

BRIEFING NOTE FOR SENIOR MANAGERS

ON THE UNITED NATIONS INTEGRATED DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION, AND REINTEGRATION STANDARDS

I. Introduction

This briefing note is intended for senior managers who play a role in processes of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR). It distils key strategic and policy guidance from the United Nations Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS), which represent the agreed policies and procedures of the United Nations (UN) for preparing and executing DDR.

Published in 2006, the IDDRS were developed by members of the UN Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR (IAWG) and were based on lessons learned from DDR programmes implemented throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. In 2017, after further operational experience in DDR had been acquired, and recognizing the changes in the global landscape of armed conflict, the IAWG took the decision to revise the IDDRS. By this time, the IAWG had grown to include 25 members, all of which contributed to the revision process and to the relaunch of the revised IDDRS in November 2019.¹

It is important that senior managers use the IDDRS for the following reasons:

- The IDDRS are a repository of lessons and best practices drawn from the experience of all UN departments, agencies, funds and programmes involved in supporting DDR;
- The IDDRS are a key document for jump-starting new DDR processes, providing not only the necessary policy guidance, but a range of policy options;
- The IDDRS outline the UN's integrated approach to DDR and provide evidence-based guidance that is crucial for informed decision making.

The guidance contained within the revised IDDRS is organized into six different levels. This includes an introduction to the IDDRS (Level One), the concepts, policy and strategy of the IDDRS (Level Two), structures and processes (Level Three), operations, programmes and support (Level Four), cross-cutting issues (Level Five), and linkages with other processes (Level Six). The focus of this Briefing Note is IDDRS Level Two, which includes the following five guidance modules:

- IDDRS 2.10 on The UN Approach to DDR;
- IDDRS 2.11 on The Legal Framework for UN DDR;
- IDDRS 2.20 on The Politics of DDR;
- IDDRS 2.30 on Community Violence Reduction; and
- IDDRS 2.40 on Reintegration as Part of Sustaining Peace.

These modules are available online at the UN DDR Resource Centre (see www.unddr.org). A full overview of the IDDRS is provided below in Diagram 1: The IDDRS Framework.

II. What is DDR?

DDR is a process through which members of armed forces and groups are supported to lay down their weapons and return to civilian life. DDR processes can also contribute to stabilization efforts, and to creating an environment in which a peace process, political and social reconciliation, access to livelihoods and decent work, and sustainable development can take root. For these reasons, DDR processes should be seen as integral parts of efforts to consolidate peace and promote stability, and not merely as a set of sequenced technical programmes and activities.

The official UN definition of DDR was provided by the Secretary-General in his Note to the General Assembly on the administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of UN peacekeeping operations (A/C.5/59/31, 24 May 2005). In this note, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration are defined as follows:

Disarmament:

Disarmament is the collection, documentation, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population. Disarmament also includes the development of responsible arms management programmes.

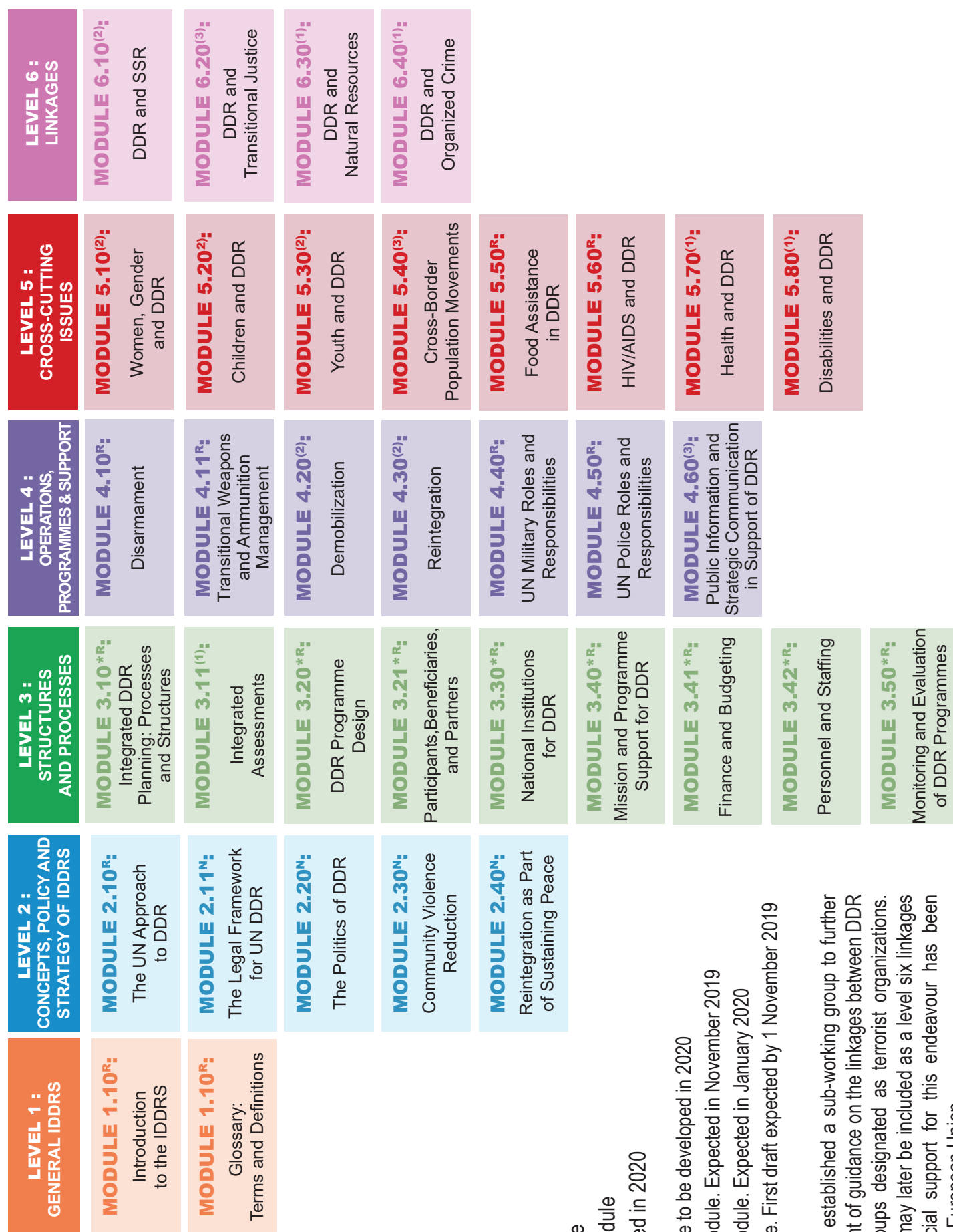
Demobilization:

Demobilization is the formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces or other groups. The first stage of demobilization may extend from the processing of individual combatants in temporary centres to the massing of troops in camps designated for this purpose (cantonment sites, encampments, assembly areas or barracks). The second stage of demobilization encompasses the support package provided to the demobilized, which is called reinsertion. Reinsertion is the assistance offered to ex-combatants during demobilization but prior to the longer term process of reintegration. Reinsertion is a form of transitional assistance to help cover the basic needs of ex-combatants and their families and can include transitional safety allowances, food, clothes, shelter, medical services, short-term education, training, employment and tools. While reintegration is a long-term, continuous social and economic process of development, reinsertion is short-term material and/or financial assistance to meet immediate needs, and can last up to one year.

Reintegration:

Reintegration is the process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income. Reintegration is essentially a social and economic

Diagram 1: The IDDRS Framework



^N New module

^R Revised module

^{*R} To be revised in 2020

(1) New module to be developed in 2020

(2) Revised module. Expected in November 2019

(3) Revised module. Expected in January 2020

(4) New module. First draft expected by 1 November 2019

The IAWG has established a sub-working group to further the development of guidance on the linkages between DDR and armed groups designated as terrorist organizations. This guidance may later be included as a level six linkages module. Financial support for this endeavour has been provided by the European Union.

process with an open time frame, primarily taking place in communities at the local level. It is part of the general development of a country and a national responsibility and often necessitates long-term external assistance.

Recognizing new developments since the release of the Secretary General's 2005 Note to the General Assembly, the Third Report of the Secretary-General on DDR (A/65/741, 21 March 2011) includes revised policy and guidance on reintegration. It observes that, "in most countries, economic aspects, while central, are not sufficient for the sustainable reintegration of ex-combatants. Serious consideration of the social and political aspects of reintegration ... is [also] crucial for the sustainability and success of reintegration programmes," including interventions, such as psychosocial support, mental health counselling and clinical treatment and medical health support, as well as reconciliation, access to justice/transitional justice and participation in political processes. Additionally, it emphasizes that while "reintegration programmes supported by the United Nations are time-bound in nature ... the reintegration of ex-combatants and associated groups is a long-term process that takes place at the individual, community, national and regional levels, and is dependent on wider recovery and development."

From DDR Programmes to DDR Processes

DDR has typically been associated with DDR programmes in contexts where a peace agreement has been signed between armed groups and a national government, and where a UN peacekeeping mission has been deployed. The UN views DDR programmes as an integral part of peacebuilding efforts because they aim to address the post-conflict security problem that arises when combatants are left without livelihoods and support networks during the vital period stretching from conflict to peace, recovery, and development. DDR programmes

provide an opportunity for members of armed forces and groups to hand over their weapons, to change from military to civilian status, and to receive support for their reintegration back into civilian life.

Experience gathered over the last ten years has shown that DDR programmes are viable only when certain preconditions are in place:

- The signing of a negotiated ceasefire and/or peace agreement that provides a framework for DDR;
- Trust in the peace process;
- Willingness of the parties to the armed conflict to engage in DDR;
- A minimum guarantee of security.

However, the United Nations is increasingly engaged in settings where these preconditions are not present. Many contexts are characterized by the fragmentation and multiplication of armed groups, some of which sign peace agreements while others refuse. Similarly, armed conflict is often localized as armed groups fight each other, in addition to (or instead of) fighting State forces. Furthermore, in contexts of violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, peace agreements are often only a remote possibility.

Responding to these developments, the revised IDDRS provide guidance not only on DDR programmes but also a range of other options for DDR practitioners under the umbrella of a DDR process. A DDR process may consist of any combination of the following:

- DDR programmes;
- DDR-related tools;
- Reintegration support, including when complementing DDR-related tools.

This is illustrated in Diagram 2 below.

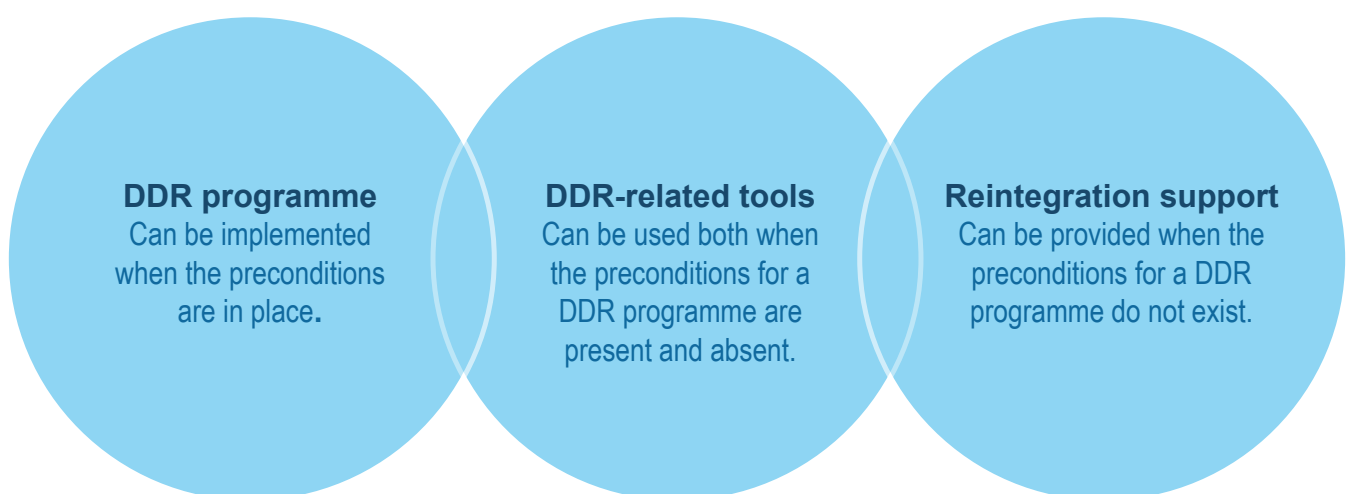


Diagram 2: The possible elements of an integrated DDR process.

DDR-Related Tools

The revised IDDRS introduce a number of DDR-related tools. These are:

- Pre-DDR;
- Transitional weapons and ammunition management (WAM);
- Community violence reduction (CVR);
- Initiatives to prevent individuals from joining armed groups designated as terrorist organizations;
- DDR support to mediation;
- DDR support to transitional security arrangements.

In addition, DDR support to programmes for those leaving armed groups labelled and/or designated as terrorist organizations may also be provided by DDR practitioners in compliance with international standards.

Box 1: DDR-Related Tools

Pre-DDR is a local-level transitional stabilization measure designed for those who are eligible for a DDR programme. Pre-DDR can be initiated when the implementation of a DDR programme is delayed.

Transitional WAM may include (but is not limited to) weapons collection in exchange for community development projects, and support for the safer management of weapons and ammunition by communities.

CVR is a bottom-up approach that helps to eliminate the main drivers of violence in communities by providing alternatives to recruitment into armed groups and building social cohesion. It includes a wide range of activities from labour intensive projects to community dialogue forums.

DDR support to mediation: DDR practitioners can provide support to the drafting of DDR provisions in ceasefires and political agreements. They can also make proposals on the design and implementation of DDR programmes, provide advice on how to engage armed forces and groups on DDR issues, and contribute to the attainment of agreements.

DDR support to transitional security arrangements: DDR practitioners can provide support to the establishment of security-related confidence building measures as part of ongoing negotiations, ceasefire or peace agreements. This can include the temporary establishment of legitimate non-state security providers or of mixed patrols and units made up of both state and non-state armed forces and groups.

* A description of initiatives to prevent individuals from joining armed groups designated as terrorist organizations is not included in this box because IDDRS guidance on this DDR-related tool is still under development.

The specific aims of DDR-related tools will vary according to the context. DDR-related tools may be used when the preconditions for DDR programmes are absent in order to contribute to stabilization, to make the returns of stability more tangible, and to generate more conducive environments for local and national peace processes. However, when the preconditions for a DDR programme are present, DDR-related tools may also be used before, during and after DDR programmes as complementary measures (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: DDR-Related Tools and DDR Programmes - Complementary Measures

Before a DDR Programme	Pre-DDR may be used when national DDR programmes are delayed.
During a DDR Programme	CVR can be used to reduce tensions in communities where cantonment is occurring.
After a DDR Programme	Transitional WAM can be used after DDR programmes to mop up civilian held weapons.

Reintegration support, including when complementing DDR-related tools

The revised IDDRS reframe DDR under the sustaining peace approach. This approach, manifested in the General Assembly and Security Council twin resolutions on the Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture, recognises the need to work across the entire peace continuum from prevention, conflict resolution and peacekeeping, to peacebuilding and development (General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 [2016]). The implications of this are particularly important for reintegration, as the revised IDDRS recognize that support to the reintegration of former combatants and persons formerly associated with armed forces and groups can be provided not only in post-conflict contexts, but also during active conflict, when the preconditions for DDR programmes are not in place. Support to reintegration in this context may also complement DDR-related tools, such as when reintegration support follows CVR.

III. Key Considerations for Senior Managers

A new United Nations approach

The new emphasis on DDR processes recognizes that innovative and adaptive DDR responses will be required, many of which will differ from the sequenced disarmament, demobilization and reintegration often associated with DDR programmes. Careful risk assessment and risk management will be necessary to address the challenges of working in contexts where peace agreements have not been signed. One particularly important challenge in this regard may be the lack of a pre-existing political-operational framework for DDR.

ACTION POINTS:

- When the preconditions for a DDR programme are not present, DDR-related tools and reintegration support should not be applied reactively and in an ad hoc manner. These activities should be part of a clear strategy with a pre-defined end goal.
- When there is no peace agreement to provide a political-operational framework for DDR, it will be important, where feasible, to work closely with national and/or local partners to support the development of DDR frameworks.

Mission and non-mission settings

The United Nations has previously initiated its engagement in DDR processes within the context of a ceasefire or a comprehensive peace accord. This engagement has typically been undertaken in mission settings, i.e., those situations where peace operations mandated by the Security Council are deployed through peacekeeping operations, political missions, or good offices engagements by the United Nations or a regional organization. For the first time, the revised IDDRS now provide guidance related to both mission and non-mission settings. In the latter case, UN DDR support may be provided when requests for assistance are made either by a national government and/or a UN Resident Coordinator (RC).

ACTION POINTS:**In both mission and non-mission settings:**

- When requests for assistance are received, thorough assessments will be required to establish the parameters and potential for support to a DDR process.
- Where possible, joint assessments with partners should be undertaken so that joint planning and coordinated implementation processes can follow.

National and local

Experience has shown that national level peace accords do not necessarily address or resolve local conflicts. Local agendas – at the level of the individual, family, clan, municipality, community, district, or ethnic group – can at least partly drive the continuation of armed violence. Some incidents of localized violence will require primarily local solutions, such as rivalry over positions of traditional authority. However, other types of localized armed conflict may be linked to the national level and be more amenable to top-down intervention. An example would be competition over political roles at the sub-federal or district level.

ACTION POINTS:

- Analyse interlinkages between conflict dynamics at the local and national levels. Where relevant, also consider links to the regional level.
- Where appropriate, provide support to the mediation of local level peace agreements including, but not limited to, local non-aggression pacts between armed groups, deals regarding access to specific areas, and community violence reduction agreements.
- Be aware that many DDR-related tools are well-suited to local level intervention, such as CVR and transitional WAM.

Prevention of ongoing recruitment

Reframing DDR under the sustaining peace approach means that DDR processes should also factor in the importance of prevention. For many years, DDR practitioners have provided support to the reintegration of former combatants in order to lessen the likelihood that these individuals will re-join armed groups. However, in settings of active conflict, focusing only on those who leave armed groups, and ignoring the prevention of ongoing first-time recruitment, means that the overall impact of DDR will be undermined.



ACTION POINTS:

- Reintegration support should primarily be geared towards the prevention of re-recruitment. However, in line with the sustaining peace approach, consideration should also be given to how community-based reintegration support can be applied to reduce first-time recruitment, for example, through the inclusion of youth at risk.
- Consider how, during ongoing conflict, DDR-related tools such as CVR and initiatives to prevent individuals from joining armed groups designated as terrorist organizations, can be used alongside support to reintegration.

IV. General Principles for the UN Approach to DDR

The United Nations approach to DDR is guided by the following principles:

1. Voluntary

DDR shall be a voluntary process for armed forces and groups and for their individual members. This principle has become even more important, but contested, in contemporary conflict environments where the participation of some combatants in nationally, locally, or privately-supported efforts is arguably involuntary, for example as a result of capture on the battlefield, or being forced into DDR under duress.

2. People-centred

Criteria for participation/eligibility

Determining the criteria that define which people are eligible to participate in DDR is vital if aims are to be achieved. In DDR programmes, eligibility criteria must be carefully designed and ready for use in the disarmament and demobilization stages. In instances where the preconditions for a DDR programme are not in place, or where combatants are ineligible for DDR programmes, DDR-related tools, such as CVR, or support to reintegration may be considered. Determination of eligibility for these activities should be undertaken by relevant national and local authorities with support from UN missions, agencies, programmes and funds as appropriate.

Unconditional release and protection of children

The unconditional and immediate release of children associated with armed forces and groups must be a priority, irrespective of the status of peace negotiations and/or the development of DDR processes. When DDR programmes, DDR-related tools and reintegration support are implemented, children shall be separated from armed forces and groups and handed over to child protection agencies. Children will then be supported to demobilize and reintegrate into families and communities.

In accordance with standards and principles of humanitarian assistance

UN-supported DDR processes promote the human rights of participants and the communities into which they reintegrate, and are conducted in line with international



humanitarian, human rights and refugee law. The UN and its partners should be neutral, transparent and impartial, and should not take sides in any conflict or in political, racial, religious or ideological controversies, or give preferential treatment to different parties taking part in DDR. Humanitarian aid must be delivered to all those who are suffering, according to their need, and human rights provide the framework on which an assessment of needs is based. However, mechanisms must also be designed to prevent those who have committed violations of human rights from going unpunished by ensuring that DDR programmes, related tools and reintegration support do not operate as a reward system for the worst violators.

3. Gender-responsive and inclusive

Non-discrimination and fair and equitable treatment are core principles in both the design and implementation of DDR processes. The eligibility criteria for DDR shall not discriminate against individuals on the basis of sex, age, race, gender identity, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, political opinion, or other personal characteristics or associations. Furthermore, the opportunities/benefits that eligible individuals have access to when participating in a particular DDR process shall not discriminate on the basis of their former affiliation with a particular armed force or group.

Like men and boys, women and girls are likely to have played many different roles in armed forces and groups, as fighters, supporters, wives or sex slaves, messengers and cooks. The design and implementation of DDR processes should aim to address the specific needs of women and girls, men and boys, or persons of other gender identities, by taking into account their different experiences.

4. Conflict-sensitive

'Do no harm' is a standard principle against which all DDR processes shall be evaluated at all times. No false promises shall be made, and, ultimately, no individual or community should be made less secure by the return of ex-combatants or the presence of UN peacekeeping, police, or civilian personnel. The establishment of UN-supported prevention, protection, and monitoring mechanisms (including systems for ensuring access to justice and police protection) is essential to prevent and punish sexual and gender-based violence, harassment and intimidation, and any other violation of human rights.

5. Context specific

DDR processes need to be context-specific in order to address local, national, regional, and global realities. The IDDRS provide DDR practitioners with comprehensive guidance and analytical tools for the planning and design of DDR, rather than a standard formula that is applicable to every situation.

6. Flexible, accountable and transparent

Flexible, sustainable and transparent funding arrangements

Due to the complex and dynamic nature of DDR processes, long-term funding arrangements are essential. The multidimensional nature of DDR requires an initial investment

of staff and funds for planning and initial programming, as well as accessible and sustainable sources of funding throughout the different phases of implementation. Funding mechanisms including trust funds and pooled funding, and the criteria established for the use of funds, shall be flexible.

Accountability and transparency

In order to build confidence and ensure legitimacy, DDR processes are, from the very beginning, predicated on the principles of accountability and transparency. The UN aims to establish transparent mechanisms for the independent monitoring, oversight, and evaluation of DDR processes and their financing mechanisms. The UN also attempts to create an environment in which all stakeholders understand and are accountable for achieving broad objectives.

7. Nationally and locally owned

Ensuring national and local ownership is crucial to the success of DDR. National ownership ensures that DDR processes are informed by an understanding of the local context, the dynamics of the conflict, and the dynamics between ex-combatants and community members. Even when receiving financial and technical assistance from partners, it is the responsibility of national governments to ensure coordination between government ministries and local government, between government and national civil society, and between government and external partners. In contexts where national capacity is weak, a government exerts national ownership by building the capacity of its national institutions, by contributing to the DDR process, and by creating links to other peacebuilding and development initiatives. This is particularly important in the case of reintegration support, as measures should be designed as part of national development and recovery efforts.

8. Regionally supported

The regional causes of conflict and the political, social and economic interrelationships among neighbouring States sharing insecure borders will present challenges for the implementation of DDR. Managing repatriation and the cross-border movement of weapons and armed groups requires careful coordination among UN agencies and regional organizations, both in the countries concerned and in neighbouring countries where there may be spill-over effects. The return of foreign former combatants and mercenaries may be a particular problem and will require a separate strategy. Importantly, UN actors need to engage regional stakeholders, including neighbouring countries, in order to foster a conducive environment for DDR.

9. Integrated

From the earliest assessment phase and throughout all stages of strategy development, planning and implementation, it is essential to encourage integration and unity of effort within the UN system and with national players. It is also important to coordinate the participation of international partners so as to achieve common objectives. Joint assessments and programming are key to ensuring that DDR programmes in both mission and non-mission

contexts are implemented in an integrated manner. DDR practitioners should also strive for an integrated approach in contexts where DDR programmes are used in combination with DDR-related tools, and in settings where the preconditions for DDR programmes are not present.

10. Well-planned

Safety and security

Given that DDR is aimed at groups who are a security risk and is implemented in fragile security environments, risks and operational security and safety protocols should be decided on before the planning and implementation of activities. These should include the security and safety needs of UN and partner agency personnel involved in DDR operations, DDR participants (who will have many different needs), and members of local communities. Security concerns should be included in operational plans, and clear criteria, in line with the UN Programme Criticality Framework, should be established for starting, delaying, suspending or cancelling activities and/or operations, should security risks be too high.

Planning: assessment, design, monitoring and evaluation

DDR processes shall be designed on the basis of detailed quantitative and qualitative data. Supporting information management systems should ensure that this data remains up to date, accurate and accessible. Regularly updating this information allows DDR to adapt to changing circumstances. Internal and external monitoring and evaluation mechanisms must also be established from the start. Monitoring and evaluation should be based on

an integrated approach to metrics, and produce lessons learned and best practices that will influence the further development of IDDRS policy and practice.

Public information and community sensitization

Public information, awareness-raising, and community sensitization ensure that affected communities and participants receive accurate information on DDR procedures and benefits. Public information strategies should be drawn up and implemented as early as possible. Messages should be appropriately designed for different audiences, considering gender and cultural dimensions in design and delivery, and should employ many different and locally appropriate means of communication.

Transition and exit strategies

While DDR programmes last for a specific period of time that includes the immediate post-conflict situation, and the transition and early recovery periods, other aspects of DDR may need to be continued, albeit in a different form. DDR-related tools can be initiated after DDR programmes, and reintegration activities also become an integral part of recovery and development. To ensure a smooth transition from one stage to another, an exit strategy should be defined as soon as possible, and should focus on how DDR processes will seamlessly transform into broader and/or longer-term development strategies, such as security sector reform, violence prevention, socio-economic recovery, national reconciliation, peacebuilding, gender equality and poverty reduction.



V. Conclusions

Over the past decade DDR has evolved in response to the changing nature of armed conflict. Lessons learned since the original publication of the IDDRS in 2006 have been distilled into the new and revised modules of the IDDRS.

Following the new UN approach to DDR:

- A DDR process may consist of any combination of: DDR programmes, DDR-related tools, and reintegration support, including when complementing DDR-related tools.
- DDR processes can be implemented in mission and non-mission settings both when the preconditions for a DDR programme are in place, and when they are not.
- Where appropriate, the United Nations should support the mediation and implementation of local-level peace agreements in addition to national ones. Regional conflict dynamics should also be assessed.
- In contexts where the preconditions for a DDR programme are not in place:
 - Innovative and adaptive DDR responses will be required. These responses will differ from the sequenced process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration often associated with DDR programmes.
 - There may be no peace agreement to provide a political-operational framework for DDR. It will therefore be important, where feasible, to work closely with national and/or local partners to support the development of DDR frameworks.
 - In line with the sustaining peace approach, support to the reintegration of former combatants and persons formerly associated with armed forces and groups can be provided not only in post-conflict contexts, but also during active conflict.
 - DDR processes should focus not only on supporting the reintegration of ex-combatants and persons formerly associated with armed forces and groups, but also on activities that prevent ongoing first-time recruitment. This can be achieved, for example, through the inclusion of youth at risk in CVR programmes and community-based reintegration support.

Endnotes

¹ Members are CTED, DGC, DPPA, DPPA/PBSO, ODA, OHCHR, ILO, IOM, OSAA, OSRSG CAAC, UNAIDS, UNEP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDIR, UNITAR, UNODC, UNOPS, UN Women, WFP, WHO and the World Bank. DPO and UNDP are co-chairs of the IAWG. OLA also participates in IAWG meetings and activities. The African Union has observer status with the IAWG-DDR.

