AU Develops DDR Operational Guidance Notes

This Issue features key highlights on AU DDR engagement from February–June 2014

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Dear readers,

It is my pleasure to share with you this second edition of the AU Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) newsletter. This issue will take you through the development of DDR guidance documents and also highlight recent missions undertaken by the AUC and its partners in the Republic of Sudan and the State of Libya.

These guidance documents, fall under the knowledge management component of the African Union Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration Capacity Program (AU DDRCP) and this initial set, specifically addresses the reintegration process, the different options that need consideration as a Government embarks on setting up a national authority to address DDR, responding to the needs of women and children and ensuring humane treatment of detainees.

You may be asking yourself why the AU is developing guidance documents and how this is different from other DDR technical guidelines already available. The answer is simple, while these documents are compliant with international legal standards such as the United Nations Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS), the AU guidelines draw from DDR experiences in Africa and cater to the particular needs on the continent. The guidelines are intended to assist practitioners by providing a step-by-step guide, exemplified by case studies, on how to implement best practices drawn from the African continent.

I would like to take this opportunity to convey my sincere appreciation to our partners the World Bank/ Post-Conflict and Social Development Practice Group (AFTCS) - Transitional Demobilization and Reintegration Program (TDRP), the European Union (EU), the United Nations (Department of Peace Keeping Operations (DPKO) and United Nations Office for the African Union (UNOAU), United Nations Children’s Fund Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (UNICEF- ESARO), and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Special recognition also goes to the AU Liaison Offices, for their continuous and sustained support to the implementation of the AU DDRCP.

I sincerely hope you, our reader will enjoy this second edition and that you find the information captured both insightful and informative.

Best Wishes,

Amb. Smail Chergui
Commissioner, Peace and Security,
African Union Commission
AU Support to Member States

Republic of Sudan

At the request of the Government of Sudan, a Joint AU-UN-World Bank-League of Arab States, Technical Mission on DDR, Community Security and Small Arms Control (CSAC) and Post-Conflict Reconstructions and Development (PCRD) needs assessment was conducted in Sudan from 14 to 17 April, 2014. The aim of the mission was: i) to respond to the request from the Sudan DDR Commission for technical support to the new national DDR Strategy and Action (2014 -2016), ii) explore linkages between DDR, Community Security and Arms Control (CSACs), and PCRD activities towards stabilization, peace and national reconciliation; and iv) make recommendations to the Government of Sudan, AUC and international partners on how to move the DDR/CSAC and SSR processes forward in the context of promoting the Sudan’s Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) efforts.

The Joint Technical Assessment Mission met with a range of national and international distinguished personalities, including national and international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Several presentations were made which provided the opportunity to assess current DDR progress, lessons learned, gaps and challenges, and identification of needs. In addition, the assessment examined the level of international engagement and donor support, including how to compliment ongoing national and international support in the area of DDR, ensuring no duplication of efforts amongst various partners.

From the discussions held with the Government of Sudan and the international community, particularly the UN, the World Bank and the African Development Bank (AfDB) country representatives in Sudan, a number of immediate to medium to long-term recommendations were proposed.

First, was the need to intensify advocacy and resource mobilization efforts to support the implementation of the revised program, the “Sudan DDR, a road to Peace and Development”. Second, was the need to align DDR efforts with the ongoing transition political process. Third, that there is a greater need for the AUC and its partners to provide training and capacity building support to the DDR process in Sudan, and finally, the mission recommended the need for support to strengthen border security and regional co-operation to mitigate transnational crime.

In conclusion, despite the complex and highly political sensitive environment in which the Sudan DDR Commission is operating, it is delivering against certain goals, which were originally envisaged based on its mandate assigned after the signing of the CPA in 2005. That said, the mission suggested that with the collective support of the AUC, its partners and the international community, the Government needs to review its new 3 year DDR program (2014 to 2016), with the aim of prioritizing activities against certain agreed set of criteria such as those ongoing projects that need to be completed before the end of 2014; and activities that need to strengthen sub-regional security and border cooperation initiatives with South Sudan, CAR, Chad and DRC.
From 4 to 8 May 2014, the African Union and its partners, the United Nations and the World Bank/AFTCS-TDRP, conducted a joint DDR sensitization mission to Libya. The main objective of the sensitization mission was to raise awareness on the kind of DDR assistance that can be provided to the Libyan authorities based on successful and emerging lessons learned on the African continent in dealing with non-state armed groups, particularly militias through comprehensive DDR processes. The sensitization briefing brought together senior government officials from all line ministers, the Libyan Program for Reintegration and Development (formerly the Warriors Affairs Commission), and UNSMIL in Libya. A formal sensitization briefing session was jointly organized by the office of the AU Special Representative of the Chairperson (SRCC), with specific support from the Head of the office Mondher Rezgui, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tripoli, Libya; the briefing was chaired by, Madam Wafa Taher Bughaighis, Under-Secretary for Political Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Libya. Presentations were made by representatives of the Libyan Government; the AU; the Libyan Program for Reintegration and Development (formerly the Warrior Affairs Commission); the UN Mission in Libya (UNSMIL); and the Transitional Demobilization and Reintegration Program (TDRP).
of the World Bank. More than 80 participants attended, representing relevant Libyan structures and institutions, including the Ministries of Defense, Interior and Labor, as well as civil society organizations. Overall, a general consensus was reached during the sensitization briefing that there is an urgent need for a national vision and coherent engagement strategy on DDR. Participants called on the international community, particularly the AU, UN, WB and EU to assist in enhancing an inclusive national dialogue process that takes into consideration DDR as an urgent priority. Such a dialogue process should involve diverse audiences drawn from the community and national levels and should discuss issues related to transitional justice, including establishment of a Truth and National Reconciliation process.

The mission was concluded with the following recommended 6-12 months’ timeline, outlining the following activities and strategic areas of support that is; (i) there is an urgent need to improve the public information and communications; (ii) there is a need to facilitate an inclusive dialogue process aimed at developing a coherent national DDR Strategy and Policy, (iii) need to conduct DDR training and capacity building activities (iv) need to collect data and statistics (v) need to provide advisory support as well as oversight and co-ordination support (vi) to establish border engagement and cooperation. A proposed follow-up meeting will be considered in November 2014.

Donors Briefing on DDR

26 May 2014, Addis Ababa

As part of a continued dialogue and interaction with the donor community in Addis Ababa, a donors briefing was held on 26 May 2014, to follow up from the last donors briefing that was held 18 February 2013. The rationale for holding this conference was to; (i) provide an update of the DDRCP to the international community and explain how it is currently engaging DDR initiatives on the continent by utilising the APSA; and (ii) solicit additional financial support for the DDRCP. A presentation was made by the AU, highlighting the achievements of the DDR capacity program between 2012 - 2014. The commission also presented a budget which outlined the key priority areas and funding gaps. Participants noted that, although the AU is progressively integrating the DDRCP Programmatic budgetary requirements into the AU regular budget and the various pool funds, additional funding was required to enhance support to the third component of the program: support the Member States.

Overall, participants expressed their satisfaction in the progress the program had made and the donors suggested that the Defence and Security Division (DSD) create a Joint Financing Arrangement where donors could support the efforts not only of DDR but other units within DSD in-order to promote oversight and transparency. The AU Commission is currently exploring these options. They also pointed out the need to boost the general visibility and public relations to the DDR program.
Third AU-Regions Steering Committee Meeting

on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration

13-14 May 2014, Nairobi-Kenya

The above AUC meeting was hosted by the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA) Nairobi, Kenya, and brought together representatives from the members of the Steering Committee: Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), RECSA, the United Nations (UN) and the World Bank’s Transitional, Demobilization and Reintegration Program (TDRP).

The Members presented briefs on their activities, highlighting key achievements and challenges in the fight against illicit SALW. On its part, the Commission presented updates on the implementation of the AU DDRCP, highlighting achievements, lessons learned and challenges ahead. Some of these challenges include the need to continue to enhance the capacity of the AUC and strengthen the engagement of RECs/RMs on DDR related issues on the African Continent, especially research and policy formulation. The Commission also presented on the fight against illicit proliferation and trafficking of SALW, steps towards the signature and ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and preparations in support of Member States’ participation at the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Program of Action on small arms scheduled to take place from 16 - 20 June 2014 in New York.

The Steering Committee called for increased cooperation and collaboration in the implementation of these activities, mainly because most Member States belong to more than one REC. Cooperation and collaboration at both planning and execution of the activities, mainly because most Member States belong to more than one REC. This would strengthen synergy and foster closer sharing of experiences. In this regard, the AUC was commended for inviting relevant Members of the Steering Committee to relevant meetings. It was also agreed that Members should invite the AU Commission to participate in their activities to encourage continental perspective in the fight against illicit SALW and DDR.
Second Document Review and Validation Workshop

On DDR Technical Guidance Documents

26-27 May 2014 Addis Ababa

The Commission embarked on the development of an initial five DDR guidance documents (Detention, Children in Armed Conflict, Women in Armed Conflict, Reintegration and National frameworks DDR initiatives). The Commission subsequently held a 2 day meeting, 3 - 4 December 2013 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to allow AUC, RECs/ RMs and international DDR experts to review the draft documents. After incorporating the comments and suggestions the Commission convened a second review meeting 26 – 27 May 2014, whose main purpose was to: (i) review the documents to identify if all major edits have been captured and validate the following DDR technical guidance documents on: and (ii) get an endorsement from the participants for the implementation of the AU DDR technical guidance documents for use by the AU, RECs/ RMs and Member States.

These guidance documents are aimed at assisting in the planning and implementation of the wider reintegration process, to provide national perspective in engaging national institutions; to mobilize adequate funding; to manage the downsize of military structure; to respond to the needs of women and ensure humane treatment of the detainees.

The participants expressed their appreciation in regards to the efforts of the AU DDRCP and provided several useful suggestions including the development of an additional guideline on DDR in Peace Support Operations (PSOs). The development of two additional guidance notes before the end of 2014 will be explored.