

Disarming and reintegrating fighters into society key to sustaining peace – UN officials

19 June 2017 – Celebrating the tenth anniversary of the development of United Nations standards for having former combatants lay down weapons and reintegrate into society, senior UN officials today highlighted how crucial the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) processes are to sustaining peace.

Over the past three decades, [DDR](#) has become an integral part of peace operations across the globe. DDR has played a key role in violence prevention, stabilization and support to political processes, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu told a high-level roundtable, titled ‘Tenth anniversary of the Integrated DDR Standards and the experience of Côte d’Ivoire.’

The UN peacekeeping mission in Côte d’Ivoire, known by its French acronym, UNOCI, which was set up in April 2004, will [close at the end of this month](#).

This crucial contribution to sustaining peace is manifested in successful DDR programmes, as witnessed in Central America, Angola, Sierra Leone, Liberia and of course Côte d’Ivoire, Ms. Nakamitsu said, speaking on behalf of the Secretary-General.

The heightened political and security challenges in recent times have made peacekeeping, and more specifically DDR, more challenging. These include contexts in which there is no peace agreement or inclusive political process, a rising number of armed groups with regional agendas and links to transnational criminal networks as well as a large number of illicit arms within communities exacerbating the threat of violent extremism.

The past decade of implementing the Integrated DDR Standards has taught us that as complex as DDR appears, it is a tool that can adapt to realities on the ground UN disarmament chief Izumi Nakamitsu

Community Violence Reduction (CVR), including community security measures, are examples that can complement classic DDR programmes to create the space for stability, recovery and sustainable peace, she noted.

The 2017 revision of the [Integrated DDR Standards](#) and development of new guidance including on disarmament and arms control will help ensure that DDR remains relevant to contemporary and future peace operation contexts, and that Integrated DDR Standards continue to be the living and dynamic tool it was meant to be.

Standardizing guidance on DDR operations in 2006 was a major step towards

improving the 'One UN' approach to carrying out its DDR mandate, she said, adding that "it is now crucial that we use the revision to take UN DDR to the next level."

Echoing Ms. Nakamitsu's key points, Fabrizio Hochschild, Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, stressed that 10 years after the publication of the Integrated DDR standards, its revision is an excellent opportunity to reflect the wider reform efforts by the Secretary-General.

"Statistically speaking, there has never been a moment in history where more people have enjoyed as much prosperity and security. Nevertheless, there is truth to the common perception that the multilateral system has not dealt with the current transnational challenges effectively in light of new signs of fragility and unpredictability," he said.

"This is what has brought the Secretary-General to start his term with a strong emphasis on prevention and reform," he added.

Primacy of national ownership is essential for a successful DDR process

Also speaking at the roundtable was Alexandre Zouev, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions, who highlighted four key points.

He said that first, reintegration needs to ensure that the political, social and economic grievances of former combatants are properly addressed. Second, DDR initiatives cannot be sustained if they are not supported by well-funded, long-term reintegration programmes for ex-combatants. Third, there is a need to re-think partnerships more strategically.

Lastly, the primacy of national ownership is essential for a successful DDR process, he said, and in that regard, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire had been exemplary through its strong commitment to complete the DDR process, which had been fully led by the personal vision of President Ouattara and effectively implemented by the national *Autorité pour le DDR* headed by Fidèle Sarassoro. "This was critical in mobilizing funding and partners had confidence in the Government's visible commitment," he said.

Other speakers included Ambassador Claude Stanislas Bouah-Kamon; Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations; El Ghassim Wane, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; David Clay, Deputy Political Coordinator, Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to the United Nations; and Jean-Paul Laborde, Assistant Secretary-General & Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate.

The meeting was moderated by Dmitry Titov, outgoing Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions and Kelvin Ong, Chief of the Security Council Subsidiary Organs Branch.