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Directions in Development

The Transition from War to Peace in Sub-Saharan Africa

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In the cover panel are details from color woodcuts by Fred Mutebi, a Ugandan artist who has exhibited in Africa and Europe. We are grateful to Mr. Mutebi for granting permission to use these works.

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Foreword

The transition from war to peace and from economic crisis to revitalization is a fragile process characterized by intense political, economic, and ethnic rivalries. Nowhere is this transition more compelling, and nowhere are the rivalries more deeply rooted, than in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Although reported military expenditures in Sub-Saharan Africa, excluding South Africa, have declined significantly (from \$3.5 billion in 1987 to \$1.9 billion in 1993), poverty, inequality, and ethnic discrimination continue to foster conflict and undermine the authority of several African states. The resulting fragmentation has led to an alarming privatization of violence: armed bands, often aligned with political, ethnic, and other special interests, rush to fill the vacuum left by a diminished state security and administrative apparatus. Indeed, fragmentation and violence threaten the very existence of some African states, such as Somalia and Liberia.

This weakening of the overall security umbrella that had readily received external financing during the cold war has produced a flood of displaced people and refugees. In Central and Eastern Africa alone, about 22 million people are displaced (within the country or externally). Natural disasters and famine used to be the root of human suffering and displacement in Africa; now, internal conflict is the leading cause of emergencies in many countries.

The convergence of a decade of economic deterioration with the end of the cold war has created a climate in which a growing number of African governments, whether emerging from internal conflict or at peace, are exploring ways to address persistent poverty by reallocating scarce resources from military budgets. In this changing context, demobilization and reintegration programs (DRPs) for military personnel constitute the central element of the transition from war to peace. DRPs not only provide assistance to an especially vulnerable and potentially volatile group among the poor; they also help rebuild a secure foundation on which an economy can grow sustainably.

Several countries have asked the donor community, including the World Bank, to provide technical assistance and financing for demobilization and reintegration efforts. In response, the World Bank's Africa Regional Office

has adopted a two-pronged strategy: first, it established,

in 1992, a working group to examine the African experience with DRPS and to assess the potential role of the Bank, and second, it began to offer technical and financial assistance to those governments that sought help in the design and implementation of DRPS.

The efforts of the working group culminated in the Africa Regional Discussion Paper "Demobilization and Reintegration of Military Personnel in Africa: The Evidence from Seven Country Case Studies" (World Bank 1993). The study, which was based on secondary data, focused on design issues of the demobilization phase and identified the key factors that influence the outcome of a DRP. The report found a wide audience among client governments, donors, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, and academics.

Concurrently, the Bank provided technical and financial assistance to the governments of Mozambique, Rwanda, and Uganda. In Uganda the Bank played a central role in the development and implementation of a program that, over the past three years, has reduced defense expenditures from 35 to 25 percent of the current national budget and has cut the size of the army almost in half, from 80,000 to 43,000 soldiers. The Bank also assisted in the design of a DRP for Rwanda, but the tragic turn of internal political events and the ensuing change of government preempted the program. Recently, the government of Rwanda has again requested the Bank's leadership in DRP design. This time, social reconciliation will be part of the overall program. Current assistance to Mozambique focuses primarily on reintegration, with an emphasis on generating employment and training through support for microprojects and through capacity building. This program has been recently expanded to target displaced persons and returning refugees, as well as ex-combatants.

Other DRPS have been substantially completed (Chad and Zimbabwe) or are well on their way to completion (Eritrea and Ethiopia). Many more African countries for example, Angola, Djibouti, Liberia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, and Togo have emerged as potential candidates for DRP assistance, as have Bosnia, Cambodia, and Sri Lanka outside Africa. Finally, DRPS for Somalia and the Sudan will most likely materialize in the more distant future.

The growing experience with DRPS has helped the Bank to crystallize a number of key policy and programmatic issues. These include targeting criteria and mechanisms, program options, costs and effectiveness, institutional

arrangements for implementation, restoration of social capital, economic impact (the "peace dividend"), and donor coordination.

In order to fill gaps in knowledge and to assist client governments, international partners (multilateral and bilateral agencies and nongovernmental organizations), and Bank staff in improving the design and

implementation of DRPS, the Africa Regional Office prepared a "best practices" study focusing on the reinsertion and reintegration of ex-combat-ants. The study, to be issued as a World Bank Discussion Paper (Colletta and others forthcoming), draws on the lessons learned from in-depth country studies of Ethiopia, Namibia, and Uganda. The experiences of these countries offer an extensive range of social, political, and economic contexts and program models and contain a wide variety of important lessons.

This book, which is based on the "best practices" paper and supporting country studies, provides a window on the complex political, economic, and sociocultural transitions that face many countries. These insights will be shared with our clients and our partners as we work together toward enduring peace and prosperity on the African continent.

E. V. K. JAYCOX
VICE
PRESIDENT
AFRICA
REGIONAL
OFFICE
THE WORLD
BANK

MARCH 1996

Preface

Africa was among the first battlefronts and final casualties of the cold war. Many devastating conflicts have persisted for twenty years or more. Some countries (such as Ethiopia, Namibia, South Africa, Uganda, and, more recently, Angola and Mozambique) are emerging from years of cold war politics and internal civil strife, but pernicious internal struggles continue to plague others (Liberia, Somalia, and the Sudan, for example).

The damage inflicted on the social capital and economic potential of these countries has been horrific. Of the estimated 80 million to 110 million land mines spread across 64 countries around the world, about 20 million are strewn across nearly half the countries of Africa. The impact of warfare on disinvestment, the destruction of physical infrastructure, and the deterioration of human capital through disability, death, and displacement is impossible to quantify. However, armed conflict is surely one reason why at least 250 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa nearly half the population are living below the poverty line in the mid-1990s.

While war-ravaged countries are among the poorest in the world, their neighbors, in which hundreds of thousands of people seek refuge from the devastation of war, are often in no better position. Over the past decade the African continent hosted about half of the world's displaced people, and by 1994, 21.4 million Africans had fled their homes because of conflict. Of these, 6.2 million were living abroad, representing 38 percent of the world's refugees.

Despite these dire circumstances, the governments of the continent have devoted a substantial percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) to military expenditures (3.1 percent in 1992). Expenditures for defense have crowded out those for human development; in many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa they surpass expenditures for health and education combined.

The ideological camps that once fueled military buildups receded with the end of the cold war, making it possible for many African governments to downsize their militaries and reduce defense expenditures so that human and material resources may be shifted to development activities. Demobilization and reintegration programs for military personnel constitute a vital part of

demilitarization in general, and of transitions from war to peace in particular.

Indeed, increased demilitarization is a precondition for reviving civil society, reducing poverty, and sustaining development in Africa. The realization of this objective demands disarmament, demining, and demobilization of forces, as well as the reintegration of ex-combatants into productive civilian roles. Demilitarization also requires the reduction of the destructive flow of arms into the continent.

World suppliers of arms continue to sell large quantities of military hardware to Sub-Saharan Africa, and this could be an obstacle to a rapid transition to peace. In the past, principals in the cold war armed local factions or entire countries; internal factions now rely on the control and sale of precious natural resources (ranging from forest woods to diamonds and oil) to sustain their arms purchases. The path to peace on the continent is thus littered with mines, both underground and in the form of violent sociopolitical rivalry.

The millions of displaced people scattered within and around the borders of warring countries are a grim reminder of the human consequences of such conflicts. The relationship between poverty and conflict is clear. What an Africa unblemished by internal conflicts would have looked like is hard to imagine.

Rationale And Objectives

As with civil service reform, reductions in military forces can yield great dividends for budgetary reallocations. These dividends constitute an important economic rationale for embarking on a demobilization program, particularly in peacetime. Furthermore, by reducing arms procurement and building security, DRPS have an overarching impact on fiscal policy, investment behavior, formulation of policy in the social sectors, and related poverty reduction efforts.

In war-torn societies, the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants are integral parts of the political-military solution to conflict, and DRPS lie at the heart of transition from war to peace. It is the key instrument for moving beyond humanitarian assistance to poverty reduction and sustainable reconstruction. DRPS, however, are highly complex operations that often affect more people from a lower human capital and asset base (the poorer segments of society) than does civil service reform.

The principal objective of this book is to inform Bank management and staff,

client governments, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) about best practices for improving the design and implementation of programs for demobilization, reinsertion, and reintegration in client countries. Identifying high-impact, cost-effective program options and design features on the basis

of experience is important for the success of ^{DRP} operations both in peacetime and in transitions from war to peace.

This book also provides early warning signals of what can go wrong in the ^{DRP} process and suggests preventive actions. Intentionally, however, it does not offer a blueprint for universal application because such a generalized prescription cannot substitute for a thorough understanding of the political, social, and economic conditions and needs in a given country. Only such comprehensive knowledge can lead to an in-depth, country-specific design process with good prospects for success.

Because ^{DRPS} address broad issues of populations in transition, they may also hold valuable lessons for projects that support the economic and social reintegration of other vulnerable groups, such as repatriated refugees, internally displaced populations, retrenched civil servants, and former employees of privatized parastatals. Such projects might focus on generic reinsertion and reintegration activities that include the provision of safety nets, information, counseling, and referral services, resettlement schemes, credit and business advice, and retraining and employment programs.

Methodology

The research followed multiple approaches: collection of secondary data that have become available since completion of the first ^{DRP} study; incorporation of primary data involving new information at the administrative and field levels; and the authors' direct field visits and experience in ^{DRP} design work. Two assessments of the impact of ^{DRP}—one quantitative, the other qualitative—were commissioned in Ethiopia and Namibia and undertaken by local researchers. In Ethiopia sixteen communities were assessed, and in Namibia interviews were held in twelve communities. In addition, the program monitoring and evaluation system provided an in-depth assessment of thirteen communities in Uganda.

All impact assessments were based on purposive sampling and triangulation of responses from the three groups most affected by the program: ex-combatants, family members, and community members. The field visits also captured the reflections of program staff.

Even at this stage, some gaps in knowledge exist. As a result of the emergency nature of the programs, especially those in Ethiopia and Namibia,

these gaps can never be completely filled. The dual approach of the research strategy nevertheless supplies information that is sufficiently robust for drawing lessons and making cross-country comparisons. We hope that the book will help improve the design and implementation of future DRPS in Sub-Saharan Africa and other regions.

Acknowledgments

This book has benefited from considerable input from colleagues both within and outside the Bank. It is based in part on in-depth field analysis of demobilization and reintegration in Ethiopia, Namibia, and Uganda. Those three country studies, prepared with the assistance of Emilio Mondo, Taimi Sitari, and Tadesse A. Woldu, are being published as a World Bank Discussion Paper, *Case Studies in War-to-Peace Transition: The Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants in Ethiopia, Namibia, and Uganda*.

The book would not have been possible without the extraordinary openness and collaboration of the Ethiopian Commission for the Rehabilitation of Members of the Former Army and Disabled War Veterans; the Namibian Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation; the Namibian Development Brigade Corporation; and the Uganda Veterans Assistance Board. We would also like to thank the Swiss government, which provided a grant to finance the overall project, and the U.S. Agency for International Development, which cofinanced the Ethiopian field study.

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Summary and Lessons

In his speech at the 1995 annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, James Wolfensohn, president of the World Bank, declared that a priority of the Bank is to anticipate and be organized for postconflict economic development programs. A demobilization and reintegration program (DRP) for ex-combatants is the key to an effective transition from war to peace. The success of this first step following the signing of a peace accord signals the end to organized conflict and provides the security necessary for people affected by war to reinvest in their lives and their country.

Reinsertion and reintegration are not distinct phases after demobilization. Rather, they form part of a seamless web of transition from military to civilian life, without a clear beginning or end. As reinsertion and reintegration proceed, the needs of ex-combatants change and call for different support measures.

A successful DRP requires several actions: (a) classifying ex-combatants according to their characteristics, needs and desired way of earning a livelihood (mode of subsistence); (b) offering a basic transitional assistance package (safety net); (c) finding a way to deliver assistance simply, minimizing transaction costs while maximizing benefits to ex-combatants; (d) providing counseling, information, training, employment, and social support while sensitizing communities and building on existing social capital; (e) coordinating centrally yet decentralizing implementation authority to districts; and (f) connecting to ongoing development efforts by retargeting and restructuring existing portfolios.

This book examines ways to determine the impact of a DRP on ex-combatants. The key lessons drawn from this examination warrant close consideration by Bank staff, client governments, donors, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) involved in the design and implementation of . These lessons are summarized below and are discussed in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

Political Dimensions

When a country is moving from war to peace, demobilization and reintegration issues should be addressed at the earliest stages of the peace

negotiation process. Strong political will and leadership, expressed in

terms of commitment, realism, and pragmatism, are crucial factors for successful program implementation.

National reconciliation should be actively promoted through transparent policies and conflict resolution efforts at the community level. These can reduce suspicion and help rebuild trust.

The question of land ownership and distribution needs to be treated carefully and openly. Both traditional and legal rights to the land, as well as historically rooted inequalities, have to be taken into account.

Targeting

Ex-combatants constitute a specially vulnerable group in need of priority targeted assistance. Socioeconomic data should be collected to reveal their characteristics, needs, and aspirations so that appropriate program interventions can be designed.

Careful analysis of the opportunity structure for ex-combatants (in particular, the demand for labor and the availability of land, credit, information, and provision for skill development) is a prerequisite not only for program design but also for targeted counseling and adequate placement.

An authentic, nontransferable, and noncorruptible identification system is of paramount importance for avoiding targeting errors.

The particular challenges confronting veterans' dependents (the family), as well as female soldiers, child soldiers, and disabled ex-combatants, warrant the development of specially targeted interventions.

Demobilization

Ex-combatants should be released or discharged from military quarters as soon as possible so that they do not become a serious threat to security. Prior to discharge, they should receive information about civilian liferights and duties, opportunities and constraints. If feasible, postdischarge orientation, with a focus on social support and economic opportunities, should be provided in the communities where ex-combatants settle.

Especially in transitions from war to peace, neutral international monitors and technical assistance can facilitate the design and implementation of demobilization programs.