

2.30 Participants, Beneficiaries and Partners

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NOTE

Each IDDRS module is current with effect from the date shown on the cover page. As the IDDRS is periodically reviewed, users should consult the UN DDR Resource Centre web site for updates: <http://www.unddr.org>.

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2.30 Participants, Beneficiaries and Partners

Summary

United Nations (UN)-supported disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) is people-centred and relies on collaboration among participants and national and international actors to maximise the effectiveness of a DDR process. Participants include male and female adult, youth and child combatants, and others associated with armed forces or groups in non-combat roles. Receiving communities, which may include returning internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, are also central stakeholders.

National actors who shape the DDR process are: the signatories of the peace agreement, including the military; national and transitional governments, political parties and leaders; armed forces and groups; civil society groups; women's leaders and associations; provincial and local authorities; community-based organizations; the private sector; and the media.

The third group that influences DDR includes international actors such as the UN system, bilateral and multilateral donors, and regional and other international organizations.

The efforts of all of these parties should be coordinated so as to ensure that they work towards a common (shared) vision of peace and security, and channel their resources towards a common goal.

1. Module scope and objectives

This module provides an overview of the participants, stakeholders and strategic partnerships involved in DDR programmes. It examines the roles and profiles of those involved in a DDR process, whether they be beneficiaries or DDR and other staff involved in the planning and delivery of a DDR programme. Although a broad range of national and international stakeholders are discussed, this is not a complete list, nor are all those mentioned here to be found in every DDR context.

2. Terms, definitions and abbreviations

Annex A contains a list of abbreviations used in this standard. A complete glossary of all the terms, definitions and abbreviations used in the series of integrated DDR standards (IDDRS) is given in IDDRS 1.20.

In the IDDRS series, the words 'shall', 'should' and 'may' are used to indicate the intended degree of compliance with the standards laid down. This use is consistent with the language used in the International Organization for Standardization standards and guidelines:

- "a) 'shall' is used to indicated requirements, methods or specifications that are to be applied in order to conform to the standard.
- b) 'should' is used to indicate the preferred requirements, methods or specifications.
- c) 'may' is used to indicate a possible method or course of action."

3. Introduction

A successful integrated DDR processes leads to the transformation of individuals from combatants to civilians and of societies from conflict to peace. These complex changes are brought about by a range of local, national and international actors working in partnership to achieve a common goal — sustainable peace.

4. Guiding principles

Relationships among stakeholders, participants, partners and beneficiaries in UN-supported DDR programmes are guided by the principles, key considerations and approaches defined in IDDRS 2.10 on the UN Approach to DDR. The following are of particular importance:

- national and local ownership fostered through participatory approaches to planning, design and implementation;
- prioritizing the development of capacity in national institutions, local communities, implementing partners and participants in the DDR process;
- accountability, transparency, coordination and communication among all stakeholders in all stages of the process;
- non-discriminatory, fair and equitable treatment of participants;
- designing programmes and projects that focus on people and communities rather than weapons.

5. Participants and beneficiaries

5.1. Members of armed forces and groups

While the peace agreement will generally state or otherwise indicate which armed forces and groups will participate in DDR, the development of detailed and transparent eligibility criteria for individual combatants to enter into the programme is a priority in the initial assessment and planning phase. These criteria should avoid allowing persons to enter the programme simply because they have surrendered weapons or ammunition. Rather, the criteria should be based on tests to determine an individual's membership of an armed force or group. All those who are found to be members of an armed force or group, whether they were involved in active combat or in support roles (such as cooks, porters, messengers, administrators, sex slaves and 'war wives'), shall be considered part of the armed force or group and therefore shall be included in the DDR programme.

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Because a commander may wish to hide the real strength of his/her force, especially the numbers of under-age children who are members, it is important to gain an independent estimate for use as a planning figure. Where field commanders will be largely responsible for 'delivering' their units to DDR sites, field verification teams must include child protection officers and gender advisers who can assist in the identification of groups often excluded by field commanders.

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When managing a regional conflict, it will probably be necessary to deal with foreign combatants and mercenaries, for whom separate, multinational strategies must be developed (also see IDDRS 2.10 on the UN Approach to DDR).

5.2. Abductees

Abduction is a broadly practised but largely unrecognized feature of modern conflicts and is a serious violation of humanitarian and human rights law. Male and female youth and children, and adult women are all vulnerable to abduction or forced recruitment by armed forces and groups. They are forced to perform a number of military and non-military support roles and are often exposed to extreme and long-term violence.

The UN shall work for the unconditional release of abductees associated with armed forces and groups at all times — during open conflict, when peace negotiations are under way and before the establishment of a national DDR process. Identification mechanisms for abductees must be a priority, and programmes must be set up to enable abducted persons to decide on return or repatriation options in safety, separately from their captors.

5.3. Dependants

Dependants are civilians who rely on a combatant for their livelihood. Because they are civilians, they do not directly participate in the disarmament and demobilization phases of DDR. Where dependants have accompanied armed forces or groups in the field, provisions shall be made for them during disarmament and demobilization — either encampment, or transport to their communities of origin, if they are far from home. As much as possible, dependants should have access to information and counselling to be able to participate in important decisions on resettlement and reintegration options.

Dependants make up a significant number of participants in the reintegration phases of DDR. Criteria for establishing their status shall be developed according to local contexts and social norms, while national institutions will generally determine policy on their direct reintegration benefits. Dependants should be involved in decision-making and management processes when support is provided to an ex-combatant as part of a DDR programme. Evidence shows that including women when support packages are provided has a positive impact on the well-being of the family. As far as possible, dependants should also participate in the planning and delivery of reinsertion and reintegration support programmes. Attention should be given to the needs of particularly vulnerable dependants such as the children of female and girl combatants, widows, orphans, and disabled and chronically ill dependants. Family tracing must be made available to those who have been separated from other members of their family.

5.4. Women

In the past, female combatants and supporters of armed forces and groups, and women in general were largely left out of formal DDR processes. They were excluded from participation at peace talks and not represented on national DDR commissions, undercounted in estimations of force size, excluded by field commanders, or overlooked during identification processes by DDR officers who were not trained to identify female combatants or the multiple roles performed by women associated with armed forces and groups. Also, they often chose not to join DDR programmes because of experiences or even just perceptions of insecurity and stigmatization at disarmament and demobilization sites.

It has been found that many women therefore 'self-demobilized' without participating in a formal DDR process. By doing so, they went on to face many difficulties when reintegrating into civilian life. Women who have relied on armed forces and groups for employment, to the exclusion of all other social groups, find themselves with neither a community nor a means to make a living after demobilization. Moreover, they may have been victims of serious and repeated sexual and gender-based violence and require specialized health and

psychosocial support services. Furthermore, these same women are often expected to shoulder, unassisted, a large burden of care for ill, disabled, and traumatized male ex-combatants and children associated with armed forces and groups, particularly in contexts where health care and other social infrastructure have been destroyed.

It is vital to ensure that women participate in all stages of DDR, from programme development to implementation, and are taken into account in all stages of the DDR process, through representation in national

institutions and decision-making bodies, and through the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of DDR (also see IDDRS 5.10 on Women, Gender and DDR).

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5.5. Youth

While there is no internationally recognized legal definition of 'youth', young people associated with armed forces and groups make up an important part of society and can both fuel conflict and support post-conflict reconciliation and recovery. Many young ex-combatants may have been recruited as children, but not demobilized until they were young adults. They have therefore been denied normal socialization by families and communities, they have missed educational and vocational opportunities, and lack basic living skills. The design and delivery of DDR programmes shall consider the particular needs and potential of older children and younger adults associated with armed forces and groups.

DDR programmes designed for youth can also have a positive impact on young people in the community who may be at risk of recruitment by armed forces and groups or organized criminals (also see IDDRS 5.20 on Youth and DDR).

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5.6. Children

The recruitment of children into armed forces and groups is a serious violation of human rights and is prohibited under international law. The UN shall promote the unconditional release of children associated with fighting forces at all times, i.e., during open conflict, while peace negotiations are taking place and before the establishment of a national DDR process.

The identification and management of children associated with armed forces and groups may in practice be quite difficult. While the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes 18 as the age of legal majority, concepts and experiences of childhood vary significantly among cultures and communities. Furthermore, children are likely to have taken on adult roles and responsibilities during conflict, either while associated with armed forces and groups or in war-affected communities. Girl children in particular may

be considered adults if they have been 'married' during conflict, borne children or taken on responsibilities as heads of household in receiving communities.

Children formerly associated with armed forces and groups are stakeholders and must be carefully consulted when DDR processes are set up. To successfully cater for children's needs, programme development and implementation should be designed to ensure the participation of all stakeholders, and reintegration strategies must be adapted to meet the different needs, roles and responsibilities of children in each post-conflict situation. To ease their return to civilian life, former child soldiers should be integrated into programmes that benefit all war-affected children (also see IDDRS 5.30 on Children and DDR).

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5.7. Disabled people

Ex-combatants suffering from disability, chronic illness or substance addiction, because of their health status, will not be eligible for integration into new national security forces. They will require specialized DDR assistance and should be given opportunities to participate and have their concerns reflected in decisions dealing with their treatment and reintegration. The capacity for health screening, and particularly for voluntary counselling and testing for HIV/AIDS, should be established in the demobilization stage in order to identify rehabilitation and/or treatment options. Disabled and chronically ill ex-combatants, their families and caregivers, and those with substance addiction will require specialized reintegration assistance, including living and vocational training, and medical and psychosocial support programmes adapted to their specific needs. Institutionalization is not likely to be an option, so priority should be given to community-based care programmes, and capacity built to support independent living (see also IDDRS 5.60 on HIV/AIDS and DDR and IDDRS 5.70 on Health and DDR).

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5.8. Civilian returnees

Individuals who have been associated with armed forces or groups are not granted refugee status by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to avoid aiding people who have been responsible for human rights violations and war crimes. However, certain ex-combatants, possibly self-demobilized, may be present among refugee and returnee populations. It will be necessary to identify them in consultation with the general local population and with UNHCR and the refugee/IDP or returnee committee, and then to determine whether they are eligible to enter the DDR programme (also see IDDRS 4.10 on Disarmament, IDDRS 4.30 on Social and Economic Reintegration and IDDRS 5.40 on Cross-border Population Movements).

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5.9. Communities

DDR improves security and supports economic recovery in post-conflict societies. While its initial focus is on individuals in armed forces and groups, it also assists the general population, who benefit from increased security when former combatants are assisted to become productive members of society, and small arms are collected and controlled. Integrated DDR programmes are designed to achieve the goal of returning ex-combatants to civilian communities. Communities, therefore, become a principal partner in DDR programmes, not only as beneficiaries, but also as participants in the planning and implementation of reintegration strategies and as stakeholders in the outcome.

It is important to recognize that, after war, 'communities' may be quite unstable and disorganized, having been newly formed as a result of conflict. Although this presents challenges to the sustainability of the reintegration process, it is also an opportunity to bring about change for the better: DDR programmes shall not reconstitute traditional power structures that may have contributed to the outbreak of violent conflict in the first place, but instead shall encourage reconciliation and the inclusion of all stakeholders, through consulting often marginalized groups such as women, youth, minorities, disabled people and so on.

An excellent way of including all members of communities is to ensure that the specifically designed reintegration assistance (training, employment, health services, etc.) needed

by certain groups of ex-combatants is delivered through community-based mechanisms and made available to a range of war-affected populations. Where ex-combatants receive individual reintegration support, this assistance should be limited in time and scope and delivered, as far as possible, through programmes and projects that benefit the broader community: the rehabilitation of infrastructure and other forms of community

development could serve this purpose. Through careful sequencing of activities, longer-term assistance to ex-combatants should be phased into the broader community recovery programmes that continue once the work of the DDR operation is finished.

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6. National actors

6.1. Political parties

DDR is one component of the wider peace-building and recovery framework. This framework is often outlined in a peace agreement that lays out the way in which national institutions will manage post-conflict governance, including the respective roles that parties who signed the peace agreement will play in establishing and running national institutions and formulating policy. Because details of policy and institutional mechanisms are often left for further negotiation among the parties or within the transitional government or authority, it is necessary to ensure that DDR is linked to larger peace-building and recovery plans.

To build trust among the parties and the broader public, all key stakeholders in the political process, including those who have not directly participated in armed conflict, should be involved in the development of DDR policy and institutions. The coordinating body for DDR can do this by organizing national and local DDR committees that bring together local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), UN agencies, civil society organizations (CSOs), and military and administrative authorities to discuss and agree to preparations for DDR.

Although national DDR institutions should be politically neutral, it is important to include major political parties, e.g., through the establishment of an advisory or consultative mechanism, or through informal meetings, seminars and communications strategies when discussing the creation of national DDR structures.

Potential spoilers should be identified early in the assessment phase and strategies developed to win their support. There are a range of individuals and groups who may try

to delay or undermine the DDR process, including: those with a political interest in undermining and derailing post-conflict transition; those with a personal interest in retaining power through the control of armed groups; and those with commercial or criminal interests protected through armed violence and the breakdown in the rule of law.

6.2. Governments

National or transitional governments generally lead the establishment of institutions for DDR such as a national commission on DDR (NCDDR). This commission, or its equivalent, must be closely linked with government ministries, which will be responsible for longer-term national recovery and reintegration strategies (also see IDDRS 3.30 on National Institutions for DDR). DDR must also be connected to other transitional authorities such as ceasefire commissions, reintegration commissions, national economic recovery strategies, truth and reconciliation commissions, etc.

There are three major considerations when dealing with national authorities, and in particular NCDDRs, in post-conflict contexts:

- they can be perceived — rightly or wrongly — to favour one party over another;
- they may reflect a fragile balance of power between previously warring parties, making them weak;
- they may lack the technical expertise and capacity necessary to plan and manage complex DDR processes.

In order to assist in building local capacity, the UN system should assist the NCDDR by seconding to it or otherwise arranging for it to be supported by experts and consultants. The UN system should also play a guiding role to ensure that work plans are implemented and deadlines met. Also, to support the establishment of open, transparent and integrated governance structures for DDR, the UN can support and encourage the broad participation of all parties to the conflict and all parts of society in the national DDR structures.

While it is important to maintain central oversight of national programmes, supporting or establishing provincial and local authorities for the planning and delivery of DDR programmes allows for flexibility and greater responsiveness to regional and local conditions and dynamics, thus improving the chance for effective and sustainable reintegration. However, the decentralization of decision-making authority for DDR can be a source of difficulties in post-conflict States where central government is often trying to consolidate its administrative control over territories in which rebel groups have been operating.

6.3. The military

The success of DDR programmes depends on adequate coordination among civilian, police and military institutions, so it is important to include civilian, police and military personnel in the DDR team to facilitate cooperation between the peacekeeping mission and external partners, including UN funds, agencies and programmes, as well as national military authorities. Possible ways of doing this include coordination meetings, the establishment of military liaison officers, and the integration of staff from organizations actively involved in DDR into a single DDR coordinating team. Civil–military cooperation should also take place between the UN blue helmets and the local population (also see IDDRS 4.40 on UN Military Roles and Responsibilities and IDDRS 4.50 on UN Police Roles and Responsibilities).

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6.4. Non-signatory armed groups

Ideally, the DDR of all armed forces and groups is discussed as part of the peace accord and political agreement, and the different motivations and interests of leaders, field commanders, and members of armed forces and groups are understood before DDR planning begins.

If other forces and groups have not been represented in political processes or formal institutional mechanisms for DDR and/or have not signed the peace accord, a framework must be set up to secure their buy-in and participation. This is particularly important in areas where informal militias and/or criminal gangs have been active in conflict, but are not represented in political processes and negotiations. To avoid disagreements, the framework for inclusion must pay particular attention to the status of individuals in other armed forces and groups. One solution may be to establish a consultative framework for them that works together with the formal forum; another could be to bring in a neutral and respected non-UN body to negotiate with them. When dealing with such groups, UN partners must ensure that they have a mandate to do so. As the mandates of many peacekeeping missions are given in support of a peace agreement, the mission's mandate may be limited to assisting with the DDR of the groups listed in the peace agreement.

6.5. Civil society

Civil society organizations based in local communities are stakeholders in the policy development and planning phases of DDR, and should be consulted through formal and informal mechanisms. During the implementation phase, they are local partners and service providers. However, international assistance will usually be necessary to build their capacity in networking, strategic planning, programme development, financial management and communications strategies. Such support is one means through which DDR increases capacities within communities for post-conflict peace-building and also for recovery in the broader sense. CSOs are very different and may include NGOs, religious groups, traditional authorities, workers' associations, women's organizations, human rights groups, the private sector and so on. After war, these organizations may be polarized along political, religious or ethnic lines, and may represent specific interests, so their legitimacy and representation should be checked.

Although their capacities may have been weakened by conflict, CSOs can become partners in DDR by providing individual opportunities for reintegration through employment and training as one of many industry and economic recovery strategies. At the local level, partnerships with small businesses support the creation of sustainable reintegration opportunities for ex-combatants and their dependants.

Women's leaders and associations deserve special mention: with the right support and encouragement — both at national and grassroots levels — they can make significant and unique contributions to all phases of the DDR process, from political negotiation and planning to programme design and implementation. UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) states that all departments and agencies of the UN system have a duty to promote the representation and participation of women in all phases of DDR, to remove obstacles to their participation, and to provide alternative forums for their participation, as well as ensuring access to appropriate capacity-building programmes.

6.6. The media

Like other institutions in post-conflict societies, the capacities, infrastructure and even neutrality of the local and national media will have been reduced. Yet the media are crucial

for the delivery of messages to armed forces and groups, and members of the general public regarding post-conflict reconciliation and peace-building strategies, including the implementation of DDR programmes. A media and communications strategy, including capacity-building, must be deployed early in the DDR planning process to ensure that members of local and national media receive accurate and timely information as the process evolves.

7. International actors

7.1. The UN system

Where the Secretary-General has appointed a Special Representative (SRSG), the latter will generally have overall responsibility for the UN system in-country, as well as direct responsibility for the UN peacekeeping mission, including the DDR unit. The SRSG may also represent the UN in political negotiations on DDR, overseeing the provision of technical assistance and implementation of UN support operations.

UN specialized agencies, programmes and funds make up a large part of the UN system's operational capacity in countries where integrated peacekeeping missions are established. Several agencies will be present and running programmes before the establishment of a peacekeeping mission, during its operation and after its exit. Together, they make up the UN country team, headed by the UN Resident Coordinator (RC). Where an integrated UN peacekeeping mission has been established, the RC function will generally be assumed by a Deputy SRSG to further strengthen integration of UN efforts in support of its peace-building mandate. This Deputy SRSG normally also functions as the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC). The integrated DDR unit should report to the Deputy SRSG responsible for development and humanitarian affairs so that the UN country team and UN mission activities in support of DDR operations are synchronized (also see IDDRS 3.10 on Integrated DDR Planning: Processes and Structures).

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7.2. The region

Regional actors and neighbouring countries may have been direct or indirect parties to the conflict, and DDR will have an impact on them when foreign combatants are repatriated. Consultation with regional actors and neighbouring countries in the planning phases of DDR will establish the appropriate mechanisms for dealing with such situations (also see IDDRS 5.40 on Cross-border Population Movements).

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Regional and sub-regional organizations such as the Organization of American States, the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union have been important partners in a number of DDR processes at both political and technical levels. Where missions of these organizations are working alongside UN peace support operations in the same country, the respective roles and responsibilities of each one must be established through clear mandates.

7.3. Member States and bilateral partners

Member States and bilateral partners act as guarantors and supporters of political transition processes and as donors for peace-building and recovery programmes, and may even assume responsibilities as primary international sponsors of particular components of DDR and security sector reform processes. When political obstacles are encountered in the

DDR process, bilateral partners can use their diplomatic leverage to remove them, and they can deliver direct DDR assistance through their bilateral cooperation and aid agencies, although this should be coordinated with the wider DDR process.

7.4. Development banks

Although the mandates of development banks do not generally allow them to support disarmament or other security-related components of DDR programmes, the World Bank and regional development banks have been involved in the financing, programme development and monitoring of a number of DDR programmes. They often provide assistance as a component of broader recovery strategies and financing mechanisms. The World Bank can offer a number of funding mechanisms, including International Development Association loans and credits, and post-conflict grants, and can manage multi-donor trust funds such as the Great Lakes Region Multi-Donor Demobilization and Reintegration Programme.

7.5. International non-governmental organizations

Several international NGOs have developed experience in managing and implementing various components of DDR programmes (among others, German Agro Action, World Vision, International Rescue Committee, Oxfam and Gesellschaft für Zusammenarbeit [GTZ]). They are also often engaged in humanitarian and development activities in regions where DDR programmes are being established. To ensure effective collaboration and avoid duplication of international assistance in support of DDR, coordination mechanisms must be established at the central planning level and in the field. Where possible, these should build upon existing coordination structures and mechanisms, such as those established by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, or, after a UN peacekeeping operation has been established, under the auspices of the Deputy SRSG who has been designated HC. If international NGOs are implementing partners for DDR, they shall follow the guidelines laid down in the IDDRS and establish appropriate monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

7.6. International corporations

Where conflict has resulted from competition for natural resources or where their exploitation fuels conflict, there can be direct and/or indirect links between international commercial interests and local armed groups. International corporations can be either supportive or subversive/destructive, so their presence needs to be understood when DDR programmes are designed. International corporations can be constructive through direct support to economic development or employment programmes, or they can sponsor information and sensitization campaigns or special initiatives within a DDR programme. Carrying out surveys and establishing partnerships with international business can gain its support for DDR.

7.7. Research and policy centres

A number of national and international research centres have made contributions to the development, monitoring and review of past and current DDR programmes, and are a valuable external resource in the design and implementation of new programmes. For further information, please refer to the UN DDR Resource Centre.¹

Annex A: Abbreviations

CSO	civil society organization
DDR	disarmament, demobilization and reintegration
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
IDDRS	integrated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration standard/ standards
IDP	internally displaced person
NCDDR	national commission on DDR
NGO	non-governmental organization
RC	Resident Coordinator
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees

Endnotes

- 1 <http://www.unddr.org>.