

**Peacebuilding Commission
Ambassadorial-Level Meeting**

Contributions of disarmament demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform (SSR) to peacebuilding and sustaining peace

**7 December 2021
Chair's Summary**

1. On 7 December, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) held an ambassadorial-level meeting on DDR and SSR chaired by H.E. Mr. Osama Abdelkhalek, Chair of the PBC. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the contributions of DDR and SSR to peacebuilding and sustaining peace with inputs from representatives of Côte d'Ivoire and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), drawing on the separate and unique experiences in the two countries.
2. In his opening remarks, the Chair underlined the political nature of DDR and SSR and, by extension, the importance of embedding DDR and SSR in a wider political strategy. National ownership, he said, should be an overarching guiding principle of SSR and DDR. Indeed, international support to DDR and SSR processes should be coherent and aligned with the actual needs and priorities of the country concerned, context-specific and adjusted to local needs and realities, he added. He stressed the importance of sustained resources for DDR and SSR which, he said, are critical to their success.
3. Mr. Alexandre Zouev, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions indicated that UN assistance to DDR and SSR was being deployed in increasingly complex and regionalized conflict environments. This meant, he said, that DDR and SSR required greater political engagement, better coordination and integration, effective strategic partnerships as well as adequate, predictable and sustained financing. He further noted that DDR was no longer synonymous with linear, post conflict, national level DDR programs, but had evolved into a process addressing the entire peace continuum, in both mission and non-mission contexts at regional, national and local levels. This conceptual and programmatic shift was, he said, reflected in the recent revision of the Integrated DDR Standards. Regarding SSR, he indicated that the UN had further developed its normative framework grounded in Security Council resolution 2553 (2020) which rooted SSR in the national context, was gender responsive and based on the principles of democratic accountability, inclusiveness, representativeness and national ownership. He cited a Humanitarian-Development-Peacebuilding and partnership (HDPP) funded initiative to advance policy tools for sustainable SSR, as an example of scaling up research in this area.

4. H.E. Mr. Fidèle Gboroton Sarassoro, Minister/Cabinet Director, Presidency of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, presented the experience and history of Côte d'Ivoire's DDR and SSR processes going back to 2003. He noted that DDR required political will at the highest level to be successful. Such success, he said, also rested in the enforcement of political agreements, and the restoration of confidence in political institutions. In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, he explained, DDR was conducted concomitantly with an SSR process. Other ingredients that contributed to the country's successful DDR program included national ownership, equity and transparency, as well as flexibility, adequate resources and support from external partners. He described the DDR process from 2012 to 2015, which sought to address the needs of ex-combatants that were not retained for the newly constituted army. This process, he said, produced tangible outcomes and was successful at reintegrating a large percentage of the targeted population. With regard to SSR, he said there were three pillars: 1) national security; 2) reconstruction post-crisis; and 3) rule of law. He cited as SSR related constraints the difficulty in mobilizing resources; lack of flexibility in procedures and on the part of certain partners; and the premature disengagement of partners. He concluded that some of the lessons learned from DDR and SSR were as follows: 1) the necessity of political will at the highest level to implement these processes; 2) the importance, in the context of Côte d'Ivoire, of a simultaneous implementation of DDR and SSR; 3) the importance of building an integrated database for facial recognition and fingerprints from the outset; 4) reintegration of ex-combatants; 5) adequate resources; 6) ongoing communication; and 7) national ownership.

5. H.E. Mr. Tommy Tambwe, Coordinator of the DDR and Community Reintegration and Stabilization programme of the Government of the DRC indicated that DDR efforts in his country had begun 20 years ago and that multiple phases of DDR in the DRC had been implemented since then. A new DDR process, he noted, would begin in January and would identify the ex-combatants and begin the process of reintegration. It would be based on the following principles: civilian DDR with no integration of the militias into the FARDC (Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo); DDR as a tool for peace, conflict resolution and social cohesion; focus on socio-economic integration and reintegration, taking into account the real needs of local communities and ex-combatants; integration of the new norms and directives of the AU and UN as they pertain to DDR; integration of transitional justice as a tool for reconciliation; focus on preventing the financing of armed groups; focus on combatting extremism and terrorism; and emphasis on harnessing national and regional efforts to combat foreign armed groups and foreign combatants. He underscored the importance of putting into place a coherent and integrated process, which should rest on five pillars: 1) leadership and management; 2) peace and conflict resolution and social cohesion; 3) restoration of state authority and security; 4) community resilience and stabilization; and 5) economic and social development. He concluded by outlining the next steps for the implementation of the new DDR process in the DRC, including the finalization of the national

strategy; the organization of provincial meetings on peace and security; and the preparation of a roadmap for peace.

6. Ms. Jennifer Oreta, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Ateneo de Manila University noted that there was no “one size fits all” DDR program. Different contexts necessitated different approaches, she said. While peace processes and peace agreements settle conflicts between state and non-state armed groups, they do not automatically settle conflicts between and among groups in society. She stressed that DDR processes should: 1) be context specific and gender sensitive; 2) people centered; 3) promote human rights and humanitarian law; 4) promote accountability and transparency; 4) be holistic and sustainable; 5) participatory and inclusive; and 6) respect the rule of law. Drawing on her experience in taking stock of good practices in promoting gender-responsive DDR processes, she added that DDR needs to be gender-responsive to make a positive contribution to peace and stability in conflict-affected communities. She stressed the importance of taking into account the different gendered roles of men, women, boys and girls and the urgent need to enable the contributions of women ex-combatants and women peacebuilders and to strengthen women’s roles as community leaders and peacebuilders.
7. Member States welcomed the briefings and made the following observations:
 - The Commission indicated that DDR and SSR must be anchored in national ownership and be locally designed and led. Such processes should be implemented and planned in line with national priorities, bearing in mind each country’s unique context and historical experience. In this respect, while recognizing the need for well-coordinated DDR and SSR, the Commission acknowledged that this does not mean there should automatically be a continuum between the two processes. In the DRC, for instance, the Commission noted that, given the vast constellation and complexity of armed groups and other integration related challenges, the Government had decided to address DDR and SSR as separate matters, especially to avoid de facto integration of former combatants into the armed forces, while in Côte d’Ivoire, one of the key factors to the country’s successful DDR programme was that it was part of the government’s overall SSR strategy.
 - The Commission stressed the importance of accountability and transparency and emphasized the need for inclusive and people-centered DDR and SSR processes, informed by the needs of all members of society, including marginalized populations. The Commission recognized the role of local actors, civil society and non-governmental organizations, which are essential in their long-term success.
 - The Commission underlined the importance of women’s equal and effective participation and full involvement in all stages of DDR and SSR processes. Gender-sensitive SSR, they stressed, was key to developing security sector institutions that are non-discriminatory, representative of the population. They also welcomed efforts to implement gender-

responsive DDR processes and related research and policy guidance; and encouraged the UN to continue facilitating the exchange of experiences, including between national authorities and women formerly associated with armed groups.

- PBC members stressed that SSR should not be confined to building State institutions but should also be accountable to the people and protect the people. This, in turn, would engender legitimacy by creating trust between the people and the newly established or strengthened democratic institutions, thereby contributing to the conditions necessary for sustainable peace. They affirmed that SSR should incorporate principles of good governance, and professional, effective management of public resources, the rule of law and respect for human rights. They viewed DDR and SSR as essentially political processes which are more effective when grounded in broader reforms including, in relevant contexts, transitional justice related institutional reforms.
- A number of PBC members cited the new Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS) as essential for providing guidance; they indicated that it would be important to move to the next phase and implement and operationalize these new DDR guidelines in the field.
- PBC members cited the need for adequate, predictable, and sustained financing for both DDR and SSR processes so that they can effectively contribute to peacebuilding and sustaining peace and referred to the General Assembly high-level event on peacebuilding financing, scheduled to take place in 2022, as an opportunity to reinforce this message, including through the related PBC input to the General Assembly. In recognition of the need to make concrete progress in strengthening the effectiveness of international assistance to nationally owned DDR processes and SSR initiatives, the Commission stressed the need for well-coordinated donor activities and alignment with national priorities. They welcomed ongoing efforts to strengthen partnerships with regional and sub-regional organizations and international financial institutions, including through initiatives such as the DPO-UNDP- World Bank SSR program, funded by the HDPP Facility.
- The Peacebuilding Commission agreed to offer its platform, primarily through its country-specific engagements and at the request of concerned governments, to foster meaningful dialogue between peace, security and development actors and to help enhance coordination among international actors for successful DDR and SSR processes, which according to many PBC members was necessary for coherent action and cooperation with host governments, in line with their stated needs and priorities.
- The Commission took note of the upcoming thematic report on SSR of the Secretary-General to the Security Council as well as the fourth report of the Secretary-General on DDR, expected to be issued in early 2022. The Commission expressed interest in

discussing the recommendations of the two reports and sharing its observations and suggestion with the Security Council.