UNDP-ComRec) concentrates on the third phase of the DCR programme, and is in charge of micro-credit projects for ex-combatants and socio-economic rehabilitation activities for the communities in general. UNICEF is fully responsible for the disarmament, demobilization and community reintegration of children associated with the armed forces. Finally, it should be noted that all these key actors can subcontract other international or national agencies for specific tasks within the DCR programme.
14. Another element of the DCR programme that deserves attention is **gender**. The PNDDR, of which the DCR programme is an integral component, acknowledges the multiple roles of women in conflict situations, including the role of combatant. The PNDDR stresses that **female combatants** – and **women associated with the armed forces** – are programme beneficiaries. It stipulates that their inclusion in the programme, though, requires specific measures. For instance, it mentions that planners should pay extra attention to the question of identifying women as members of militias, because this still is a taboo in Congolese society. The PNDDR document stresses that there is a need for sensitization campaigns that specifically target female combatants. It also stipulates that all programme phases should take into account the different needs of female and male combatants. At the same time, however, the PNDDR clearly states that **female dependants** of male combatants are not direct beneficiaries of the programme.⁶ The DRC plan document itself explicitly speaks of male and female combatants, and refers to female ex-

⁶ Gouvernement de la République Démocratique du Congo (2004) *Plan National de Désarmement, Démobilisation et Réinsertion*, pp. 21–22 and p. 30.

combatants and wives of ex-combatants as a vulnerable group whose community reinsertion requires special attention.⁷ Both the PNDDR and the DDR plan are unambiguous about the presence of girls and boys in the militias, and the importance of addressing their different needs.

15. Against the background described above, in September 2004, the DCR programme opened five **transit sites** (Aveba, Mahagi, Kpandroma, Kasenyi and Nizi) for the disarmament and demobilization of the militias. Each site in principle corresponds to one militia group, or to more than one, provided they are not in opposition to each other. In February 2005, a sixth transit site was opened in Bunia, and more recently a seventh site in Aru.

⁷ Comité Technique de Planification et Coordination DDR/RDC (February 2004) *Plan Opérationnel pour le Désarmement et la Réinsertion Communautaire en Ituri*.

Current State of Affairs⁸

16. This section assesses three aspects of the DCR programme. First, the numbers of disarmed combatants, and at the numbers of militia leaders who have been appointed to posts in the FARDC to date. Second, the institutional linkage between the national PNDDR and the Ituri DCR programme in terms of collaboration between lead agencies such as CONADER and UNDP, and in terms of information exchange through a joint database for the registration of ex-combatants. Third, the way in which gender issues are addressed.

Numbers and Figures of Disarmed Combatants

17. It is hard to be precise about **the number of disarmed and demobilized ex-combatants**, as figures are changing daily.⁹ Figures released by MONUC on 14 April 2005 speak of a total of about 10172 disarmed combatants, including some 3,000 children associated with the armed forces. This suggests that over the last months the number of disarmed militias has substantially increased. The figures of 26 January 2005, as collected during the field visit, for instance, spoke of a total of about 2500 disarmed militias.

14 April 2005					
Transit Site	Men	Women	Boys	Girls	
Kasenyi	858	6	217	0	1081
Kpandroma	617	4	852	317	1790
Mahagi	671	8	296	114	1089
Nizi	563	5	98	6	672
Aveba	609	28	775	114	1526
Bunia	1714	4	160	17	1895
Aru	1741	119	194	65	2119
Total	6,773	174	2,592	633	10,172
<i>Source: MONUC.</i>					

⁸ The report largely reflects the situation of the DCR programme at the beginning of February 2005. Most numbers of disarmed combatants, appointed generals in the FARDC, etc., relate to the situation at that moment. Where possible, reference is made to more recent developments, such as the recent skirmishes between MONUC and FNI, and the supposed disarmament of FAPC troops. The latest data included in the report are from 14 April 2005.

⁹ In principle, MONUC makes a daily update of the number of combatants disarmed and arms surrendered. For the latest updates, it is suggested to directly contact MONUC's Information Office.

26 January 2005					
Transit Site	Men	Women	Boys	Girls	
Kasenyi	226	5	112	0	343
Kpandroma	404	3	583	143	1,133
Mahagi	239	1	149	9	398
Nizi	59	1	20	1	81
Aveba	89	2	463	46	600
Total	1,017	12	1,327	199	2,555
<i>Source: MONUC.</i>					

26 January 2005						
Transit Site	Kasenyi	Kpandroma	Mahagi	Nizi	Aveba	Total
FNI	0	1,133	16	3	0	1,152
FAPC	0	0	296	0	0	296
FPDC	0	0	78	0	0	78
UPC/L	42	0	4	65	0	111
UPC/K	21	0	0	4	0	25
PUSIC	236	0	0	9	0	245
FPRI	0	0	0	0	582	582
Others	30	0	0	0	0	30
Total						2519
<i>Source: MONUC.</i>						

What these figures show is that while initially mainly *déserteurs* and ‘children’ went to the transit sites, more recently all sorts of militia got disarmed. Especially the percentage of disarmed **adult combatants** has rapidly increased over the last two months.

Another observation is that members of the same militia were disarmed at different sites. Some interviewees thought this was because of MONUC flying in militia members from elsewhere to boost the disarmament statistics. Other interviewees mentioned that militia members often had had to escape from their group and out of fear of repercussions did not go to transit sites in their own group’s area of control.

A third observation is that militias tend to play with the figures in order to show how committed they are to the DCR programme. They claim that most of the disarmed ex-combatants belonged to their own group. For instance, when the UPC-K spokesman was confronted with the low number of disarmed UPC-K combatants, his answer was that “those who have been entered in the disarmament figures as PUSIC were actually UPC-K militias”.

A fourth, related observation is that numbers do not always reflect a militia’s current commitment to the disarmament and demobilization process. For instance, the FNI is probably one of the hardest militias to disarm. However, the number of 1,152 disarmed FNI militia members on 26 January 2005 would not suggest so. One explanation for this high number despite the low commitment is that there were many children among those FNI militia members who

disarmed. Another explanation is that within the FNI the difference between militia and community member is hardly distinguishable, as Lendu communities as a whole have participated in the conflict. In a situation where the total number of FNI supporters is unclear, a figure of 1,152 disarmed FNI supporters is not that indicative of FNI commitment.

A fifth observation concerns the number of ex-combatants who opted for integration into the FARDC. MONUC figures of 28 March 2005 mention that of the estimated 4,700 ex-combatants, some 4,565 returned home and 135 opted for integration into the FARDC. However, the latter process does not always go smoothly. Various interviewees mentioned that the transport to the *centres de brassage* – for the ex-combatants who opted for incorporation into the FARDC – was sometimes problematic. None of the agencies (SMI, MONUC, UNDP-MRR) wanted to take the lead and bear the costs. In certain cases, this led to a situation where, according to a UPC-K spokesman, “ex-combatants who did not receive any transport to a *centre de brassage* were “forced” to return to the bush and take up their arms again”.

A final observation is that although about 10,172 combatants have been disarmed, the number of weapons collected, 4225, is relatively low. According to one interviewee, “It is estimated that the programme has collected one gun for every three militia members, while it is known that each militia member has two guns on average.” Hence, the perception remains that the number of guns handed in represents only a tiny proportion of the weapons that abound in Ituri.

18. In the hope of increasing the militias’ commitment to the DCR programme, the TNG offered **Ituri militia leaders top positions in the FARDC**. The actual number of militia leaders who have been appointed and who have gone to Kinshasa is not clear. While the ‘official’ figures speak of one general, four colonels, three lieutenant-colonels and four majors for each militia, the militias themselves mentioned totally different numbers. The UPC-L spokesman said: “General Bosco has been appointed as a general in the FARDC, but as he was slightly wounded he has not yet gone to Kinshasa but stayed in Ituri. We also had four colonels, three lieutenant-colonels and four majors appointed. I am one of these colonels, so even though I am still here in Bunia, I regard myself no longer as UPC-L militia but as a FARDC colonel.” In contrast, the UPC-K spokesman said that his militia had “already sent three generals to Kinshasa to join the FARDC, and will soon send another five commanders, including one general, one colonel, one lieutenant-colonel and one major”. The FNI spokesman came up with different numbers again, indicating that “two of their generals, Germaine Katanga and Goda Supka, went to Kinshasa and are waiting to officially be sworn in, and FNI expects that other FNI leaders also can enter the FARDC”. The next paragraph further analyses this gap between the expectations of the militias and the plans of the DCR programme.

Institutional Linkage Between PNDDR and Ituri DCR Programme

19. The institutional linkage between the DCR programme and the PNDDR is growing, and is reflected in e.g. the CONADER presence on the ground, the intensified cooperation between CONADER and UNDP, and the use of a joint database for the registration of ex-combatants.
20. CONADER currently has 130 staff working in Ituri: 70 technical support officers, and 60 sensitization officers. Its field presence is quite visible. At each transit site, CONADER officers

are responsible for the overall management. Each site also has a number of CONADER officers who are charged with conducting sensitization activities inside and outside the transit site. Although so far most sensitization has targeted combatants and has taken place within the sites, CONADER is now concentrating more on informing communities about the DCR programme. In Mahagi, for instance, CONADER uses the local radio station to disseminate information, and every Friday it briefs local NGOs to disseminate the information to their own local constituencies.

Whether the CONADER field presence has a positive **impact** on the DCR programme remains unclear. One interviewee stated that “if the presence of CONADER in Ituri increases and that of MONUC decreases, militias like the UPC-L may become more committed to the DCR programme”. Another interviewee remarked that “CONADER right from the start lost goodwill among the local population, because it mainly recruited officers from outside and not inside Ituri”. Perhaps most importantly, various interviewees observed that CONADER’s commitment to the DCR programme is not necessarily the same as the TNG’s. As will be elaborated below, the TNG decision to incorporate armed Ituri militia members directly into the FARDC has been in stark contrast with CONADER’s policy, according to which all Ituri militias should disarm before opting for community reinsertion or FARDC incorporation.

21. The cooperation between CONADER and UNDP does not (yet) seem to have been formalized in an official **memorandum of understanding (MoU)**. According to the head of CONADER in Ituri, “Only the Technical Committee for Pacification and Coordination (CPTC) has signed a contract with UNDP. This contract forms the basis for the cooperation between CONADER and UNDP.” A representative of UNDP-MRR, who is not aware of an official MoU either, thinks that “if there was to be an MoU between CONADER and UNDP, it would be signed at the level of Kinshasa and surely not at the level of Bunia”. She adds that the practical cooperation is relatively good. “On a daily basis UNDP and CONADER meet regularly. We share the same office in Bunia, and we attend the daily briefing meetings at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) office in Bunia.”
22. One tension that came to the fore arose from the fact that UNDP – and not the MDRP – pays for CONADER’s involvement in the DCR programme. Various UNDP officials expressed their dissatisfaction with the current situation in which CONADER takes the decisions, and UNDP pays the costs.
23. One connection of a practical nature between the PNDDR and the DCR Ituri is **the joint database** for the registration of ex-combatants, which entails identification by iris recognition. Once a combatant enters a transit site, then the relevant agency – usually UNDP-MRR for adults and UNICEF for children – automatically enters the combatant’s details into a database. Then each Ituri transit site sends this data to Bunia, and Bunia sends it to Kinshasa. Likewise, every transit site, both inside and outside Ituri, can access the database. The actual use of the database during the community reinsertion phase, for instance, to monitor which reinsertion benefits each ex-combatant receives, requires additional analysis. As the reinsertion phase had hardly started, no data could yet be obtained.

Gender Dimensions of the DCR Programme

24. As at 26 January 2005, **12 female combatants** and 199 girls associated with the armed forces had reported at the transit sites. Whether there are no more than 12 female combatants among the militias, or whether there are more female combatants who for various reasons do not show up at the transit sites, cannot be said with certainty. None of the interviewees could provide information on the number of adult women among the militias. Some, though, guessed that there were about 10 per cent female combatants among the militias.
25. Besides the 12 female combatants, the transit site officers noticed an unknown number of **female dependants** who accompanied male combatants to the transit camps. These female dependants did not enter the camps, but stayed in the neighbourhood. In most cases the transit site officers, who had enough time, counted the number of dependants and readjusted the reinsertion package of all ex-combatant with dependants accordingly.
26. DCR planners appeared to have difficulties with the category '**women associated with the armed forces**', which include both abducted women and women in support functions. While the PNDDR refers on paper to women associated with the armed forces, the DCR programme in practice does not take their specific needs into account. According to the head of CONADER in Ituri, the DCR programme "only separates women with weapons (female combatants) from women without weapons (female dependants). It simply regards women associated with the armed forces as female dependants, and thus not as direct beneficiaries of the DCR programme." This practice is not in line with the prescribed PNDDR policy of targeting women associated with the armed forces as direct beneficiaries. It is also in contrast with the reality on the ground, where according to UNICEF officials, "various adult women are forced by boys and men to enter the militias. Everyone knows that these women should not be regarded as their wives. Therefore it is up to CONADER and the UNDP to adequately take account of the needs of these women."
27. One interviewee very accurately described the way in which DCR planners deal with the **specific needs** of female and male combatants: "The one female combatant disarmed in Nizi was Esperanza. Following the guidelines, we placed her in the special women's quarters at our site. As she was there all by herself, we decided to put some disabled male combatants who had been injured by mines in her quarters. Esperanza followed the same information and sensitization activities as her male colleagues. There was no need to adjust these activities to her specific needs. Like all the men, Esperanza also had to return home and take up her civilian life again." Other interviewees confirmed this picture of officers scarcely considering the different encampment and reinsertion needs of women and men from the militias.
28. The DCR programme has no **specialized gender officers**. It is open to question whether DCR staff in general, trained in gender issues or not, automatically pay attention to gender during implementation. One UNDP interviewee clearly stated: "It is the task of our gender adviser in Kinshasa to take care of gender in the DCR programme." Another UNDP interviewee expects that "our newly employed gender specialist in Bukavu will start working on gender issues in the DCR programme, and will work with women in the transit sites if there are any women who show

up”. Due to the absence of gender experts, the DCR programme is not able to assess the number and roles of women in the militias, and to adequately address the needs of these women during the encampment and reinsertion phase. More action and expertise is required to render the DCR programme more sensitive to women in the militias.

29. The DCR programme/UNICEF does aim to address the specific needs of **boys and girls associated with the armed forces**. In order to be effective in this field, it will be crucial to ensure that community reinsertion activities make provisions for the different needs of boys and girls. Often parallel to the DCR programme, various international and national organizations are assisting **(civilian) women who have been subjected to sexual violence** during conflict. For instance, in Mahagi, the Italian NGO Cooperazione Internazionale (COPI) and the local women’s organization FOMMI cooperate in identifying female survivors of sexual violence, treating them medically and psychologically, and helping them find alternative places to settle if they are rejected by their husbands, family and/or community. For both the DCR programme and other programmes in the Ituri region, it remains crucial to address the high incidence of rape and other forms of sexual violence against women, as well as to provide female survivors of sexual violence with both short-term assistance (eg, medicines) and long-term support (eg, sustainable community reintegration).

Challenges

30. The DCR programme obviously faces a number of challenges, such as the continued tensions and fighting between the militias, the recent skirmishes between MONUC and the FNI, the ongoing proliferation of arms in Ituri, the weak commitment of militias (especially the FNI, UPC-L and UPC-K) to the disarmament and demobilization process, and the TNG's ambiguous attitude to the process. Interviews with various stakeholders brought the following five challenges to the fore:
- Appointment of militia leaders to senior posts in the FARDC;
 - FARDC incorporation of rank-and-file militia members;
 - Improvement of the community reinsertion trajectory;
 - Attention to be paid to the gender dimensions of the DCR programme;
 - Consideration to be given to moving from voluntary to forced disarmament and demobilization.

Appointing Ituri Militia Leaders to Posts in the FARDC

Analysis

31. Right from the start of the DCR programme, stakeholders considered removing the militia leaders from Ituri by appointing them as generals in the FARDC in Kinshasa, in the expectation that the militias would then disintegrate, disarm and demobilize. During a visit to Bunia on 12 December 2004, the former Congolese Minister of Defence, General Jean-Pierre Onekdane, revisited the issue of incorporating Ituri militia leaders into the FARDC. The General announced a government decree under which officers of the Ituri militias were to be appointed to posts in the FARDC and their existing military ranks would be recognized. The response of the different militias varied substantially.
32. The reaction of the UPC-K spokesman was that “the TNG is no longer committed to Ituri and the DCR programme, but is shifting its attention to Kinshasa and the FARDC. Therefore our stance is not to give any men to the DCR programme or to Kinshasa until the TNG and the international community jointly indicate what they expect from us. It should also be clear that sending generals to Kinshasa is a solution for individuals, not for the group. The generals just take what they are offered. From Kinshasa they are not giving us orders any more, but we order them what to do. The only reason that UPC-K provided Kinshasa with generals was to show to the TNG and international community that the UPC-K is cooperative.”
33. The UPC-L spokesman was not very positive about the decree either, and mentioned that “the DCR programme should first secure the troops and then the leaders, instead of the other way round. Moreover, those in Kinshasa will not tell us any more what to do here in Ituri.”

34. The FNI reacted positively, saying that “it welcomes the decree, because the FNI has right from the start of the DCR programme demanded the reintegration of its militias into the FARDC. Initially this did not take place. All we had to do was disarm and wait for reintegration support, which so far was minimal and did not bring us any benefits. Now with the decree one of our demands is fulfilled.” However, various interviewees critically remarked that “the FNI has always had a leadership problem and it is fairly unlikely that the FNI leaders who have been appointed in Kinshasa will still control the FNI militias in Ituri.”
35. The decree appeared to work out well for the FAPC. A former FAPC chief remarked in an Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) interview of 22 March 2005: “The Congolese Government showed us goodwill and our leader – Jerome Kakwavu – is well received in Kinshasa. There is no more reason to fight.”
36. Generally speaking, though, stakeholders in the DCR programme doubt whether appointing Ituri militia leaders to the FARDC would be beneficial to the disarmament process in Ituri. UNDP and UNICEF staff interviewed stated: “It is a disaster that the militia leaders are sent off to Kinshasa, because we no longer know how the militias are operating, and who in the militias we should contact.” Others, like an interviewee from AIP, questioned “whether the militias will obey their leaders in Kinshasa if they order them to disarm. The militias do not seem to be organized in a very hierarchal way. So once the militia leaders are sent off to Kinshasa, it is likely that others will replace them, and that still none of the troops will disarm.” An interviewee from MONUC complained that “the TNG is frustrating the DCR process by appointing generals. It is also a mistake on MONUC’s part to support these appointments. It did not work before by granting national militias a position in the new army, it will not work now. The Ituri militias are not real military and will not know how to operate as real soldiers in a more professional army. We have seen that with the Mai-Mai who quickly left the FARDC. The generals just go to Kinshasa to gain respect. They stay there in a nice hotel and phone the militia in Ituri for six hours a day. In the meantime other commanders take over their position in Ituri but nothing changes, and it will not speed up the disarmament process. Do you really think that if militia leaders earn US\$ 2,500 per day in Ituri, they will accept a post of general that pays US\$ 300 per month? Of course they will continue to keep control over their resources in Ituri.”

Policy Considerations

37. It can be questioned whether appointing militia leaders as FARDC generals in Kinshasa will accelerate the DCR programme. The programme faces a dilemma in that if the leaders remain in contact with their militias and resources in Ituri, nothing will change. If they are cut off, however, it is not likely that they still can influence their militias. It makes more sense to take a tougher line towards the militia leaders. The recent arrests of some Ituri militia leaders in Kinshasa as a response to their presumed involvement in the recent assassinations of nine MONUC peacekeepers, is an important step in this direction.

Incorporating all Rank-and-File Militia Members into the FARDC?

Analysis

38. Over the last few months, there has been confusion about whether it is true that all militia members, including the rank and file, can join the FARDC. And if true, whether they still must be disarmed at one of the transit sites, or whether they can keep their arms and go directly to one of the *centres de brassage*. The confusion on this issue started after the above-mentioned visit of General Jean-Pierre Onekdane to Bunia on 12 December 2004. According to the General, not only a TNG decree appointing the militia leaders to FARDC posts was announced, but a decree (No. 094 of 11 December 2004) was issued, which insists on the incorporation of *all* Ituri militias, including the rank-and-file members, into the FARDC.
39. According to a **UPC-K** spokesman, the decree states that “the TNG will be sending a Coordination Mission to Ituri in order to count, identify and regroup all militia members, and send them to a *centre de brassage* in order to integrate them into the FARDC”. UPC-K’s interpretation of the decree is that “once the TNG sends this Coordination Commission, there is no role to play any more for CONADER, which shows that the TNG is no longer committed to the DCR programme. Furthermore, the decree only speaks of *centres de brassage* outside Ituri instead of transit sites inside Ituri. This also indicates that the TNG is giving up its commitment to the DCR programme.” The UPC-K spokesman clarified his point by saying that “While the TNG and the international community started together with the DCR, they are now operating against each other. Only the international community is still supporting the DCR programme, and the TNG has let it down.”
40. The **UPC-L** explains the decree as meaning that “all UPC-L militia members can now enter the FARDC. They will go for the selection, and those who pass the selection will stay, those who do not, will return home.” The combatants who return home still need assistance, which is why the UPC-L also asked the TNG “not to give up its commitment to the DCR programme”.
41. A CONADER spokesman commented as follows on the decree: “If the message is that combatants can go with their arms to a *centre de brassage*, then it must be interpreted as a message to sabotage the programme. While it indeed has been said that militia members can go

directly to the *centres de brassage* to join the new army, MONUC has directly corrected this message through Radio Okapi, stating that the only way to enter the new army is to go through the transit sites.” He also added: “If the TNG had changed its policy, then it would have officially informed CONADER, and that has not yet been the case.”

42. Obviously, the announcement has confused the militias so much that they no longer know whether the TNG and the international community still expect them to disarm and return home, or whether the TNG and the international community offer them the possibility of keeping their arms and of entering the FARDC. Despite this confusion, there seems to be a willingness among the militia to let their rank-and-file members incorporate into the FARDC. This willingness should be further capitalized upon. The situation calls for unambiguous, adequately coordinated messages on the part of the TNG, MONUC and the FARDC.

Policy Considerations

43. *Clearer and better coordinated communication.* It is essential for programmes like the DCR that the parties that are part of the management of the programme communicate clearly on what can be expected and should be done. This is currently not the case in the DCR programme. Given the problems that have already occurred on the basis of the vague communication, it is essential that steps are taken immediately to solve this problem. The TNG, MONUC, UNDP and CONADER should issue a joint statement about what they expect from the militias and should at least respond to the following concerns: The (im)possibility for *all* Ituri militia members to integrate into the FARDC; where militia members should go in case of integration into the FARDC (i.e. should they first go to one of the transit sites in Ituri to be disarmed? Or alternatively, keep their arms and directly go to one of the *centres de brassage* outside Ituri?); who will arrange transport if they have to go to a *centre de brassage* outside Ituri; whether militia members who have entered a *centres de brassage*, can expect to automatically be integrated into the FARDC (or is there still the possibility that they may not pass a particular selection test, and therefore cannot be incorporated into the FARDC?); whether militia members who want to integrate into the FARDC but cannot do so for whatever reason and have to return home, still can participate in the reinsertion trajectory of the DCR programme; the duration of the reinsertion programme (a clear end date, clearly related to the commitment of the TNG and the international community). A joint statement of this kind would give members of the militias a clearer idea of what they can expect from the DCR.
44. *Make FARDC more attractive as employer.* As long as the employment conditions in the FARDC are uncertain, meaning that salaries are not regularly and fully paid, militia members will continue to be doubtful about joining the FARDC. An important challenge in the medium term, therefore, is to invest in improving the functioning of the FARDC, and to turn it into an attractive future employer for (Ituri) militias.
45. *Develop alternative, local security structures/bodies to FARDC.* As an alternative to integration into the FARDC, the TNG and other stakeholders could consider creating local security structures that absorb the militias, such as communal defence groups. These local security structures may particularly attract those militia members who feel they cannot leave Ituri because they have to defend their own people. It is, however, crucial that these local defence mechanisms are integrated into the regional/national security apparatus and to ensure they fall under the responsibility and control of the TNG.

Improving the Community Reinsertion Trajectory

Analysis In General

47. No community reinsertion benefits can ever compete with the benefits the militia gain from looting and illegal exploitation of resources. As long as these activities continue, it is not realistic

to expect them to disarm and take up their civilian life again. However, various interviewees indicated that only a few high-ranking militia members get the profits, and the majority do not. For this majority, adequate reinsertion assistance can be a powerful incentive to leave the militias, particularly if the DCR programme forces them to make a choice.

48. So far, the community reinsertion trajectory has not provided the rank and file with a strong incentive to leave, and thus clearly needs to be accelerated and improved. The link between the demobilization and community reinsertion phases needs to be strengthened to avoid ex-combatants returning to the militias and communities losing their commitment to the DCR programme. In addition, a proper balance between short-term reinsertion activities and more sustainable reintegration activities must be found. Key problem areas are:

- Limited reinsertion staff, especially within UNDP-ComRec;
- Insufficient information on reinsertion benefits for ex-combatants and receiving communities;
- Inadequate coordinated information dissemination;
- Perspective on continuation of reinsertion activities in a relatively insecure working environment;
- Sustained reintegration of ex-combatants.

More Staff

49. Until January 2005, only two UNDP-ComRec officers in Bunia worked full-time on the reinsertion trajectory. With the arrival of new staff in February 2005, UNDP-ComRec finally hopes to open local offices outside Bunia to speed up the reinsertion phase. In the meantime, though, the reinsertion trajectory has been substantially delayed. Only two micro-credit projects for ex-combatants, assisting two groups of 12 ex-combatants in Kasenyi to restart their fishery activities, have so far been approved. It is hard to tell how many socio-economic community reinsertion projects are carried out. Communities have sent UNDP-ComRec numerous proposals, of which some were not approved, others were approved but have not yet been funded, and others again did get funding but have still not been implemented. According to a CONADER officer, the delay in reinsertion assistance has led to “a gap between demobilization and reinsertion”. He explained that “those who got disarmed and returned to their communities never got any assistance and they started looting. This had a negative impact on the receiving communities. While initially there was some willingness to receive the ex-combatants, some of them have now become hesitant. They no longer are open to the returning ex-combatants, not even to ‘the good ones’, those who have not been looting after disarmament.”

More Information

50. More targeted information on the reinsertion trajectory is needed to (re)gain the interest and trust of the militias. For instance, the UPC-K spokesmen complained that the reinsertion assistance so far has been inadequate. “As the DCR programme cannot even guarantee reintegration assistance for one year, it is better to keep our arms, and to ensure our own income.” The FNI-spokesman referred to a declining trust in the reinsertion trajectory. “We go to the transit sites, we get some marginal assistance, and can then go home. Do the DCR officers really think that our war mentality has changed?” He also added that “initially our FNI communities saw the benefits of

the DCR programme. On the invitation of UNDP-ComRec they developed proposals for socio-economic community reinsertion projects, which are still waiting for a response. This lack of response and funding is making them disappointed in the DCR programme. I warn you that once FNI communities have lost their trust in the DCR programme, it will be very hard to regain their trust.”

51. Returned ex-combatants in Nizi did not understand what reinsertion assistance to ask for. They appeared to confuse the **two forms of reinsertion assistance** (micro-credit projects for ex-combatants and socio-economic community reinsertion for mixed groups of community members and ex-combatants). It was noted that 20 ex-combatants in Nizi were preparing a proposal for a fishery project to be set up in their home communities, requiring funding of US\$ 30,000. As a micro-credit project pays up to about US\$ 600 per ex-combatant, the funding for the proposed project could not have exceeded US\$ 12,000. If it had been a community reinsertion project, then the maximum sum indeed could have been US\$ 30,000, which shows how these ex-combatants confused the two different forms of reinsertion assistance.
52. Civil society organizations (CSOs) in Mahagi did not realize that their proposals, too, could be turned down. They stated: “UNDP-ComRec asked us to write proposals for reinsertion projects in Mahagi. The proposals passed through the CLAPs to UNDP-ComRec, but most of them never got funded. Out of the 48 projects accepted by UNDP in Kinshasa, UNDP-ComRec asked us to select five, because more could not be funded. Two of these five projects focus on reconstructing health centres, two on reconstructing schools, and one on installing a water well.”
53. UNDP-ComRec itself realizes that it needs to improve its information dissemination. One officer commented: “The communities do not understand what kind of community reinsertion assistance they can apply for. We receive the strangest requests. For instance, a local human rights organization wrote a proposal to work on the rehabilitation of the electricity network in the community. My question then is how can a human rights organization now work on repairing the electricity network?” The officer admitted that inadequate information dissemination had caused this misunderstanding: “So far UNDP-ComRec has not distributed any flyers and leaflets to explain which community reinsertion benefits ex-combatants and communities can apply for. Also the lack of staff within both UNDP-ComRec and CONADER has impeded us from going into the field to sensitize the beneficiaries. However, with the arrival of new staff UNDP-ComRec hopes to produce more written materials on the DCR reinsertion benefits.”

More Coordination

54. At present, UNDP-ComRec aims to sensitize the ex-combatants and the receiving communities through NGOs and through its system of CLAPs. However, UNDP-ComRec does not really know what information these NGOs and CLAPs pass on to their respective constituencies. It is not aware what kind of information the ex-combatants and receiving communities have at their disposal.

More Reinsertion Activities in Safe Zones

55. In order to get the militias committed to voluntary community reinsertion, it is key to continue the reinsertion trajectory under even the most difficult circumstances. Obviously, it is difficult to continue implementing the reinsertion trajectory under hazardous circumstances. In certain Hema and Lendu districts the circumstances do not yet allow the start of the reinsertion trajectory. Various international and national agencies regard it as too risky to send their staff there and carry out reinsertion activities that could even fuel the tensions, eg. aid gets stolen. A UNDP-ComRec officer said: "The insecure conditions have reduced the number of sensitization activities within the communities, as I could not always send staff outside the transit camps."
56. However, even though the conditions in Ituri are still relatively instable, various stakeholders indicated that it is possible and desirable to continue the reinsertion trajectory of the DCR programme in less hazardous parts of the region, such as North Ituri. They stated that "in various communities, like Magahi, where it is pretty safe to operate for the international community, for ex-combatants and for the communities themselves, reinsertion activities be implemented. Representatives of local CSOs added that "even outside Magahi it is possible to start projects like literacy courses, as long as you do not provide too much material assistance that the militia can loot".

More Sustained Approach to Reinsertion

57. It is important to pay more attention to the sustained reintegration of ex-combatants. One means of improving the sustainability of the reinsertion trajectory may be to integrate ex-combatants into existing local CSOs. Socio-economic reinsertion projects are now arranged for mixed teams of community members and ex-combatants. However, this can lead, for instance, to road-building projects where local organizations are forced to work with ex-combatants, who have no skills in road-building at all. After a short period of cooperation between community members and ex-combatants, it is likely that each will go their own way and that the prospects for more sustainable reintegration will decline.

Policy Considerations

58. *More staff.* UNDP-ComRec, the organization in charge of the reinsertion trajectory, should expand its staff in order to accelerate the implementation of both the micro-credit projects for ex-combatants and the socio-economic reinsertion projects for communities as a whole.
59. *More information (1).* Stakeholders in the DCR programme, particularly UNDP-ComRec, should provide information to militias, ex-combatants and the receiving communities in a better and more coordinated way. People often do not understand what reinsertion assistance to ask for and how to apply for it. They also do not always realize that proposals may be turned down and not get funded. So there has often been disparity between the reinsertion assistance that UNDP-ComRec can provide and the reinsertion assistance the ex-combatants and communities expect to receive. If the UNDP-ComRec does not tackle this disparity (and the misinformation) soon,

community interest in the DCR programme will decline and, even worse, ex-combatants will rejoin the militias.

60. *More information (2).* In addition to providing more information on the short-term benefits, UNDP-ComRec may want to inform militias, ex-combatants and communities about the length of the reinsertion phase and, rather importantly, about the follow-up to this phase in terms of longer-term recovery programmes. This is to (re)gain their commitment to the reinsertion trajectory and to avoid generating expectations that in the end cannot be fulfilled.
61. activities that take place. It is crucial to ensure that all stakeholders disseminate, as far as possible, the same information on reinsertion benefits. Therefore, it consider planning stakeholder meetings in order to assess the current state of affairs of the sensitization process. Moreover, UNDP-ComRec could ask each sub-contracted NGO and each CLAP for a working plan to indicate what sensitization sessions take place and where, and what information they disseminate at these sessions. In joint consultation, UNDP-ComRec may even provide each sub-contracted NGO and each CLAP with standardized, written information materials on the reinsertion benefits the DCR programme can offer to ex-combatants and/or to receiving communities. Ideally, coordinated sensitization activities should reach receiving communities and ex-combatants as soon as possible. Combatants should preferably receive relevant information while they are still in the militia. Although it may be difficult to directly contact the militias at this stage, when they are rather suspicious towards the international community, attempts should be made to adequately inform them. Attempts should also be made to counter the distorted information that the militia commanders give their rank and file – for example, that “once you enter the transit site you will not get assistance and then return home, you will be locked up in jail”.
62. *More reinsertion activities in safe zones.* UNDP-ComRec and other agencies involved in the reinsertion trajectory should focus on implementing reinsertion activities in relatively safe zones in the region, such as North Ituri.
63. *More sustained reintegration.* All agencies that are active in the reintegration trajectory should try to better ensure the sustained reintegration of ex-combatants. One specific consideration is to integrate more ex-combatants into existing local CSOs. UNDP-ComRec and other stakeholders could encourage ex-combatants to become members of existing local CSOs by channelling assistance through these CSOs, and leave it up to the CSOs as to how to distribute the benefits among their members. This option probably ensures a more sustained cooperation between community members and ex-combatants. It also avoids the situation where UNDP-ComRec ‘misuses’ local CSOs to channel funds to ex-combatants. This option does not exclude giving direct micro-finance assistance to ex-combatants alone. However, it does require better insight into the functioning of local CSOs, and into local communities’ perceptions of the DCR programme.

Paying Greater Attention to Gender Dimensions of DCR Programme

Analysis

64. Stakeholders in the DCR programme do not pay adequate attention to gender. CONADER, MONUC, and UNDP-MRR have not undertaken sufficient action to gender-sensitize the disarmament and demobilization trajectory, and the UNDP-ComRec has not paid sufficient attention to the different community reinsertion and reintegration needs of women and men. There is a lack of gender expertise to address a number of issues, including to gain more insight in the numbers and roles of women in the militias; to clearly decide whether women associated with the armed forces are regarded direct beneficiaries; to actually trace and identify these women in the militias in order to inform them about the benefits of the DCR program; and to take into account the different encampment and reinsertion needs of women and men in the militias.
65. The earlier mentioned report “Gender, and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: Building Blocks for Dutch Policy” identifies a number of gender elements that ideally should be part of DDR programmes. As will be elaborated in more detail under the policy considerations here below, this would imply the following for the DCR programme. First, it should not exclude from assistance any women who joined the militias. Second, it needs to ensure that all male and female ex-combatants, including those in support functions, have access to the full package of assistance to which they are eligible under the DCR programme. Third, the DCR programme should deal with beneficiary units i.e. the (male) ex-combatant together with his wife and dependants. Fourth, the programme should distinguish, on the one hand, female and male ex-combatants eligible for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration assistance, and, on the other, vulnerable groups associated with militias, such as abducted women, widows and children, who require separate, special attention. Fifth, it should consider implementing complementary programmes (to the DCR programme) that provide assistance to abducted women or widows of combatants. And sixth, the DCR programme and possible complementary assistance programmes for vulnerable women associated with the militias should provide assistance in a safe and trustworthy way in order to encourage women to actually sign up for such assistance. In order to further improve the attention for gender in the DCR programme, the below mentioned policy considerations should be taken into account.

Policy Considerations

66. *Ascertain the number and roles of women in the militias.* In order to target women in the militias, DCR planners should do more to ascertain the number and percentage of women in the militias, as well as the type of role (combatant, support worker, abductee, dependant) they have filled. This is not only a task of possible gender coordinators, but of all staff involved in the DCR programme.
67. *Develop approach for women associated with the armed forces.* In the DCR programme this category of women associated with the armed forces includes both women in support functions and abducted women. DCR planners should clarify whether they regard them as direct beneficiaries (in line with the PNDDR guidelines) or as indirect beneficiaries (in contrast to the PNDDR guidelines), thus ensuring that they are targeted with some form of assistance. A directly

related issue is how the DCR programme wants to deal with male militia members without weapons. Various militia members, particularly among the FNI, fight with *armes blanches* (knives, machetes, etc.) which do not give them access to the DCR programme. Commanders also deliberately take away the arms of the rank and file so that they cannot escape from the militias to join the DCR programme.¹⁰ The question of what the DCR programme wants to do with unarmed militia members thus applies to both men and women within the militia.

68. associated with the armed forces, it should ideally refer them to complementary assistance programmes. Clear coordination between DCR planners and staff of complementary programmes will be required. As there may be a lack of alternative programmes at this moment, DCR planners could consider how to maximally involve women associated with the armed forces in community-based reinsertion activities once they return home. Bottom-line is to avoid at all costs that if women that joined the militias cannot enter the DCR programme, they do not receive any assistance at all.
69. *Sensitization of women in the militias.* Special sensitization measures are needed to give an alternative to self-demobilization of women in the militias, and to ensure that they feel safe and welcome in the DCR programme. Sensitization officers may consider contracting local (women's) organizations to guarantee that this information actually reaches the women in the militias and the communities.
70. *Improve knowledge of different reinsertion needs.* The specific reinsertion needs of female combatants, the wives of ex-combatants, but also of women in the communities themselves should not be ignored. Experience shows, for instance, that these women face negative stigmatization and are in need of psycho-social assistance, have unequal access to productive resources such as land to build up a livelihood, and require different vocational training activities than male ex-combatants.

Moving From Voluntary to Forced Disarmament and Demobilization

Analysis

71. An unavoidable deliberation is whether the time is ripe to start forcibly disarming and demobilizing the Ituri militias. If it were up to Ambassador Swing, the voluntary disarmament and demobilization of the Ituri militias would soon be over. According to IRIN he stated that "militiamen who had not have surrendered by 31 March 2005 would be disarmed and demobilized by force because it will be up to the Congolese Government and to the FARDC to take over".
72. The use of force against the FAPC seemed to work rather well. As one MONUC officer explained: "The MONUC attacks in December 2004 on FAPC camps have led to the disintegration of the FAPC into splinter groups. On the hand, we now see these splinter groups

¹⁰ See for instance Africa Initiative Programme (January 2005) *Ituri Watch: Insecurity Persists at the End of 2004*, p. 4.

roaming around the communities of Mahagi and Aru. On the other hand, we see an increasing number of FAPC militia showing up at the transit site. MONUC is trying to pick up splinter groups of FAPC members to bring them to the transit site in Mahagi. It would not surprise me if a substantial number of FAPC members come to the transit site to disarm.” Recently, substantial numbers of FAPC militia members have indeed been disarmed. As one interviewee explained: “It is not so surprising that the FAPC militias opted to disarm. They have always been more cooperative with the DCR programme and it was, for instance, the FAPC leader Jerome Kakwavu who was the first of all Ituri militia leaders to be appointed general in Kinshasa.”

73. The use of force against the FNI, UPC-L and UPC-K is much more complicated. In the case of the FNI, for instance, it would be quite difficult to separate normal community members from active FNI militia members, as whole FNI communities tend to be involved in the conflict. Moreover, as the recent skirmishes between MONUC and the FNI show, the FNI appeared not to be afraid of MONUC, and even militarily withstood the MONUC attacks. Forcibly disarming these militias could well start with the arrest of their leaders in Kinshasa, instead of with direct military attacks on the militias in Ituri.
74. If forced disarmament is going to take place, it is still unclear whether MONUC or the TNG and FARDC will be in charge. Swing clearly expressed the view that MONUC should not be in charge of forcibly disarming the Ituri militias. He regards it the task of the TNG and the FARDC. However, Albrecht Conze, deputy political director of MONUC, indicated in another interview with IRIN on 21 March 2005 that “the armed militias after 1 April 2005 will be considered outlaws and prosecuted for banditry and other crimes by the Congolese authorities and, and until their power is firmly established in Ituri, forcibly disarmed by MONUC”. Apart from the question of whether MONUC is willing to participate, various interviewees wondered whether MONUC has the capacity to do so. At the same time, the commitment and capacity of the TNG and the FARDC are also highly questionable. The deployment of the FARDC in Ituri started not that long ago, and it is debatable when the FARDC will be strong enough to take over MONUC’s security tasks. Moreover, the relationship between the TNG and the DCR programme has often been ambiguous. Therefore it would be rather optimistic to expect that the role of the TNG in the DCR Programme substantially increases and that the TNG commits itself one-hundred per cent to the stabilization of the Ituri region.
75. Finally, account should also be taken of the fact that a process of forced disarmament has its limitations and, even if successful, it represents no more than a contribution to the stabilization of the region. Firstly, the role and capacity of the TNG and FARDC in providing security in Ituri needs to expand further so that they bring security not only to parts of Bunia but to the region as a whole. Secondly, forcibly disarming militias will remove only part of the arms that proliferate in Ituri. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, forced disarmament does not per se reduce the tensions between the Hema and Lendu communities at the local level. It does not necessarily provide basic human security for the local population. Hence, such ‘hardware’ military actions need to be complemented by ‘software’ activities such as support for intra- and inter-communitarian dialogues and reconciliation activities at the local level. Unless these

considerations are taken into account, the idea of forced disarmament and demobilization is unlikely to lead to the desired long-term stabilization of the Ituri region.

Policy Considerations

76. *Carefully consider the move from involuntary to forced disarmament of the Ituri militias.* If voluntary disarmament does not work adequately, the focus may have to shift to forced disarmament. Question remains though whether the capacity of the current agencies is sufficient to do this. As regards forceful disarmament, it should be noted that it may have a positive effect on those who would like to disarm, but are forced to stay in the militias.
77. *Recognize the limitations of a forced disarmament approach.* Complement every ‘hardware’ military approach with ongoing ‘software’ activities (e.g. intra- and inter-communitarian dialogues and reconciliation activities at the local level) in order to achieve **long-term** stability in Ituri.. As forcibly disarming militias will remove only part of the arms that proliferate in Ituri, it should also complemented with longer-term SALW collection programmes.

Annexe I: Organizations Interviewed

AIP	(Bunia/Nairobi)
AIP Network of Local Associations in Mahagi	(Mahagi)
CONADER Office	(Bunia)
CONADER Representation	(Mahagi)
COOPI Office	(Mahagi)
FNI Militia	(Bunia)
FOMMI	(Women's NGO Mahagi)
Justice and Peace Commission of Mahagi Diocese	(Mahagi)
Justice Plus	(Bunia)
MemisaB	(Bunia/Nizi)
MONUC Human Rights Office	(Mahagi/Kwandroma)
MONUC Child Protection Office	(Bunia)
UNDP-COMREC (Community Reconstruction Unit)	(Bunia)
UNDP-MRR (Rapid Response Mechanism Unit)	(Bunia)
UNDP Reconciliation and Development Unit	(Bunia)
UNICEF Office	(Bunia)
UPC-K Militia	(Bunia)
UPC-L Militia	(Bunia)

Annexe II: Programme (27 January – 4 February 2005)

Thursday, 27 January	Arrival Bunia
	AIP (Meeting)
Friday, 28 January	AIP (Preparatory Meeting to set up interviews and field trip to Mahagi)
	MemisaB (Interview)
Saturday, 29 January	CONADER Office (Interview)
	UNDP-COMREC (Interview)
	UNDP-MRR (Interview)
	UPC-L (Interview)
	Justice Plus (Interview)
Sunday, 30 January	UPC-K (Interview)
	UNICEF (Interview)
	FNI (Interview)
Monday, 31 January	Travelling to Mahagi
	MONUC Human Rights Office (Discussion)
	Transit Site Mahagi (Visit)
	CONADER Officer Transit Site Mahagi (Interview)
	Justice and Peace Commission of Mahagi Diocese (Interview)
Tuesday, 1 February	MONUC Child Protection Office (Discussion)
	AIP Network of Local Associations Mahagi (Meeting)
	FOMMI Women's NGO Mahagi (Interview)
	COOPI (Interview)
Wednesday, 2 Feb	Return to Bunia
	UNDP-COMREC (Discussion)
	UNDP-Reconciliation and Development (Discussion)
	MONUC Human Rights Office (Discussion)
	AIP (Meeting)
Thursday, 3 February	AIP (Meeting)
	Travelling to Entebbe
Friday, 4 February	Writing up of interviews
	Preparing draft report