



Assessment of the Situation of Women and Children Combatants in the Liberian Post- Conflict Period and Recommendations for Successful Integration

**Prepared for Short-Term Technical Assistance and
Research under EGAT/WID Management to Support
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FOREWORD

The purpose of this assessment is to review existing reintegration programs for women and child soldiers and women associated with the fighting forces (WAFF), assess their current situation in Liberia, and make recommendations to USAID on possible interventions for assistance. These recommendations include a detailed program description for a proposed USAID/Liberia activity. The assessment and recommendations are done within the context of the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) program being planned and implemented in Liberia by the international community and the United Nations peacekeeping forces (UNMIL).

The assessment was done under the Short-Term Technical Assistance and Research Under EGAT/WID Management to Support USAID Washington and Field Mission Anti-Trafficking Activities Task Order (ATTO) (GEW-I-00-02-0017-00) managed by Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI).

The assessment started with an October 2003 desk review of existing programs and lessons learned in DDR processes in Africa by the Field Team Leader Sue Nelson and Dr. Art Hansen, the Post-Conflict and Reintegration Specialist. Ms. Nelson is a former Director a.i. of USAID/Cambodia's Office of Democracy and Governance and a specialist in post-conflict assistance. Dr. Hansen is a noted professor of Anthropology specializing in child soldiers.

The fieldwork for the assessment was done in Liberia from November 5-26, 2003, and in Sierra Leone from November 17-21, 2003. The Liberia Team was composed of Ms. Nelson; Belinda Bernard, the Anti-Trafficking Task Order Project Director for DAI; Brian Brewer, the Post-Conflict and Reintegration Specialist; and Edwin Dobar, the Research and Child Soldier Specialist. Mr. Brewer worked for the European Union and the British Development Agency in both Liberia and Sierra Leone and is an expert in post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation. Mr. Dobar has done extensive research on the issues of child soldiers in Liberia. The Team was joined by Sahana Dharmapuri, an IWID fellow representing USAID's Office for Women and Development, and later by Dr. Hansen. The Sierra Leone portion of the assessment was done by Ms. Dharmapuri and Dr. Hansen.

In Liberia, interviews were conducted in Monrovia and surrounding areas. Due to the security situation, it was not possible to visit areas beyond the UNMIL perimeter. Nevertheless, the Team was able to visit the two Interim Care Centers (ICCs) housing child and women combatants who had spontaneously demobilized; visit trauma counseling programs in IDP camps and elsewhere; and observe the voluntary disarmament of GOL militia by UNMIL in Grand Bassa County. The Team also visited potential project sites, ongoing NGO programs, and counseling/medical facilities. Similar interviews and program visits were conducted in and around Freetown, Sierra Leone. The methodology for the assessment is detailed in Appendix 3.

During the fieldwork, the Team interviewed USAID staff from Liberia and Sierra Leone, U.S. Embassy officials, OFDA and OTI representatives, UNMIL, UNAMSIL and other U.N.

agencies, other donors, USAID grantees, international and local NGOs, government officials, and others involved in the DDR process in both Liberia and Sierra Leone (Appendix 1). The Team also collected and reviewed the available documentation (Appendix 4).

The findings of the assessment reflect the information and conditions found in Liberia in November 2003. The DDR process was in the planning stages and the official start to the DDR process was scheduled for December 7, 2003. The Team wishes to thank all of those who took the time to meet with them during this hectic planning period and for sharing their thoughts, information, and insight on the DDR process and prospects for peace in Liberia.

In particular, the Team wishes to thank the USAID Missions in Sierra Leone and Liberia, which provided the logistical support and background information needed for the assessment. This included Julie Koenen-Grant and Miranda Taylor at USAID/Sierra Leone, Korto Williams and Naomi Nkechi Exeagu at USAID/Liberia, and the USAID/Liberia Mission Director, Edward Birgels. In Washington, the Team wishes to thank Nicole Zdrojewski at DAI for her administrative and programmatic support.

ABBREVIATIONS

AFELL	Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia
AGRHA	Action for Greater Harvest Association
AU	African Union
CAB	Christian Association of the Blind
CAFF	Children associated with the fighting forces
CAP	Children's Assistance Program
CAP	U.N. Consolidated Appeal
CBO	Community based organization
CCC	Concern Christian Community
CCL	Calvary Chapel Liberia
CEP	Community Empowerment Project
CHAL	Christian Health Association of Liberia
CJPB	Center for Justice and Peace Studies
CKLI	Cherish the Kids Liberia
COHDA	Community and Human Development Agency
CPBD	Community Peacebuilding Program
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DAI	Development Alternatives, Inc
DEN-L	Development Education Network
DCOF	Displaced Children and Orphan Fund
DDDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
DFID	Department for International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECOMIL	ECOWAS Peacekeeping Mission in Liberia
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FAR	Rwandese Armed Forces
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FF	Fighting force
FFP	Food for Peace
FIND	Foundation for International Dignity
FPAL	Family Planning Association of Liberia
FRELIMO	Government of Mozambique forces
GASP	Global Age Sustainable Program
GTZ	German Development Organization
G/WAFF	Girls and women associated with the fighting forces
IAVE	International Association for Volunteer Effort
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFESH	International Foundation for Education Self-Help
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee
ISF	International Stabilization Force
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization

GOL	Government of Liberia
GOM	Government of Mozambique
GOR	Government of Rwanda
GOS	Government of Sudan
GOU	Government of Uganda
ICC	Interim Care Center
IDP	Internally displaced person
ILO	International Labor Organization
INCHR	Independent National Commission on Human Rights
LICADHO	Cambodian Human Rights Organization
LNRC	Liberian National Red Cross Society
LOIC	Liberian Opportunities Industrialization Centers, Inc
LUADA	Liberians United Against Drug Abuse
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
LUSH	Liberians United to Serve Humanity
MODEL	Movement for Democracy in Liberia
NAEL	National Adult Education Association of Liberia
NAWOCOL	National Women Commission of Liberia
NCDDR	National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
NCDDRR	National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NTGL	National Transitional Government
OLS	Operation Lifeline Sudan
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
RENAMO	Mozambique National Resistance forces
RLA	Lord's Resistance Army (Uganda)
RPA	Rwandese Patriotic Army
SDP	Sustainable Development Promoters
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UAVP	Uganda Veterans Assistance Program
UN	United Nations
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNOCHA	U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNOMOZ	U.N. Mission in Mozambique
UNSRSG	United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary General
UPDG	Uganda People's Defense Force
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WAFF	Women associated with the fighting forces
WAYS	War Affected Youth Support project
WID	Women in Development

WANEP	West African Network for Peace
WIPNET	Women for Peace Network
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide a review of existing programs on women and child soldiers and recommend next steps to design age- and gender-sensitive programs for the demobilization and reintegration of child/women combatants and other vulnerable war-affected children and women.

The assignment had three interrelated objectives:

1. A review of programs for the demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers, including specific issues facing women and children associated with fighting forces or affected by war, and the opportunities and obstacles to their successful reintegration. The review highlights key aspects of successful short- and medium-term programs and activities for the demobilization, rehabilitation, and reintegration of child and women combatants and war-affected women and girls.
2. A report on in-country data collection that incorporates the situation in Liberia, and in Sierra Leone relevant to Liberia; offers a menu of options based on experience; and integrates a gender-sensitive demobilization program into existing or new USAID projects in Liberia.
3. A program description for the components to be chosen by the Mission for a proposed activity.

Data were gathered during two phases:

Phase 1—Collection and analysis of background information on demobilizing and reintegrating child soldiers in Africa before arrival in Liberia, including:

- A desk review of programs for child soldiers in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Angola, Rwanda, Uganda, and other relevant countries. Programs reviewed included the USAID Office of Transition Initiatives' Youth Reintegration Training and Education for Peace (YTREP) program in Sierra Leone.
- U.S.-based discussions with USAID,¹ as well as representatives of organizations implementing programs to address women and children affected by war.

Phase 2—Field-based data collection and analysis:

- Data collection in Liberia and in Sierra Leone through one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions. Rapid assessments of the responses to the needs of women combatants

¹ The Office of Women in Development in the Bureau for Economic Growth and Trade (EGAT/WID), the Displaced Children's and Orphans' Fund (DCOF), the Africa Bureau (AFR), the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), and other appropriate offices/bureaus.

and child soldiers at reception centers, discharge centers, transition camps, and economic reintegration programs run by NGOs, international agencies, and host governments. Consultation with USAID Mission and Embassy personnel before and during this process.

- Assessment of Liberia-specific factors affecting women and children affected by war.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following is a summary of the primary findings of the assessment mission. Each of these issues is discussed in more depth in the Recommendations section of this Executive Summary.

- 1.1. The DDR planning process includes child and women combatants and provides for special procedures and considerations based on their special needs. These considerations are based on their gender, age, and condition—including girl mothers, pregnant women combatants, women associated with the fighting forces (WAFF), and male combatants with dependents. The Team still has concerns on a number of DDR issues related to child and women combatants. These concerns include:
 - Whether the structures for child soldiers, women combatants, and WAFF will be in place by the time the process is scheduled to start.
 - Whether the DDR process will capture the larger part of the actual numbers of the eligible child and women combatants. Although they are given special mention in the planning documents, their needs are often ignored in implementation. In addition, there are a number of issues, including the stigma attached to being identified as a combatant or a used female of a fighting force, that may deter some of the children and especially the female combatants and “wives” from participating in the DDR process.
 - Whether all children and women will want or be able to be reunified with their families. UNICEF planning focuses on the early reintegration of children with their families. However, if a large number of these children and young women refuse to return home or are unable to return home, they will need alternative care for an extended period. There appeared to be little planning so far to address these extended care needs.
 - The lack of dissemination of information on the DDR process to both the combatants and the communities. Outside of Monrovia, information is based on rumor and communities need to be sensitized to the return of these groups.
- 1.2. The child soldiers, women combatants, and WAFF have special needs. These needs must be addressed or many of these ex-combatants will reintegrate onto the streets, degenerate into prostitution or crime, or return as mercenaries to another war. The

severity of their needs varies based on their age, gender, and experiences. Some committed atrocities. Many use drugs. They have little to no education yet have been all-powerful through the use of a gun. Girls have been sexually abused and used, some are girl-mothers, and others have become “wives.” These children have not been accessible to UNICEF and as a result, their actual condition, numbers, and specific needs are still unknown. It is clear that without appropriate assistance the options for most of these ex-combatants and women are limited and unsavory.

- 1.3. Reintegrating these ex-child soldiers, former women combatants, and WAFF back into a “normal” and productive life is a complex problem that requires serious attention, time, and assistance. A standard six-month DDR package is not enough and programs must be tailored to the specific needs of each of the subgroups within the larger groups of women and children. These women and children require assistance that will not only help them find acceptance back into their communities and provide psycho-social support, but will help provide them with the skills, education and information needed to become successful students and workers. In effect, these programs should promote hope for a better future.
- 1.4. The DDR process in Liberia cannot be seen or addressed in isolation. It has to be considered within the national framework of good governance, accountability, and economic growth as well as within the context of the larger subregional issues of trafficking in arms and combatants.
- 1.5. UNICEF has taken the lead on the reintegration of child soldiers, women combatants, and WAFF along with its partner NGOs and UNDP. Apart from the U.N. Trust Funds and small-scale donor funding to UNICEF or individual NGOs, there is no other major donor involved in addressing the specific reintegration needs of these target groups. At the end of the assessment fieldwork, most assistance was still in the planning phase and few of the NGO or U.N.-planned programs had been funded.
- 1.6. USAID can make a significant difference in the lives of these women and children. However, the programs must be of sufficient duration to make a difference and tailored specifically to the needs of each of the sub-groups within the larger vulnerable groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Team recommends that USAID/Liberia consider a flexible set of activities that will foster successful reintegration of women and child ex-combatants and women associated with the fighting forces into peacetime, civilian society.

The recommended activities would:

- Address the psycho-social, substance abuse, and related health needs of the target groups as well as provide alternative skills and/or education needed for them to earn a non-combatant livelihood.
- Be flexible and target the range of special needs of these beneficiaries who themselves range from aggressors to victims and from small child combatants and girl mothers to hard-core young combatants and mature adult women combatants.
- Be able to pick up the beneficiaries from the different phases of the DDR process and at the different times of the school year as they come out of DD or are identified by child protection agencies, women's organizations, medical services, and communities. Experience in Liberia and elsewhere indicates that significant numbers of eligible beneficiaries may spontaneously demobilize and melt into society.
- Help communities accept these beneficiaries and enable them to cope with their legacy.
- Be community-based to the extent possible and have quality interventions that are of a suitable duration to make a difference.
- Take advantage of and build on the capacity of existing public and private structures and networks for supporting, healing, and training so that the gains made do not end with the end of the project.
- Re-establish and extend accelerated learning programs for child and women ex-combatants, children associated with the fighting forces (CAFF), and WAFF. Teacher training, providing essential material, and capacity building for associated learning institutions, organizations, and the Ministry of Education should be part of the program.
- Provide vocational skill training and apprenticeships for older ex-combatant children and women, CAFF, and WAFF that include basic literacy and numeracy and possible on-the-job training. Training in marketable skills and basic management would be part of the program. A small micro-credit component could also be included for graduates of the training programs.
- Provide and strengthen psycho-social support to beneficiaries using existing structures and networks. Raise awareness on reintegration issues related to target groups and crosscutting issues such as substance abuse, HIV/AIDS/STDs, and SGBV. Develop referral mechanisms and structures for those needing special care.

REPORT FORMAT

The report is divided into three parts.

Part One—International Framework and Best Practices describes the international policy framework for child soldiers and women combatants and best practices and lessons learned from earlier programs for the reintegration of child and women combatants.

Part Two—Liberian Peace Process and the Reintegration of Child Soldiers/Women covers the current Liberian Peace Process and current and planned assistance programs, implemented either by international or local partners.

Part Three—Findings and Recommendations for USAID Programming includes issues and recommendations related to the peace process and formal DDR process, reintegration, assistance programs to foster reintegration of child and women ex-combatants and those associated with fighting forces, long-term sustainability of a successful DDR process, and a program description for a possible USAID programmatic response.

PART ONE—INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK AND BEST PRACTICES

I. INTERNATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD SOLDIERS AND WOMEN COMBATANTS

This assessment focuses on three targeted categories: child soldiers (combatants and non-combatants), women combatants, and women who are associated with the fighting forces (WAFF).

The use of child soldiers is considered one of the worst forms of child labor and was an issue first raised in the Geneva Conventions. Initially, it referred to children under the age of 15 bearing arms. However, today, the widely used definition for a child soldier is included in the Cape Town Principles:

A person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed forces or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers and anyone accompanying such groups, other than family members. The definition includes girls recruited for sexual purposes or for forced marriage. It does not, therefore, only refer to a child who is carrying or has carried arms.²

The term “combatant” means someone who carries a weapon, while the term “child soldier” (according to the Cape Town Principles) includes, “child combatants, camp followers and abductees who are recognized members of any of the fighting groups.”³ The term “WAFF” appears to include both combatant and non-combatant women, but there is nothing for women that is equivalent to the Cape Town Principles that establishes an inclusive “woman soldier” category.

1. INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

The **Geneva Conventions** of 1949 first provided protection to children in hostilities. In 1977, two **Additional Protocols** were adopted: (1) which requires States to “take all feasible measures” in international conflicts to prevent children under 15 from being directly involved; and (2) which requires the same for non-international conflicts.

In the 1980s, the Iranian use of children as shields and as mine detonators in the Iran/Iraq War sparked renewed interest in the fate of child soldiers. In 1989, the U.N. adopted the **Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)** that reiterates the obligations of Additional Protocol I.

² Definition used by UNICEF and in the Cape Town Principles.

³ See Annex F: Assistance to child and youth ex-combatants. In *Liberian Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Program* prepared by the Draft Interim Secretariat. Monrovia, 9 October 2003, page 59.

The **ILO Convention No 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour**, issued in 1999, directly addresses the use of children in armed conflict and prohibits the “forced or compulsory recruitment of children (persons under 18) for use in armed conflict.” Under the Convention, member States are obligated to take action to eliminate this practice and it recommends that State parties mutually assist each other in giving effect to the provisions of the Convention. This Convention set the minimum age for enlistment at 18 and was the first time that the use of children in armed conflict was officially recognized as a form of child labor.

In 2000, the U.N. adopted a new international treaty that prohibits the recruitment of child soldiers. This **Optional Protocol** to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict raises the age for a child soldier from 15 to 18 and bans all military recruitment and use of children under 18 by armed groups. It also raises the minimum age for voluntary recruitment to 16 and calls upon all State parties to provide special protection and safeguards for anyone under 18. The Protocol came into force in 2002.

The **Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court** of 2002 makes the conscription, enlistment, or use of children under 15 in hostilities a war crime.

2. AFRICAN AGREEMENTS

In 1997, participants in a conference on child soldiers in Africa hosted by UNICEF and the NGO Working Group on the Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted the “Cape Town Principles and best practices on the prevention of recruitment of children into the armed forces and demobilization and social reintegration of child soldiers in Africa.” (Attachment I)

The Cape Town Principles include a detailed list of best practices for the prevention, demobilization, and reintegration of children. These principles include:

- Eighteen as the minimum age for any participation in hostilities and recruitment into any armed group;
- Children under 18 should be demobilized and given priority in any DDR process; and
- Child soldiers should be recognized in peace agreements.

Demobilization should be as short as possible and particular attention should be paid to the special needs of girls. Family tracing and reunification should start as soon as possible. Efforts also need to be made to ensure that re-recruitment does not occur. The Principles state that the risk of re-recruitment can be reduced if:

- The children are returned to their caregivers as soon as possible,
- The children are informed of their right not to be re-recruited, and

- Others are informed that the children have been formally demobilized.

Demobilized children should not be discriminated against in the services and benefits provided to regular soldiers being demobilized.

Family reunification is seen as the principal factor in effective social reintegration and special attention needs to be paid to re-establishing the emotional link between the child and family. Institutionalization should only be used as a means of last resort and for the shortest possible time. Community resources, priorities, values, and traditions need to be built into the reintegration process. Monitoring and follow up of children needs to take place and reintegration of the child within the community should be done within the framework of national reconciliation.

The **African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child** also establishes 18 as the minimum age for recruitment and participation. It was adopted in 1990 by the Conference of Heads of State and the African Union and came into force in 1999.

The **Maputo Declaration on the Use of Children as Soldiers** was adopted at the conference of the same name held in Maputo, Mozambique in April 1999. It reiterates the principle that the use of any child under 18 by any armed force is unacceptable, even when the child claims to be a volunteer. It calls upon all African States to demobilize child soldiers, both boys and girls, currently in armed forces to safety, ensure their physical and psychosocial rehabilitation and reintegration back into society and for States to refrain from drafting demobilized child soldiers.

Table 1: Liberian Ratification of International Agreements on Child Soldiers

Agreement	Signed	Ratified
Geneva Convention	Yes	
Additional Protocols I/II	Yes	
Convention on the Rights of the Child	1990	1993
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child	1993	No
ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes	Yes
Rome Statue of the International Criminal Court		
Cape Town Principles		
African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child		
Maputo Declaration		

II. BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

International peacekeeping missions under U.N. auspices with an internationally supervised DDR process have been on going for more than ten years. Many of these missions were in Africa and involved the demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers and women combatants. One of these missions (UNOMIL) took place in Liberia in the 1990s⁴.

⁴ See attached case study on Liberian DDR 1994-1997.

Many lessons have been learned in the process. Some of these were particular to that country at that time, but many others have relevance that is more general. The 2003 peace process in Liberia has benefited from the experiences of these other countries and its own previous DDR process, and many lessons have been incorporated into the Peace Agreement and UNMIL mandate (Part Three).

There are still other lessons that may be useful in the post-conflict phase when demobilized child soldiers and WAFFs are confronting the challenges of reintegration. These lessons are presented below in the context of important issues that shape the decisions that policy-makers and designers of reintegration programs must make.

1. ISSUE: POSSIBILITY OF CONTINUING WARFARE AND INSECURITY

How confident is USAID/Liberia that the warfare in Liberia is over, and there is a sustainable peace? The Mano River region is unstable unless there is sustained peace in all three countries (Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone) plus the neighboring Cote d'Ivoire. Guns, fighters, diamonds, and other resources flow easily across the porous borders. Without a sustained peace in all four countries, the stability of a separate peace in any of the countries is threatened. This situation has been confronted in other African countries by USAID (and OTI) Missions. Given this situation, designers of programs need to consider at least two different scenarios.

The first scenario is when all warring factions agree to implement a ceasefire and a sustainable peace. Given such a peace, there is disarmament and demilitarization, a widespread or universal demobilization of child soldiers, and a total (or almost complete) stoppage of further recruitment. Given this scenario, USAID development programs do not have to consider potential warfare as a factor.

The second scenario is when a sustainable peace is possible but not assured. Warfare might continue or resume. The official demobilization of large numbers of child and women soldiers might be delayed indefinitely, but some small-scale demobilization and unofficial "self-demobilization" (desertion) might continue. There are no guarantees that factions will resist recruiting more child and women soldiers. In this situation of insecurity, how important is it to USAID that its programs begin quickly and continue to be relevant and productive? Can USAID plan mini-max programs that would be more productive (max) in peacetime but could be implemented and would continue to be productive (mini) even during periods of chronic or increased insecurity?

- Peace has a price. If the warring factions, political leaders, and donors are not prepared to pay the price, even the best DDR plans will falter or fail.⁵

⁵ See attached case study on Liberian DDR 1994-1997.

- Need for flexibility and the ability of donors/partners to react to bumps in the peace process.

The lessons learned from the DDR process of child soldiers in Liberia from 1994 to 1997⁶ clearly show the need for flexibility and for contingency planning in the implementation of the DDR and peace process. Detailed planning and structures had been put into place starting in 1993 in Liberia but the program was not implemented because the DDR process stalled only a month after the process officially started. Later, small groups of child combatants either spontaneously demobilized or were demobilized upon a moment's notice. When it became clear in 1996 that the DDR process would start in earnest they quickly re-did the DDR organizational structure based on the lessons learned from the previous operations (1994-1996). Nevertheless, no matter how carefully they had planned, changing circumstances forced them to change their plans along the way.

2. ISSUE: WHEN TO BEGIN REINTEGRATION PROGRAMS

A closely related issue is when to begin reintegration programs. There is debate within the humanitarian assistance community as to whether, and how, to proceed with reintegration activities for child and women soldiers when continuing or renewed warfare is possible. Must a sustainable peace be established first? Is the program dependent on prior demobilization programs?

On one side are agencies that advocate for a comprehensive political solution before beginning reintegration programs. Their primary priority is to end the war. They want to maintain pressure on the major parties to achieve peace and believe that beginning reintegration programs too early diverts attention from the peace process. They also recognize the possibility that demobilized (even reintegrated) children and women may be remobilized by armed groups unless there is a sustained peace. In fact, the programs may help the armed groups by identifying and gathering ex-soldiers where they may more easily be recruited or abducted again.

A disadvantage of waiting is that programs that target only officially demobilized child and women soldiers are dependent on the success of other programs. The successful completion of disarmament and demobilization are necessary preconditions that determine the timetable for these reintegration programs. These other events may be delayed or have an indefinite timetable.

On the other side are agencies that work with various categories of children and women. They want to start now because they can see tremendous suffering. There are always children and women (including demobilized ex-soldiers) needing assistance. Some of these agencies already are working directly with political and military officials and with local communities to facilitate demobilization and reintegration, even if only in a piecemeal fashion.⁷ They are

⁶ UNICEF study. The Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration of Child Soldiers in Liberia.

⁷ See DRC case study.

helping reintegrate demobilized ex-child and women soldiers as well as other children in particularly difficult circumstances and other victimized women.

Even in the absence of a comprehensive peace, partial demobilization can be arranged at the local level with local authorities, and children can be reintegrated.⁸

3. ISSUE: OFFICIAL, LOCAL, AND SELF-DIRECTED DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION

Demobilization and reintegration may occur officially, locally, and “spontaneously” (self-directed). Although the focus of government planning is the national DDR program, which includes a formal process for demobilizing soldiers, in reality, many combatants direct their own demobilization (or desertion) and reintegration even before a cease-fire. In some countries, the great majority of combatants self-demobilize before the formal demobilization program. Localized demobilization of some combatants, including children and women, may also occur sporadically at different times because of decisions by local commanders or negotiations between local commanders and leaders.

On the other hand, children may claim to have been soldiers in order to access the resources of the demobilization and reintegration program.

- Self-directed (spontaneous) demobilization and reintegration may characterize the behavior of many, perhaps most, of the children who are currently soldiers.⁹

Towns and cities may contain many children who are self-directed ex-combatants. They are already available for reintegration programs before DDR programs start.

- Local military commanders may facilitate or frustrate demobilization and reintegration.

Start a dialogue with the military so that they support demobilization and provide correct orientation and information to children before they are demobilized. Even in the absence of a comprehensive peace agreement, NGO advocacy and dialogue with local military authorities might encourage those local authorities to support demobilization and control re-mobilization.¹⁰ It is much more difficult to implement reintegration successfully if armed forces are still recruiting children, especially re-mobilizing reintegrated ex-soldiers.

- Need for an early assessment on the numbers, location and needs of child soldiers and women associated with the fighting forces (WAFs).

Many of the lessons learned were that the actual numbers and locations of child soldiers and WAFs (women associated with the fighting forces) were not known. Some of this was from

⁸ See DRC case study.

⁹ See DRC case study.

¹⁰ See DRC case study.

the deliberate nondisclosure by the armed groups, and some was from a general lack of information. The result was that many of the eligible children were not able to take advantage of the DDR process or that non-combatant children were included in the DDR process. In Rwanda, it was found that only 30 percent of the children identified by the military had actually been in the armed forces and that the rest were children who had affiliated themselves with the armed groups in the final days seeking protection. Assessments of the children in rebel camps in Mozambique enabled UNICEF to plan a program that the child soldiers wanted and attended. Surveys by local human rights and child protection NGOs in DRC were the best source of information on the numbers of children and WAFFs in different camps.

4. ISSUE: DOCUMENTATION OF WARTIME SERVICE

Identification procedures are needed to separate child soldiers from war-affected children who are found in and around military camps. Many self-directed ex-combatants lack documentation of their status. Official demobilization documents may be needed to prevent the drafting (conscription) of former child soldiers back into the army. The prior service of former child soldiers may not be recognized by a demobilization certificate.

- Need for a demobilization certificate for child soldiers

In several of the case studies, child soldiers were not given a demobilization certificate. In the case of Uganda, a “security clearance” was given to the children to lower the levels of suspicion about them within their communities. In both Rwanda and Mozambique, no documents were given and former child soldiers are now threatened with being redrafted into the armed forces.

5. ISSUE: THREAT OF FORCED AND VOLUNTARY REMOBILIZATION

Military command structures may still exist even though a DDR program has started. Some commanders may be reluctant to identify or release children or women. Child soldiers may continue to be recruited, and demobilized child soldiers may try to re-enlist. In Rwanda, some children asked to return to the army because many secondary schools refused to accept them or because they had no homes or means of financial support.

- Specific policy against recruiting children

The continuing recruitment of child soldiers needs to be addressed, and specific measures (policies and orders) need to be put into place to prevent recruitment and remobilization. One of the problems in the 1996-1997 Liberian process was that the command structure for the child soldiers remained intact and, as a result, they were easily re-recruited.

- Need to prevent re-recruitment of children.

Re-recruitment of children can be reduced if child soldiers are provided with an official demobilization certificate, if everyone is made aware of their demobilization, and if the child is aware of his/her right not to be re-recruited.

6. ISSUE: IS REINTEGRATION SIMPLY ABOUT INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN AND WOMEN?

The DDR process for child soldiers needs to be an integral part of not only the DDR process, but also the rehabilitation efforts of the nation. The reintegration of former child soldiers and the prevention of their re-recruitment require a long-term commitment to education, vocational training, attention to psycho-social needs, reunifying them with their families, and the establishment of permanent, independent national institutions that protect human rights and re-institute the rule of law.¹¹

- There are long-term strategies to prevent recruitment of children.¹²
 - Help vulnerable families to increase their income.
 - Offer counseling to families.
 - Make parents aware of danger of recruitment of minors.
 - Teach nonviolent methods of conflict resolution.
 - Demystify the idea that armed groups are employers who can provide a high standard of living with no special qualifications.
 - Use school as a means of prevention
 - By reducing failure in school and preventing drop out,
 - By raising the awareness of children on the dangers of becoming a child soldier, and
 - By applying the principles of nonviolence and democracy.
 - Help street children who are easy prey for recruiters.
 - Involve former child soldiers in prevention drives.

Reintegration strategies that emphasize improving family livelihood provide more of an effective impact than programs that emphasize providing vocational training to ex-soldiers.¹³

¹¹ UNICEF Policy Statement. Op cit.

¹² List primarily based on the ILO Proposals for Action detailed in Wounded Childhood.

¹³ See Verhey 2003.

7. ISSUE: TARGETING CHILD AND WOMEN SOLDIERS FOR REINTEGRATION PROGRAMS

There is a debate over whether child and women soldiers should be specifically targeted for reintegration programs, or whether reintegration programs should be open to more children and women in particularly difficult circumstances. As in most countries where there has been an extended period of warfare and displacement, most of the children and many of the women in Liberia are clearly in very difficult situations and could use assistance.

One position (Target) is to target child and women soldiers specifically and design programs only for them. There are political and military reasons to differentiate soldiers from other children and women. Child and women soldiers are visible components of armed groups, and their demilitarization is an integral part of the peace process and a return to normal civil society.

If a goal of the reintegration program is to end the war, this may be achieved by reducing the number of arms and combatants. Programs target combatants to encourage them to identify themselves and go with their arms to the demobilization camps. Encouragement usually includes giving each soldier money, material benefits (a tool kit, home-building materials, food rations, etc.), and access to vocational skills training programs after he or she disarms. This means that combatants, perhaps including child and women soldiers, have separate special programs and receive special benefits that non-combatants do not receive. Targeted assistance means segregated programs and beneficiaries.

There are social and psychological reasons for targeting and isolating demobilized soldiers. Child and women soldiers may have participated in killing, mutilating, and torturing people and, therefore, may be more traumatized than other children and women. There is also the issue of protection from the child soldier. Some child soldiers express violent behavior and need to learn non-violent conflict resolution procedures as well as the rationale for practicing non-violence. Separate reintegration programs that serve only soldiers can provide this training while protecting other children and women.

In Sierra Leone, the policy decision to provide separate assistance to ex-combatants during the early phases of reintegration was effective. This helped keep the ex-combatants from becoming frustrated at the slowness with which other reintegration programs were being established

The other position (Do Not Target) is that all children and women in particularly difficult circumstances should be treated in reintegration programs. Child and women ex-soldiers should not be privileged or put into a separate “ghetto.” If a goal of the reintegration program is to help needy children and women recover from their wartime experiences, child soldiers are only some of the needy children. In addition, there are orphans and unaccompanied children, street children, handicapped and disabled children. All these children and women in particularly difficult circumstances are equally worthy and deserving of assistance and should be helped.

This position believes that child and women ex-soldiers should be put together with other children and women as soon as possible in the transit center and, after a transit period, in training centers and schools. Integration in the program should facilitate reintegration in society. Reintegration will not be complete if ex-soldiers are kept together and apart from other children and women. Children ex-soldiers need to learn how to play and learn in company with other children. Rehabilitation of children and their social reintegration is facilitated by social interaction with other children, which means that demobilized child soldiers would benefit from being integrated with other children in the same programs.

A disadvantage of targeted assistance is that it may send the wrong message about whether people should send their children to the army. When child soldiers are privileged in reintegration programs and receive special assistance for their education, health, and living, parents may think that sending their children to the armed forces for a few months will ensure that an international NGO will support him, send him to school or to vocational skills training, and provide him with a starter kit or tool kit.

Another disadvantage of reintegration programs that focus only on soldiers is that they tend to ignore and neglect victimized girls and women who have experienced rape and often conditions of slavery or enforced servitude. They have suffered through extremely traumatic situations. The social and psychological effects of rape and sexual violence have been well documented in western societies.

In Sierra Leone the decision to open health care to the surrounding community, even while directing benefits to the ex-combatants, gave the entire community a benefit from the presence of ex-combatants. This was a means by which targeted programs could still benefit a larger community, which was also suffering from the effects of warfare and destruction.

In Liberia from 1994 to 1997, UNICEF wanted to make sure it did not give the impression that child soldiers were being rewarded for fighting by giving them better living conditions than most civilian families. This would breed resentment among civilians and make it less likely that the former child soldiers would want to return to the lower living conditions of their families.

- See Best Practice: Save-UK's Program in DRC. A program established to serve a broad array of needy children could refocus to serve as the base to which are added demobilized child soldiers.

8. ISSUE: SPECIFICALLY MENTIONING THE SPECIAL PLACE AND NEEDS OF CHILD SOLDIERS AND WOMEN IN DDR DOCUMENTS

Peace agreements should detail DDR procedures and responsibilities as much as possible. This should include specific standards for the demobilization of children as a "special subset of fighters with exceptional needs."¹⁴ The DDR process for child soldiers was not included in

¹⁴ See the David Kelly report, page 71.

many of the older peace accords reviewed during the study. This was the case in both the Mozambican and earlier Liberian peace agreements. As a result, the need and the process had to be negotiated along the way. In the case of Mozambique, it took a year and a half for the rebel group to admit they had child soldiers and to allow UNICEF access. In Rwanda, children have been accused of committing war crimes. The outcome of this is not yet known.

- Peace accord should address the need for a DDR process for child soldiers.

The 2003 Liberian Peace Agreement specifically addresses the issue of child soldiers and authorizes the National Transition Government to work with the international community to address their special DDR needs.¹⁵ This means that a specific plan for the DDR of child soldiers will be part of the larger DDR process. According to UNICEF, the process for child soldiers should include reclaiming and destroying weapons, as well as the provision of psychosocial support, material benefits, and vocational alternatives.¹⁶

- Peace accord should address the need for a DDR plan for women combatants and for women associated with the fighting forces.

Fighting groups are less likely to release women and girls, so the number of demobilized women soldiers and WAFFs is not a true indication of how many women and girls are held by, or associated with, armed groups. Women and girls are not released for several reasons, especially if their release is not specified in the peace accord or cease-fire. They were considered “wives” of combatants rather than fighters, and women’s domestic labor and sexual services continue to be important during and after the DDR period.

- “Although they often blur the line between combatants and non-combatants, appropriate and effective policies for dependents, bush wives and camp followers must be implemented in order to successfully demobilize soldiers.”¹⁷

Almost none of the DDR processes reviewed specifically addressed the issue of women combatants, and none addressed the issue of women (often abducted) associated with the fighting forces (WAFFs). However, the review showed that women have special needs for demobilization that include such issues as pregnant women combatants or women combatants with children. The Liberian Peace Agreement does not include a specific reference to women combatants, but they are acknowledged as a group in the UNMIL planning.

- Demobilization and reorientation interviews of child and women soldiers should be conducted by neutral and trained national staff in a private safe haven.

Several of the case studies highlighted the importance of neutral national staff interviewing the child soldiers and women combatants. Children may be afraid of being re-recruited or re-

¹⁵ These provisions are detailed in Section 3 of the Phase I Report.

¹⁶ UNICEF Policy Statement on UNICEF and the Protection of Children Affected by Armed Conflicts. www.ginie.org/ginie-crises-links/childsoldiers/basic.html

¹⁷ See the Ted Morse report, page 22.

caught by their own armed group or by the enemy. They need a reception center and safe haven. To function effectively, the child soldiers must trust the center and its staff. The Liberian lessons indicated that a separate questionnaire for demobilizing child soldiers was needed. Children are often mistrustful and might not answer questions truthfully. The adult one was too long, and some of the questions were not appropriate. Child soldiers tend to have a short attention span.

- Avoid discrimination against child soldiers, women combatants, and women associated with the fighting forces in the DDR process.

Child soldiers often receive a different DDR package than adult combatants. In Mozambique, demobilizing adult combatants received a demobilization payment. Child soldiers did not. Some commanders put their child soldiers through the adult process so that they would receive the payment. ILO recommends that former child soldiers be provided with the same type of help for income-generating activities that are provided to adult ex-combatants, in kind (equipment) and/or with cash (grant or a loan).¹⁸

The identification of women combatants and abducted girls (WAFs) is an issue in the DDR process. Many times, women must rely on men to confirm the women's grade or status to participate in the DDR process. In the first DDR in Liberia, only 2 percent of those demobilized were girls.¹⁹ Clear selection criteria for these women must be defined that do not allow for subjective interpretation by men in the camps.

- Prevent sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) by peacekeepers and aid workers.

A lesson still being learned in several peacekeeping operations is the need to prevent sexual and gender-based violence (rape and abuse) by peacekeepers and aid workers.

9. ISSUE: NEED FOR AGE AND GENDER APPROPRIATE DDR OPERATIONS

In most DDR programs, disarmament is how combatants qualify for demobilization benefits. Combatants must surrender weapons or ammunition to qualify to be demobilized. This leaves room for gender and age based discrimination by adult male combatants.

- If one or more of the fighting forces have more fighters than weapons, then child soldiers and women should be allowed to demobilize without surrendering weapons.

The disarmament requirement discriminates against child and women combatants who may have had other duties and do not have a weapon to surrender.

¹⁸ Financial help to set up an economic generating activity only if accompanied with technical assistance. ILO. Wounded Childhood. p 70.

¹⁹ McKay, Susan, Girls in Militaries, Paramilitaries and Armed Opposition Groups.

- Women combatants being demobilized require separate shelter and sanitation facilities from the men. The information provided to women upon demobilization should cover their specific needs such as access to credit, access to education and employment, income-generating activities, and prevention of HIV/AIDS and STDs.

According to a World Bank study,²⁰ girl soldiers should be sent to separate recovery camps and not mixed to adults to avoid further trauma. Disabled women combatants are another vulnerable group who will require special attention to ensure they are not discriminated against for pensions or assistance programs for disabled veterans.

10. ISSUE: HETEROGENEITY OF CHILD AND WOMEN SOLDIERS AND WOMEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE FIGHTING FORCES

Child and women soldiers and women associated with the fighting forces (WAFs) are not all the same and will not respond to programs that treat them the same. They vary by age, sex, temperament, prior education and skills, wartime experiences, etc. Many carried guns; some killed and tortured; others were porters and servants. Many were sexually abused. Some were abducted; others volunteered. Some are violent and vicious; others are victims. Some of the violent ones respond well to re-education programs; others remain violent and a threat to society and to others in their program. Some victims are willing to be in the same reintegration program with their victimizers; others want to be separated.

- Reintegration programs need to take the ages of child and woman soldiers and WAFs into consideration as well as their wartime experience and length of service.

Some are young enough to re-enter the formal school system; others require special alternative (non-formal or “bridging”) schools; and others have outgrown the possibility of re-entering the normal school system, but may respond to vocational education or apprenticeships. Some are healthy; some have physical wounds, and some are disabled. Some have sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. Some are pregnant or have babies. Most had traumatic experiences with which they are coping more or less successfully. Some are willing to discuss their experiences; others hide their pasts. Some of the ex-soldiers come directly from their armed groups; others have been living on the street or in the bush. Most still have family members in civil society, but the hospitality and willingness of families and communities to accept these children and women vary.

- There are three essential components for the reintegration of child soldiers: family reunification, psychosocial support and education, and economic opportunities.²¹

²⁰ World Bank, *Demobilization and Reintegration Programs: Addressing Gender* 2003. Issues.

²¹ World Bank. *Child Soldier: Prevention, Demobilization and Reintegration*. 2002

The physical and psychological condition of child ex-combatants varied from place to place, but all shared “trauma, uncertainty about their future, insecurity, and above all, a desire to go back to school or to learn a trade.”²²

- Girl soldiers have special needs

The situation of girl soldiers should be assessed and specific protection measures should be put into place that are culturally sensitive. Pregnant soldiers or girl soldiers with children will also have special reintegration requirements.

In the case of Ethiopia, women who had been inducted into the armed forces at an early age found their entire militarized socialization and meaning of being a woman ran counter to the traditional values of Ethiopian society. After demobilization, they found they faced a different world where these constructs no longer applied and where they were immediately placed into conflict with traditional society.

Many of the boys demobilized in Liberia from 1994 to 1997 had joined the fighting forces voluntarily to protect themselves or their families or to avoid being harassed, but the vast majority of girls had been forcibly abducted.

- Sexually victimized women and girls will not step forward and easily identify themselves in order to be helped. Women and girls have to seek out assistance programs privately. The programs must identify the affected women and girls in ways that will not stigmatize them.

11. ISSUE: PERSONAL DIFFICULTIES IN DEMOBILIZING AND REINTEGRATING

Humanitarian organizations often think that all soldiers and WAFFs are eager to leave the armed groups and re-enter civil society. However, demobilization and reintegration may be times of great risk and uncertainty for child and women soldiers and WAFFs. These are not simple processes of getting out of the army and “going home” again. DDR programs and staff should anticipate the mixed emotions and difficulties of demobilizing and reintegrating children and women.

The soldier has been changed by his or her life and experiences as a soldier. Demobilized soldiers go through the process of leaving the status of soldier, leaving the life with which they have become familiar, and leaving the community of soldiers who have been companions through many experiences.²³ Certainly, for the child soldier this important period of forming a social and personal identity has been the capstone of his childhood to that date.

²² See the Human Rights Watch/Africa 1997 Report Vol. 9, no. 7 (A).

²³ See Hansen 1999.

Women soldiers and WAFFs may have established marriages (forced or voluntary) with other soldiers and may have children. In returning to the workforce, women are often discriminated against and men afforded priority in the job market. Sensitization campaigns and incentives with the private sector could be considered to encourage the hiring of women.

The society has changed. Family and friends may have died or been displaced, or they may have grown hostile to the soldier. The home village or town may have been destroyed. Civil society in general may hate and discriminate against ex-soldiers, and WAFFs are stigmatized.

The economy also has changed or been destroyed. How is the demobilized soldier or WAFF going to acquire food and shelter and earn a living? The military provided food and shelter for the soldier or allowed the soldier to forage with a gun, while the civil economy may not be able to provide the food, shelter, jobs, and services that ex-soldiers will need.

- Although demobilization entails risks, many child soldiers will be anxious and able to reintegrate rapidly. A majority might desert and self-reintegrate or move as quickly as possible through the demobilization and reinsertion process.

12. ISSUE: IMPORTANCE OF AND DURATION IN TRANSIT CENTERS

Everyone agrees that transit or interim care centers are important, but there is a major, ongoing debate about the amount of time demobilizing children should spend there. Some organizations think a week is all right, while others think that three to six months is best. Part of the reason for the debate is a question about how to deal with the psychosocial trauma that child soldiers are supposed to have experienced. Those favoring shorter times believe the best cure is through being reunited with family, while others believe a longer period of being sheltered with trained staff is preferable. Another reason for the debate is whether vocational training should be part of the transit center's program, since vocational skills training obviously requires several months at least.

- Children cannot (or should not) be demobilized in 12 or even 24 hours.

A lesson from the earlier Liberian experience is that some form of temporary encampment for at least a week is necessary to protect the child from his or her former commander, to assess the child's physical and mental condition, and to provide some education for peace and information about reintegration opportunities.

- Transit and orientation (or interim care) centers are needed to shelter and orient children while the staff have time to trace families, decide which educational programs are appropriate, provide protection and counseling, and work out with the children and families the best placement options for each child.
- Although the population of child soldiers is heterogeneous, many will be anxious and able to reintegrate rapidly. Probably the majority will move as quickly as possible through the transit center phase.

- Social reinsertion in family and community is preferable to segregation in separate schools or barracks.
- It is important to involve the local community in the transit center.

This is a good place to start preparing the child and the community for the child's reintegration. The DRC experience shows how opening the transit center to the community is another way to facilitate the psycho-social rehabilitation of child soldiers and to involve communities in the protection of these children.

13. ISSUE: DDR OR DDRRRRD

The DDR acronym is often used to describe the post-conflict processes of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration. This underestimates the complexity of the post-demobilization process. When designing demobilization and reintegration programs, it is important to recognize that the development goal is DDRRRRD:

- Disarmament—Taking weapons out of circulation.
 - Demobilization—Reducing the number of combatants.
 - Reinsertion or Reunification—Transporting the ex-combatants to their civilian homes.
 - Reconciliation—Encouraging people to forgive past conflict.
 - Reconstruction—Rebuilding necessary infrastructure.
 - Reintegration—Knitting together a ripped social fabric.
 - Demilitarization—Reorienting society and culture from violence to peace.
- Planning for reintegration should occur in coordination with plans for disarmament and demobilization in order to establish smooth transitions. Reintegration programs should be in place and operative before demobilization begins.
 - Accurate information about what to expect at the DDR sites should be provided to the members of the fighting forces (especially to the children) before they arrive at the sites. Too often, combatants will have received inaccurate information from their commanders. Learning the truth at the disarmament site can lead to violence and the disruption of the DDR process.

Reinsertion is the soldier-centered process of identifying an ex-soldier's family or community and transporting the soldier there. Family reunification and reinsertion may be accomplished quickly. Dropping a child or woman back into his or her community is important but only the beginning of reintegration.

- Returning children to insecure environments in attempts to reintegrate them back into their communities may result in some children being re-abducted or killed.

It may be impossible to reinsert some children and women into their families and home communities. These ex-soldiers may need longer-term programs.

- Reintegration programs have to be community-based. Transit centers are only temporary staging areas from which children move out to communities to reintegrate.

Successful reintegration into families and communities requires the provision of follow-up social, economic, and psychological support to the families of ex-child soldiers.

- Public information and awareness programs are important to keep the community informed and to communicate the importance of human rights and communal reconciliation. NGOs, including churches and community-based organizations, can play important roles in broadcasting these messages.

Reconciliation is the social and emotional process of social healing. This is a community-centered process that emphasizes the importance of family and community education and motivation. This process may begin before reinsertion and may take months or years.

- A functioning network of NGOs and CBOs is the crucially important institutional structure that facilitated and made possible demobilization and reintegration programs in DRC.

Reconstruction is the physical process of rebuilding destroyed infrastructure. Rebuilding is often a necessary step in restarting the local and national economy. This process is often targeted by reintegration programs with Quick Impact Projects (QIPs). Giving ex-soldiers and non-combatants (local residents) the opportunity to work together to reconstruct their town is also a way to further the process of social reconciliation.

Reintegration is an umbrella term that includes all these dimensions of the complex long-term process during which the ex-soldier and the members of his or her society begin to work through the challenges of living and working together to rebuild their infrastructure, economy, and sense of community.

Demilitarization is a longer social and cultural shift away from thinking about violent solutions and prioritizing peaceful coexistence and conflict management. This may be accomplished by educational programs and strong leadership.

- Reinsertion disperses the target population

Reinserting former child and women soldiers with their families may disperse them throughout the country making their follow-up more costly and complicated. As a result, only some of the children and women going through the DDR program may be able to

receive vocational skills training or participate in income generating projects after reintegration.

- Importance of registration and record-keeping

Paying close attention during demobilization to the proper registration of the name and location of the family is necessary in order to be able to provide any follow-up care. A monitoring system to follow up on demobilized child and women soldiers is needed because the program may lose track of people after reinsertion.

- Need for follow-up of demobilized child soldiers and vulnerable women combatants

The reintegration of child soldiers and women combatants can be difficult. They can be stigmatized, ostracized, and threatened. In the case of Uganda, some returned girls were threatened by their husbands as they attempted to reintegrate, and 30 percent of those girls were girl mothers who needed additional assistance. In the Sudan, child soldiers who were stigmatized by their communities were more likely to be recruited back into the rebel movement. In Mozambique, the lack of an adequate tracking system meant that they lost track of more than half of the reintegrated ex-child soldiers, which meant that they missed opportunities to be integrated into subsequent reintegration and economic development programs.

- Need to promote reconciliation among children.

Children who were soldiers and children who are war-affected need to reconcile and develop healthy relationships with each other. Promoting dialogue among the young may help to construct the basis for a sustainable peace. Child soldiers need to be forgiven by their communities and viewed as victims of armed conflict, rather than as aggressors. UNICEF found that community-based strategies reduced the stigma attached to psychological therapy. Case studies show the important positive role that traditional activities, such as dancing or singing, along with group sports and tournaments, play in the social healing process.

- Avoid prolonged institutionalization of former child soldiers.

The case studies of the DDR process in Mozambique and Rwanda show stark contrasts in the use of institutions as a transitional mechanism in the DDR process for child soldiers. In Mozambique, no institutions were used as a transition mechanism. The ex-combatants who went through the child soldier DDR process were reunited directly with relatives or their communities. Child soldiers who went through the adult DDR process stayed in camps with their adult colleagues and upon demobilization were transported back to their areas of origin.

However, in Rwanda, child soldiers were demobilized directly into an institution where some children stayed up to three years before being re-united with their families or communities.

The lessons learned from Rwanda²⁴ show that prolonged institutionalization created several problems including:

- Long-term stays in the DDR institution stigmatized the children, which hindered their acceptance back into their communities.
- Housing, feeding, clothing, and educating the children overwhelmed donor and government capacity and became the focal point of the program—rather than the reintegration of the children back into their communities.

14. ISSUE: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

- Importance of tying reintegration into local cultural traditions and using community-based approaches.

Community-based organizations need to be strengthened to enable them to follow up and assist/promote the reintegration and human rights of returning children and women. The capacity of local communities and leaders needs to be strengthened so they are able to initiate and carry out demobilization and reunification programs themselves.

- Community-based child protection networks (or committees) raise local awareness of child protection issues and empower community members to defend their children.

All of the case studies emphasized the importance of tying reintegration and the healing process into local cultural traditions and using these traditional systems, values and beliefs wherever possible. In Mozambique, this meant working through the traditional healer system. In Uganda, traditional ceremonies for cleansing were especially important for girls who served as “wives” to improve their chances for a post-war marriage. “Cleansing” the child provided psychological security for both the child and the community and made it easier for the communities to accept these children and women back into their fold. These practices were not used in the Sudan DDR process, where children were often stigmatized by their communities and, as a result, were more likely to return to the armed groups.

- Almost all of the international and national NGOs involved in reintegration of child soldiers emphasized an integrated approach.

These children have a variety of needs. Each sector (education, vocational training, economic self-sufficiency, health, and counseling) is important. Programs to assist these children need to take into account their education and training, their health, their future economic life, their social behavior in society, and their psychological and moral needs. Income-generating

²⁴ UNICEF study. Lessons Learned: Rwanda.

projects or scholarships may be a necessary component of reintegration programs to help the children and their families pay for school, food, or other items.

- The capacity of the community to recover from the war needs to be addressed.

Reintegration of the child with his/her family and community is a fundamental principle of UNICEF's DDR process. Their lesson learned is that the ultimate goal of any institution is to facilitate the children's return to their community. This requires communities to take responsibility for the recovery and rehabilitation of its youth. Reinforcing existing care-giving positions such as mothers, grandparents, and teachers was also important.

- Reintegration and rehabilitation is a long-term process.

Case studies show that the reintegration and rehabilitation of ex-child soldiers is a long-term process. According to the World Bank, it requires at least 3 to 5 years of committed resources.²⁵ It requires economic reintegration to help them find an income so they can take care of their needs. It requires social reintegration whereby the former combatant adjusts to civilian life and morals and where society accepts the former combatant. "Mental demobilization"²⁶ takes psychosocial support and a longer period than the logistical process of demobilizing a soldier of his/her weapon and military status.

15. BEST PRACTICE: SAVE-UK'S PROGRAM IN DRC²⁷

This program has been chosen as a best practice for several reasons:

1. It is able to operate in an unstable atmosphere without a sustainable peace by building relationships with national NGOs and with local military officials;
2. It has learned from experience to become more community-based; and
3. It has built a program for demobilized child soldiers on the foundation of a program to serve a broad range of disadvantaged children and serves as a model of a program that integrates ex-soldiers within the transit center.

SAVE-UK uses a community-based approach for the reintegration process. In collaboration with a network of national (primarily local) NGOs, SAVE-UK established the following model:

²⁵ World Bank. Child Soldiers Op Cit

²⁶ Farr, Vanessa, Gendering Demobilization as a Peacebuilding Tool. p. 26.

²⁷ See the DRC case study.

1. Advocacy with the military.
 - a. They advocate for children's rights and for the release (demobilization) of child soldiers.
 - b. They advocate for children's protection and to stop recruiting new children.
2. Transit centers. They receive the demobilized (and other unaccompanied) children in temporary centers where the children stay for one to three months, while the NGOs do the following:
 - a. Trace the child's family.
 - b. Provide basic health services.
 - c. Provide psycho-social counseling.
 - d. Teach functional literacy and other bridging classes.
 - e. Provide vocational training.
3. Reinsert children into their families.
4. Support families and communities.
 - a. Community education about children's rights. Create community networks for child protection to advocate and protect children's rights and prevent recruitment.
 - b. Counseling for families.
 - c. Community development and self-help projects.
 - d. Individual or small-scale income-generating projects.
5. Monitor children who are ex-soldiers or disadvantaged.

This is an example of a program that was established to serve street children or other vulnerable groups, but that refocused its attention as the situation changed and the need arose to provide a transit center for demobilizing children.

When nationwide peace has not yet been established, there may be a relatively small number of demobilized child and women soldiers, many of whom self-demobilized. Reintegration programs could be established that integrate all types of needy children and women, including soldiers. Programs would not have to check people's documents to try to determine whether they had been soldiers. This would be helpful since most self-demobilized ex-soldiers are not able to document that they had been soldiers.

This is the time for pilot projects to experiment and demonstrate reintegration procedures and for NGOs to experiment and learn how to handle child soldiers. This is the time to strengthen the institutional capacity of these NGOs and NGO networks to prepare for and handle the onslaught of demobilized child soldiers from a ceasefire. This is the time to strengthen civil society's ability to coordinate and communicate so that the various NGOs and other agencies can cooperate more effectively to implement a massive reintegration program.

Once a comprehensive peace occurs, or is in process of happening, the situation may change dramatically. There may be thousands of child and women soldiers who demobilize and are ready for reintegration. Although many of these will self-demobilize and self-reintegrate, that will still leave a large population that will want and need assistance in reintegrating.

A significant advantage to beginning general reintegration activities with children and women even before the formal DDR program is that, when peace occurs and the armed groups are ready to demobilize, the social and institutional capacity to implement reintegration will already exist or be strengthened. In many countries, no agency has the capability now to handle well a large-scale reintegration. No one has enough experience in psycho-social counseling, skilled counselors, or the capacity in terms of teachers, space, etc., to set up enough transit centers, bridging classes, and vocational training. No one has the capacity to work with all of the families and communities or to coordinate all of the services and organizations that would be involved.

The agencies that establish and work with reintegration for a mixed clientele will establish transit centers and educational programs and work with families and communities to reintegrate children and women socially. When large-scale demobilization occurs and many ex-soldiers need assistance, these agencies may shift their priorities to focus on, or accept, only or primarily child and women soldiers and will be able to build on the infrastructure and lessons learned dealing with other children and women.

16. BEST PRACTICE: YRTEP IN SIERRA LEONE²⁸

The Youth Reintegration Training and Education for Peace (YRTEP) program has been chosen as a best practice for several reasons:

- It had a positive impact on Sierra Leone's peace process;
- It achieved its original objectives (reintegration, remedial education, strengthen peace-building initiatives, and public support for demobilization);
- It rapidly expanded across the countryside and engaged tens of thousands of people, most of them war-affected youths and ex-combatants; and
- It stimulated a positive, self-help, we-can-do-it attitude in people that left them ripe for development programs.

This is a multidimensional educational program aimed at young people, who were thought to be a critical cohort in terms of potential trouble making. This is not vocational skills training. The curriculum mixes life skills basic education (literacy and numeracy), self-awareness, anger and conflict management, education for peace, health, environmental awareness, and good governance. The structure is:

²⁸ See the Sierra Leone case study.

- A highly-qualified group of master trainers taught
- Community-level trainers (youths), who taught
 - Community-level participants (youths).

The community-level groups of trainers and participants were designed to consist of half ex-combatants and half war-affected youth. It is difficult to know exactly how many ex-combatants actually participated. What is known is that the decision to mix ex-combatants and war-affected youth was wise and assisted the reconciliation and reintegration process. A frequent complaint in the community about DDR activities, which are only for ex-combatants, is that they unfairly benefit those who perpetrated violent acts against communities. They elicit comments like, “I should have become a rebel so I would also be able to benefit from these programs.” Because YRTEP stressed the combination of the two groups, it presented a more integrated approach.

Although this program is selected as an example of a best practice, it is an incomplete program that stimulates people in the communities to reach for development, but cannot help them with the necessary resources to prevent people being left disappointed. YRTEP is a good forerunner for a development program because it leaves community people excited, stimulated, aware, and wanting to improve. The local trainers and participants are motivated and ready to change. Unfortunately, the success of this program has created expectations in the participants and communities about future sustainable development that the program cannot satisfy in its current form.

The reality is that sustainability is an issue for Sierra Leonean communities. Participants go through a six-month to yearlong YRTEP training program that raises their hopes and their expectations. When the trainings end, many new skills are gained but expectations for the future usually are not met. The contradiction between expectations and skills learned means communities are left with a sense of wanting more and being prepared for more. As one Learning Facilitator said, “You cannot sensitize people and then have them live in the streets.”

PART TWO—LIBERIAN PEACE PROCESS AND THE REINTEGRATION OF CHILD SOLDIERS/WOMEN COMBATANTS

I. PEACE PROCESS

1. PEACE AGREEMENT

The Peace Agreement between the Government of Liberia (GOL), Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) and the Political Parties (Attachment II) was signed and entered into force on August 18, 2003. Among the provisions of the Peace Agreement are the Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration (DDRR) of all irregular and paramilitary forces, and the restructuring of the Armed Forces of Liberia. This will be done under the coordination of a National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration (NCDDRR), which includes representatives from the GOL, LURD, MODEL, Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS), UN, African Union (AU), and the International Contact Group on Liberia.

According to the Peace Agreement, irregular combatants must go to cantonment locations and the Armed Forces of Liberia will be confined to their barracks. The International Stabilization Force (ISF) will monitor the DDRR process and all arms and ammunition (Article VI). LURD, MODEL, and all irregular GOL forces will cease to exist as military forces upon completion of disarmament (Article XXI).

All political prisoners, prisoners of war, and abductees are to be released immediately and unconditionally (Article IX). They will be assisted by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other national and international organizations (Article X).

An Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) will be established with assistance from the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (Article XII) and a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) will be established to provide a forum to address issues of impunity (Article XIII). It will look at the root causes of the crisis in Liberia, including human rights violations and, among other things, will recommend measures to be taken for the rehabilitation of the victims of human rights violations.

The Vice President will govern Liberia until a National Transitional Government (NTGL) is created on October 14, 2003 (Article XXI). The primary responsibility of the transitional government is to ensure the implementation of the Peace Agreement and in the holding of internationally supervised elections in October 2005 for the inauguration of the GOL-elect in January 2006 (Article XXII).

Several Articles in the Peace Agreement directly address gender and child soldier issues. These include:

Article XXVIII. National Balance. “The parties shall reflect national and gender balance in all elective and non-elective appointments with the NTGL.”

Article XXX. Refugees and Displaced Persons. The Article calls on the NTGL to design a plan for the voluntary return and reintegration of Liberian refugees and IDPs, including non-combatants.

Article XXXI. Vulnerable Groups.

“1a. The NTGL shall accord particular attention to the issue of rehabilitation of vulnerable groups or war victims (children, women, the elderly and the disabled) within Liberia, who have been severely affected by the conflict in Liberia.

b. With the support of the International community, the NTGL shall design and implement a program for the rehabilitation of such war-victims.

2a. The NTGL shall, in addition, accord special attention to the issue of child combatants.

b. It shall, accordingly mobilize resources with the assistance of the International community, especially in cooperation with the Office of the U.N. Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict, UNICEF, the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and other relevant agencies, to address their special demobilization and re-integration needs.

3. The NTGL, in formulating and implementing programs for national rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, for the moral, social and physical reconstruction of Liberia in the post-conflict period, shall ensure that the needs and potentials of the war victims are taken into account and that gender balance is maintained in apportioning responsibilities for program implementation.”

2. PEACE PROCESS TIMETABLE

The timetable for the peace process according to the Peace Agreements and the U.N. Secretary General’s Report are as follows:

October 15, 2003	Establishment of Transitional Government
November 1, 2003	UNMIL Interim HQ operational
November 15, 2003	Start of National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration
December 15, 2003	Start of cantonment, disarmament and demobilization
March 2004	UNMIL military component fully deployed

October 2005	National elections
January 2006	Inauguration of new government
End of UNMIL	

3. UNMIL

The United Nations is establishing a multidimensional U.N. peacekeeping operation for Liberia called UNMIL (U.N. Mission in Liberia). The specifics of UNMIL are detailed in the Report of the Secretary General to the Security Council on Liberia (Attachment III).

Its mandate is to support the National Transitional government of Liberia and other parties in the implementation of the Peace Agreement, assist the NTGL in the DDR process, assist with the preparation of national elections, and monitor the human rights situation. It will also support the establishment and operations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Its total force is expected to be about 15,000 and its primary task will be to support the DDR process. The U.N. Secretary General also appointed a Special Representative (SRSG) for Liberia.

The U.N. Report discusses the DDR process for child soldiers and women combatants using the definition of child soldier from the Cape Town Principles. It states that separate disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs should be put into place for children, especially girls because of their numbers and specific problems. They also want to prevent the renewed recruitment of demobilized children by armed groups.

“Any disarmament, demobilization and reintegration program should pay particular attention to the needs of child combatants, women among the fighting forces, dependants of combatants, camp followers and abductees. There should be a clear definition of beneficiaries, screening for vulnerabilities should be carried out and interim care facilities should be established to cater to their needs and reintegration. Special measures and programs should address the gender-specific needs of female ex-combatants, as well as the wives and widows of former combatants. Briefing, counseling and training in programs, for an eventual reintegration of ex-combatants should take into consideration the differences in the experiences during conflict of women and girls, as compared to men and boys. Because of the high rates of sexual violence perpetrated in the conflict, reintegration programs must include prevention of sexual violence.”²⁹

It is imperative that such child soldiers be admitted to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process without the prerequisite of possession of a weapon. Often, fighting forces and factions do not disclose the presence of child soldiers, especially girls, within their ranks, thus preventing them from benefiting from the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. Parallel plans,

²⁹ Report of the Secretary General to the Security Council on Liberia, S/2003/875, Para 46.

*including outreach programs, must be developed to document, track and provide support to children who may be bypassed by the disarmament process.*³⁰

*The gross violations of human rights require special attention be paid to the protection of civilians, in particular, the response to widespread sexual violence against women and children. Early establishment of a functional national capacity for the protection and promotion of human rights and transitional justice mechanism to address issues of impunity Thus facilitating the process of national healing and nation-building. Special efforts should be made to ensure that women and girls are involved in the process.*³¹

UNMIL also takes a subregional vision of the conflict and intends to link the DDR program in Liberia wherever possible to the ongoing DDR process in the Cote d'Ivoire. It also wants to benefit from the lessons learned from the DDR process in Sierra Leone and other initiatives in the region that deal with the reintegration needs of IDPs and war-affected communities.

4. DDR PROCESS

The DDR process has been further elaborated by UNMIL and UNDP, which is the lead technical agency for DDR. According to the draft documents available during the ATTO Assessment,³² the DDR process objective is to consolidate peace through comprehensive disarmament, demobilization and sustainable reintegration of all ex-combatants into civilian society. Its immediate objective is to consolidate national security as a precondition to facilitating humanitarian assistance, restoring civil authority, and promoting economic growth and development.

The U.N. is planning a DDR process for 38,000 combatants of which 15,000 are expected to be children under 18. The numbers are estimates based on the 1997 DDR process. During the Assessment, the Team heard estimates of the forces ranging upwards of 50,000 to significantly less than the 38,000-planning figure. The number of child soldiers is also a guesstimate. For cost-planning purposes, the U.N. divided the estimate of 15,000 child soldiers into two groups—7,000 children over the age of 16 who are living adult lives (some with spouses and children) and 8,000 children under 16. However, for the DD phase all child soldiers under the age of 18 will be processed as children. One thousand women combatants are planned for although most experts believe this number is under-estimated.

³⁰ OpCit, Para 47

³¹ OpCit, Para 110

³² Power point presentation of the Draft Strategy and Implementation Framework for Liberian Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Program, October 24, 2003 and the Draft Strategy Document dated October 8, 2003.

Table 2: DDR Target Groups per U.N. Planning

Fighting Forces	Total	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
AFL & Para Military	10,000	2,000	6,000	2,000
LURD	8,000	2,000	4,000	2,000
MODEL	5,000	1,000	3,000	1,000
Other Militias	5,000	-	5,000	-
Child Combatants	8,000	4,000	4,000	-
Disabled Combatants	1,000	1,000	-	-
Women Combatants	1,000	1,000	-	-
Total Combatants	38,000	11,000	2,000	5,000

To be eligible for the DDR process every combatant must:

- Demonstrate participation as an adult combatant member of one of the fighting forces listed in Table 2 at the time of the signature of the Peace Agreement;
- Be an under-aged combatant, accompanying minor, unaccompanied minor, or any other participant under 18 or female presenting with any of the groups listed in Table 2; or
- Present acceptable proof of participation in the armed conflict as a member of at least one of the groups listed in Table 2, which includes either a weapon presented by each combatant or a group comprised of up to five combatants with a group weapon.

The DDR process is based on the following principles and assumptions.³³

4.1 Principles

There will be

- Complementary military restructuring;
- National ownership through beneficiary participation and transparent processing of target groups;
- Sensitization and a nationwide reconciliation campaign;
- No retroactive demobilization;
- Needs-driven assistance and community-based support;

³³ Information on the DDR process is from UNDP DDR draft documents. Specific information on the processing of child combatants is from UNICEF draft documents and Team discussions with UNICEF.

- Coordination and partnerships linked to a wider framework of reconstruction and recovery; and
- Regional sensitivity.

The issue of no retroactive demobilization for spontaneously demobilizing child and women combatants was being re-visited by the U.N. during the Assessment. It expects to do a retroactive demobilization of children/women who were in ICC centers by November 1, 2003, and a retrospective demobilization of children/women who spontaneously demobilize and are identified by protection agencies before December 7, 2003. However, the Assessment Team believes that a substantial number of former child and women combatants will spontaneously demobilize without going to an ICC, UNICEF, or an NGO dealing with the DDR process. This puts them outside of the official DDR process and is an issue discussed in more depth in Part Three.

4.2 Assumptions

- Political will and a process of post conflict reconciliation is developed.
- A National Transition Government is formed.
- Comprehensive (including regional) measures are taken to stem and control the influx and recycling of weapons.
- Irregular forces are disbanded and the Liberian security force is restructured.
- The DDR program has adequate funding.
- A national recovery, community reconstruction, rehabilitation and reintegration program is implemented concurrently.
- Other complementary political provisions in the Peace Agreement are initiated and implemented.

4.3 Implementation Responsibilities

The U.N. draft DDR documents divide responsibility for the implementation of DDR as follows:

- Policy: NCDDR with the AU, ECOWAS, UNMIL, GOL, LURD, MODEL, and NTGL.
- Implementation: Joint Implementation Unit (JIU) headed by a UNDP Program and Policy Advisor with 4 sub-units:

- DD Unit headed by UNMIL;
- Information and Sensitization Unit headed by UNMIL/OCHA;
- Monitoring and Evaluation Unit headed by UNDP; and
- Rehabilitation and Reintegration Unit headed by UNDP.

The JIU will have five DDR Field Offices and the programs will be implemented by international and national implementing partners (such as NGOs).

UNICEF is responsible for the rehabilitation and reintegration of child and women combatants. UNICEF's detailed guidelines for assisting children associated with the fighting forces in the DDR program are listed in Attachment 7.

4.4 DDR Processing

Three camps were to be opened by the planned December 7, 2003 start up date. These are in Monrovia, Tubmanberg, and Buchanan. Three more sites are planned to be opened by March 2003 with an additional three sites opened afterwards. The DDR processing will be done in three parts: disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration.

The question of whether the DDR camps will be ready by December 7 was widely discussed during the Assessment mission. UNMIL forces had not yet moved into two of the three cantonment areas and security was still a concern. These timing and readiness issues are discussed in more depth in Part Three.

Disarmament. Groups will report or be transported to a cantonment site where they will be registered by UNMIL. Weapons will be collected and processed. Draft UNICEF guidelines allow children to report independently or in groups (with commanders or with other soldiers) and to be processed with or without weapons or ammunition. Women and children will be separated from the men and placed in separate areas within the camp. These areas will be fenced off from the rest of the camp and are to have gender/age appropriate facilities and supplies.

After registration, child soldiers (both males and females under 18) and other separated children will be transferred to demobilization sites (which can also be within the same cantonment site). Age verification is to be done at the time of registration by a social worker.

Special consideration planning for girls and young women at the camps include:

- Ensuring their security and protection in the camps;
- Gender sensitive interviews with efforts made to ensure the presence of female military observers at all cantonment sites;

- Flexibility in the eligibility criteria so that girls and young women associated with the fighting forces as wives, cooks, etc., but who were not in active combat can go through the formal process; and
- Providing childcare facilities for girl mothers and their children along with special considerations for pregnant girls and women.

Demobilization. Adult combatants will receive a pre-discharge orientation and medical screening. ID cards will be issued. Socio-economic profiling will be done along with career counseling. They will be issued a discharge certificate, reinsertion benefits, and transport back to their home areas.

Children will be handed over to the child protection agency present at the demobilization center. Screening will be done by social workers to identify separated (unaccompanied) children and the child soldiers. The child soldiers will go through the DDR process while the separated children will be transferred immediately to an ICC (interim care facility) or foster family.

Children who qualify for the demobilization process will stay at the demobilization site in order to go through the DDR process. Their processing is expected to take not more than 72 hours after which they are to be transferred to an ICC.

Babies of female combatants will remain with their mothers through the DDR process. Child soldiers of adult combatants will be given the option to undergo the DDR process with other children or remain with the parent throughout the DDR process, leaving camp together at the end.

Children of male combatants who accompany the combatant to a center will be screened by the child protection agency for eligibility in the DDR program. Older accompanied children who do not qualify for the DDR process will be offered:

- Tracing to find other family members who could look after them;
- Placement in foster care in the area where demobilization is taking place; and
- Placement in an ICC while awaiting the discharge of the parent.

Girls between 13 and 18 who have a “husband” among the male combatants will be treated as children and referred to the children’s section for screening, counseling, and registration.

Reintegration. Ex-combatant adults, women and men, are expected to return to their homes, farms, or microenterprises and are eligible to receive further education and vocational training. Psycho-social counseling and community and family-based activities are also to be made available.

4.5 ICC Centers

Ex-child and women combatants will be processed through Interim Care Centers that will start their reintegration process. ICC centers are to be located next to the cantonment sites and provide a residence for the children associated with the fighting forces (CAFF), women associated with the fighting forces (WAFF) and other separated children while family tracing and reintegration activities are underway.

Table 3: UNICEF and Partner ICC Planning³⁴

	Monrovia		Buchanan		Tugmanburg		TBD
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
CCF					100	100	
Samaritan's Purse		80		80			1.
STC/UK	50	50	50	50			
Don Bosco	75		75		75		2.
Youth Aid		100		100			
IRC							3.
WV							4.

1. Samaritan's Purse ICC center in Monrovia is open but not up to this capacity yet.

2. Don Bosco is planning for 75 boys each at Harbel and Kakata.

3. World Vision has not yet decided if it will open an ICC but will provide services to all ICCs.

Other NGOs are intending to open ICCs but this was UNICEF's list of primary partners as of the end of the assessment fieldwork.

CAFF will be referred to the ICC through the formal DDR process. The ICCs will also take care of:

- CAFF who spontaneously demobilize;
- Children in need of family tracing;
- CAFF and separated children who feel unsafe or uncertain about returning to their families or communities of origin;
- CAFF with severe psychological problems related to their experiences;
- CAFF with serious medical conditions or disabilities; and
- Female CAFF, WAFF, and separated children who are pregnant or with children.

UNICEF has developed standard protocols for ICCs in order to ensure quality control and a standard level of services (Attachment 8). It wants to ensure a safe, comfortable home for these beneficiaries, but not to have them so comfortable that children and WAFF will not want to move on. The anticipated ICC stay for most women/children is expected to be about 4 to 6 weeks. The maximum stay is 12 weeks. UNICEF's primary objective is to reunify the

³⁴ As of November 25, 2003

children with their families and provide the bulk of the reintegration assistance after reunification. Alternative care arrangements, such as foster homes, are to be found for ICC children whose families cannot be found or who are unable to return home because of various reasons.

II. ASSISTANCE

1. BACKGROUND

The U.N. estimates there are between 27,000 and 38,000 combatants in Liberia, with an estimated 15,000 children involved in the conflict as either child soldiers or sex slaves to combatants.³⁵ Some factions are thought to be comprised of 70 percent children and it is estimated that 80 percent of the children involved in direct combat are armed. Many children have also fallen victims to sexual abuse and gender-based violence and exploitation. Rapid assessments done by UNICEF in June 2003 indicated an increase in the number of forced recruitment of children and the levels of rape and sexual violence.

From the numbers of persons assisted by trauma centers at the Catholic Church and religious organizations, the Archbishop Michael Francis estimates there are about 25,000 child soldiers and 10,000 women combatants. Ages of child soldiers range from eight or nine upwards, with some reports of children as young as six.

Liberia went through a similar DDR process in 1997 (see attached case study) in which 4,319 child soldiers, including 78 girls were demobilized. This was 20 percent of the total number of combatants demobilized.³⁶ Many of the interventions and programs being designed for the 2003 process are based on the programs and experiences of the earlier DDR process. The 1997 DDR process also trained a significant number of Liberians in counseling and reintegration and many are still in Liberia and willing to resume their work. Those working on DDR issues now in Liberia are also very aware of the DDR process in neighboring Sierra Leone and their lessons learned (see attached case study on Sierra Leone). Many of the international and national organizations have personnel in-country who worked in the DDR process in Sierra Leone or in other African peacekeeping missions.

The international community is directly assisting and implementing the DDR process. This assistance is detailed in the following section. However, as the much of the process was still in the planning phase, most of the programs described below are planned programs and their actual programming may differ from these initial plans.

³⁵ UNICEF appeal for Liberia's children Aug 2003-Dec 2003.

³⁶ UNICEF, *The Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Child Soldiers in Liberia, 1994-1997*.

2. EXISTING AND PLANNED PROGRAMS

2.1 United Nations System

UNMIL and other U.N. agencies are focusing among other things on protection issues for child soldiers as well as IDPs and the general population. A Protection Steering Committee chaired by the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) will coordinate U.N. responses. A Joint Monitoring Committee will be established under a UNDP-funded protection program and will issue monitoring reports that will form the basis for more comprehensive responses to issues such as sexual and gender-based violence, protection of IDPs, forced recruitment, and other human rights violations.

A senior protection adviser is expected to be deployed to the Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator to ensure linkages with the child protection activities led by UNICEF and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) protection experience with refugees. The U.N. expects to use a U.N. system-wide approach in the implementation of their protection programs.

A senior gender adviser will be attached to the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) who will undertake and support gender mainstreaming within the UN, with civil society and other external partners.

Two child protection advisers will be attached to the SRSG's Office to advocate against the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict and "seek the collaboration of parties" to support the DDR programs for child soldiers. The advisers will also monitor and report on child protection issues, provide training and raise awareness among UNMIL staff as well as the national military and police forces.

The U.N. will also establish a public outreach unit to support the DDR process, provide media monitoring and a small video unit.

UNICEF

UNICEF plans for a \$3.4 million project for "Comprehensive Protection Support to IDPs and Other Vulnerable Groups." UNICEF's plans are based on the assumption they will eventually have access throughout Liberia. This project will:

- Assess the scale of child separations, child soldiers, and victims of sexual abuse and gender-based violence with the help of its partner agencies;
- Identify vulnerable populations;
- Put a system into place to respond to children whose rights have been violated;

- Develop advocacy strategies for the vulnerable groups;
- Support prevention and response to sexual abuse and gender-based violence and exploitation directed to children; and
- Support the prevention of HIV/AIDS and sexual abuse through advocacy, sensitizing humanitarian workers and peacekeepers, mobilizing communities to build a protective environment for survivors, providing essential supplies (such as post rape kits) and training health care staff.

Not all separated children will be reunified with their families immediately. UNICEF believes that children who have been part of a fighting force for a long time may need key services prior to reunification.

Specifically for child soldiers, UNICEF will:

- Advocate for the release and demobilization of children associated with fighting forces;
- Advocate for a phased and early release of children coming from the armed factions because of the limited access for supplies and humanitarian workers;
- With the SRSB and the ECOWAS peacekeeping force known as ECOMIL, put a strategy into place to negotiate with the parties to the conflict a timetable for the planned release of children that will link them to immediate care and protection;
- Coordinate with child protection agencies to ensure Interim Care Facilities and system for family tracing and reunification are set up near each demobilization center; and
- Provide basic education and life skills training to facilitate the return of child soldiers to and acceptance in their communities.

UNICEF has also started a Back to School Campaign. Following an initial learning spaces needs assessment, which also served to mobilize community support for the campaign, the program distributed “School in a Box” kits, which contain enough pens, notebooks and chalk for 80 students for 3 months. UNICEF will re-launch its “Child Friendly Spaces” that will provide an entry point for children to access non-formal education and recreation and enable an integrated and quick response for the most vulnerable children. This program is currently underway in a few of the IDP camps. UNICEF also plans a \$274,700 program “Gender based violence prevention and responses” program in Montserrat IDP camps, and a \$785,000 “Child protection and gender awareness” project.

UNICEF chairs the weekly Child Protection Working Group Meeting, while UNHCR and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) chair the weekly Sexual Gender Base Violence meetings. OCHA chairs the bi-weekly Inter-Agency Protection Group and the weekly meeting of the Protection Core Group.

UNDP

UNDP has a project to support the preparatory activities for DDR. This \$830,000 project will screen candidates for the DDR process using criteria adopted by the NCDDRR body and register eligible candidates. It will give an ID that will be used for participation in the DDR program and for services that might be provided to the ex-combatants after demobilization. It will also collect biodata information on each registered individual in order to profile their needs, skills, and expectations for their economic and social reintegration. This profiling will be used to adjust the reintegration support packages, which eventually are expected to include psycho-social reintegration support, and a mix of training, job counseling, placement, and microenterprise creation support.

UNDP plans to spend \$1 million (2003-2005) for reintegration at the community level, and has draft project documents prepared. Programs will work with ex-combatants, refugees, and returnees in host communities to build capacity for sustainable livelihoods. When dealing with the reintegration of children and women, programs will address their needs within the context of their host communities, involving communities in participatory processes to plan for intervention.

UNDP chairs the Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration Working Group, which meets weekly to coordinate DDR activities.

2.2 U.S. Assistance

USAID/Liberia

USAID/Liberia has a cooperative agreement with a consortium headed by the Academy for Education Development with Mercy Corps as its primary implementing partner for a Community Peacebuilding and Development Program (CPBD). This five-year \$12 million program started in January 2003 and focuses on strengthening the capacity of Liberian NGOs to manage and implement social and economic development activities. It includes subgrants to the NGOs and Community Based Organizations (CBOs). It is active in 100 communities in three counties and plans to expand to another two counties.

Activities under CPBD that can relate to the re-integration of child soldiers and women combatants include:

- Helping communities re-integrate former combatants not only economically but socially and culturally;
- Helping villages to be ready to accept ex-combatants who have committed crimes in or near the village; and

- Incorporating re-integration activities with community development and helping build their skills not only for the individuals but also for the community.

In addition, the USAID Improved Community Health Program, which has been active in two counties, incorporates peace building and community participation as part of its primary health delivery program.

For the reintegration of ex-combatants, USAID/Liberia will start a \$30 to 50 million Liberia Community Infrastructure Program (LCIP). LCIP intends to assist the reintegration of approximately 10,000 ex-combatants, returnees and other war-affected persons in urban and rural areas. This program will:

- Train and establish labor intensive construction brigades to rehabilitate roads, water systems, community buildings, clinics, homes and government offices that were destroyed or neglected in the war;
- Provide appropriate training in relevant skills, such as carpentry, masonry, and vehicle/machinery operation and maintenance; and
- Provide assistance and micro-credit for the establishment of small business in construction and related fields to ex-combatants.

The LCIP will address both social and economic reintegration issues. For social reintegration, it intends to help the ex-combatants to re-establish their relationship with local communities and gain community approval and acceptance for LCIP's rehabilitation work. Psycho-social counseling will also be a part of social-reintegration. For economic reintegration, LCIP will help establish jobs through the creation of labor-intensive construction brigades of skilled and semi-skilled trade persons and unskilled laborers. It will provide on-the-job training and support the production of locally produced construction materials. It will provide micro-credit to small businesses established through the program and develop approximately 200 small/microenterprises. It will also incorporate the MoE's Advanced Learning Program (ALP) into its activities to provide a primary-school education to interested over-aged combatants who missed school

USAID also intends to solicit proposals for a project to strengthen the role of civil society in democratic governance through its Next Steps in Peace Program (NSPP). This program will support the early stages of the peace process and facilitate a peaceful reintegration of displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, and ex-combatants. In particular, the NSPP program will:

- Strengthen constituencies for peace by increasing awareness and providing information about the peace process. Provide peace education, peace advocacy and faith based or inter-ethnic messages or dialogue.
- Mitigate imminent and ongoing violence and address its immediate aftermath through mediation, community based reconciliation and peace media.

- Address some of the causes and consequences of conflict through conflict management programs.

Ambassador's Girls Scholarship Fund

The African Education Initiative provided \$800,000 for a three year expanded Ambassador's Girls Scholarship Fund. About half the funds will be used to provide scholarships for women and girls between 8 and 25 years old associated with armed groups. The scholarships amount to \$135 for primary school students and \$150 for secondary school students.

Displaced Children and Orphan Fund (DCOF)

DCOF just provided a \$1.5 million grant to the IRC to help mitigate the effect of violence and displacement of young people in Liberia. The project will work in IDP camps in Montserrado, Bong, Nimba, and Lofa counties and could be expanded to include child soldiers. The project is being implemented in phases, based on the security situation. It will start in IDP camps around Monrovia and in Montserrado County. It is a community-based, participatory project that involves the beneficiaries in project design and implementation.

Some of the activities include:

- Organizing child welfare committees and doing participatory appraisals of child protection concerns;
- Training and building the capacity of committee members to identify and revise the best child protection practices used by communities before the conflict;
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and child rights;
- Creating a supporting school environments for children affected by armed conflict by adapting a Psychosocial Teacher Training manual and recruiting and training female teaching assistants;
- Promoting life skills and HIV/AIDS education through teacher training;
- Addressing psychosocial and protection concerns in schools through PTAs; and
- Ensuring children and youth participate in activities that promote their psychosocial and educational development, with particular attention to vulnerable children such as child soldiers.

There are two activities identified in the IRC proposal as dealing directly with former child soldiers; Activities 1.5 and 3.4 are described below.

Activity 1.5: Ensure a smooth reintegration of former child soldiers. IRC will use their Committees to lead discussions with community members on how to assist and support former child combatants, and to identify and strengthen resources to support the returnees. IRC sees its Child Welfare Committees as serving as central support systems for the child soldiers as they reintegrate: solving problems, acting as mediators and linking them with key services and activities. IRC has a manual used in Sierra Leone for this purpose that it will adapt for use in Liberia.

Activity 3.4: Ensure enrollment of vulnerable children, particularly former child soldiers, in skills training programs. IRC will ensure enrollment of vulnerable children, particularly former child soldiers in skills training programs. This will be done in collaboration with other IRC skills training programs and those of other NGOs. It will actively recruit participants into its ongoing skills training program from vulnerable groups such as girls, disable children, street children, separated children, and former child soldiers. IRC will expand its current skills training program in Monserrado County to accommodate the larger number of youths from this DCOF project.

DCOF provided a grant to UNICEF in 1994 for a War Affected Youth Support (WAYS) Project. UNICEF, in turn, issued subgrants to international and national NGOs. The programs focused on:

- Supporting demobilization and social reintegration through psychosocial services;
- Referring war-affected youth to educational programs;
- Placing youth in transit homes while tracing and reunifying families; and
- Providing basic literacy training, vocational skills training, small enterprise development, and other income-generating services.

More than 4,500 children and youth benefited from WAYS training, 22 centers were established that provided training and community reintegration support. Subgrantees included:

- **GTZ** for vocational and literacy training, business skills, income generation and counseling for about 530 trainees (including about 230 females). GTZ had its own standard training course of 18 months and DCOF training lasted for about three months.
- **Sustainable Development Promoters (SDP)** to provide skills training at four sites in Bong County for 675 young people (including almost 300 females) and to later provide them with support for setting up small businesses.
- **Community and Human Development Agency (COHDA)** for two centers (Tubmanburg and Tienii) that provided accelerated academic training for about a thousand students (including over 500 female) ages 8 to 13 and vocational skills training

for 338 (including 108 females) children. It also provided counseling and reported that 65 percent of their older students were ex-combatants.

- **Children's Assistance Program (CAP)** for vocational training in three areas (Montserrado and Grand Bassa counties.). A total of 778 students (including 518 females) completed training in areas such as furniture making, building trades, auto repair, and agriculture. In addition, at a Promoteen center pilot project in Monrovia, 36 teenage mothers went through a residential training program that included literacy and numeracy training, business education and counseling services.

According to interviews with UNICEF, the CAP project successfully integrated the provision of tools and other incentives to promote the self-reliance of trainees upon completion of training. However, the project failed to address the issue of the reintegration of the trainees in their communities. The failure to address these key socialization components put the reintegration process of youths affected by armed conflict at risk. It also illustrates the limited impact of the work of psychosocial counselors when it does not attempt to address the social aspects of the reintegration of children.³⁷

The WAYS assessment done in July 1999 also raised the issue of whether a short-term residential program for teenage mothers would make a significant difference in the lives of the unskilled young women and girls once they returned to their communities.

- **Don Bosco Homes** trained about 860 persons (including about 350 females) in several training centers. Skill areas included sewing, agriculture, masonry, carpentry, and soap making. Literacy and numeracy was part of the training that also provided counseling, family reunification and community reintegration services.
- **Calvary Chapel Liberia (CCL)** vocational training for almost 1,000 war-affected youths (including 420 females) was a highly structured residential program with homes in Grand Bassa and Rivercess Counties. Participants were considered "hard-core" ex-combatants or girls abducted by factions. The goal was family and community reintegration and the residential stay was six weeks for boys and three months for girls. It worked with the families as well as with the youths and included older community members who would discuss traditional values and ways of behavior.

OTI

OTI is planning a Democratizing the Peace in Liberia (DPL) program that will support the transition to peace and democratic governance outlined in the Peace Agreement. Illustrative activities include:

³⁷ From discussions with Patricia Hugyebert, UNICEF Protection Officer. UNICEF/NY

- Jump start key transition activities such as DDR, peace and reconciliation and human rights programs until longer term programs can take over;
- Provide critical TA/support to NTGL institutions on issues of good governance and transparency;
- Support to CSOs for good governance and advocacy;
- Expand human rights protection and prevention through CSOs and support to the establishment of the National Commission on Human Rights;
- Develop and disseminate timely and relevant messages in main dialects regarding key aspects of the peace agreement and on peace building; and
- Support the establishment of an NGO resource center with ISP hookup and sponsor national debates and public meetings on key transition issues.

Other USG Assistance

The U.S. Government has a large humanitarian assistance program (almost \$50 million for FY 2003/2004) in Liberia. This is done through the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), Food for Peace (FFP) and the State Department. This assistance is detailed in Attachment 9.

2.3 Other Donors and International Organizations

While a number of donors are likely to be involved in funding activities associated with the DDR process and contributing to activities through the UNMIL Trust Funds, only the EU, British, and French were identified as potential direct donors during the course of the Assessment.

European Union

At this point, the European Union (EU) has committed Euro 50 million to post-conflict Liberia. This will involve three major areas of intervention:

1. Support to ECOWAS (military)

- Euro 8 million to be provided for administrative support to ensure troop mobilization in support of the DDR process.

2. Support to DDR

- A total of Euro 16 million has been reserved for this intervention.
- Euro 4 million has been provided to the U.N. DDR trust fund in order to initiate development of the cantonments and associated activities.
- A DDR expert is currently in Liberia on a four month visit in order to work with other active agencies and donors in deciding how best to target the remaining funds.
- In principle, the E.U. wants to see the rehabilitation of infrastructure, particularly education, health facilities, and the re-training of associated staff. They are keen to become involved in supporting this through labor-intensive rural projects focusing upon employment provision. These are likely to be very similar to the USAID LCIP infrastructure program.

3. Institutional support

- The E.U. intends to work with the GOL to re-vitalize the economy in order to provide future employment and stability. Interventions will focus upon capacity building and institutional strengthening and are likely to involve the provision of technical assistance to the Central Bank and the Ministries of Finance, Planning, Education and Health.
- Having been involved in supporting the Monrovia Port for a number of years the EU is likely to recommend that the management of the port be tendered out and the revenues independently controlled.
- The long-term E.U. support to the Liberian Electricity Corporation (LEC) and the Liberian Water and Sewer Corporation (LWSC) currently lack exit strategies. The E.U. intends to fund management studies to design their inputs focusing upon the possibility of tendering management to commercial companies.
- The overall E.U. focus is to break down monopolies, encourage the provision of professional services in order to control revenue and expenditure thereby providing much needed Government revenue.

In addition to the three areas above, the E.U. is currently operating a development-oriented Local Community Development Program (LCD) that focuses upon funding small projects (up to Euro 25,000) which are generated by communities, CBOs or NGOs. There is no preferred sectoral focus (although a large number of agricultural requests are foreseen by the program manager) and the main conditionality is that the project must be sustainable and self-financing following the E.U. intervention. In order to create competition, only half of the monthly submissions will be considered with a maximum of eight approved. The program will initially run for two years but is expected (by the program manager) to continue after this time.

France

The French expect to contribute to both the disarmament and demobilization process and to the reintegration process. The French attaché is planning to bring in an expert to assist in designing the inputs that will be directly linked to the UN/EU planning framework. This is expected to be done in December. They appear to be particularly interested in assistance to women.

UK

- A large British investigative mission from the Department for International Development (DFID) spent a week in Liberia (19-26 November) looking at areas of possible intervention.
- DFID recognizes the existence of serious child protection issues and have provided \$0.5 million to UNICEF for a broad protection package focusing upon children associated with fighting forces. The funding should last up until March 2004 when details of future inputs should be known.
- Additional to this DFID plan to fund five ICCs. They are however extremely concerned at plans by UNICEF and SCF to include orphans and street children with former child combatants in the ICCs. They now plan to provide UNICEF with dedicated funds for non-combatant children, in order to preclude this.
- Following the mission DFID expect to fund democracy and associated interventions but will not have full details until the findings of the mission are known. They fully intend to co-ordinate all of their activities with USAID and the E.U., whom they recognize as the major players, in order to prevent duplication of activities.

International Committee of the Red Cross

The ICRC currently has a large-scale tracing program to reunite children with their families underway in Liberia. This is a sub-regional effort, with the ICRC posting the photos of 707 Liberian children it registered in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, and Ghana. There are 40 registration sites throughout Liberia. ICRC tracing focuses on children under 18 and separated children (without family members).

During the DDR process, they will be able to start family tracing as soon as the children reach the cantonment areas, but they do not think the child soldiers will provide accurate information (for tracing purposes) during the UNMIL interview. In addition, they believe the child soldiers will not ask for tracing until they are out of those areas and into the ICCs. The ICRC is negotiating with the sponsors of each ICC to arrange for family tracing. A few NGOs want to do their own tracing within their own project areas, but there is concern that

the NGOs will only be able to cover few areas, leaving large portions of the country unaided. As a result, the ICRC will rely on their own collection of data using their existing data bank and their national network, which with the Liberian Red Cross has national coverage.

International Organization of Migration

IOM will be transporting the ex-combatants back to their homes of origin, in order to help break up the command structures. IOM also expect to be involved in vocational training, apprenticeship training, and setting up microenterprises with the ex-combatants, as it did in Sierra Leone. These will be community-based projects, with an 80-20 ratio of ex-combatants to non-combatants, in order to facilitate the transformation of ex-combatants into civilians and to reduce community resentment against preferential programs for ex-combatants. IOM will also have programs for the repatriation of foreign combatants, such as the Ivorians who are associated with the MODEL faction.

2.4 International NGOs

There are many international and national NGOs working in Liberia on issues related to the DDR process. The following sections include INGOs and NGOs visited during the Assessment mission or whose programs were discussed during the mission. There are many other INGOs and NGOs working in Liberia that were not visited by the Assessment Team because of time constraints.

Action Aid

Action Aid has been operating in Liberia since 1996, concentrating in the southeast and west regions. They pioneered the use of “REFLECT” methodology (now used by Mercy Corps, Africare and others)—a participatory, open way to use symbols to open up debate to encourage communities and adults to analyze their environments by using symbols to open up debate. This approach is also used in adult literacy programs.

Their response to the last reintegration attempt was the Youth Social and Economic Reintegration Project, \$500,000 three-year program funded by Comic Relief, a UK NGO. Priorities for this reintegration: 1-Psychological coping skills will be a first priority; 2- Training package using local youths for peer influence; 3-rehabilitate schools, provide furniture; work with parents and teachers for collective management of schools; 4-rebuild collaboration and confidence; get elders and youths to work together again. Action Aid’s old proposal targeted 10,000 beneficiaries in schools, but only 200 received skills training since renewed fighting stopped the program right away. Target group will be the same as last time and will try to do the same program, but will target more children. Action Aid/Greece will fund this effort.

Foundation for International Dignity

FIND is a regional human rights and community development organization created by Liberian, Sierra Leonean and Guinean refugees. The organization has offices in Sierra Leone, Guinea and has just set up one in Liberia. Its focus areas are legal assistance, monitoring and documenting human rights violations, establishing a database on those violations and disseminating information. They have eight human rights monitors in the IDP camps and carry out conflict resolution activities in Liberia

International Foundation for Education Self-Help

IFESH works in 12 communities and uses the “REFLECT” technique as an approach to community development, peace and reconciliation and capacity building through literacy training. The program focuses on women. In the past, they worked in seven counties: Nimba, Bong, Montserrado, Rivercess, Grand Bassa, Grand Gedeh and Margibi and carried out agriculture programs and skills training for ex-combatants.

International Rescue Committee

In addition to the DCOF grant, IRC is implementing programs in emergency education and non-formal education programs (including peace education, recreation and peer education) for IDP youth and children. It is providing vocational and income generating skill training to IDP youth, along with sexual and gender-based violence prevention and response. Their focus is on victims of violence, meeting emergency needs, SGBV in refugee camps, and emergency response for IDPs.

The IRC will open ICCs in Nimba, Lofa, Grand Gedeh (two centers each—one for boys, one for girls). Two ICC in Monrovia, two in Buchanan, two in Grand Gedeh—six total (3 for boys, 3 for girls). The capacity for each ICC is 100 children. They hope to implement integrated programs, with a focus on education and livelihood training. Support to educational structures is key, so that the children do not miss reintegration into schools.

IRC’s DCOF-funded program will do a market study in January to be able to target skills/vocational training programs.

Search for Common Ground

Initially Search for Common Ground was part of the consortium of grantees implementing USAID/Liberia’s CPDP program. For the DDR process, Common Ground proposes to integrate community outreach activities with its public information work to develop practical and non-violent ways of collectively addressing important issues and to serve as a communications channel between the governors and the governed.

This is expected to include:

- Disseminating information on the peace agreement in local languages and employing culturally relevant formats;
- Raising awareness of the DDR process through radio soap operas and community work focusing on theater and community focus group discussions;
- Conflict transformation training for CBOs and other social groups using interactive and participatory approaches and local experiences and case studies;
- Advocacy and protection through public information campaigns to sensitize general populations on the rights of returnees and gender-based violence; and
- Mobilizing communities to develop problem solving skills through drama and art.

Common Ground will develop radio soap operas and expand their Golden Kids News programming to help implement these proposed activities.

Save the Children/UK

For the DDR process, Save is planning to set up the two ICCs soon, in Monrovia and Buchanan. Possible assistance activities include providing initial ICC certificates, setting up family reunification, group homes or foster care arrangements, skills training, and links all to community development. Save also will look at programs for IDPs, who will move back ad hoc or en masse and are Save's current clients. Save has also worked with child combatants/children associated with fighting forces (CAFF) and want to be sure CAFF are not separated from their larger communities.

They want to refocus their activities' geographic spread and open two field offices where Save is strong, perhaps in Banga and Zwedru. At the time of the ATTO Assessment, Save had a consultant in country to look at cross sectoral programs and write a DDR proposal by 11/23, and they were planning to recruit a DDR advisor on field implementation. For the moment, they are not looking at education. Three prime areas under consideration are health; child protection and social welfare; food security and livelihoods. Livelihoods focus will include assessments of fishing, charcoal and rubber plantations; small projects with local NGOs, to provide training and supplies; apprenticeships with local artisans; children's associations for group activities, such as agriculture or selling in kiosks. Save hopes other INGOs will follow up its assessments with actual programs.

Samaritan's Purse

They will open 2 ICCs, in Buchanan and Monrovia, with at capacity of +/-80 children each, but at the time of the ATTO Assessment, they still needed to find and train people to work

there. (Note: Samaritan's Purse is funding the newly created THINK program for girl ex-combatants. See section 2.5 below.)

World Vision

They are currently operating within Monrovia but wish to move into Bomi and Cape Mount as soon as possible, as WVI have traditionally been active in these counties. The current programs focus on food aid and health and are entering into psycho-social counseling. They are training 100 teachers in this regard (including 50 training of trainers) with funding provided by DFID. Also included in this program are 218 health trainees in Sexual and Gender based violence. They have a Memorandum of Understanding with UNDP for a study to determine the magnitude of the problem of SGBV, mainly focused upon camps.

They will base their DDR program on their experience in Sierra Leone. They had a program focusing on female ex-combatants and a program focusing upon female abductees and "wives" of ex-combatants. The main input was training for trades and marketing. Each program contained an accelerated education aspect. In Liberia, they would hope to carry out a similar program for skills training and enterprise development to support women's independence. Following training there would be a provision of tools. They have a plan to introduce an accelerated learning program but it is still at the design stage.

Initially in the ICCs, they would wish to provide health care, food, and psycho-social counseling services to NGO's managing the ICCS and to open at least one ICC themselves, probably in Tubmanburg (Bomi). In terms of community development in health, food and psycho-social counseling etc., they intend to target 200,000 in Bomi and 150,000 in Grand Cape Mount. If this is successful, they intend to target Montserrado and Margibi in the same way. They are planning to bring in experienced people from their reintegration program in Sierra Leone.

2.5 Local NGOs

Association of Evangelicals in Liberia

Founded in 1967, AEL began relief programs in the 90s for war-affected people. Programs focused on food aid, health, water and sanitation, and peace building. During the last disarmament period, they helped 1,000 ex-combatants with and without ID cards, providing a package of assistance including counseling funded by World Relief and Samaritan's Purse. They are not part of the Inter-Religious Council.

The Action for Greater Harvest

The Action for Greater Harvest (AGRHA) provided skills training in in-land fish farming to 100 war-affected women and children in Lofa County in 1996/1997. The objective of the

program was to establish income-generation capacity among the beneficiaries, which they could use in their efforts to reintegrate back into their own communities. The program did not differentiate between aggressors and victims and found it had to provide counseling to cool down the sometimes violent confrontations between trainees and to reduce the fear level of others.

For 2003-2005, the AGRHA plans to support the reintegration efforts of women and child combatants between the ages of 8 and 25. The program is still in the proposal phase and is not funded. Beneficiaries will be divided by age into three groups with the following programs:

- 14 to 25 years old: Vocational skill training to enable them to support themselves within their community. Agriculture will be the core vocation. Training will last 6 to 12 months. The younger children will also be provided with lessons in basic literacy and numeracy.
- 11 to 13: Accelerated lessons to make up for the time they missed from school so that they can then rejoin the normal school program. AGRHA will work out the details of this program with the Ministry of Education, Mercy Corps or the donor. It will also provide non-hazardous vocational training to complement the academic training.
- 8 to 10: Preparatory courses for the children who have had no prior schooling. Details for the training will also be worked out with the Ministry of Education, Mercy Corps, or donor but will not include any vocational training.

All trainees will be provided with psycho-social/trauma counseling and healing services. They will also assist related community members who need trauma counseling services and therapy for the former women/child combatants who are having difficulty integrating back into their communities. Communities are expected to support the graduates of the program engaging their services. Trainees and graduates will be encouraged to organize themselves into cooperatives or business groups of at least ten members. AGRHA will provide vocational graduates with a tool kit and the cooperatives/groups will be provided with a start-up loan or grant for their business.

Children's Assistance Program

CAP started in 1991 dealing with war-orphaned and abandoned children, funded by the EU. They were then involved in the 1995 DDR process but were looted in April 1996, losing everything including documents.

They are currently working in two IDP camps at Jatondoh and Wilson and intend to add Plumcor and Perry Town to this. At the two current sites they are providing "child friendly spaces" for learning (early childcare, health including HIV/Aids, counseling and basic literacy and numeracy) for ages 3 to 18. In the new camps, they will provide "learning spaces" in tents, which involves all of the above with the exception of the early child care input (ages 5 to 18). Their basic education package goes up to 6th grade and anyone at 7th grade or over is sent to other schools within the area.

They have access to qualified and experienced staff and wish to be actively involved in the DDR process providing a program in skills training with psycho-social counseling and literacy and numeracy components, including ALP. They are proposing centers in Monrovia (Virginia), Buchanan and Maryland. The centers will provide essential psycho-social counseling as well as skills training in sectors appropriate to the setting, including construction, plumbing, electricians, blacksmith, shoe-making, tailoring, soap making, and agriculture. They also intend to include sexual and gender based violence and human rights education. They plan to target child soldiers and women/girls up to 21, with an overall target figure of 3,000 to 4,000. The training period targeted would be 12 months to 2 years and is likely to be only residential for 2 to 6 months.

CAP currently has a project proposal before UNICEF focusing upon gender-based violence. They wish to establish a center for victims and provide psycho-social counseling and possible overnight refuge for a maximum of two nights.

Concerned Christian Community

CCC has a psychosocial unit with women staff who provide a three-month program of counseling services, especially to rape victims. The victims also receive training in vocational skills such as soap making, tie-dye and tailoring, and small business training. Graduates are put into cooperative groups and are given an empowerment package consisting of basic tools and materials according to skill area, as well as grant of up to \$75. Beneficiaries also receive clothes and other materials during the training.

CCC also has a scholarship program for ex-combatants and the most vulnerable. The scholarship includes tuition, books, and other school materials. Three hundred people have benefited so far from the scholarship program.

They are currently working in IDP camps in Totota, Salala, and camps around Montserrado.

Center for Justice and Peace Studies

The Center collaborated with the Save the Children Fund/UK Liberian program to conduct research on the plight of street children, most of whom were ex-combatants (both males and females). The information gathered was used to plan and implement a series of interventions in 2001 that included income generation activities for teenage mothers and the provision of support to children who actively participated in or were affected by the war. The Center works with target beneficiaries in the structures where they were found. They find this starts the process of trust and confidence building, which creates an enabling environment for re-integration and helps the communities see the interventions as contributing to their own lives.

In August 2003, with funding (\$18,000) from the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) the Center started a four-month emergency intervention for youth in two IDP camps in Margibi County. The purpose is to help young people, some of whom

were ex-combatants and girls affected by war develop coping mechanisms. Activities include counseling sessions, provision of psychosocial materials and creating awareness of HIV/AIDS.

The Center has a three-year activity plan that includes the following specific programs for ex-combatants.

- Conflict Transformation Training will address the lack of problem solving skills by young people through the formation of palava management committees to mediate conflicts. Year I (Activity 3): 90 young people and 90-ex combatants. Year II: Activity 5: 75 young people and 75 ex-combatants. Year III, Activity 5: 75 young people and 75 ex-combatants
- Psychosocial services to help heal the emotional and psychological wounds of ex-150 combatants per year and to improve their behavior, increase their self-esteem and acceptance back into their communities. Year I. Activity 7. Year II, Activity 11.
- Mobilize and sensitize communities to accept demobilized child soldiers. One hundred and fifty former child soldiers per year from three target areas will be assisted. Focus group discussions will be organized with the former child soldiers and communities to assess the level of relationship between them and this is expected to reduce the stigma and stereotyping of former child soldiers by community member and increase their acceptance. Year I, Activity 8. Year II, Activity 12.
- Human rights and advocacy training for 75 young people, 75 ex-combatants and 6 CBOs. Young people will be empowered by using collective approaches to address issues that affect them and their community. The result is expected to be an increase in knowledge in basic human rights concepts and advocacy techniques. Year II. Activity 6.
- Provide grants to 60 teenage mothers per year in three targeted areas. The purpose is to improve the livelihood of teenage mothers and to provide for their basic needs by improving their businesses. Year I, Activity 9, Year II, Activity 8.
- Life skill training for 150-excombatants (youths) to improve their livelihood in three target areas. They will be trained to find employment in both the formal and informal sectors. Year II, Activity 10. This includes the provision of tool kits. Year II, Activity 13.

Cherish the Kids Liberia

Cherish the Kids Liberia (CKLI) has a short-term anti-child labor campaign underway that includes a social reintegration program that prioritizes child soldiers and street children. The objective is to sensitize the families about the need to accept these children and reintegrate them into their family and community (planned for mid-November to end December 2003). It is completing a survey on war-affected children, including child soldiers and street children, that it will use for formulating project proposals. The survey is expected to be

completed in mid-November 2003. In mid November, CKLI will also launch an anti-child labor campaign in Monrovia starting with a sports tournament. It also includes workshops with communities for parents and leaders, video spots on child trafficking and cultural performances.

Child Art

Child Art was created in 2000 to help children through art, based on the premise that even illiterate children can be artists. The program not yet underway, but they report that they do work with primarily schools. Plans include providing art classes on Saturdays and Sundays for 500 street children, as well as schoolchildren. Children are trained to be the teachers of other children. UNICEF funded this in the past.

Community Human Development Agency

Community Human Development (COHDA) focuses on vocational skills training. Since 1992, they have worked in five counties targeting disadvantaged rural communities. They were a partner in the WAYS project and provided DDR assistance with child friendly spaces in Bomi and Grand Cape Mount counties.

Development Education Network-Liberia

Development Education Network-Liberia (DEN-L) has three core projects: the Theater Project, DELTA project and the Women development Program. The Women's Development Program focuses on gender and leadership training in target areas in Gbarnga and Bong County. Income generation complements the literacy training, and participants receive \$50 seed money to start a small business. A portion of the income generated from the business is saved with the program to serve as collateral for any future loans that participants may want to take.

Don Bosco Homes

About 3,450 children are in the streets; 1,800 of these live in the streets and the rest come out during the day. Many street children's families could not afford to keep them or were abused and left. They think giving a macro project for the single parent mothers is important to prevent the remaining siblings from going to the street.

Since September 2003, Don Bosco Homes have taken child soldiers who are spontaneously demobilizing into their night shelters. At the time of the ATTO assessment, about 30 were in their centers, where they receive meals, psycho-social counseling, clothing, family tracing, caretakers, and activities to keep them occupied. The overall objective is to reunify the children with their families. If reunification is not possible within after 6 months to one year

they will find alternative places for them. Those over 18 go back into the community in semi-independent living. Don Bosco intends to open ICCs in Buchanan and Tubmanburg, and already have shelters in Kakata, Harbel, and Monrovia. They receive funding from the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD)/UK.

Forum for African Women Educationalists

FAWE focuses on girls' education. They work with schools to form girls clubs, with 58 clubs now established in 9 counties. Activities include focus group discussions with girls on sexual harassment and gender based violence, advocacy for gender sensitive facilities in schools especially as it relates to toilet, bath and water and sanitation facilities, and vocational skills training for girls.

For the DDR process, FAWE intends to establish learning centers for children around the country and to carry out rapid education program for three years, which will tie in with the ALP methodologies. This will respond to the problem cited in an assessment by the Ministry of Education, which shows that there are over 8,000 children that will not have the opportunity to go to school because existing schools have limited space. The rapid education will provide children the opportunity to acquire literacy and numerical training as a basis to enroll in regular schools.

Joseph Brethren Initiative

In our interviews with UNICEF/NY, they suggested a potentially good practice undertaken by the Joseph Brethren. This church-based initiative deals with young people who are unable to be reintegrated because they were rejected by their community of origin. These include ex-child soldiers who committed atrocities in communities and girls who were forced to serve as sexual partners for combatants. Counselors are selected from the community and receive an intensive, eight-week training. Each counselor works full time with one child.

During an average eight to ten week stay in the centers (one for boys and another for girls), the young people are re-socialized in terms of behavior, hygiene, self-confidence, and capacity to verbalize. They receive counseling, literacy skills and eventually some pre-vocational training. The youths are also requested to participate in a project benefiting the community such as the rehabilitation of a health-post or a school. Simultaneously, the church leaders work to sensitize the community. Elders are invited to the centers to discuss traditional issues, their way of life and the shared values of the community. Dances and song sessions are also organized. The process culminates in a traditional ceremony where the young people acknowledge the harm they have committed and request to be forgiven by the community. This has shown that when forgiveness cannot be denied when it is requested in the proper manner and grounded in traditional values.

Inter-Religious Council

The Inter-Religious Council represents Christian, both Catholic and Protestant, as well as Muslim communities. At the time of the ATTO assessment, the Council had not yet engaged in the RR process, but they are eager to begin once they know the necessary funding and structures. They see a role for the Council in reconciliation of ex-combatants with their communities. They minister to people all over the country and religion is important for acceptance of those who committed atrocities. The council can create an enabling environment for their acceptance. This should not be a problem, since there are religions groups in every community, be they Christian, Moslem or traditional.

They noted that religious groups are already involved in programs related to reconciliation and reintegration. For instance, Radio Veritas has a program for child soldiers to talk to their peers. Mother Paten has a women-to-women program in the College of Health Science for counseling rape victims and this approach could be replicated nation wide by training women from different counties on how to be sensitive, ask questions and gain victims' trust, then and sending them back to the counties to implement the program. Related programs should include empowerment after trauma counseling, including economic empowerment / independence (marketing, farming).

Liberian Opportunities Industrialization Center

LOIC is an affiliate of Opportunities Industrialization Centers International, Inc. (OIC) in Philadelphia, which set up 16 affiliates in Africa. LOIC's target groups are disadvantaged youth, the disabled, dropouts, and street children. Since its founding in 1997, LOIC has trained over 15,000 students 16 yrs of age and older, providing training for 6 months in vocational skills such as carpentry, masonry, electricity, plumbing, tailoring. Its rural centers did primarily agriculture and the building trades. It cut back on shoe making and wants to replace it with metalworking. The training center was built with USAID-funding and LOIC continued to receive USAID funding until 2000. Since then it has received some funds from European religious organizations. In 1993, LOIC had 8 to 9 centers nationwide that catered to ex-combatants and 8,000, including 450 child soldiers aged between 7 and 15 years. The programs in Gbarnga and Buchanan closed when centers were looted and the Monrovia center has been closed since 6/03.

At the time of the assessment, there was little available funding. The staff has been laid off but is still available if funding comes in. The facilities had electric power from a generator and some 5 to 7 vehicles were on the compound. The rural LOIC centers were all looted; the structures remain but nothing was left inside.

Liberians United Against Drug Abuse

LUADA was started in 1993 and has community-based programs to work with street youth, ex-combatants, and the civilian population. They currently work with several communities in

Monrovia on life-skills training for drug users, and have religious leaders as active counselors. They have done more sensitization than treatment, although they would like to obtain funding for a proposed 4-month residential rehab program for about 50 people. The major learning themes would be addiction awareness, life skills, and psycho-social support.

Liberians United to Serve Humanity

LUSH provided distribution of non-food items to refugees and are involved in prevention of SGBV in the IDP camps.

Mother Patern College of Health Science

Mother Patern provides training for social workers and medical staff in various programs, including social work (certificate or Associate of Arts), midwife training, practical and registered nursing, and physician's assistance. All of the midwives are women, as are all traditional birth attendants in the villages. Most of the students are women in these programs, except for the practical nurses and physician's assistants, who are predominantly men. Both of these programs are designed for medical staff who will live and work in areas that are more rural.

The Professional Certificate in-service summer training program takes four months. This program upgrades skills and knowledge of people who are already employed with various agencies (GOL and NGOs). The students are usually sponsored by their agencies, although UNICEF funds this training for social workers from the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and for judges and police from the Ministry of Justice. Tuition for the four-month program is \$US 200. The constraint that prevents this program from being expanded is the scarcity of classroom space. This program was created in 1993 because many people and programs began working with children affected by the war. Two hundred staff members have graduated from this course since 1993.

The Associate of Arts (AA) degree program in social work takes three years. This is equivalent to the AA program in U.S. community colleges or universities. Total tuition costs are \$ 884 for the three years. Part of the degree program is a supervised practicum; the students are assigned to agencies and sites to gain practical in-the-field experience and to practice what they have learned in the classroom. The first cohort of 15 graduated two years ago and the second cohort (14 students) will graduate in September 2004. At that time, a third group of students will be admitted. All of the students in the AA program are already employed in the field with the GOL or NGOs and continue to work full-time while going through the training.

National AIDS Control Program

NACP conducts free testing and trains NGOs and CBOs to create awareness of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted disease. They are also working to provide counseling and HIV/AIDS awareness for child soldiers.

National Adult Education Association of Liberia

The National Adult Education Association of Liberia (NAEL) was a sub-contractor for the ILO for practical skills training in rural areas of Liberia in 1998 and 1999. The project focused on short cycle practical skills training in areas such as tailoring, soap making, furniture making, masonry, and piggery. About 90 persons participated in the trainings.

THINK

THINK is funded by Samaritan's Purse and is a spin off of the Calvary Chapel program. It provides a residential care program for 25 girls (24 ex-combatants/wives and 1 orphan) in a pilot home near Sinkor. They have funding for a nine-month program that starts with counseling, and then moves to literacy and vocational skill training. The program is conceived as a pilot for the ICCs that will be established by Samaritan's Purse when the formal DDR program begins.

Women in Peacebuilding Network

WIPNET is the women's program within the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), a regional network based in Ghana. WIPNET Liberia was established two years ago. Women's organizations form the membership, and have a board of directors and secretariat (Country Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator). Work to build and use organizations' advocacy skills. Two organizations spearheaded the movement: Liberian Moslem Women for Peace, and Christian Women's Peace Institute.

"No More War" was their first campaign, started in April 2003. Advocacy campaign for: food for dialogue, intervention force, peace talks. Most of the things they requested have been granted. Now they want to continue advocacy for women's issues in the DDR and later. "Never Again" is the current advocacy campaign against the possible resumption of hostilities, human rights abuses, and violence against women. They would like to conduct a two-year women's election education campaign with partners, to encourage women to vote and run for office.

PART THREE—FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USAID PROGRAMMING

I. SUMMARY

1. FINDINGS

The following is a summary of the primary findings of the Assessment mission. Each of these issues is discussed in more depth in Section II: Issues and Recommendations.

- 1.1. The DDR planning process includes child and women combatants and provides for special procedures and considerations based on their special needs. These considerations are based on their gender, age, and condition—including girl mothers, pregnant women combatants, women associated with the fighting forces (WAFF), and male combatants with dependents. Nevertheless, the Team still has concerns on a number of DDR issues related to child and women combatants. These include:
- Whether the structures for child soldiers, women combatants and women associated with the fighting forces will be in place by the time the process is scheduled to start
 - Whether the DDR process will capture the larger part of the actual numbers of the eligible child and women combatants. Although they are given special mention in the planning documents, their needs are often ignored in implementation. In addition, there are a number of issues including the stigma attached to being identified as a combatant or a used female of a fighting force that may deter some of the children and especially the female combatants and “wives” from participating in the DDR process.
 - Whether all children and women will want or be able to be reunified with their families. UNICEF planning focuses on the early reintegration of children with their families. However if a large number of these children and young women refuse to return home or are unable to return home, they will need alternative care for an extended period of time. There appeared to be little planning so far to address these extended care needs.
 - The lack of dissemination of information on the DDR process to both the combatants and the communities. Outside of Monrovia, information is based on rumor and communities need to be sensitized to the return of these groups.
- 1.2. The child soldiers, women combatants, and women associated with the fighting forces have special needs. These needs must be addressed or many of these ex-combatants will reintegrate onto the streets, degenerate into prostitution or crime or

return as mercenaries to another war. The severity of their needs vary based on their age, gender and experiences. Some committed atrocities. Many use drugs. They have little to no education yet have been all-powerful through the use of a gun. Girls have been sexually abused and used, some are girl-mothers, and others have become “wives.” These children have not been accessible to UNICEF and as a result, their actual condition, numbers, and specific needs are still unknown. However, it is clear that without appropriate assistance the options for most of these ex-combatants and women are limited and unsavory.

- 1.3. Reintegrating these ex-child soldiers, former women combatants and WAFF back into a “normal” and productive life is a complex problem that requires serious attention, time, and assistance. A standard six-month DDR package is not enough and programs must be tailored to the specific needs of each of the subgroups within the larger groups of women and children. They require assistance that will not only help them find acceptance back into their communities and provide psycho-social support, but that will help provide them with the skills, education and information needed to become successful students and workers. This will promote hope for a better future.
- 1.4. The DDR process in Liberia cannot be seen or addressed in isolation. It has to be considered within the national framework of good governance, accountability, and economic growth as well as within the context of the larger subregional issues of trafficking in arms and combatants
- 1.5. UNICEF has taken the lead on the reintegration of child soldiers, women combatants and WAFF along with its partner NGOs and UNDP. Apart from the U.N. Trust Funds and small-scale donor funding to UNICEF or individual NGOs, there is no other major donor involved in addressing the specific reintegration needs of these target groups. As of the end of the fieldwork for the Assessment, most assistance was still in the planning phase and few of the NGO or U.N. planned programs had been funded.
- 1.6. USAID can make a significant difference in the lives of these women and children. However, the programs must be of sufficient duration to make a difference and tailored specifically to the needs of each of the sub-groups within the larger vulnerable groups.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Team recommends that USAID/Liberia consider a flexible set of activities that will foster successful reintegration of women and child ex-combatants and women associated with the fighting forces into peacetime, civilian society.

The program would:

- Address the psycho-social, substance abuse and related health needs of the target groups as well as provide alternative skills and/or education needed for them to earn a non-combatant livelihood.
- Be flexible and target the range of special needs of these beneficiaries who themselves range from aggressors to victims and from small child combatants and girl mothers to hard-core young combatants and mature adult women combatants.
- Be able to pick up the beneficiaries from the different phases of the DDR process and at the different times of the school year as they come out of DD or are identified by child protection agencies, women's organizations, medical services, and communities. Experience in Liberia and elsewhere indicates that significant numbers of eligible beneficiaries may spontaneously demobilize and melt into society.
- Help communities accept these beneficiaries and enable them to cope with their legacy.
- Be community based to the extent possible and have quality interventions that are of a suitable duration to make a difference.
- Take advantage of and build on the capacity of existing structures and networks for supporting, healing, and training, both public and private, so that the gains made do not end with the end of the project.
- Re-establish and extend accelerated learning programs for child and women ex-combatants, children associated with the fighting forces (CAFF) and WAFF. Training of teachers, provisions of essential materials and capacity building of associated learning institutions, organizations, and Ministry of Education should be part of the program.
- Provide vocational skill training and apprenticeships for older ex-combatant children and women, CAFF and WAFF that includes basic literacy and numeracy and possible on-the-job training. Training in marketable skills and basic management would be part of the program. A small micro-credit component could also be included for graduates of the training programs.
- Provide and strengthen psycho-social support to beneficiaries using existing structures and networks. Raise awareness on reintegration issues related to its target groups and cross cutting issues such as substance abuse, HIV/AIDS/STDs and SGBV. Develop referral mechanisms and structures for those needing special care.

These activities are described in detail in the Scope of Work included as an annex to this report.

II. ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO THE PEACE PROCESS AND FORMAL DDR PROCESS

I. INCLUSION OF CHILD SOLDIERS, WOMEN COMBATANTS, AND WOMEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE FIGHTING FORCES IN THE PEACE PROCESS AND DDR PLANNING

Both the Peace Agreement and the DDR planning documents include the participation of child soldiers in the DDR process and reference the need for gender balance and special considerations. The UNMIL and U.N. DDR planning documents go into these issues in depth. They use the Cape Town definitions and principles and cover the specific needs and processing of child soldiers, women combatants and women associated with the fighting forces. UNICEF planning has gone into detail on the physical and mental needs of these groups and the standards of care required for each group at ICCs.

As it now stands, demobilization in the cantonment/encampment is supposed to differ for different categories of combatants and non-combatants. Their considerations are based on gender, age, and condition. After arriving at the disarmament sites and surrendering their arms, combatants and non-combatants are supposed to be taken to demobilization encampments. Adult male combatants are supposed to be separated from dependents (women and children). Most people who identify themselves as combatants will be adult males, and it is assumed that all adult males will be classified as combatants. This means that adult men will be in one part of the camp, while combatant and non-combatant women and children will be taken to one or more separate parts of the camp or to other nearby camps.³⁸

Children

In accordance with the Cape Town principles, all children associated with the fighting forces (CAFF) should be considered to be “child soldiers” and demobilized and reintegrated (receiving separate benefits) as such. These principles mean that treatment (demobilization and reintegration procedures and benefits) should not differ between those children who were combatants and those who were non-combatants. The GOL recognizes that all children associated with the fighting forces (CAFF) should be treated equally as “child soldiers,” since the DDR document refers to child soldiers including “camp followers and abductees.”³⁹

Demobilized child combatants and other children (non-combatants) are supposed to stay in the encampments no more than three days before being taken to interim care centers (ICCs), where the children should stay no more than a week. The centers will provide physical and psychic shelter for a few days or weeks while the child’s family is traced, and the child

³⁸ See Liberian Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Program prepared by the Draft Interim Secretariat. Monrovia, 9 October 2003.

³⁹ See Annex F: Assistance to child and youth ex-combatants. In Liberian Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Program prepared by the Draft Interim Secretariat. Monrovia, 9 October 2003.

receives some education for peace and conflict management lectures and learns more about the reintegration benefits and opportunities open to him or her. From the ICCs the children are supposed to be taken to where their families are located (family reunification). The expectation is that almost all of the families will be willing to accept their children and that the families will be located in communities where the ex-combatants may be reintegrated safely.

Women

UNMIL and UNDP are supposed to manage the disarmament and demobilization of adult women combatants.⁴⁰ The procedures for the demobilization housing and treatment of women combatants are not fully detailed.⁴¹ One possibility is that all adult women, after a short stay of three days (same short stay as for children) in the demobilization camp, will go with the children to ICCs. Another possibility is that women (whether combatants or non-combatants) who go through the formal DDR process will stay in the cantonment sites for up to three weeks and will not go to ICCs because they do not have the capacity to look after adult women.

There needs to be some equivalent to the ICCs to serve as a “halfway house” or women’s shelter for women combatants and WAFFs. The needs of women ex-combatants and WAFFs should receive equitable consideration and attention. One of the lessons learned from other DDR exercises is that women and their specific needs will be ignored if they are not specified and spelled out in detail. Demobilizing women, both combatants and non-combatants, will need some days or even weeks to adjust to their new status, to receive some lectures about human rights (their own and those of others) and conflict management, to receive some empathic rape counseling, and to learn more about the programs and opportunities open to them. The families of these women also need to be traced to see if family reunification is possible.

The current DDR plans note that “the targeting of women combatants has proved difficult,” and demobilization plans for these women (presumably including non-combatant WAFFs) will essentially rely on an informal network of women’s organizations. Just as child protection agencies are engaged as operating partners with the U.N. and the DDR program, national NGOs and CBOs in women’s rights and human rights that have field operative capacity should be involved in establishing women’s shelters for demobilizing women.

One of the complicating factors is the issue of “marriage.” Some of the men combatants and some of the women and girls will claim that they are married to each other. Some (most?) of these “wives” will have been abducted. Sorting out the truth and significance of these claims of marriage is best left to cultural insiders like women’s groups, families, and traditional leaders.

⁴⁰ From the meeting with the Child Protection Core Group (November 13, 2003).

⁴¹ See Annex E: Assistance to women ex-combatants. In *Liberian Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Program* prepared by the Draft Interim Secretariat. Monrovia, 9 October 2003.

Recommendations. The issue for these groups will be whether or not they participate in the official DDR program (discussed in issue II.3. below), if the ICCs and special programs are up and running in time to catch these groups as they demobilize (issue II.2. below), and if the peace and DDR process (including security and access concerns) actually allows for the programs to be implemented according to plan. One of the lessons learned from the 1994 to 1997 DDR process was that circumstances can make even the most carefully drawn plans obsolete and send the U.N. and child protection agencies scrambling to catch up to the changed situation and timing.

The situation in Liberia is still unfolding. Although these groups have been included in the formal planning process, the U.N. has not yet had access to them and does not know their actual number, needs, or condition. At this stage in the process, the Team can only restate the obvious:

- Ensure flexibility is built into all DDR plans for these vulnerable groups so that these groups do not fall through the cracks if actual circumstances differ significantly from the planned process and programs.
- Ensure contingency plans for the DDR of these groups are made in case the process does not proceed according to the peace agreement or UNMIL planning. This could include problems such as the non-release of child/women soldiers or WAFF or the need to find long-term alternative care for children who cannot be reunified with their families because of lack of access or insecurity where their families are located.

2. TIMELINE AND READINESS FOR DDR

The timeline for the DDR process was set in the Peace Agreement and it was evident during the Assessment that the political timeline did not accurately reflect the amount of time actually needed to plan and set up a peacekeeping operation, establish a functioning NTGL and prepare for a DDR. At the same time, it was clear that hungry armed combatants will not sit indefinitely waiting for the process to start. Fighting was still going on during the Assessment in the north and security was still a significant issue in the areas outside the UNMIL perimeter, which did not stretch far beyond Monrovia and its surrounding areas.

There was also a significant disconnect evident between the political process and the technical planning for DD. Although UNMIL and the political levels kept working towards a December 7 DDR start date, the U.N. agencies and their partner NGOs were actively planning for a January 2004 start date. When the SRSG made it clear in a U.N. inter-agency meeting the second week of November that DDR would start on December 7, the U.N. agencies and their implementing partners talked about the date as having been “pushed forward” and seemed have been taken completely by surprise. They then started scrambling to make preparations so that they could be ready by December 7.

In addition to these issues inherent in balancing the need for a prompt implementation of the peace accord and DD with allowing enough time for adequate preparations, and the obvious

need for better coordination between the political and technical components of the DDR process, the current situation in Liberia raises a number of practical issues. These include:

- 2.1 Security in and around the cantonment sites. As of the end of the fieldwork, UNMIL troops were only present in one of the three locations scheduled to start DD on December 7. The UNMIL military commander told the Assessment Team that disarmament would only take place under conditions of security guaranteed by UNMIL troops, and that the lesson learned from Sierra Leone was that peacekeepers spread too thinly were easy targets. As a result, the deployment of UNMIL troops throughout Liberia is dependent on the arrival of more peacekeepers. The Pakistani contingent of UNMIL, which will be assigned to the LURD zones, will not be arriving in country until the end of December or early January.⁴² Security is a national issue. Even within IDP camps within the Monrovia areas where UNMIL is deployed, the Team heard of continuing cases of looting, rape, and violence.
- 2.2 Ramifications of starting DD in one or more sites if all three sites are not ready or do not have UNMIL present by December 7. Each cantonment site is to disarm and demobilize a different faction to the conflict: LURD, MODEL, and the GOL. It is doubtful that starting the official DD process with only one or two of the factions would be politically acceptable to all three factions. There was talk of the U.N. starting the DDR process on December 7 with a small ceremonial disarmament in all three locations with the actual Phase I DD following later.
- 2.3 If the structures for child soldiers, women combatants, and women associated with the fighting forces will be in place and operational in time for the start of the DD process. Camps are to have a screened off section for both children and women, and ICCs are supposed to be set up and ready to accept the children and women as they are demobilized. There is also the need for referral systems to be set up for counseling and other health-related needs of ex-combatants and WAFF.
- 2.4 Whether the combatants—both adult and children—will continue to wait to be disarmed and demobilized if the DDR process is delayed. Many of the combatants outside of Monrovia were described as hungry and anxious and their situation described as combustible. Fighting was still going on along the borders near Guinea—some between the factions and some within the GOL forces. Some of the elites within the factions have taken up positions in the transitional government and combatants are leery that their commanders have already benefited from the peace process and will leave the rest behind. Other combatants, CAFF and WAFF are spontaneously demobilizing and melting back into their communities. If they do not come forward when the official DDR process starts, they could be left behind.
- 2.5 Lack of information on the peace and DDR process. There is very little information flowing out to the combatants, communities, and families on the peace agreement, DD, and the reintegration process. Outside of Monrovia information is based on

⁴² According to the Pakistani reconnaissance team interviewed during the Assessment.

rumor and communities have not yet been sensitized to the return of these groups—some of which have committed atrocities and will not be welcomed (discussed in II.3 below).

The timeline also looks at DD(R) as a linear process—starting in December with the DD of the first phase of combatants in three sites and ending in 2004 with the DD of the third phase of combatants. Reintegration follows DD for an official period of six months. However, reality could be very different. DD could start on December 7 as planned and then it could be disrupted at one or more sites by renewed fighting, political maneuvering, or unhappy combatants going on strike. It could go in fits and starts or it could go smoothly but in only a part of the country with the rest of the country keeping the current status quo. An interrupted process was another lesson learned from Liberia's previous DDR- that planning started in 1994 but sporadic fighting kept the DDR process from starting in earnest until November 1996.

The situation is different in 2003 in that there will be a significant number of U.N. troops. Although there were 3,000 ECOMOG troops in 1997, the Liberians seem to think that 15,000 troops under U.N. command indicate a greater commitment of the international community to a durable peace in Liberia. There is also the departure of Taylor. However many of the other factors present in 1997 still remain the same.

Recommendations. With the situation still fluid and uncertain, it is difficult to make recommendations for these issues, especially as they are widely recognized and discussed in Monrovia. The Team supports the ongoing efforts to cope with these issues, which include:

- Ensuring there will be a retroactive and retrospective demobilization for child soldiers and WAFF and a way to identify and pick up eligible women and children who are melting back into their communities who may not want to be identified for a significant period.
- Continuing the voluntary disarmament for (WFP) food that started with hungry GOL militia in Grand Bassa County. This should be continued as long as there are armed combatants who are not in the formal DDR process.
- Increasing the amount of information being disseminated on the peace and DDR processes, expanding its geographic coverage and ensuring its quality to avoid misunderstandings and disinformation.
- Fast track support to the National Commission for DDR and its secretariat so that needed decisions and processes can be formally adopted and started.
- Start the community sensitization process for the return of ex-combatants, IDPs and returning refugees so that these communities assist with the process rather than hinder it.

3. CULTURAL IMPACT OF DDR

3.1 Stigma

The international community hopes that child and women combatants and other girls and women associated with the fighting forces (G/WAFF) will be demobilized and reunified rapidly with their families and communities. That process will be more difficult or, in some cases, impossible because of the reputation, or stigma, attached to combatants and their dependent children and women. Combatants of any age, including young children, may be stigmatized and rejected by civil society because of the atrocities, deaths, and destruction that have occurred because of the years of fighting, and specific individuals or armed bands may be especially stigmatized. G/WAFF may also be stigmatized, whether or not they were abducted or raped by the combatants. A girl or woman who is pregnant or has borne a child while with the combatants is even more stigmatized, as are her children.

This stigmatization may result in children and women identified with the fighting forces being abused by their families and home communities. One possible outcome would be for children and women who are rejected to turn to their comrades in arms for social support and, in effect, remobilize the armed groups that were supposed to be demobilized. Even if armed groups are not completely reconstituted, social stigmatization and rejection by home communities could cause ex-combatants to associate themselves in small groups that would serve as foci of local discontent.

There is a risk that even the fear of being stigmatized will prompt child combatants and WAFF to avoid the formal DDR process. They would then self-demobilize in an attempt to melt back into the general population, missing the DDR program benefits. Attempts to draw them into the formal DDR process should reflect the women and children's wishes to avoid stigma where possible.

3.2 Preferential Treatment

While it is clearly considered expedient to offer money and benefits to former combatants to encourage them to disarm and demobilize, if there is to be any sustainable reconciliation and reintegration of communities within society there must be some form of equitable treatment of the civilian victims.

The absence of cognate benefits for the civilians can lead to considerable resentment among communities, as they will see the perpetrators of their misery rewarded while they, the victims, are ignored. Successfully reintegrating ex-combatants into such communities will be fraught with difficulties and danger. Depending on the community's wartime experience and post-war condition, what can be perceived as preferential treatment for perpetrators can lead to simmering resentment that could explode at any moment.

It is obviously necessary to provide combatants with an incentive to disarm, but it is equally necessary to provide civilians with a good reason to consider accepting the ex-combatants back into their communities. In the end, no amount of benefits can determine the acceptance and reconciliation procedure, but their absence most certainly can.

3.3 Impunity

For the reconciliation and reintegration process to be successful, the issue of impunity of criminal acts by adults must be addressed. There is considerable anger and resentment that the perpetrators of atrocities, child soldier recruitment and crimes against humanity, appear to be above the law. The issue of war crimes is only included in the Peace Agreement in terms of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. However, the issue of war crimes and punishment will need to be seriously addressed. Charles Taylor has already been indicted for war crimes by the Special Court in Sierra Leone. Should he also be tried in Liberia? What about the others who committed war crimes in Liberia?

There are several issues involved with the issue of impunity. These include:

- Punishing those who committed war crimes for their actions as a deterrent to further crime. These crimes include the abduction and rape of women and girls, including G/WAFF. It is important in terms of national and indeed regional stability, that the chief culprits be tried for their crimes in order to dissuade further outrages.
- Punishing those who recruited child soldiers and forced them to commit atrocities. The Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court makes the conscription, enlistment, or use of children under 15 in hostilities a war crime.
- What to do with children who committed atrocities. Rwanda is still trying to deal with this issue. Should these children be held responsible for their crimes and at if so, at which age?

There are no easy answers to the questions of impunity in a country in search of peace and reconciliation. At the same time, war crimes should not go unpunished. The peace process in Liberia is at a delicate stage. Disarmament has not yet started. At the time of the Assessment, factions were still threatening not to disarm, and raising discussions at this point in the process about trying some of them for war crimes could derail it completely. However, it is an issue that will need to be dealt with at the local level by reintegration programs and at a national level by the international community and Liberians themselves.

III. ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO REINTEGRATION

1. PERPETRATORS, VICTIMS, AND WITNESSES

The trauma of war-related violence affects all of the actors—those who perpetrate acts of aggression, their victims and those who witness atrocities. Programs that aim to foster individual and community healing and reconciliation will have to deal with each type of trauma.

Sometimes it will be difficult to separate the perpetrators of torture and violence from the victims and witnesses. What about a child or youth who is captured in his village or town and forced to witness and then, under threat of death, to commit atrocities to his own family or neighbors? When he is taken prisoner and cannot return home because of the atrocities he was forced to commit, the very same people who abducted him become his only society and social network. Is he a victim, a perpetrator, or both? What about the child or youth who joins an armed group or fighting force (FF) because of hunger, poverty, or abuse in his or her home or to seek protection from other FFs? Once in the armed group, these abducted or volunteering children and youths are socialized to learn and to accept as normal the rules of behavior of the FF. Have those children or youth become perpetrators or even more victimized?

1.1 Criteria and Variables

The variables that are usually mentioned to differentiate among children and women with the FFs are gender, age, condition (pregnant, with child, etc.), wartime experiences (degree of trauma), and physical health (disabled, drug-dependent, ill with STDs or HIV/AIDS, etc.). The following is a more detailed listing of the most important criteria and variables that would define different types of C/WC and WAFF. These could serve as the basis for a survey questionnaire that would be developed to administer during demobilization screening. Information gathered at that time would guide early planning for reintegration programs.

- **Gender (male or female).** The proposed USAID programs would work with females associated with the fighting forces whether they were children or adults (girls/women).
- **Current age (in years).** Using international agreements and the Cape Town Principles, children are defined as under 18 years of age.
- **Time (months or years) associated with the fighting forces (FFs).** This factor helps determine whether a child might easily enter/return to school, serves as a check on whether an adult was a child when recruited, and might relate to the extent to which the child/woman (C/W) has suffered social isolation or trauma.

- **Age when originally recruited by the FFs.** This factor relates to how much the C/W was socialized into civil society before being recruited and serves as a check on whether an adult combatant was a child when recruited.
- **Pre-FF level of schooling.** This factor reveals how much the child and family have already invested in education and helps determine whether a child might easily enter/return to school and at what level.
- **Current educational level.** War-affected people often regress in their education, so their pre-FF level of schooling does not reflect their current abilities. This could be determined by screening or testing the C/W for functional literacy, numeracy, and other school-related subjects. This factor helps determine whether the ex-combatant or WAFF might easily enter/return to school and at what level, as well as which alternative livelihood/training options are more appropriate.
- **Current marital status/relationships (including “bush” marriages).**
- **Current social isolation or association with family or dependents in FF.** This notes whether the C/W lives alone or with other family members, including siblings, a spouse, or children conceived while with the FF.
- **“Traumatic” experiences as a perpetrator, victim, or witness.** There are moral and mental health issues involved in eliciting wartime experiences from C/WC and WAFF when the interviewer does not have the psychosocial training to manage the potential flashbacks or relived memories/trauma.
- **Current social behavior.** This refers to the normalcy and attitude of the C/WC and WAFF’s relationship to others (aggressive, violent, withdrawn, etc.). These behaviors relate to the need for conflict management and education for peace, to the safety and security of others, and to potential psychosocial problems.
- **Current physical health (wounds, disabling handicaps, HIV/AIDS, STDs, drug or other substance addiction, etc.).** This would be determined by a medical screening. Treating existing physical problems may take precedence over other potential educational or skills training programs.
- **Current mental health.** This might be determined by a medical screening or by analyzing the individual’s current social behavior. Unless the existing mental problem is severe, treatment would consist of counseling while proceeding through educational or skills training programs. If the existing problem is severe and detectable, the individual may be referred for treatment in a special facility.

1.2 Types of Children and Women Associated with Demobilization and Reintegration

When the armed forces come to the demobilization sites, the GOL, UN, and NGOs will find a heterogeneous population of men, women, and children. This assessment is concerned with child/women combatants (C/WC) and WAFF, and the following section focuses on the types in Liberia. The assessment did not address the issues of adult men (18 years of age and older) who will come forward, but there is the issue of adult male combatants who were originally recruited as children and served as combatants (perhaps during the 1990 to 1997 period of warfare) before reaching 18 years of age.

There are young girls and boys who have some or no formal schooling before being abducted and never were combatants, but performed domestic labor (and perhaps spying). They need medical screening to diagnose physical (illness, wounds, STDs, and HIV/AIDS) and psychological problems, but they are young enough to reintegrate into the normal school system without much trouble. Almost all will be able to reunify with their family. They will benefit from counseling and being enrolled in school and probably are young enough to escape much of the stigma attached to their history.

There are young girls and boys and women who were combatants and qualify for the DDR program benefits. They range in age and medical condition, but all will be strongly negatively stigmatized. They have some or no formal schooling before being abducted or voluntarily joining the FF. They need medical screening to diagnose physical (illness, wounds, STDs, and HIV/AIDS) and psychological problems, and they need testing to learn if they would benefit from being enrolled in a school system. All need to be demilitarized through education about conflict management and human rights. It is hoped that most of these children and women will be able to reunify with their pre-FF families, but some will remain ostracized and require alternative living arrangements.

There are girl and women (18 and older) mothers who are pregnant or already have a child. They range in age and medical condition, but all will be strongly negatively stigmatized. All need education about mothering and maternal and child health. They need medical screening to diagnose physical (illness, wounds, STDs, and HIV/AIDS) and psychological problems. The girls and women also need childcare assistance in order to participate in any educational or income-generating program. The older women need help learning how to generate income, but they also would benefit from educational programs that taught them functional literacy and numeracy. It is hoped that most of these girl and women mothers will be able to reunify with their pre-FF families, but some will remain ostracized and require alternative living arrangements.

Some children and women have serious substance abuse (drugs or alcohol) or psychological problems. These problems should be discovered through the screening process during demobilization, but may surface later, after the children or women have been enrolled in other programs. When discovered, these children and women should be directed for treatment to a special facility.

2. REJECTION, ACCEPTANCE, AND RECONCILIATION

2.1 Self-acceptance

Physical wounds and infections are not the only significant and lasting damages that child combatants and WAFF must confront. They must also live and deal with psychological wounds. Children have been trained to kill and torture and have lived through the brutal experiences of combat and being combatants. Women have lived through the experiences of sexual abuse, abduction, and living with the enemy. After demobilization, these children and WAFF have internal problems of self-acceptance, guilt, and self-hatred.

Caregivers and reintegration programs can learn from the previous Liberian experience with demobilized children and WAFF. First, it is important to recognize the individuality of war-affected children and women. Each individual may react and recover differently. The psychological wounds vary depending on the level of involvement in the conflict, the exposure to and participation in violence, individual temperament and coping mechanisms, and access to family and community support.⁴³

Children may appear to be “highly agitated...constantly jumpy and on the move...quick to overreact, often with violence.” They often demonstrate “enormously inflated egos...mistrust of authority...difficulty sleeping, nightmares and flashbacks.” In the 1996-1997 Liberian situation, most of the children suffered “deep-seated remorse and guilt... (and) an overwhelming need to reveal or unburden themselves by confessing to the atrocities they committed.”⁴⁴

A minority of the children in the earlier Liberian DDR program did not show remorse. They were usually very young, had witnessed continual violence for a long time, and had been socialized into a “culture of violence” by the adult combatants who served as the children’s only role models. To these children “killing is normal.” During and after DDR, these ex-combatant children will learn new social rules and values as they are socialized into civil society. Caregivers should be careful because these children, when confronted with the disparity between society’s values and their past behavior, may develop suicidal tendencies, even though suicide is rare in Liberian society.⁴⁵

Girls and women experience the same feelings of guilt, remorse, and hopelessness as the boys with the added burden of struggling with their history of sexual abuse, sometimes complicated by their wartime experiences of bearing, rearing, and perhaps losing babies. Their sense of hopelessness and lack of faith in the future is deepened by the knowledge that they face a double stigma, association with combatants and having been raped.

⁴³ See the David Kelly report on the earlier Liberian conflict.

⁴⁴ See the David Kelly report on the earlier Liberian conflict.

⁴⁵ See the David Kelly report.

2.2 Community Acceptance

The objective of any sustainable program in a post-conflict situation must include attaining reconciliation between the ex-combatants (including reconciliation between factions), the returnees (internally and externally displaced), and those who remained behind in the local communities. Only following this can all sides enter into a process of successful reintegration into civil society.

Reintegration is very much a two-sided arrangement. On the one hand, the ex-combatants re-enter civil society and on the other, the communities have to accept them. There is no quick fix solution to such a problem and great care and sensitivity is required at every stage of the process, particularly with the civilian communities who justifiably, see themselves as the victims of the conflict. Civilians make up the vast majority of the population and their concerns and wishes must be addressed if the reintegration process is to be successful and sustainable.

The ex-combatants too will have their own concerns, for the first time in years they no longer have the weapons that have guaranteed their access to food, goods, shelter, and safety. Financial rewards to encourage ex-combatants to disarm further serve to generate resentment towards them from the civilian population.

Fear of possible reprisals from an embittered population is a normal concern. In many cases, ex-combatants will wish to reintegrate back into society with as little fuss as possible and keep a relatively low profile. This is particularly true of women combatants and other females associated with the fighting forces. In most cases, women are likely to suffer from serious stigmatization that can affect their potential suitability as a partner. Child combatants may be seen as abducted victims or vicious killers, depending upon their actions within the communities from whence they came. Their acceptance, reconciliation, and reintegration within the communities may be dependent upon sensitive counseling for both parties and the dissemination of accurate information on the reintegration process.

When the Liberian people believe that the warfare has ended, there will be a lot of migration from IDP and refugee camps. Rural and urban communities will be filled with resettling IDPs, repatriating refugees, and demobilizing combatants. In the midst of all the reuniting and rebuilding, there may be cause for anger and unrest. Those who never left may criticize those who fled. Those who fought on different sides or were preyed upon by combatants may discover the former “enemy” to be a neighbor. Some returnees may discover others living in their houses and shops and tilling their fields. Husbands and wives may discover that, in their absence, their wives and husbands divorced or remarried. Those who were united against common enemies may rekindle old local enmities and factions.

Media campaigns and “palava hut” meetings to educate people about human rights, the rights of children and women, and the culture of peace, are an important component of building peace and unifying returnees and residents.

It must be noted that there is sometimes resentment by communities that remained “in situ,” towards returnees (refugees and IDPs). The remaining communities believe that they have suffered more from the war than returnees whom they frequently see as deserters. The reintegration packages provided to returnees may also serve to isolate or stigmatize them as well. These issues are frequently complex and require sensitive and careful handling

Reducing resentment and increasing acceptance will take communication and sensitization of communities and beneficiaries. It needs to be carried out at every level of the process. Initially, radio broadcasts in English and local dialects can inform communities about the peace process, disarmament, and demobilization. This should be further developed in conjunction with proposed local radio stations (such as those of Mercy Corps and Search for Common Ground) to initiate reconciliation and reintegration messages prior to formal sensitization activities before the arrival of returning groups. Such processes should take advantage of and work through existing community structures where possible.

Traditional community occasions and events are useful entry points for the reconciliation and reintegration process. A central tenet of this process is the positive engagement of traditional leaders. Traditional leaders should play a key role in ensuring a sustainable peace and reconciliation, especially related to the community acceptance of children ex-combatants and WAFF. Although the importance of traditional leaders has been severely bruised by the conflict, it is useful to include this traditional social and ritual structure in the process.

Where appropriate, traditional forgiveness and cleansing ceremonies could also help. Traditional leaders may be productively engaged in the process of planning and holding traditional ceremonies and rituals, which are essential for community acceptance and reconciliation, especially in rural Liberian towns and villages. The inclusion of traditional leaders and the holding of traditional ceremonies would help to ensure true community acceptance and reconciliation and would help restore and build community leadership and mutual trust between the residents and the returning ex-combatants and WAFF. Though their moral authority has been eroded during the conflict, the zoes, elders, chiefs, and traditional women leaders retain an authority that may be positively used to support the reintegration process. Using traditional methods, including the traditional communication mechanisms, these leaders may be very useful in sensitizing the community and increasing awareness of the DDDR process.

Because of the need for communities and families to accept the returnees and ultimately, to accept responsibility for them as members of their communities, the Team recommends that:

- Reintegration programs use and improve existing community structures where possible and appropriate so that the community not only feels a part of the process but also is a part of the process.
- The program design, while focusing upon the reintegration of the child and women ex-combatants and WAFF, should also benefit the community. In the case of the accelerated learning programs, extra places could be provided for over-aged community members wishing to return to school and the entire school population could benefit from the

rehabilitation of school facilities where ALP is taught. Community benefits could also be designed into the psycho-social programs, vocational skill training programs, and other activities.

2.3 Future Spouse Acceptance

DDR programs tend to focus on short-term reintegration. Often this really means reinsertion (transport home and family reunification) and six months of skills training, sometimes topped off with a tools kit. However, reintegration is really a longer-term and more complex process, and marriage is an integral part of becoming a fully integrated adult in Liberian society.

Women and girls often voice a consistent underlying fear—“Who will marry me?” All ex-combatants carry a stigma because they are associated with the suffering and atrocities of the war, and individual ex-combatants may be additionally stigmatized because of specific atrocities those individuals committed. All girl and women ex-combatants and WAFFs carry a double stigma—having been associated with combatants and having been raped and sexually abused. Although this is a classic case of “blaming the victim,” knowing that does not help these women and girls. Some of these women and girls had babies or became pregnant before demobilization, and their babies attract even more condemnation as tangible evidence (visible symbols) of wartime sexual misconduct.

Whereas male ex-combatants may outgrow their wartime associations, especially when they utilize LCIP opportunities to work side by side with residents to rebuild local infrastructure, women and girls are less fortunate. Education and income-generation activities for female ex-combatants and WAFFs are doubly important because they address economic concerns and provide the girls and women with advantages that could overcome or balance out their stigmatization and make them more marriageable

This issue of stigmatizing women and girls because they were abducted and raped brings out the need to sensitize families and communities to the human rights of girls and women. Informational and educational campaigns about human rights need to begin even before demobilization so that civil society is sensitized beforehand.

3. PROVIDING ALTERNATIVES

3.1 Education

Findings

The lack of education is perhaps the most critical social issue facing the future of Liberia. Liberia has an extremely high illiteracy rate estimated to be between 63 and 80 percent. The destruction and instability caused by successive civil wars since 1990 has severely

compounded the problem and has led to a generation of unschooled or illiterate citizens. Many young and older adults have little or no schooling because of the disruption caused by the war. Children have been left behind in school and many over-aged students will not want to return to the classroom with younger classmates. The vast majority of two generations of children have been severely traumatized. Ex-combatant children and youths if not assisted and left alone could bring up seriously disturbed children of their own, mirroring the trauma suffered by themselves and their parents. Already we are seeing the effect of the 1990's war with children who were 8 years old then, are now 21 with children of their own who are equally dysfunctional, who have no respect for authority or the rights of others, and have had little or no education.

It has long been recognized that the education of women produces a very high dividend. Educated women tend to ensure that all of their children are educated and encouraged in their aspirations. Ensuring the maximum participation of females in any education program would be important for both immediate effect and long-term sustainability. In the current circumstances, the primary concern of mothers, many of whom are themselves still girls under the age of 18, will be earning adequate funds to provide for themselves and their children. Education, while still of importance to them, is likely to be of secondary importance. Short-term expediency could thus jeopardize their long-term independence and well-being unless this situation is acknowledged and creative solutions found. Similarly, traumatized women who avoid inclusion within the reconciliation and reintegration process for whatever reason are unlikely to be in a position to enter the educational system. They are susceptible to drift into prostitution in order to support themselves and their children and in so doing will perpetuate a cycle of dysfunction within their families.

For any sustainable economic and livelihood development, this problem must be addressed. Basic literacy and numeracy is necessary for microenterprise development and even for most employment opportunities. Education in this case involves far more than simply writing one's name and counting to ten. It is crucial for democratic and political development, human rights development and is necessary for the promotion of sustainable livelihoods. Where targeting ex-combatants and those associated with fighting forces it should seek to improve the lifestyle, philosophy and aspirations of the target groups by providing options, examples of alternatives and encouraging hope for a better future. In this light, it requires a systemic input and impact on a large scale.

During interviews with child/women soldiers and WAFF, education was identified as their major priority. They believe that with literacy and numeracy they will no longer be "fooled" and "cheated," a somewhat cynical approach to education but nonetheless a useful starting point. Education was also the preferred choice of demobilizing combatants in Liberia in 1996 and in neighboring Sierra Leone.

Recommendations

Education should be the cornerstone of programs for the reintegration of children and women. Education will provide options for the future for program beneficiaries. If they so

choose they can move on to vocational or other training or further education, or they can continue with school. Education is a pre-cursor to most other interventions planned by the program so it is important to start it as soon as possible in order for the other options to become available.

The Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) designed by the Ministry of Education and managed in conjunction with UNICEF, provides a good entry point for ex-combatant youths and WAFF who are behind in their education. Such groups are unlikely to be comfortable attending the same classes as younger children since they no longer identify themselves as children. In addition to literacy and numeracy, the ALP course provides education in social sciences and elementary science and enables the students to finish the 6 years of primary school in 3 years. Successful participants should receive a certificate of achievement signed by the Minister of Education. UNICEF is working with the MOE to adopt an education card that mirrors a health card for shots- the card would be certified at the successful completion of each school year and the recipient could use the card throughout the Mano River Union to verify grade level.

An accelerated learning and education program must be extremely flexible in nature to respond to the participants' needs in a changing environment. The recommended three-year program should focus upon a flexible interpretation of ALP, where basic literacy and numeracy is supported by rights and life skills education, psycho-social counseling and income generating possibilities. It should be structured to allow beneficiaries to enter at different stages and to leave at different stages. Some will wish to focus upon vocational training when they have received basic literacy and numeracy; others will wish to pursue education to the exclusion of vocational training.

Recommended plan for accelerated learning:

- **1st year**—ALP level 1, basic literacy and numeracy, psycho-social counseling, rights and civic education and the introduction of a consultative process that might including aptitude testing to determine the appropriate training for the future for the older students who appear unlikely to continue through the entire three year program.
- **2nd year**—continuation of ALP at level 2 for those interested in obtaining their primary school certificate.
- **3rd year**—ALP level 3 training continues for those pursuing their primary school diploma, where possible taught in a business way (for example, teaching numeracy in terms of basic book-keeping).

While the literacy and numeracy aspects should make up the core of the program, many of the older members of the target group may withdraw from the ALP at various levels before completion of the standard three-year course. While regrettable, this is probably inevitable. These individuals should be encouraged to continue with the other reintegration program components that focus on vocational skill training or income generation activities. For them, business training could form a major focus in the final year. Whenever possible, participants

should be given opportunities to access other skills training or on the job training opportunities available through the LCIP program.

Where appropriate, some students could attend classes in the morning and work on the USAID funded infrastructure program in the afternoon. This way, they could receive on the job training while earning a wage on which they can support themselves and where necessary their family. Where on the job training is inappropriate or unavailable it is likely that some form of student support may be necessary particularly for young mothers and older boys with families.

In addition to supporting ALP, the reintegration program can offer adult literacy courses, such as the one designed by the Ministry of Education, for mature women ex-combatants and WAFF with families. Such a course frequently uses community participation techniques, allowing communities to develop their own learning materials, which represent local realities to make learning easier and more pertinent. REFLECT tools are often used under similar conditions and a number of organizations claim to be familiar with the system. The Forum for African Women's Education (FAWE) has used community participation techniques in adult education to good effect in Sierra Leone.

Support to sports and recreation should be included in any education-focused programs. Provision of footballs to communities (or to the learning center) can be a remarkably effective reintegration tool bringing the various disparate groups within the community together in a common bond of appreciation.

In order to support genuine community reintegration and to ensure a pluralistic approach to benefits, reintegration activities should target the centers to be used for ALP rather than just the ex-combatants needing the ALP program. This way, the entire community would benefit over the long term. The efficacy of seeing community structures renovated and improved by those who had been associated with their destruction is itself a useful reconciliation and reintegration tool.

Interventions could include renovations to the school, the provision of basic furniture, latrines and a well with a hand-pump. In many instances, such work could be coordinated with and implemented by the proposed USAID Liberian Community Infrastructure Program (LCIP) and could serve as a valuable on-the-job training exercise for its associated group. It would be highly desirable to have a minimum of three classrooms at each school or learning center for each of the three ALP levels. Construction of furniture and other renovations could provide economic opportunities for local artisans who could be given the contracts conditional to their acceptance of apprentices. The ALP program could go half day and the facilities used by the regular school students the rest of the day. In this way, the renovation of facilities, and provision of books (which are the same for ALP and primary school) would benefit the entire school.

In addition to school and learning center renovations, it is axiomatic that any support be conditioned upon the provision of appropriately qualified, experienced, and remunerated teaching staff. It is anticipated that the regular teaching staff could teach normal school in a

morning or afternoon and ALP in the other. As teachers would be working in excess of their normal hours, the provision of a small stipend should be included in the design of the project.

3.2 Vocational Skills

Vocational training has been identified as second only to education in terms of the aspirations of ex-combatants and women associated with fighting forces. This was also observed in Liberia in 1996/97 and later in Sierra Leone under similar circumstances.

There is a paucity of genuine training facilities in vocational skills. Much of this is linked to more than a decade of almost continuous conflict in Liberia. Many of the various attempts to improve the skills situation, although well meaning, have been inappropriate. Several agencies and organizations instigated training courses in various disciplines that were frequently too short to produce genuinely qualified artisans, mostly focusing upon 3 to 6 month packages. Little or no attempt was made to ascertain the marketability of the skills taught, particularly in the numbers involved, and business training was either absent or perfunctory.

Vocational training programs address both the quality of training and its final product. It wants to ensure that the beneficiary be able to earn a living once training is done. As a result, all training courses supported by the program should be of an adequate length to ensure full technical competence. It is unlikely that this would be less than two years in skills such as carpentry, masonry, electrical, auto mechanics, metalworking, plumbing, shoe making, and tailoring. Some specialized skills may be of a shorter duration, however.

When dealing with ex-combatant youths in particular, it is necessary to instill the discipline of learning and produce competent tradesmen and artisans with marketable skills. Equally important is to ensure through counseling and aptitude tests that the aspirations of those involved in the training are realistic and compatible with their abilities. Wherever possible an element of literacy and numeracy should be included for those who have received little or no formal education. Coordination with project-assisted accelerated learning programs could also be considered.

It is inevitable that many agencies and organizations will continue to support training in many of the standard skills such as soap making, tie-dyeing, and baking for women and basic carpentry and masonry skills for men. While such skills may well be required, and in some cases could be supported, there is no point in over-duplication and it is important to look towards future self-sufficiency and to be creative in providing sustainable market-oriented training opportunities.

When assessing the pertinence of training courses, cognizance of the main requirements for rural and urban living is crucial. Shelter, water and sanitation, food security and the ability to generate sufficient income for school fees and health charges, are of prime concern for the rural population. Care must be taken to ensure that there is an existing and continuing market for the skills within the catchment area. Some skills may be appropriate to certain areas (for

example, canoe construction, net making, and fish drying) and should be included, other skills may be sufficiently available or over-subscribed to and therefore not included.

Examples of specialized training that might be considered include:

- **Production of improved clay blocks:** This is applied masonry. Mobile block machines are available at reasonable cost and can be used with a mix of cement (5 percent to 15 percent depending upon the soil used) to produce high value, strong, durable building bricks.
- **Production of roofing tiles:** The machines necessary for this production are already available in West Africa and the costs of local production are viable in comparison to imported zinc roofing sheets.
- **Well construction using concrete liners:** Well construction techniques are already known in Liberia and the moulds for constructing well liners can be purchased in the region or preferably made locally.
- **Production of improved latrine slabs:** Training and production of these slabs is more recent in Liberia, commencing essentially in 1997. The moulds may still be available locally and if not can easily be imported from Sierra Leone or other nearby countries. When introduced in the rural areas the slabs proved to be very popular and inexpensive to produce.
- **Maintenance of hand-pumps:** Training courses in the maintenance and repair of water pumps has been undertaken previously in Liberia. The continuing requirement for such skills is obvious.
- **Traditional arts and crafts:** Such training is frequently best undertaken in some kind of apprenticeship. There are however a number of areas where training on a slightly larger scale would be appropriate. The export potential of high quality crafts is enormous, when well marketed.

With the exception of the traditional arts and crafts, the examples above could be taught to a sufficiently high level within one year and would form the basis of encouragement to older child combatants and women, who may wish to earn a living as soon as possible. Following training, the program should focus upon job placement for the trainees or enterprise development support. Such training however, should only be provided in conjunction with an education program that also involves some form of enterprise advice. Linkages to USAID and EU funded rehabilitation projects should be pursued.

3.3 Apprenticeships

The provision of apprenticeships is extremely important not only for the skills training but for the mentoring provided by a respected artisan. This forms a sustainable and powerful

form of reintegration into the community for the participants. Great care must be taken to limit the number of apprentices to a number that can be properly trained and personally mentored by the artisan involved (normally no more than 4), and by the number that the market can sustain.

It should be possible, working with LCIP, to award specific contracts to artisans who have accepted apprentices as well as with other reconstruction and rehabilitation projects.

Examples of useful apprenticeships include but are not limited to:

- **Blacksmiths:** Producing agricultural implements will always be required. The possibility of using scrap metal from vehicles including scrapped military vehicles (swords into plough-shares) should be investigated.
- **Auto mechanics:** Although necessary and marketable in the rural communities it is of particular relevance in an urban setting where the majority of the vehicles remain. As security and economic development permits, well-trained mechanics are likely to follow the markets.
- **Boat building and net making:** Both occupations are highly skilled and largely confined to riverine (particularly estuarine) and coastal locations. The requirement for such skills has been identified by EU surveys since 1996.
- **Tailoring:** Such apprenticeships are not new in Liberia and have produced many high-quality tailors.
- **Charcoal making:** A highly profitable enterprise when a quality product is forthcoming.

The program should consider assistance in providing appropriate tools and equipment where and when necessary, to ensure that such apprenticeships are of suitable quality. Following their apprenticeships participants could receive tools and equipment and even small start up loans.

3.4 On-the-Job Training

Following basic education, some of the target group is likely to tire of education and wish to earn a living to support their families while learning a trade. In conjunction with the USAID-funded LCIP, on-the-job training could be available for limited numbers of program participants. Indeed the inter-linking of the USAID funded programs should be seen as a strategic economic development. Private companies that are contracted to renovate and rehabilitate infrastructure should also be encouraged to provide such services and to hire skills training graduates.

Where possible part-time training and employment should be requested in order to allow education to continue but facilitate income generation in order to support families. Such

training would be extremely valuable as an added incentive to many ex-combatants who are used to having money. The importance of labor-intensive work in the rural context should not be underestimated as it will re-introduce a cash economy and provide an environment conducive to small business development providing agricultural products, goods and services.

3.5 Training Institutions and Organizations

The focus of the reintegration program for former women and children combatants and WAFF is their return to their communities and families. Many of these were in rural based communities and the majority of such training should be focused in these communities. However, it is clear that a number of women and youths do not intend or may be unable to return to their communities at this point for a variety of reasons. To reduce the likelihood that they will drift into prostitution and criminal activities in and around greater Monrovia, it is essential to make provision for their incorporation into skills training and basic education in this peri-urban area.

There are several large vocational training facilities and programs possible in Monrovia and other semi-urban areas. For example, programs currently proposed by the Monrovia Vocational Training Center (MVTC) focus on supporting up to 1,500 women and youths associated with fighting forces, over an initial two-year period. This institute once provided skills training to high school graduates but was damaged in the war. Its facilities were recently renovated by U.N. and Taiwan funding but it still requires operational funding, equipment and supplies. The institute has access to a large number of well qualified and experienced vocational trainers and intends to offer courses in: carpentry, masonry, electrical, plumbing, drafting, roofing tile production, tailoring, traditional arts and crafts, painting and decorating, computer training and, possibly, agriculture.

The training programs would combine with ALP teaching, computer operation and business management. If funding for tools and equipment is forthcoming, the center intends to market its tailoring expertise and to use the computer labs as an internet café outside instruction hours, in order to focus upon becoming self-financing. As it is a large campus providing sports facilities and a proposed small dormitory for young mothers, it may provide an ideal urban center that could be considered for project support.

The MVTC is a facility of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Their planned program is to be done jointly with the Ministry of Education. Both of these Ministries had vocational training programs that were disrupted or stopped during the war. Many of these programs were also based outside of Monrovia and included agricultural training. These programs also should be investigated for possible support.

Another larger-scale project is Boys Town. Boys Town is based close to Camp Scheiflin on the Robertsfield Highway outside of Monrovia, and is another example of the type of institution that might easily fit into the reintegration program.

The site is on 100 acres most of which could be returned to agriculture. There are six buildings in reasonable condition (could be used now) and four that need renovation. The buildings were looted, but fortunately, they moved their tile making machines into town to keep them safe and so they could be re-deployed quickly.

All of the buildings were renovated in 2000 as part of the training of resident boys in carpentry and masonry (including the manufacture of roofing tiles). They trained 100 boys (ex-combatants and street children) for one year then placed them in on the job training and monitored them for a further year.

Previously they did their own scouting for beneficiaries, which could again be useful in identifying children who have fallen through the system for one reason or another. They estimate that they can get the dormitories and teaching facilities up and running in a month and can cope immediately after this with up to 200 boys.

They are keen to become involved in training child soldiers focusing mainly upon Carpentry, Masonry, and Agriculture (pigs, chickens, crops including cash crops). They would further teach basic literacy and numeracy and have a good sports program (2 soccer pitches plus a basketball court). The location of the site is ideal for some of the more difficult members of the target group as it is too far from Monrovia to provide easy access to temptations.

A number of other nonprofit organizations have or are planning to conduct vocational skills training. These include the CAP program and the LOIC. Each of these programs and facilities should be considered in reintegration programming as the project focus is on using and strengthening existing institutions and programs rather than creating new ones. However, the program should also support training programs that can become self-supporting and sustainable and sustainability is a factor that must be taken into consideration for any vocational skills training program support.

3.6 Income Generation

Liberia's economy particularly the rural economy is in a state of collapse. Insecurity due to continued fighting and the presence of armed factional forces means that very little beneficial economic activity is currently being undertaken. The only significant exception is the Firestone rubber plantation.

Traditional income generation based upon agricultural cash crops has become largely non-viable. The former cash crops of coffee and cocoa are no longer economically viable. The trees are overgrown and riddled with pests and diseases. Even if they were brushed and rehabilitated, the trees in Liberia has little or no benefit in terms of competing with other producers.

Social reintegration without economic reintegration is unsupportable, as people would merely be reintegrating into poverty. It is anticipated that the majority of the target groups identified in the recommended program will return to their original communities, most of

which would be up-country. Without the provision of employment or income generating opportunities for at least the older youths and women it is hard to see why they would bother returning. The absence of such opportunities would lead many of the groups to remain in donor-assisted camps thus perpetuating a cycle of dependency. The reintegration program activities must focus upon instilling self-reliance within its target groups and remove them from the cycle of dependency.

Income generating and rural livelihood possibilities support sustainable peace, economic rehabilitation and provide hope for a better future. People employed in a viable business are likely to possess hope for the future and are thus less likely to drop everything to return to war. It is particularly important for ex-combatants to recognize the possibilities of immediate and longer-term economic advancement in order to justify their decision to disarm. It is important to ensure that the jobs provided and businesses supported are sustainable to the extent possible after the program has ceased to provide an input. All support to income generating activities should link into the training aspects of the program with elementary business training.

In order to establish the potential for sustainable livelihoods the reintegration program could consider carrying out a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) survey utilizing the sustainable livelihoods (SLA) approach.

Some interventions would be likely to support the processing and marketing of agricultural produce but others might focus upon support to tailors, motor mechanics, blacksmiths, metal fabrication, carpentry, masonry, and construction enterprises, amongst others. Where possible, support (including business advice and micro-credit) should be given to ex-combatants and WAFF successfully trained under the program, but who may require small loans in order to set up in a viable business. Small business development can also provide much needed employment and apprentice opportunities that are critical to the reintegration of the target groups back into society.

Business Skills Training

While most business owners in Liberia know how to run their business and whether or not they are making a profit, few keep records or are able to analyze their business to see which parts are profitable, undertake basic financial planning or to appreciate the importance of quality control, managing their staff etc. All business owners who benefit from the program should be required to attend a basic training course. The effect of this training should be a general increase in business management capacity. All implementing partners contracted by the project should also be required to attend this course.

Financial Services

Consideration should be given to the provision of micro credit for the purchase of tools and for initial working capital. All credit programs should be linked to skills training and business development training.

Building the Local Economy

The reintegration program has the potential to distribute a considerable amount of funds in Liberia, and in particular in the rural areas. Wherever possible the program should ensure that goods and services are purchased locally within the district and not from Monrovia, particularly any goods that can be made or produced locally.

Marketing

The production of cash crops and processed products requires improved access of the producers to markets (normally Monrovia and other major settlements).

There have long been traditions of women's cooperatives operating in Liberia, particularly in Lofa, Nimba, Bong, Margibi, and Bomi. These organizations should be encouraged and where necessary provided with business training and micro-credit to develop.

The road network in Liberia is extremely bad and access to most areas is severely limited during the rainy season. Nonetheless, it is important to encourage the development of transport co-operatives for the marketing of produce. Consideration should be given to assist farmers associations in mobilizing their resources to hire transport, thereby exerting greater control over the prices that they are paid by traders.⁴⁶

Examples of Agro-businesses that might be supported under the project

At least 80 percent of Liberians have traditionally been dependent upon agriculture for their livelihoods and there is little reason to assume that this will change in the short term. The requirement is to develop improved cash crop and livestock production, processing and marketing. Where available (for example, Grand Gedeh, Sinoe, Maryland) oil palm plantations could be rehabilitated and out-grower rubber plantations similarly supported.

Improved high yielding seeds and planting materials are available from Ibadan University in Nigeria. Previous experience indicates that the relative low cost of obtaining improved planting materials can become self-financing within two years. Similarly, improved livestock such as poultry, pigs, and goats can be obtained within the region (Nigeria, Ghana, and Ivory Coast). Support to "barefoot vets" should be considered.

⁴⁶ Lack of reliable, safe, reasonably priced and regular transport is a major constraint to the development of the rural economies and, unless addressed, will devalue the investments being made by USAID. Failures in the transport system reflect the loss of vehicles during the war. Ownership of the remaining vehicles rests mainly with Monrovia-based entrepreneurs rather than the drivers, and there is a lack of competition off the main roads. The high cost of daily hire requires overloading to pay the hire charges and interference at road blocks leads to increased costs and journey times. The recommended reintegration program cannot address many of these issues but could possibly identify ways of assisting drivers and communities to build a loan fund to finance deposits and associated working capital required for vehicle ownership and operation.

Simple processing equipment can also be purchased within the region or in some cases produced locally using designs such as those provided free by the Intermediate Technology Group in London U.K. Processing farm produce can increase the inherent value of the raw material, reduce the unit cost of transport and can, in some instances, significantly increase the storage life. Simple mechanical cassava graters can be used to produce Gari, and hand presses and nutcrackers are available for the cheap production of palm oil. The introduction of groundnut decorticators can add considerable value to the crop. Investing in co-operatively owned small rice mills can reduce post-harvest losses and the by-product husk can be sold as fish and poultry feed. Simple fish smokers can be made locally providing work for local artisans.

Examples of enterprise in the urban areas

By the term “enterprise,” we mean generally small businesses that are engaged in small scale manufacturing (metalworking, mechanics, carpentry etc), services (for example, repair shops), and trading. In general, priority should be given to manufacturers and service-providers rather than to traders although, given the importance of petty trading as a means of livelihood to so many people, they could also be considered. Project assistance to these small enterprises could also be linked to its apprenticeship and skills training components.

4. HEALTH ISSUES

Health is a very important sector for any reintegration program, especially one that wants to consider girls and women equitably. There are no recent accurate statistics on the status of health and nutrition in Liberia. The latest national census of population was in 1984. The latest national data on population and health conditions in Liberia that the Team found came from 1999-2000.⁴⁷ The Liberian population at that time (in 1999-2000) was estimated to be 2.7 million people. The major causes of morbidity were malaria, acute respiratory infections, diarrhea, worms, skin diseases, malnutrition, and anemia.⁴⁸

There are too few health personnel, and they are concentrated in urban areas, while the majority of Liberians are rural. In 1998, there were 89 physicians, or one for every 30,000 Liberians. There were 329 nurses (1:8,000 ratio) and 274 midwives (1:10,000 ratio). All the people in the “allied health worker” category have at least two years of training after high school. The different positions (and the years of study after passing high school) include:

- Associate of Arts degree in social work (mostly women) (two more years),
- Midwives (all women) (two more years),
- Practical nurse (mostly men) (two more years),

⁴⁷ The July 2002 Government of Liberia and World Health Organization Health Situation Analysis Final Report notes that most of its data come from the last Liberia Health and Demographic Survey Report, which was produced in 1999-2000.

⁴⁸ See the GOL-WHO Health Situation Analysis Final Report, page 7.

- Registered nurse (mostly women) (three more years), and
- Physician’s assistant (mostly men) (three more years).

The practical nurse and physician’s assistants staff positions (mostly men) are designed for people who will work in the rural areas. All of the midwives and all of the traditional birth attendants in the villages are women.⁴⁹ The Associate of Arts and registered nurse positions are for people who will work in the health centers and urban areas. As of 2002, the five functioning medical training institutions in the country were producing only 13 physicians and 80 allied health workers annually.⁵⁰

The destruction of infrastructure throughout the country during more than a decade (1990 to 2003) of warfare included the destruction and looting of health posts that provided basic services as well as health centers that offered care that is more advanced. “Access to modern health has declined from approximately 30 percent in 1990 to approximately 10 percent in 2000.”⁵¹

Rural health care is essential to any reintegration program for obvious reasons. Refugee and IDP families and communities will be reluctant to return to rural areas unless some health care facilities are operating. If their families and communities have not returned to these areas, neither will reintegrating ex-combatants and WAFF. Even if their families are living in areas without health services, ex-combatants and WAFF may refuse to go there and settle instead in Monrovia.

Less obvious is the impact that health services has on identifying and treating women and girls who have been raped or sexually abused. Because of the stigma attached to being sexually abused, many girls and women will refuse to publicly identify themselves as victims and, therefore, forego the opportunity to be counseled and treated for any related problems of HIV/AIDS or other STDs.

However, women and girls will utilize health service programs and, if the staff members are empathetic women, disclose their history of sexual abuse and receive counseling and other appropriate medical treatment. In the absence of these programs and trained women staff, victimized women and girls will often not be identified, and the proposed program will end up focusing on ex-combatants (largely boys) and missing the opportunity to identify and help many abused women and girls. Currently the rural staff positions of practical nurse and physician’s assistant are mostly for men. The women health care people in the rural areas are midwives and traditional birth attendants.

The absence of health care professionals and health posts means that there is an obvious need for training more health care professionals or para-professionals, reconstructing the rural health care infrastructure, and providing medical supplies to those posts and centers. This provides another opportunity for both the proposed LCID and the child and women

⁴⁹ From the 11/25 meeting with staff from the Mother Patern School of Health Sciences.

⁵⁰ See the GOL-WHO Health Situation Analysis Final Report, pages 9-10.

⁵¹ See the GOL-WHO Health Situation Analysis Final Report, page 10.

reintegration program to support communities where child ex-combatants and WAFF are reintegrating.

4.1 Maternal and Child Care

According to the available data, more than half (51.9 percent) of the Liberian population were children, and three-fourths of the women 20 to 24 years old had already borne a child. Infant and maternal mortality rates were undoubtedly under-reported, but the data reported that almost one-fifth of Liberian children died before they were five years old. Under nutrition was common; one-fourth of the children were underweight, and two of every five were stunted.

Many of the women and girl ex-combatants and WAFF are pregnant or have children. They need antenatal, maternal, and child health services, and they need education about mothering and childcare. Rural health posts should concentrate on the most important basic medical conditions (malaria, infections, nutrition, etc.), maternal and childcare, and health education.

4.2 HIV/AIDS and STDs

The data are fragmentary, but the overall prevalence of HIV within the population seemed to have increased to 8 percent by 2001, which appears to document a doubling of the rate of infection during an eight-year period (1994-2001).⁵² There are no available data on the rates of HIV/AIDS or STDs among WAFF and combatants, but the prevalence of rape and sexual abuse (combatants having multiple partners with no protection) indicates that demobilizing ex-combatants and WAFF may have higher rates than the general population. As was noted earlier, the stigma attached to being an ex-combatant or a WAFF will inhibit many girls and women from publicly seeking treatment.

4.3 Substance Abuse

There are no accurate data on drug or substance abuse in Liberia, but there have been widespread reports of the use of marijuana and other drugs (amphetamines known as “bubbles,” alcohol, etc.) by combatants, including children. Apparently, sometimes these drugs were supplied by the children’s commanders to make them brave for battle.⁵³ Throughout the 1990s adult and child combatants were voluntarily demobilizing (self-directed, or desertion), and there are only fragmentary data on ex-combatants showing withdrawal symptoms, so it is difficult to predict how many ex-combatants or WAFF in the upcoming DDR program might require specialized treatment for substance addiction.

⁵² See the GOL-WHO Health Situation Analysis Final Report, page 27.

⁵³ See David Kelly report, page 16.

4.4 Mental Trauma

All commentaries about child soldiers, war-affected children, and WAFF note that these people suffer trauma because of their wartime experiences. If we accept that and note that the degree of traumatization will vary from child to child, woman to woman, the question remains about the appropriate treatment for such trauma.

The earlier Liberian DDR experience indicates, “the vast majority of child soldiers require a very basic approach to recover from their wartime experiences. Prescriptions include rest, the return to a normal childhood environment, the chance to expiate their guilt and be forgiven, reunification with their families and basic counseling with an informal approach...Group counseling, especially among children, seemed to be particularly effective.” Observers estimated that five percent or fewer of the child ex-combatants suffered from serious mental disorders and required specialized treatment.⁵⁴

The earlier Liberian experience also noted the importance of incorporating the spiritual (Christian) dimension of culture into the reintegration process, although USAID may be reluctant to endorse faith-based reintegration. “Programs which incorporated this spiritual side of Liberian culture, especially into their counseling components, proved to be extremely effective. Indeed, programs which originally shied away from the spiritual inclinations of the children were soon forced—in the face of the overwhelming demand from the children themselves—to incorporate such elements as taking the children to church, holding devotions in the morning, singing gospel songs and reinforcing Christian principles in their counseling.”⁵⁵

4.5 SGBV-Related Issues

Rape and sexual and gender based violence are unfortunately common in wartime, and most of the WAFF and female combatants (even some of the males) have experienced this. Victims of rape are also victimized a second time by being socially stigmatized if the rape becomes known. For this reason, the incidence of rape and other forms of SGBV is under-reported. Health care programs again are one of the few places where women and girls will disclose their history of victimization to empathetic staff.

Health Recommendations

Based on the importance of health services to reintegration programs, to the health of families and communities, and to the identification and treatment of women and girls, the Team recommends:

⁵⁴ See David Kelly report, page 67.

⁵⁵ See David Kelly report, page 67

- The project should address maternal and child health needs in its education, skills training and, possibly, small grants activities
- The recommended child and women reintegration program, as well as the LCIP project, should prioritize the rehabilitation and reconstruction of health care infrastructure. Health posts and centers are as important as schools to girls and women and to the general attractiveness of rural areas to demobilizing combatants.
- The reintegration project should include public health, nutrition, and maternal and childcare classes as part of their alternative educational programs (ALP and basic literacy). Alternatively, the project could include the training of health care para-professionals (or water and sanitation) as one of its skills training programs.
- USAID discuss with the Ministry of Health about the need to establish trained para-professionals (“barefoot doctors”) in rural areas to supplement the small numbers of trained health professionals.
- The project should examine the utility of using small grants to provision rural health posts (once per post) in conjunction with community education about the need for local people to provide needed medicines.⁵⁶
- USAID could sponsor media campaigns against rape, SGBV, and stigmatizing victims while also publicizing the existence and location of helpful health service posts.

5. COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION AND REHABILITATION

5.1 Community Empowerment

Reintegration is a community-based activity, just as disarmament and demobilization are encampment-based activities. Community empowerment is not optional but essential for the success of reintegration. After the CAFFs leave the ICCs and the women ex-combatants and WAFFs leave the women’s shelters, they enter the Liberian community. Whether rural, small town, or urban, Liberian civil society at the local level will make or break the reintegration program. The most important factor here will be whether the local Liberian community leaders and families perceive (feel) forced to accept stigmatized ex-combatants, or whether the community perceives that it was involved in the planning and decision-making. The issue here is the perception and reality of local control.

⁵⁶ This recommendation is based on the experience of a team member in 1997 when rural health care staff pointed out that they still had a clinic because the building and local staff were still present. The only problem was that the international NGO had pulled out its funding for drug supplies. In response, the local community cooperated to provide the funds to buy medicines in Guinea to stock the village health post.

Local leaders and the local general public need to be consulted and involved from the beginning. The most important local communities are noted above—those surrounding the sites for ICCs and women’s shelters and those where ex-combatants wish to return. A dialogue needs to be established in which local leaders, NGOs and CBOs, and families participate. Let them know what is happening (DDR, ICCs, shelters, and family reunification) and ask them to participate in planning the reintegration process. People in the local community need to know and understand why, in the midst of their suffering amidst generalized destruction and war-induced poverty, some of the first development efforts in the locality do not directly benefit the residents, but are instead oriented toward ex-combatants.

Part of the participatory planning may be deciding on priorities for rebuilding or rehabilitating civil infrastructure (school, clinic, other public building, or an access road). These infrastructural projects fit with the labor-intensive, skills training, and small grants that will be available through the reintegration and LCIP projects to communities that are participating in reintegration.

Another critical feature in operating the ICCs and shelters will be to ensure that their services are not restricted only for the child ex-soldiers and WAFFs. Local infrastructure throughout Liberia has been destroyed by years of warfare. The ICCs and shelters will be offering services (counseling, classes, medical services, etc.) that are not available to local residents. The services should be available, perhaps one or two days a week, to neighbors.

5.2 Alternatives to Family and Community Reintegration

In all of the discussion about reconstructing communities, it is anticipated that the vast majority of child and women ex-combatants and WAFFs will reunify with their families and return to be reintegrated with their home communities. Nonetheless, there will be many for whom reunification will not be possible or desirable.

The families of some child combatants and WAFFs live in refugee or IDP camps. Will the children and women be relocated to those camps? If so, are they expected to reintegrate themselves into camp life, or will there be special assistance or prioritization to encourage them to repatriate or resettle in their home areas?

Another question concerns those child ex-combatants and WAFFs who cannot, or do not wish to, return to live with their families. Some of the children have committed atrocities or are violent enough that their families, home communities, or traditional leaders refuse to allow the children to return. Other children and WAFFs will not want to return to live with their families because their home areas are still considered insecure or because the children and WAFFs fear that local people may harm them. Others may not want to return because the infrastructure (schools, health care posts, water supplies, etc.) has been destroyed in those areas, or because the family is too poor to support more children or dependents.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ See Hansen, Art. 1999. Why Angolan Soldiers Worry about Demobilization.

How long will the children stay in ICCs, and have alternatives (group homes, foster families) been anticipated and arranged? In what way will WAFFs be handled who cannot, or choose not to, return to live with their families in their home communities? Will some group homes be established, or will the WAFFS be left to forage on their own?

5.3 Rehabilitation of Communities

Fighting and displacement throughout the war years will have had a devastating effect upon much of the community infrastructure in the rural areas as well as in the urban situation.

In terms of infrastructure, in order for people to return and reintegrate into their communities elementary support may be needed such as the re-opening of roads and the provision of culverts and log bridges to enable access. The building or renovation of such structures could be organized through USAID funded LCIP and through a similar project funded by the EU. Such interventions however should be conditional on the communities brushing (clearing bushes and small trees) the roads involved and supplying the trees for construction of the bridges. The need for shelter, access to water and the rehabilitation and repair of community structures such as schools, health-centers, churches and marketplaces will also be a requirement although not all of these structures can or should be targeted as donor projects.

In some cases, it may be possible for the reintegration project activities to renovate schools with the help and involvement of LCIP. A well and hand-pump should be included for the schools targeted for ALP support along with latrines. It has been noted that the lack of sanitation facilities deter girls from going to school and their construction could encourage their participation in education. All such rehabilitation could benefit the community at large in addition to the project target groups.

It would be inappropriate for donor projects to provide all of the renovation and rehabilitation that is necessary for rebuilding the communities however. Where the program is active, it should develop links to other programs that may supply tools to communities. Communities with access to basic tools will be able to construct their own shelter and many of the necessary community structures. While they may be simple in nature initially, it is important for communities to establish their independence and self-reliance, removing them from any culture of dependency that may have been engendered in refugee or displaced camps. Once communities have identified priorities they should be obliged to contribute labor and where possible materials (for example, river sand and gravel).

Where the child and women reintegration project is involved with education, training, and livelihood support, implementers should focus upon developing community organizations as part of the reintegration of former child combatants and WAFF. Such organizations can prioritize their requirements and organize the community inputs into the rehabilitation process. Project staff should provide a link to LCIP and, where appropriate, materials could be provided to assist in renovation. The possibility of providing employment for laborers and on the job training for target groups through these renovation activities should also be considered. It is important that all activities link into the economic rehabilitation of

communities as well as its physical rebuilding. Local artisans should be utilized wherever possible, and encouragement should be given to communities to provide cooked food for sale to labor groups that are working in the area. Such inputs serve to kick-start local economies and generate incentives for agricultural and artisanal production.

In addition to infrastructure needs, food security is the primary concern. The provision of tools, seeds and farming implements, proposed by UNHCR to returning refugees and by other donors to returning IDPS will go a long way towards rehabilitating communities. Once food security and immediate shelter needs are established the residents' focus upon community development is likely to return and can be nurtured.

IV. ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMING

I. TARGETING AND IDENTIFYING BENEFICIARIES

1.1 DDR Targeting

In any women- and children-oriented reintegration program in a war-ravaged country there is a fundamental debate about the wisdom and justice of targeting ex-combatants as opposed to allowing a broader range of beneficiaries to utilize the program's services.

In the case of Liberia, DDR planners have already determined that reintegration programs should be available not only to those who were disarmed (combatants), but should also include the non-combatants (CAFFs and WAFFs) who were associated with the fighting forces. The question now is whether reintegration assistance should be even more inclusive, perhaps open to all children and women in particularly difficult circumstances. Most of the children and women in Liberia, as in most countries where there has been an extended period of warfare and displacement, are clearly suffering in difficult situations and need assistance.

Targeting Argument

One position wishes to specifically target child and women combatants (C/WCs) and design DDR programs only for them. There are political and military reasons to differentiate C/WCs from other children and women. C/WCs are visible components of armed groups, and their disarmament and pacification is an integral part of the peace process and a return to normal civil society.

Apart from the strategic political-military reasons, there also are social and psychological reasons for targeting and providing special benefits to demobilized combatants. Child and women combatants may have participated in killing, mutilating, and torturing people and,

therefore, may be more traumatized than other children and women. There is also the issue of protection from the child combatant. Some child combatants express violent behavior and need to learn non-violent conflict resolution procedures as well as the rationale for practicing non-violence (education for peace). Separate reintegration programs that serve only combatants can provide this training while protecting other children and women from the combatant who is being resocialized.

Finally, there is a practical budgetary reason for restricting access to reintegration programs. DDR programs are usually under-funded, often because of under-estimating the numbers of combatants and dependents who will eventually appear. Because funding is inadequate, there is the desire to utilize it only for the primary target—combatants.

Not Targeting Argument

The other position is that reintegration programs should not target combatants. This argument is based on moral, social, psychological, and political principles rather than emphasizing the end-the-war strategic perspective. The no-targeting position is that all children and women in extreme need (“particularly difficult circumstances”) should be eligible to be treated in reintegration programs. Child and women ex-combatants should not be put into separate privileged “ghettos.” Instead, ICCs and shelters (as well as longer-term reintegration programs) should be open to all who are in desperate need.

If the goal of the reintegration program is to help needy children and women recover from their wartime experiences, then child soldiers comprise only some of the needy children. In addition, there are orphans, separated and unaccompanied children, street children, handicapped and disabled children. Similarly, women ex-combatants and WAFFs comprise only some of the needy women. The moral argument is that all the children and women in particularly difficult circumstances are equally worthy and deserving of assistance and should be helped.

This position also believes that social and psychological reintegration is accelerated when child and women ex-combatants are put together with other children and women as soon as possible in the ICCs and shelters and, after a transit period, in training centers and schools. Segregating people in ex-combatant-only sites and programs delays reintegration and makes ex-combatants stand out (become more visible) to the community.

Integration in the program should facilitate and accelerate reintegration in society. Reintegration will not occur as long as C/WCs are kept together and apart from other children and women. Child ex-soldiers need to learn how to play and learn in company with other children. Women ex-combatants and WAFFs need to learn to interact, trust, and work with other women. Rehabilitation of children and women and their social reintegration is facilitated by social interaction with other children and women in the ICCs, shelters, and other reintegration programs.

A practical difficulty with targeted programs is the emphasis on, and need to check for, official DDR documentation. The unregistered would not qualify for assistance. This makes the NGOs and CBOs that operate ICCs, shelters, and training programs very uncomfortable. They do not want to be in the position of having to check and verify registration and having to close the door to needy children and women when there is space available in their facility.

1.2 Identifying Beneficiaries

It will be relatively easy to identify the CAFF and WAFF who report to the disarmament sites and go through the formal DDR process. They are supposed to receive an official identification card, although the card does not appear to note the individual's age (verifying child status).

There are supposed to be “spotters” at the entry points to the demobilization cantonment who are supposed to separate what appear to be children from adults, after which the children are to be housed in a separate area of the camp. They are to stay in the encampment no more than three days, after which they will be transported to the ICC. From the ICC most of the children will be transported to their homes and reunified with their parents in their home community. It is at this community level where the program will be operating. By that time, these child and women soldiers and WAFF beneficiaries should have been checked and identified multiple times.

A number of children who are not associated with any of the fighting forces are always going to attempt to be included in the DDR process in order to receive the benefits. These children might be brought to the DDR site and identified as combatants by the commanders, after which they go through the ICCs and perhaps to communities where the project is active. Project staff should not be expected to try to winnow out the non-combatants who have managed to get DDR identification cards.

It is too easy to choose to focus only on children and ignore women. WAFFs are key targets for any program designed to help victimized women. We know there is going to be a difficulty in encouraging Liberian women to step forward and identify themselves (due to stigma) as victims of rape or SGBV. Are they going to slip through the critical demobilization phase without receiving special counseling and education about their rights and opportunities?

WAFFs will begin reintegration in a different way than child combatants. After arriving in the encampments, combatants are supposed to be separated from dependents, adults from children, and men from women. Most of the people who identify themselves as combatants will be men. In general, that means that men combatants will be in one part of the camp, women in another, and girls and boys in a third separate part of the camp, or another camp.

1.3 Breaking or Outflanking the Culture of Silence

Girl combatants and women and girls associated with the fighting forces (WAFFs) rank among the major beneficiaries of the recommended project, but assisting these women and girls is made more difficult by the existing culture of silence. Women and girls who have been combatants are reluctant to admit this because of the stigma attached to all those associated with the warfare. Women and girls who have been raped or suffered sexual abuse are reluctant to admit they have been victimized (even to their own families) for fear that they will be victimized again by the stigma attached to rape and sexual abuse. In addition, many of the women and girl ex-combatants and WAFF are pregnant or have children. They need antenatal, maternal, and child health services, and they need education about mothering and childcare.

If the recommended reintegration program does not stimulate the identification and treatment of these victimized women and girls, they will be ignored. By default, the proposed program will end up largely focusing on ex-combatants (mostly boys) and missing the opportunity to identify and help many abused women and girls.

It will be difficult to encourage Liberian women and girls to step forward and publicly identify themselves (due to stigma) as victims of rape or sexual abuse (SGBV). The project should not attempt to publicly identify and assist these victims because their fears of being stigmatized are well grounded in Liberian culture. A more realistic approach is to privately identify and treat the victims while publicly educating the community about human rights, the rights of women, and the fact that rape and SGBV are criminal behaviors and publicizing the existence of health care posts where a variety of services, including rape counseling, are available.

Private identification and treatment will outflank the culture of silence, while the public media campaign can attack that culture directly and indirectly while also alerting women and girls to the presence and location of helpful facilities.

Health service programs are a primary mechanism to identify and treat women and girls who have been raped or sexually abused. Because of the stigma attached to being sexually abused, many girls and women will refuse to publicly identify themselves as victims and, therefore, forego the opportunity to be counseled and treated for any related problems of HIV/AIDS or other STDs. However, women and girls can utilize general health service programs without advertising their sexual history. If the staff members are empathetic women, the women and girls will disclose their history of sexual abuse and receive counseling and other appropriate medical treatment. Unfortunately, now the rural staff positions of practical nurse and physician's assistant are mostly for men. The only women health care people in the rural areas are midwives and traditional birth attendants.

Recommendations:

- The program should include as its beneficiaries children who are identified by child protection agencies as child combatants. This will include children who demobilized early or self-demobilized.
- Outreach programs for women ex-combatants and WAFF who are fearful of participating in reintegration programs should include low-key, subtle approaches rather than relying exclusively on high-profile media campaigns.
- The program should create an identification and referral mechanism with UNICEF, community groups and health agencies.

2. IMPLEMENTATION CAPACITY

A primary concern in the reintegration process is the capacity of local institutions, both governmental and nongovernmental, to manage and implement reintegration programs. The lack of capacity is a problem not only at the institutional level but at the human resource and infrastructure levels as well.

Liberia is coming out of a devastating civil war. This war came right on the heels of an earlier destructive war from which most of the country had not recovered. Infrastructure damaged in the fighting in the 1990s is not yet repaired and many government and nongovernmental offices visited during the Assessment had been looted and were barren.

2.1 Lack of Infrastructure

A good indication of the status of the infrastructure in Liberia is its electrical power situation. There is no electricity in the capital city of Monrovia and there has been no power other than that created by private generators for over six years. The roads within Monrovia are paved and for the most part in good repair. However, the roads degenerate as they move out of the Monrovia area. Liberia has a paucity of all weather roads. There are three major highways all in various states of disrepair. The first and longest emanates in Monrovia and passes through Montserado, Margibi, Bong and Nimba counties to Ganta and then in a much worse condition to Saniquelle. The second connects the Capital to the port of Buchanan, but is also very much the worse for wear and the third connects Monrovia to Tubmanburg. While the presence of these roads and particularly the Ganta highway, has led to the development of large centers of population along the course of the roads, the bulk of the population, following resettlement, will be in the hinterland with access by simple bush roads that are largely inaccessible during the rainy season.

The infrastructure has also been affected by looting, that includes the destruction of property. One of those interviewed called it a national pastime. The International Committee of the Red Cross, whose Bushrod (Monrovia) offices were recently repaired after they were destroyed by looters for the third time, reports that not one hand pump in Lofa County is

working. They have all been looted or destroyed. Schools have been looted of their desks, chairs, books, and roofs. When the Team visited the Ministry of Youth and Sports, there was nothing in the building but one desk and three chairs. Visiting the Ministry of Education requires a flashlight- as its six flights of stairs are completely in the dark except for one lone candle burning on a step somewhere near the fourth floor.

Liberia lacks many of the pieces of infrastructure that could help the reintegration process. This includes the radio broadcasting facilities that could disseminate DDR and reconciliation messages throughout the country, or the radios on which to receive the messages. There is a lack of specialized facilities for victims of SGBV, those suffering from mental trauma or drug addiction. There is one residential drug clinic with the capacity to house and treat about 75 addicts. It was looted and is currently an empty shell with no staff. One mental clinic receives all of the trauma referrals in the country- including those related to SGBV. It has also been looted and is another almost empty shell.

Disseminating information will be problematic, given the difficulties associated with access, the high rate of illiteracy, and the fact that the vast majority of the rural dwellers speak little English. Newspapers and leaflets are useful for disseminating information regarding the peace process and its associated repatriation and reintegration aspects, but only to a small part of the population.

Radio broadcasts could be the most appropriate method of propagating messages and should be undertaken in English and in as many of the local dialects as necessary. The possibility of funding a distribution of wind-up radios, which are relatively inexpensive and available from South Africa, should be investigated. The importance of utilizing radio to ensure that clear messages regarding DDR, the peace process and community reconciliation and reintegration cannot be over-emphasized. It is critical to ensure that the necessary messages are communicated and disinformation is minimized. A USAID funded program implemented by Mercy Corps intends to establish a number of local radio stations and produce programs. These facilities and similar ones such as those provided by Search for Common Ground should be utilized wherever possible.

As the security situation improves, it will be important to ensure that the program's messages are communicated effectively up-country. Supporting theatre and musical groups is useful in this regard, as people will travel long distances to see such cultural activities. The inter-mixing of communities involved is a worthwhile reintegration activity in itself.

2.2 Lack of Government Counterparts and Programs

The NGTL was less than a month old during the assessment. Key political appointees were still taking their posts. Although the government ministries were open, for the most part they were not functioning institutions. Most civil servants, including teachers and government officials had not been paid in the final years of the Taylor regime and many had moved on to the private sector. The NGTL did pay government salaries for the first month it was in

operation, but few ministry officials expect to receive their back pay. None of the ministries visited had a budget yet nor the resources needed to run their offices or programs.

At one time, the GOL appeared to have set up systems for some of the basic services needed for reintegration programs. This included a social worker system in the Ministry of Health, the public school system and ALP program in the Ministry of Education, and the vocational skills programs and institutions in both the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Youth and Sports. However, because of the war and mismanagement of the Taylor years, these programs and institutions will need to be restarted and will require significant levels of support.

The level of pay for government counterparts is also an issue. Assuming they are paid, their salaries are extremely low- someone such as a teacher could earn \$20 a month. Because of this, civil servants and teachers find other income generating opportunities and corruption is endemic. It is called “pay yourself.”

The Government Ministries are unlikely to be fully functional during the duration of the program. Refresher courses for teachers and training in counseling and dealing with ex-combatants would be a necessary precursor to establishing education and training programs.

2.3 Lack of NGO Capacity

The national NGOs and institutions visited had not fared much better than their government counterparts had. Most NGOs depend on the international community for their financial support and institutional survival. The Team saw several institutions that had received substantial amounts of donor funding and had provided services, such as training. However, as soon as the donor funding stopped the institutions collapsed (an issue discussed in IV.4 below).

Because Liberians know the international community funds local NGOs, many NGOs have been created with the sole purpose of obtaining funding for the NGO’s creator. Other legitimate NGOs compete for the same international funds that tend to go to the same pool of NGOs.

UNICEF has the mandate to assist the child and women combatants and WAFF targeted by the program. The U.N. agencies including UNICEF, however, are not implementers so a number of INGOs are likely to be chosen as implementing partners. Many INGOs are basing their current proposals upon previously implemented projects that either failed or had limited success, with very poor cost-benefit ratios. Unfortunately, this means that many of the mistakes made in previous DDR programs both in Liberia and Sierra Leone are likely to be repeated. Without capacity building for these partners—particularly regarding management, accountability, monitoring and evaluation of project implementation—the Team believes that serious deficiencies will become apparent.

2.4 Lack of Human Resources

On the human resource side, Liberia is in the unique situation of having a better-educated older population than younger population. The younger generation has missed schooling because of the war and the pool of young educated Liberians available for reintegration projects is small. However, there are well educated and professional Liberians sprinkled throughout the government, private sector, and NGOs. They are being joined by newly returning U.S. or European educated Liberians who want to help with the rebuilding of their country. One of these is the new Minister of Agriculture who had been abroad for several years. There is also a pool of Liberians with experience working on the previous DDR process. This includes persons who received the one-week training course for counselors and those who received the more in-depth training through a UNICEF sponsored counseling course at a Monrovia community college. There are also former instructors from the vocational skill programs who are dispersed throughout Liberia and in refugee camps in Guinea and Sierra Leone.

Despite this pool of mentors and semi-skilled trainers, there is a dearth of professional expertise in several critical areas for reintegration. For the psycho-social aspects, this includes a lack of psychiatrists- there are only two in Liberia, and a lack of professional trauma counselors. Education seems to have fared better as there is a national pool of teachers. However, the quality of teaching and the level of training for many of the teachers are questionable.

2.5 A Long-Term Problem

The lack of implementing capacity is an issue that will not be fixed within the life of the DDR process. It is a long-term development issue that donors will need to address in their rehabilitation, reconstruction, and development programs. For the immediate time frame of a reintegration program, the lack of capacity must be taken into consideration in both the design of the program and its actual implementation. This can have a significant time and cost effect if short-term capacity needs to be built or imported.

To address these issues, the Team recommends:

- Using and upgrading existing structures where possible and appropriate (discussed in more depth in III.4 below), but using an umbrella project implementation mechanism to ensure overall project management, strategic planning, coordination, and monitoring of all program activities. This project should also provide local implementing partners with technical assistance and mentoring, manage and monitor the budget, and expatriate expertise as needed.
- Consideration of the use of stipends for government employees involved in implementing reintegration programs activities. Stipends are not something that the Team would normally recommend, but given the conditions on the ground, it is extremely doubtful that teachers, trainers, and government functionaries would provide what they will

perceive as extra services without payment. For example, a teacher who works in a public school might also provide ALP instruction to project beneficiaries, and be given a stipend to compensate for the extra duties.

- Reconstruction and rehabilitation of existing structures required to implement the project. This could include schools, vocational training facilities, substance abuse and mental health clinics, and residential structures such as Boys Town. Reconstruction could be coordinated with USAID's LCIP, which could provide the labor, materials and funding to reconstruct targeted facilities.

3. TIMEFRAME, LOCATIONS, AND SECURITY

There are many unknowns in the DDR process. This includes when the DDR process will start in earnest and whether it will go according to schedule; the numbers and locations of the child soldiers, women combatants and WAFF; and when the security situation will improve so that inaccessible areas of the country can be reached. All these unknowns must be taken into consideration and addressed in the design of the reintegration project.

3.1 Timeframe

As discussed in II.1, the timeline for the DDR process was set in the Peace Agreement and was scheduled to start in December 2003. The DD process was to be done in three phases ending in 2004. Reintegration of ex-combatants was seen as a six-month process starting immediately after demobilization. The DDR process was also conceived as a linear process with combatants moving from disarmament to demobilization to reintegration in an orderly and timely manner. The reality of DDR will probably be very different. The process could be interrupted by outbreaks of fighting, walkouts from the peace process or even by prolonged rains that make transportation out of the cantonment sites and back home impossible.

The reintegration activities will need to be able to pick up the beneficiaries as they come out of the ICC centers or are identified by the communities, child protection agencies, or health workers. Large numbers of beneficiaries could come out of the DD process in a short period. They might also dribble out in small numbers over an extended period. Very few will be demobilized at the start of a school year and care needs to be taken that activity schedules do not conflict with the timing of traditional ceremonies. All this affects program planning and implementation.

The six-month official time frame for reintegration is also an issue. Reintegration of these beneficiaries back into a normal and productive life will take time, attention, and assistance. This was a lesson from the last Liberian DDR program. Few ex-combatants could learn a skill that earned them a livelihood within six months. Six months was too short a time for them to become literate and to have the options that education can bring. It was also too short a time to be able to address the healing needs of former child soldiers and WAFF effectively.

Resocialization, rejoining communities where they might have committed atrocities, overcoming mental trauma from their wartime experiences or drug addiction all takes time.

As a result, the Team recommends:

- The programs should be designed so that they can pick up and assist large and small numbers of beneficiaries as they are identified or come out of the ICCs at any point in the life of the project (LOP).
- The project itself should be of sufficient duration so that a measurable impact can be made. Several activities, such as the ALP, will take 3 years to complete, others, such as vocational training, could take 2 years. The LOP should allow for enough time for the project to be established and to cover three academic years.

3.2 Location

At this point, it is not possible to specify certain geographic areas for the reintegration project. This will depend on the decisions made by the NCDDRR, the interventions of other donors and where they might focus, the security situation, and where large number of ex-combatant women and children and former WAFF might congregate or return.

It is probably a given that a significant number of the older child soldiers and women will remain in the peri-urban Monrovia area. They are also likely to return to other semi-urban areas.

There will also be the pull factor of providing training in valued skills in selected areas. This could be used to encourage some rural ex-combatants to return to their farms or home communities.

Recommendations:

- The project design should plan for a significant percentage of beneficiaries to remain in the Monrovia area and for many activities to originate from this area. It should also plan for rural interventions throughout Liberia, with a concentration of specialized programs in a few strategically placed and to-be-determined locations.
- ALP should be considered as a national program with nationwide coverage.
- Initial planning could be based on existing infrastructure and DDR-related programs. More detailed implementation/location plans can be made once DDR starts, UNICEF has completed its assessment of the situation of child/women combatants and WAFF, and the UNDP DDR database has compiled enough data on beneficiaries so that targeted planning and programming can begin.

3.3 Security

The security situation is the wild card and will dictate much of the project’s activities and implementation timeline. At the time of the Assessment, the only “secure” areas were those with UNMIL forces and the UNMIL forces had not extended very far from the Monrovia area.

Among other things, security issues will affect project outreach, the tracing and reunification of beneficiaries with their families, the ability of older beneficiaries to go home, and the likelihood of child and women soldiers being disarmed and demobilized.

In such a situation, options are limited.

Recommendations:

- Ensure the project design is flexible enough to be able to expand outreach and coverage as the security situation improves and to be able to fall back and consolidate programs as required by security conditions.
- Ensure any subgrants, subcontracts, or subactivities include a contingency clause for their suspension or early termination for security reasons.
- Include interventions in the program design to prevent the re-recruitment of former child soldiers back into an ongoing conflict. These interventions can include replacing the command structure between commander and child with family ties or a mentoring relationship with a teacher, counselor, or other responsible adult.

4. SUSTAINABILITY

Reintegration programs are by their nature short term interventions that lead to longer-term rehabilitation, reconstruction, and development work. Their purpose is to reintegrate the target beneficiaries back into their communities and a “normal” life. Sustainability in terms of reintegration is linked to the concept of a successful reintegration- of a community accepting the ex-combatants and former WAFFs and these returnees becoming productive community members who do not return to fighting, or become street children, prostitutes or career criminals.

A secondary sustainability issue is the durability of the programs that are developed to provide the reintegration support needed to ensure a sustainable reintegration. These programs educate, treat, heal, and train the beneficiaries, their families, and communities. Such programs are focused on serving the immediate needs for reintegration and are usually completely dependent on donor funding. When reintegration funding ends, so do most of these programs except for the few that may be picked up by longer term development funds.

A successful reintegration involves a significant investment- of time, planning, training, and resources. The Team believes a well-designed reintegration program that included capacity building and the strengthening of existing systems and institutions could and should set the foundations for longer-term development gains.

4.1 Ending Dependency

The Team was struck by comments made by IDP women outside of Monrovia. They all wanted to go home, but none of them wanted to go home until they were provided with food, shelter, services, and provisions back in their home communities. The same attitude was present during many of the national NGO interviews—if donors gave them the funds, they would start a DDR program catering to child soldiers or women or whatever the donor wanted. To be fair, a number of serious NGOs had already made their own plans and were moving ahead with them with or without donor funding, but they were in the minority.

In countries, such as Liberia, that have received emergency and humanitarian assistance for a long period, it is very easy for institutions, organizations, and individuals to become dependent on donors and the international community. Breaking this dependency syndrome is essential for the long-term development of the country and the sustainability of the DDR process. However, doing so when the country's economy is moribund and insecurity is rife, will not be easy or smooth.

In the design of the child and women reintegration project, the Team recommends:

- The ultimate goal of the project looks beyond the immediate reintegration of the ex-combatant or WAFF to their long-term self-sufficiency needs—both emotional and financial. That the project activities lead the beneficiary to enough of an education to provide them with viable options for their future or market-oriented skills training that will lead them to a productive livelihood.
- That any subgrants or subcontracts issued be done on a competitive basis based on proposal merit and programs that have addressed sustainability issues.
- That any community support/development activities require a specific commitment from the community to support the activities- in terms of volunteer labor, time, space, or upkeep.
- That the project be clear to all its participants, that any stipends/allowances provided through the program are directly linked to their ability to become self-sufficient after their participation in the program ends, and that beneficiaries are expected to repay the stipends back to their communities in social capital (that is, helping others).

4.2 Capacity Building

Ending dependency, and ensuring some level of sustainability for essential services that will be needed beyond reintegration, is not a simple process in a country that lacks almost everything (IV.2.) Beyond building the economy and job market, there is a significant need for capacity building- of institutions, human resources, and service delivery systems.

Capacity building is a process that takes time and effort. The recommended three-year time frame for a reintegration program would provide the time to start the capacity building of participating institutions, organizations and their staff. This process is inherent in the nature of the suggested program concept, which focuses on building self-sufficiency, marketable skills, and the educational levels of its participants. To do this, teachers and counselors must be trained, systems set up for referrals, follow-up and monitoring of vulnerable beneficiaries, community support networks built and vocation skills trainings re-started and functioning.

To maximize the longer-term capacity building benefits of a reintegration program targeting children and women, the Team recommends:

- The design focuses on the use of existing networks, systems, and institutions wherever possible and appropriate. Examples include building the ALP administrative and implementation capacity within the MOE system, strengthening the existing social work system through the MOH for referrals and follow-up, and strengthening the particular skills and management capacity of participating national NGOs and CSO and Community Development Committees.
- The design and implementation take a long-term view to the capacity building needs of the organizations, institution, and system and incorporate this into the project's shorter-term training and capacity building where possible and appropriate.
- The rehabilitation of any structure be done with consideration for its longer-term use, maintenance needs, and sustainability requirements.

4.3 Exit Strategy

From Assessment discussions, it appeared that one of the primary problems in the 1997 DDR process was its lack of an exit strategy. National NGOs talked about beneficiaries being set afloat at the end of the six-month assistance package. Many had nothing to go on to. Over-aged students did not want to return to their grade levels with younger students. Under skilled or inappropriately skilled workers could not find employment. Some beneficiaries returned to their commanders as the command and control structures had not been broken. Others ended up on the streets.

The Team also noted the number of institutions that provided training and other services in the 1997 DDR process and beyond on donor funding. However, once donor funding stopped,

these institutions stopped functioning. The war is a big factor in their inability to continue, but so was their complete dependence on donors.

The program design should learn this lesson and incorporate an exit strategy into its design. Largely, this is already an integral part of the recommended program concept, which focuses beyond reintegration to self-sufficiency. However, strategic planning and programming should be done to assist beneficiaries and the main project activities so they can evolve a successful transition to a life beyond USAID-funded project assistance.

In particular, the Team recommends:

- Exit planning be an integral part of the project and its activities from Day 1.
- Assistance to institutions and organizations by the project include technical assistance (as appropriate) on sustainability issues- such as how to generate income for the institution from the products made by students during training, or on how to diversify fund raising for charity-related assistance.
- Assistance to government structures include technical assistance for planning for the longer term viability of these programs, finding alternative funding sources and resolving other longer-term implementation needs.
- Skills training provided under the project be market oriented and incorporate job placement or microenterprise development as an integral part of its program.
- Strengthening existing networks for referrals and support and the wide dissemination of information on the availability of these networks and their services.

5. MANAGEMENT AND COSTS

The recommended project is a multi-faceted, multi-sectoral activity with specific interventions for specific target groups. At the same time, it is a broad program that will benefit a broad range of individuals and institutions. It is a stand-alone project, but is integrally involved with the official DDR process, projects of other donors and forms an integral component of the USAID/Liberia program. Implementing, managing and monitoring the program and keeping it on track in a possibly volatile transition will be a significant task.

5.1 Project Management

The management of the recommended set of activities requires a professional team of experts in reintegration, reconciliation, rehabilitation, and development. The project will need to be managed from Monrovia and will require both long term and short term expertise. Because of the conditions existing in Liberia, the project management team will need to implement various components of the project directly, while other activities should be subcontracted or

granted out to organizations within Liberia. The management team will need to provide technical assistance, mentoring, capacity building, systems development, and monitoring. Project management must be practical, cost-effective, focused on building capacity and working themselves out of a job, and grounded in the reality of the Liberian situation.

Because of the integrated nature of the activities, the Team recommends that one organization be contracted to manage the project to avoid a piecemeal approach that will dilute the activities' impact. Coordination will be a significant issue for project management as the project should take advantage of and build on the synergies with other related projects. The reintegration program is also part of the larger DDR process, which in itself is part of the larger peace keeping operation. Project management will need to ensure that activities actively coordinate with and support these ongoing efforts.

The project management team will also need to coordinate closely with USAID/Liberia's LCIP project as much of the infrastructure rehabilitation for the reintegration program can be done by the LCIP project. There will also be an overlap of beneficiaries as older child soldiers may want to work on the LCIP project while also benefiting from the specialized services of the child and women reintegration project. The management team should also consider creating an advisory board (or boards based on sector) for the project, made up of the involved ministries, key civil society organizations such as the Inter-Religious Council, and other donors involved in the DDR process as a coordination mechanism.

In addition to the normal project management responsibilities, the management team will need to ensure close monitoring of project activities. Not only do they involve sensitive issues such as rape and the need for confidentiality, they involve hardened ex-combatants and addicts who may be violent. Liberia also suffers from endemic corruption and the project's assets and programs will need to be closely managed and monitored.

5.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

The project management team will design a monitoring and evaluation plan. It should include a results framework that accurately reflects the intermediate results anticipated under the project as well as contribute to USAID/Liberia's strategic objectives. In determining results, consideration should be given to measuring the secondary benefits that will come from project implementation. This could include the number of non-ALP students who attend rehabilitated schools, or the number of non-target group beneficiaries who benefit from other project services, such as treatment for substance abuse or more in-depth care at a mental health clinic. Given the scope of the recommended program's outreach, it is important that the monitoring and performance evaluation plan be able to catch as many of these secondary benefits as possible.

For practical purposes, the UNDP DDR database should provide a baseline of basic indicators on the target groups, which can be supplemented by data from UNICEF assessments. The project should obtain copies of this data for planning and evaluation purposes as soon as possible.

As with any large assistance program, the project should have a midterm evaluation after a year of operation and an external evaluation before the end of year 3.

5.3 Costs

It was difficult for the Team to gather accurate cost figures during the Assessment. The government ministries were in the middle of their transition to the NGTL and were unable, for the most part, to provide cost breakdowns. UNICEF also provided global budget figures for education and other child protection activities. USAID grantees were rather reluctant to share their detailed budgets with us. However, the Team had significant expertise in project management in Liberia and estimated many of the costs based on that experience.

The Team estimates that a budget of \$15 million could provide the estimated 16,000 child and women ex-combatants and WAFF who will go through the official DDR process with the appropriate education and skills training (based on their age, gender and condition), psycho-social services and modest stipends if needed. It could also include an active HIV/AIDS/STDs/SGBV awareness program and serious substance abuse counseling. Approximately \$5 million of the total would be used to cover the costs of extending the ALP program to 60 to 70 schools nationwide.

V. ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO THE LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF A SUCCESSFUL DDR

Liberia successfully completed a DDR and peacekeeping operation in the late 1990s. Combatants were demobilized and returned home. A national election was held and a new government inaugurated. Nevertheless, the peace did not last and Liberia reverted to war. A DDR and peacekeeping process is only successful if it can last the test of time. Mozambique had a successful DDR and peacemaking process that ended 16 years of war and brought 10 years of relative peace. Other countries, including Liberia have not fared as well.

Liberians learned many lessons from its first DDR exercise. These lessons (Attachment 3.1) have been incorporated into their planning for the 2003-2004 DDR process as discussed in this Assessment. These lessons can improve the quality of reintegration programs, their impact, and their beneficiaries' chances for a better civilian life. However, there are many factors outside the scope of DDR that will affect Liberia's prospects for a durable peace.

Some of these issues are discussed below. Some are related to the root cause of the conflict and others are direct results of conflict. Most of these issues are systemic to the subregion and solving them will require subregional efforts and programming as well as national.

1. PEACE AND SECURITY

A prerequisite for a successful reintegration is peace and a minimum level of security. Continuing conflict breeds insecurity, hinders programs, stops access, and deters combatants from turning in their arms. The factions were still saber rattling during disarmament talks in early December and fighting was still going on in several areas in Liberia. One of the Liberians interviewed described this situation as neither peace nor war.

As part of the Peace Agreement, the army will be restructured, and an interim police force will be used until a new police force is established and trained. All of this will receive international support and assistance. In the near term, security will be the responsibility of UNAMIL troops and its civilian police component. However, the ultimate factor in peace and security is the political will of the factions to remain committed to the peace process and the terms of the Peace Agreement.

2. BREAKING THE CULTURE OF VIOLENCE

More than 40 percent of Liberians are under the age of 15. Whether they are child soldiers, refugees, Monrovia schoolchildren or CAFF, these children have known nothing but war and its destructive effects. According to one of the Liberian psychiatrists interviewed, a mid 1990s survey of high school students showed that about 70 percent of them had seen someone killed or tortured. There is a generation of child soldiers who were made to commit atrocities and given drugs to bolster their courage. Many of these children are now in their 20s and have children of their own. At the voluntary disarmament observed by the Assessment Team, several of the boy soldiers (12 years and younger) said they started fighting at the instigation of their combatant fathers.

War and its atrocities, young men with guns who have been taking whatever they wanted whenever they wanted, looting, rape, revenge—and all without any type of accountability—has created a self-perpetuating culture of violence.

It will take time, re-socialization, and an end to impunity to break the cycle of violence. Among other things, it will require the restoration of the rule of law and a long-term nationwide civic and human rights education program. The recommended activities can assist this effort by:

- Including basic civic and human rights components into all of its education and community sensitization programs;
- Encouraging school and community-based competitions that identify and reward “good” role models (this could be through sports competitions, arts and theater performances, academic achievement or essays commemorating those who positively affected the beneficiaries’ lives); and

- Encouraging community and other groups working with the ex-child/women combatants and victims to include peace and reconciliation components within their work.

3. GOOD GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Bad governance in Liberia is a major issue and was a contributing factor to the continuing conflict. The lack of good governance and systemic corruption has left Liberia destitute and in ruins. Government was used as a means to exploit national resources for a few, services were non-existent, laws were not respected and human rights abuses were rampant.

This situation needs to change for Liberia to have a sustainable peace. Power and benefits need to be distributed more equitably. The rule of law needs to be restored. Government officials need to return to their role as public servants and positive citizen participation needs to start.

There will be donor programs specifically addressed at democracy and governance issues. However, the reintegration activities can help reinforce these programs through:

- Incorporating civic education and the roles and responsibilities of government and its citizens into its education and skills training components.
- Incorporating advocacy and rudimentary “lobbying” skills into any of the more advanced business management training as well as ensuring beneficiaries know such basic things as how to obtain permits, licenses and fulfilling other business-related government requirements. This could also be provided to community-based groups, participating NGOs, and others as appropriate.

4. REGIONAL STABILITY AND AN END TO CROSS BORDER TRAFFICKING

The DDR process in Liberia and the problems of child soldiers and WAFF cannot be seen in isolation from the political, economic and security situation within the greater West African region. Child soldiers are recycled from one African war to another. During the Assessment, the Team talked to child soldiers, both male and female, from Sierra Leone, Guinea and the Ivory Coast. It is likely that some child soldiers will go through several DDR exercises. Before in Sierra Leone, and now with the Ivory Coast, they cross the borders after they receive one DDR benefit package so they can register with the other DDR program to receive that package. UNICEF fears some will receive both packages and then continue fighting along the borders.

For many years, Liberia was seen as a destabilizing factor in the region. Taylor supported the diamonds for arms trade that fueled the fighting in Sierra Leone. He acted as a middle man and let the rebels use Liberia as a safe haven and conduit for the blood diamond trade. The Ivory Coast reportedly supported the MODEL faction and provided it with a safe haven in order to have a proxy war with Taylor. Some link the fighting in the western part of the Ivory

Coast with Taylor's timber for arms and money trade. Guinea allegedly supported the LURD rebels and provided safe haven for them in Guinea.

Wherever the truth lies, the borders between Liberia and its neighbors are long and porous. Arms, soldiers, diamonds, drugs and persons easily cross between them. Cross border raids for food, supplies and porters were common. Governments on all sides of the border are shaky and insecurity is rife. Guinea, often called the "last man standing" faces a presidential election in December that could trigger civil unrest or a military coup. Sierra Leone is recuperating from its 11 year civil war and its short-term stability is only guaranteed by the UNAMSIL peacekeeping operation. There are widespread fears of a resumption of violence or a coup once UNAMSIL leaves. Ivory Coast is undergoing its own peacekeeping operation after an abortive coup attempt in 2002 destabilized the country and rebel fighting broke out. At the time of the Assessment, the peace process there was not going smoothly. And there is still fighting going on within Liberia along its borders with Guinea and the Ivory Coast.

The international community is making efforts to coordinate the peacekeeping operations in the three countries. The UNMIL plan is to deploy their peacekeepers, once they arrive in sufficient numbers, along the borders of Liberia to deter this cross-border movement of people and arms. U.N. agencies are coordinating their responses to the different crises so that the packages received by ex-combatants, returnees or others are similar and do not act as a push/pull factor across borders. Tracing is being done for children on a regional basis by the ICRC.

The program's beneficiaries, child soldiers and WAFF, are victims in these subregional problems and cross border trafficking. Although it is a Liberian-based program, the recommended reintegration program must take the larger subregional context into consideration in the design and implementation of its activities. Some subregional programming aspects could include:

- Coordinating programs aimed at preventing the recruitment and re-recruitment of child soldiers with those being done in other countries in the subregion. This could mean sharing a curriculum and materials or taking advantage of training being offered by similar programs in the subregion. This could also be done for other reintegration programs addressing special needs that transcend borders- such as the prevention of abduction of CAFF and WAFF or reintegration problems in communities that straddle the borders.
- Working with the Liberian chapters of subregional organizations, such as the Mano River Union Women Peace Network or the Mano River Union Joint Inter-Religious Council Committee, on addressing the subregional issues related to trafficking of children and women and ensuring appropriate action is taken from the Liberian side.

5. USAID/LIBERIA'S DDR AND PEACEBUILDING STRATEGY

Although it was outside the scope of this Assessment on the situation of child soldiers and women combatants in Liberian peace process, as part of its work to make recommendations for USAID programming, the Team reviewed the ongoing USAID/Liberia program and its planned programs in support of the DDR and peace process. Although the post-conflict programs are still in the planning stage, there are several programming points that the Team believes merits notice.

- USAID/Liberia started its planning process for DDR and post-war reconstruction before the peace process started. The Mission Director visited the ongoing peace process in Sierra Leone and assessed what had been working, what had not worked and what else could have been done to have made things better. He used this information, along with information from USAID/Washington on other DDR programs, to develop USAID/Liberia's post-conflict strategy. This has enabled USAID/Liberia to jump start its DDR assistance, specifically the LCIP. This project is currently in the bidding phase and is expected to start in early 2004. In this regard, USAID is significantly ahead of the other donors in both the planning and programming of its DDR assistance.
- USAID/Liberia has taken a long term development perspective in its planned DDR programs. The LCIP is a three-year program and bridges the transition from reintegration to rehabilitation. The Team believes that this approach will significantly improve the chances for a successful reintegration and DDR program.
- USAID/Liberia has taken an inclusive approach to the DDR and reintegration process. Not everyone can be helped, but the Mission genuinely wants to make sure that these vulnerable groups of child combatants, women soldiers and WAFF are not lost in the larger DDR process and that their special needs are also addressed.
- USAID/Liberia has taken an integrated approach to its assistance to its post-conflict program planning. It has designed, or is in the process of designing, several stand alone projects related to the near term imperatives of assisting the DDR and peace process. Yet, although all of these projects can stand alone, they are mutually supportive and integrated. Each covers a different aspect of the process:
 - LCIP covers the immediate needs of finding ex-combatant adults with work while addressing their longer-term training and psycho-social reintegration needs.
 - The recommended reintegration project would address the immediate needs of the reintegrating child and women soldiers and WAFF- with a productive education or training, psycho-social support and addressing the pervasive problems of SGBV and HIV/AIDS/STDs and substance abuse.
 - The planned NSPP would support the early stages of the peace process and facilitate the peaceful reintegration of all returnees, including IDPs and refugees. Its focus is on

peace and reconciliation and conflict-mitigation.

- These programs complement USAID/Liberia’s regular programming and with them form another integrated whole. In particular, CPBD its community-based development program.

Attachments

1

ATTACHMENTS

Attachments

2

Attachment 1—Gender Sector Assessment

Gender Issues in Liberian DDR for the Assessment of the Situation of Women and Children in the Liberian Post-Conflict Period, and Recommendations for Successful Reintegration

By Sahana Dharmaupuri

Economic and Legal Rights

- ***Issue: Income Generation—Micro-credit vs. Monthly allowance benefits***

Problem: Though women typically have higher payback rates in micro-lending programs around the world, as witnessed by Grameen Bank, micro-credit strategies are inappropriate during the initial phases of the DDR process. Providing women with the opportunity to access micro-credit schemes instead of making them eligible for the monthly DDR benefit allowance is an inequitable approach because women who participate in the micro-credit programs have to pay back the loan, while men, who are categorized as participants of the official DDR process, receive a monthly allowance that they are not required to pay back.

- ***Issue: Train to create a workforce, not just vocational skills***

Problem:

In short, skills training must be linked to market forces. For instance, the Sierra Leonean example of training a thousand women to become independent tailors makes little sense in an economy that finds the used clothing market cheaper than newly made clothes.

If the official DDR process wished to address the economic concerns of women and girls by providing income generating opportunities, a market study could have set the baseline of supply and demand. Perhaps training a “workforce” of tailors would have been a more sustainable and lucrative output, instead of focusing on creating independent operators. The resulting government would have had a “workforce” of tailors, to attract investment from African textile industries outside of West Africa. At the very least similar planning to create a local and national labor market would result in a sustained livelihood for the country and economic stability in a perfect world. Of course, measures would need to be taken to ensure that such planning does not obfuscate the rights of workers encourage the proliferation of cheap labor and sweat-shops.

Recommendation:

While it is a necessary aim of any reintegration process to expand vocational skills training for women in post-conflict situations including non-traditional, public and private sectors, such training should be provided in a manner that is sustainable and responsive to the local and economy.

- ***Issue: Land tenure and property rights for women and girls***

Problem:

Blah's interim government managed to pass Liberia's first inheritance rights law for women in October 2003, however, implementation of the law is uncertain, and property rights outside of inheritance are uncertain for women and girls. Furthermore, tremendous work needs to be done to harmonize this new law with pre-existing customary and religious laws regarding women's rights.

A study conducted by USAID's Center for Development Information and Evaluation showed that intrastate conflicts contributed to an increase in the rise of women-headed households. As heads of households during and after periods of conflict, in the absence of male relatives, women are left with few means of sustainable livelihood. This leads to greater poverty at the household level. Without formal land and property rights, the tenuous hold that women headed households have on economic survival is severely undermined.

This raises concerns about living arrangements and economic activity during the reintegration phase of DDR. The lack of definitive land and property rights for women will have a severe impact on independent-living arrangements for female-headed households (aka single mothers) in rural or urban areas, and on agricultural projects that include women. Independent living arrangements depend on the ability of a group of young women or girls being able to rent an apartment or home to live in. However, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible for women to rent or lease living quarters without the assistance of a male "chaperone" or relative.

Land rights are also crucial to the success of agricultural projects. Agricultural programs are indeed quite necessary to the revitalization of rural communities; however, often they are focused on family units consisting of a husband, wife and children, so that women headed-households are left out. In addition, women often do not own or cannot own the land that they would be working on. The likelihood of female headed households without land rights achieving a sustainable livelihood in this scenario decreases significantly.

Recommendation:

Measures need to be adopted to guarantee women's socio-economic rights including employment, property ownership and inheritance rights in post-conflict reconstruction. Consider civic education and legal rights training.

Education

- ***Issue: Primary and Secondary educational opportunities for women and girls are crucial***

Problem:

The focus of education during reintegration programming and reconstruction is most often primary school education programming, and not on secondary education. However, in order to increase women's participation in post-conflict economies, particularly in the formal, paid sector, education and vocational skills training need to be geared towards long-term, sustainable

employment. It is vital to aim at teaching women and girls more than basic literacy. In our interviews with girls and young women who recently came out of the bush, going to school was of primary importance, but meant little more than learning how to write one's name. Yet, women trained at the secondary and university levels can qualify for jobs as government workers, teachers, nurses and professionals in the new economy.

Indeed the words of former US Treasury Secretary, Lawrence Summers to the World Bank and IMF provide the strongest recommendation for both primary and secondary education for girls as a priority:

“We believe that expanded investment in improving access to and quality of primary and secondary education, including stronger emphasis on girls' education, is the single most important area for securing the highest development returns over the longer term. Learning is the core catalyst for unleashing individual enterprise and productivity, and it yields enormous economic and social returns. Educating girls provides particularly huge benefits in terms of improved health and poverty reduction for women, their families, and their nations.”

Recommendation:

Education targets among women and girls should be beyond achieving the basic diploma. Instead primary education should be viewed as a necessary foundation before receiving vocational skills. For instance, if individuals express an interest in learning tailoring, tie-dying and cookery they can take the three year accelerated learning program that is geared toward the liberal arts, and if they express an interest in car mechanics and masonry, they can take the three year accelerated learning program geared toward the sciences. On completion of either ALP certificates they can then go on to their vocational school of choice.

Another intriguing example of how to finance higher education comes from a project that failed in Sierra Leone, but is worth reconsidering in Liberia. During Sierra Leone's reintegration programming, the World Bank's HIPC group decided to forgive Sierra Leone's debt and instead use the \$30-\$50 million dollars to finance reconstruction projects that included ex-combatants as construction workers. However, this program failed because none of the implementing partners wanted to employ ex-combatants. This example provides an interesting possibility for the Liberian case. Under such a scenario, the HIPC money could be used to 1) finance higher education costs, and 2) attract investment from other countries in sectors that correspond to the market demand.

Stigma associated with “CAFF”

- ***Issue: Stigmatization of girls and women who have been associated with fighting forces needs to be addressed in community-based reintegration activities.***

Girls and women who come out of the Bush find that their association with the fighting forces is a tremendous scar on their reputation, making it very difficult for them to successfully reintegrate into society. First and foremost, these girls and women wish to dissociate themselves from their life in the Bush and most often not self-identify as having been part of a fighting

force—which means that they self-select out of participating in DDR programs that might be available to them. Secondly, though this group will try to hide their “past”, the community to which they return almost always knows that they were fighting or at least that they were in the Bush, and therefore ostracizes them from community life in general.

Many of these girls and women may have very young children with them as a result of the abuse they suffered in the Bush. Many of them also may have had aborted pregnancies and other health related problems while in the Bush that need attention. However, the communities that they return to, or try to settle in tend to reject the girls and women who are associated with the fighting forces because they have either actively fought on the frontlines, or because they served as auxiliary support as “wives.” Sex outside of marriage is considered a major taboo, even if the girl was abducted or raped.

If and when the community rejects them, this results in girls and women living on their own on the outskirts of the community, often lacking basic shelter, food and clothing, not to mention access to health care or education. Often they resort to sex-work for food, since they have no other means of economic activity or support. This often solidifies their reputation as “bad girls”, “rebel girls”, or “bush wives”---all considered derogatory names. This population also, understandably, has very low self-esteem, and feels their lives are over because of the abuse they suffered and because of the atrocities they committed while fighting. They often remark that they don’t want to go to school because they are ashamed. Many girls who were interviewed said “I just want to be a good person.” Another concern for returning girls and women is their marriage eligibility. Usually their low-self esteem and trauma is further reinforced by family members or community members.

Recommendation:

The critical importance of ensuring the participation in community reintegration of all the vulnerable groups and in particular those who may suffer from social stigmatization cannot be over-emphasized.

It is vital to find local community leadership who can set a new example for everyone. Work with community leaders, such as the chief, religious leaders, and informal leaders (usually women), to create a community forum to specifically address the stigmatization of the returning girls and women. The forum can air concerns and also address the issue of gender-based violence and the trauma associated with combat.

This target group of girls and women also lack a social support network. They have not been with their female relatives for many years, and also lack female friends. Surprisingly, many of the girls and women do not even know each other. The ICCs and the independent living arrangements that are proposed for their return can serve to build up a support network for the girls when they return. If the community already has a women’s group or a child welfare group, the girls together, may be able to raise their needs and concerns collectively with them. Previously established women’s groups or child welfare committees can also assist the returning girls and women with basic mothering skills, life skills, and basic hygiene.

Something that would benefit both the community and this target population is creating a small, two-room health clinic staffed with a nurse. The nurse can provide health services to the whole community from one room, such as immunizations or medical exams, and also provide mothering and basic hygiene classes, etc, in the other room.

There is also a possibility that non-violent cleansing rituals can be used to openly “cleanse” and welcome returning ex-combatants back into the community, but more work needs to be done on what these rituals are and if they really “work.”

Health

- ***Issue: Create an integrated strategy to address the continued suffering of survivors of torture, trafficking and sexual violence.***

Problem:

Some of the health issues have already been touched on in other sections, however, the predominant health concerns among this target group of girls and women associated with fighting forces are usually a result of sexual gender based violence, or SGBV. The UN definition of gender-based violence is: “Physical, sexual, and psychological violence occurring in the family and in the community, including battering, sexual abuse of female children, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation, and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence, violence related to exploitation, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions, and elsewhere, trafficking in women, forced prostitution, and violence perpetrated or condoned by the state.” (Articles 1 and 2 of the UN Declaration on Violence Against Women). In conflict situations specific forms of SGBV can include the forced impregnation of women, the use of women as sex or domestic slaves, and the torture of pregnant women.

In addition to SGBV, there is a real lack of attention on those who are war wounded or disabled during combat.

Also, secret societies play a tremendous role in the life of the community for both men and women, but not enough is known about their practices’ health implications, especially for women. The “zoes” or medicine healers are active within IDP camps and often perform a form of female genital mutilation or “surgeries” associated with initiation rites. Again, however, not enough is known about what type of FGM is being practiced and what the health consequences are.

Recommendation:

More information needs to be gathered and analyzed to fully address the health concerns of SGBV victims, especially with regard to cultural practices. However, a public information campaign about SGBV, and creating a coordinated community response to gender based violence incidents will be key to building up the local capacity to address these issues.

Communicating to women and girls (outreach/sensitization)

- ***Issue: Reach women and girls through the media they use the most.***

Problem:

Not much is known about what forms of media girls and women have access to, whether they are in the bush, or they are in urban or rural communities. Mercy Corps did a demographic study of their radio program however it was not gender-sensitive to capture information about the habits of the female listeners. However, a few forms of media are clearly stand out as the preferred choice: theater dramas, and radio. Radios are often used communally though owned usually by a male individual. Not much is known about how girls and women communicated or received information while they were in the bush, so it is difficult to know what forms of media or communication would have the best chance of reaching them to inform them about health services, educational programs, or reintegration activities.

Recommendation:

We know that drama and radio are the two most popular forms of media in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Due to the low literacy rate, public information campaigns using newspapers will probably not reach the target population effectively. Traveling dramas about health issues, reintegration and peace education could have a very positive impact for a very low cost. Community radio stations are also highly popular, but more needs to be known about when men and women listen to the radio, who has easy access to radios, and how many people a community radio station can reach.

Attachment 2—Gender Review of Related USAID/Liberia Projects

GENDER SECTOR ASSESSMENT

This assessment looks at three categories of programs in terms of their gender awareness and sensitivity. The first is the official DDDR program. The second is the set of USAID programs (Diompilor and LCIP), and the third are the types of programs that might most easily identify and assist women and girls, whether ex-combatants or WAFFs.

The Liberian DDDR Program

The Liberian Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programme (or DDDR program) defines the eligibility criteria for people to qualify for benefits. The criteria (paraphrased and abbreviated) are as follows:

1. Demonstrate adult combatant status.
2. Be a child associated with a fighting force.
3. Surrender a weapon (or be a member of a group surrendering a group weapon).

Who does this exclude, and what are the implications for gender? The following table may clarify these questions. When the people associated with armed groups (or fighting forces) are divided by age and gender, there are eight categories. The first five and the seventh (1-5 and 7) are defined to be eligible for inclusion in the DDDR program, whereas the sixth and (probably in practice) the eighth are not.

STATUS OF PEOPLE ASSOCIATED WITH ARMED GROUPS				
Fighting Status	Child (Under 18)		Adult (18 and Older)	
	Boy	Girl	Man	Woman
Combatant	1 CS	3 CS	5	7
Non-Combatant	2 CS	4 CS	6	8

Note: The fighting status of combatant indicates that the individual carried a weapon and/or participated directly in fighting. Non-combatant means that the individual was not involved in directly in fighting, although he or she may have acted as spies, porters, minelayers, or provided other services to combatants.

Note: CS stands for Child Soldier status.

The fifth and seventh categories (men and women who carried weapons and/or participated in battles) should qualify as adult combatants and are eligible for inclusion. The sixth category (men non-combatants) is probably very small and might include only the disabled. They would probably qualify as disabled ex-combatants, who are eligible for benefits.¹

¹ See the Liberian Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programme Draft Strategy and Implementation Framework (9 October 2003)(hereafter referred to as DDDR 2003), pages 31-32.

Whether or not they carried a gun or participated in the fighting, children associated with an armed group are considered by the Cape Town Principles to be “child soldiers” and, therefore, are more likely to be included in any current DDR program. The Liberian DDRR program specifically includes them as follows: “underage combatant, accompanying minor, unaccompanied minor, or any other participant under the age of 18 or female, presenting with any of the above-mentioned groups.”²

The eighth category (women non-combatants) are ineligible for DDR benefits unless they are considered as the “or female” that was tacked onto the end of the list of eligible children’s categories. This ambiguous phrase was included, but in a children’s list. The ambiguity continues because the annex that specifies in more detail the DDRR assistance to children and youth mentions “camp followers and abductees.”³ The annex that specifies in more detail the DDRR assistance to women ex-combatants does not mention camp followers or abductees, only ex-combatants.

Women non-combatants would include all the wives (including “bush wives”) and other women who are performing domestic or other services. The assessment team uses the term WAFFs (women associated with the fighting forces) to describe this category and, according to the DDRR program, WAFFs are not eligible for any benefits.

The team was told during our visit to Sierra Leone that a basic principle of any DDR program is that women/girls and children must be specifically mentioned in the DDR documents, or they will be ignored. Women combatants and children, including girls, are specifically mentioned in Liberia’s DDRR documents. Women non-combatants appear to be ignored.

The USAID Programs

The next section of this report is a gender analysis of USAID/Liberia’s Community Peace Building Development Program (CPBD, or Diompilor) and Liberia Community Infrastructure Program (LCIP), so this will provide only a brief summary of that more detailed analysis. Neither project is specifically oriented toward women and girls.

Conceivably, LCIP could operate without directly benefiting any women since gender is not noted as an essential part of the design. Many infrastructure programs in Africa employ women as well as men, and LCIP could operate that way with appropriate direction and guidance.

The CPBD program specifies gender equity at the level of community facilitator. Each community is supposed to select two facilitators (one man and one woman). Unfortunately, almost half of the women who attended training-of-facilitator workshops failed because of problems with literacy. Because of this failure rate, it was noted that attaining gender equity with facilitators may prove “challenging.” Unless the program seriously confronts this challenge, community women will be seriously under-represented in the leadership position of facilitator.

² See DDRR 2003, pages 12 and 30-31.

³ See DDRR 2003, page 59.

There is no mention of gender (equitably or not) concerning who is selected to participate in the REFLECT circles. That could easily be corrected in practice and should not prove as challenging.

In general, the assessment is that the CPBD program is aware of gender issues and the importance of equitable leadership, but has not made those a clearly specified priority nor worked out how to achieve gender equity in the only clearly specified leadership position (facilitator) for which gender was mentioned.

Gender Sensitive Programs and Mechanisms

There is a stigma attached to any woman or girl who has been associated with the fighting forces. The stigma is even more enduring for those who have become pregnant or borne children while in the bush. For that reason, many victimized women and girls will not voluntarily reveal their identity and must be encouraged or stimulated to identify themselves and take advantage of programs.

What are some of the more effective ways to privately identify these women and girls so that they will not be further stigmatized publicly? Community leaders, community-based programs, and medical programs are probably the most effective mechanisms to identify these victimized women and girls.

Community leaders often know a lot about the people in their communities and will identify these women and girls. Obviously, asking community leaders assumes that the identities are not completely sheltered. Community-based programs on human rights, on child protection, or on women's rights will often stimulate women and girls to privately identify themselves and seek treatment or receive other benefits.

Local health programs with sympathetic women staff are also effective. Women and girls can come to the clinic without publicly identifying their WAFF status. A small, low-cost building (two rooms) with some medical supplies could function as a local health center, one room being used for interviewing and classes and the other for treatment. Staff would be a paraprofessional or nurse offering basic clinical, counseling (including rape), and educational (mothering, antenatal skills) services. This could serve as a means to identify victimized women/girls and as a forum for health classes (HIV/AIDS, rape, mothering, antenatal, drug abuse, etc.). Related community-based organizations (women's or girl's clubs, etc.) could also use the building.

The USAID CPBD program could facilitate or prioritize informing communities of the benefits and treatments available to WAFFs and could be a forum for public education about their human rights and needs. The USAID LCIP program could prioritize the rehabilitation or reconstruction of health clinics.

Attachments

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Attachment 3—Case Studies for Lessons Learned***1. Liberia (Historical)***

The current Liberian civil war (1998-2003) has its roots in a 1980 military coup that overthrew the long-established rule of the Americo-Liberian class. During the following decade the new regime helped to “tribalize” Liberian politics with President Samuel Doe being backed by the Krahn-dominated Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL).⁴ Seven years of civil warfare erupted in December 1989 when Charles Taylor’s forces invaded from Cote d’Ivoire. In August 1990 peace-keeping forces from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) arrived in Monrovia. This regional force, known as the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), remained in Liberia for the next seven years while various warring factions emerged and splintered. In September 1993 the UN established a UN Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) to help monitor what seemed at the time to be a peace agreement. UNOMIL also remained in Liberia until 1997.

In August 1995 the Abuja Peace Accord was signed, but hopes for peace were shattered in early April 1996 when fighting erupted in Monrovia. During April and May, Monrovia was looted and destroyed with an estimated 3,000 people being killed and 80,000 displaced. Expatriate UN and NGO staff were evacuated, and the UN and NGOs lost almost all of their vehicles, equipment, and stored supplies.⁵ The U.S. evacuated many expatriates by helicopter in a rescue mission.

An amended implementation schedule for the Abuja Accord was signed in August 1996. ECOMOG strengthened its presence, aided by U.S. material support, and UNOMIL was fully deployed. A cease-fire was agreed upon, and disarmament and demobilization were completed by early February 1997. Elections were held in August 1997, and Charles Taylor and his National Patriotic Party won 75 percent of the vote. There was, temporarily, peace in Liberia.

Estimates of those killed during the seven years of fighting (December 1989 through 1996) ranged upwards of 150,000. More than half of the Liberian population were displaced as refugees (755,000) or internally displaced persons (an estimated one million IDPs).⁶

There are varying estimates of the number of child combatants. All the estimates mention the figure 15,000, either having that as an upper limit (“as many as 15,000 children”)⁷ or as a lower limit (“some 15,000 to 20,000 children had directly participated in violent acts”).⁸ Many of these child combatants demobilized on their own (self-directed demobilization) during the years, but

⁴ See Kelly David’s 1998 report on the 1994-1997 DDR process.

⁵ See OFDA Health Assessment for Liberia, April 1997.

⁶ See 1997 reports from the Refugee Policy Group (Haeri et al. and Farr et al.)

⁷ See David Kelly report

⁸ See Human Rights Watch World Report 1998.

during the formal disarmament that began in November 1996 and ended in early February 1997, one-fifth of the 21,315 combatants who disarmed were children (more than 4,300).⁹

Peace Process 1996-1997

August 1996 -- The warring sides signed the following amended implementation schedule for the Abuja (Peace) Accord. This ideal schedule was:

- November 7, 1996 -- ECOMOG was scheduled to begin to create a number of safe havens around the country where (a) combatants could go to disarm and demobilize and (b) citizens could go to register for elections and later vote.
- November 22, 1996 through January 21, 1997 – Disarmament and demobilization of combatants and repatriation of refugees were scheduled to occur in Monrovia and in the safe havens. UNOMIL was scheduled to monitor and verify the disarmament process.
- May 30, 1997 – National elections were scheduled.

The actual process was somewhat delayed, and parts of the process were not totally completed.¹⁰ The actual schedule was:

- November 22, 1996 – Disarmament officially began. Hidden caches of weapons and ammunition were discovered by ECOMOG troops throughout and after the period of voluntary disarmament.
- February 7, 1997 – Disarmament officially ended. Only two-thirds (21,315) of the anticipated number (estimated to total 33,000) combatants went through disarmament.
- Demobilization never actually occurred, as combatants returned to their encampments after disarmament. “Combatants were not systematically given psychological counseling, training or other vocational opportunities, or even transported and integrated into their home communities.” The entire demobilization exercise for combatants lasted no more than 12 hours in all.¹¹
- The UNHCR decided not to formally sponsor repatriation of refugees, and only a small fraction of the refugees returned in time to register and vote in the elections.¹²
- July 19, 1997 – National elections were held.

History of Demobilizing and Reintegrating Liberian Children 1992-1997

The 1996-97 demobilization was the fifth demobilization of child soldiers in Liberia as the following table¹³ demonstrates.

⁹ The David Kelly report notes 4,319 children, including 78 girls. The Human Rights Watch World Report 1998 cited the U.N. Secretary General’s Twenty-Second Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia that 4,306 children and 250 women went through the disarmament program.

¹⁰ This section relies heavily on the Human Rights Watch/Africa 1997 Report Vol. 9, no. 7 (A).

¹¹ See Human Rights Watch/Africa 1997 Report Vol. 9, no. 7 (A).

¹² See two 1997 Refugee Policy Group reports (Haeri et al. and Farr et al.).

¹³ The data in the table are taken from the David Kelley report, page 46.

The first “demobilization” of child soldiers occurred in 1992. These children were prisoners of war who were captured by the AFL and ECOMOG during the NPFL’s attack on Monrovia in October 1992. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) discovered the child prisoners during a visit to the prison in December 1992. UNICEF negotiated the release of these children or, rather, they were still prisoners but under the care of UNICEF (the War-Affected Children, or WACH program) instead of being housed in an adult prison. In 1994 the remaining prisoners were transferred to the care of Don Bosco.¹⁴

INSTANCES OF DEMOBILIZING CHILD SOLDIERS IN LIBERIA 1992-1997		
Year(s)	Number of Child Soldiers Demobilized	Condition or Situation
1992	89	Only children who were prisoners of war
1994	230	General demobilization (3,436 adults demobilized)
1995-1996	Unknown	“Spontaneous, or self-directed” (also unknown adults)
1996	69	Fendall (359 adults demobilized)
1996/1997	4,306	General demobilization (17,009 adults demobilized)
1997	0	“Spontaneous,” or self-directed (130 adults)
Totals	4,694 Known	20,934 Known Adults, or 26,253 Total Demobilized

The first sponsored demobilization occurred in March 1994. It ended quickly (only 230 children and a total of 3,666 demobilized) because the armed groups really were not committed to disarmament. The Liberian NGO Children’s Assistance Program (CAP) had managed the earlier group of prisoners of war and was selected to take charge of the child soldiers demobilized in March 1994. Both children and adults were disarmed by ECOMOG and registered at the demobilization sites by UNOMIL. The children were asked the same questions as the adults, which meant a long questionnaire and some inappropriate questions (such as marital status). Then the children were turned over to CAP.

CAP intended to separate the children into three categories, based on their wartime experiences and orientation, and each category was to be treated differently.

- (1) The first category included those children with minimal involvement in the war. They stayed at the demobilization site about a week and then went home with an assistance package.¹⁵
- (2) The second category were moderately affected by the war but had committed serious atrocities. They were to stay in a CAP-run center for two to three months of counseling and resocialization before being given the assistance package and being released to their families. The CAP-managed center offered vocational skills training, basic education (literacy), medical care, and psychotherapy (art, music, sports, and entertainment) as well as counseling.
- (3) The third category included the “hard-core” children who had committed terrible atrocities, thought of fighting as a career choice, and were heavily addicted to various

¹⁴ See the David Kelly report, pages 35 and 74.

¹⁵ According to the David Kelly report, the package included basic medicines, 50 kilos of rice, one liter of cooking oil, lanterns, cooking and eating utensils, personal hygiene items, a mattress with bedding, clothing, and a pair of sneakers.

substances. They were to stay in the CAP-run center for six to nine months before being released to their families.

These plans were interrupted when fighting resumed.

Self-directed demobilization occurred during the following two years (1995-1996).¹⁶ There is no documentation of how many children and adults decided to stop fighting on their own. Fighters could come to an ECOMOG post, surrender their weapons, and walk away, or they could simply walk away from their armed group and never appear at an ECOMOG post. Some children who came to ECOMOG were turned over to CAP of Don Bosco Homes.

The 69 children who disarmed and “demobilized” at the Fendall campus of the University of Liberia in March 1996 were among a group of ULIMO-J fighters who surrendered to ECOMOG rather than be captured by the attacking NPFL.¹⁷ The demobilization exercise took only 12 hours. A separate registration questionnaire (about 20 questions) was designed for children with numerous questions designed to measure trauma and exposure to combat. Approximately half (34) of the children did not know where their families were, and they were taken to a CAP center in Monrovia for family tracing. The other half were taken to the destination of their choice, and almost all chose to be taken to Monrovia.

The major sponsored demobilization occurred from 22 November 1996 to 7 February 1997. In general, child soldiers were expected to go through the same disarmament and demobilization procedure as adults and receive the same assistance package as adults.¹⁸ After a lot of discussion, the finally agreed upon procedure was very quick. The combatants would be transported to the disarmament sites in the morning, be disarmed and demobilized, and be transported to their communities that afternoon.

The DDR exercise was rushed and underfunded with major delays, shortcomings in supplies, including food and housing at the DDR sites, and transportation, and the inevitable last-minute scurrying to keep the process flowing. Fighters arrived at the disarmament sites with exaggerated expectations about the benefits they would receive, which led to the threat of violence and near riots.

At the last minute, it was decided that children would not have to surrender a weapon to be demobilized, whereas each adult had to bring a weapon or the equivalent in ammunition to be demobilized as a combatant. This was debated with child welfare advocates being in favor, as larger numbers of children would be demobilized (or released from their commanders). The difficulty was that other children could come or be brought to demobilization sites and claim to have been fighters in order to receive the assistance packages.

¹⁶ The UN calls this ‘spontaneous,’ but that is misleading as the demobilization is self-directed. For whatever reason, the combatant (individually or en masse) decides that it is time to stop fighting and leaves the fighting force.

¹⁷ According to the David Kelly report, the fighters probably remobilized themselves immediately after leaving ECOMOG protection and surveillance.

¹⁸ The package contained 50 kilos of bulgur wheat (instead of the accustomed rice), one liter of edible fat (instead of cooking oil), and two tins of fish.

The registration interview was much shorter for children; there were only eight questions (primarily demographic information). This change was one of the lessons learned from the Fendall exercise. The brevity of the interview and lack of time to gain children's trust meant that the answers to the questions asked at Fendall about combat experience and level of trauma were considered to be unreliable and untrustworthy. The initial interview for children was supposed to be 40 minutes and private, allowing the interviewers, who had received training as counselors, adequate time to assess the mental state of the child and provide some initial counseling.¹⁹ As it turned out, the interviews were often only 10-15 minutes and in a semi-public space, so accurate assessment and private counseling were impossible. In some locations, children simply went through the same process as adults.

It was estimated that ten percent of the child soldiers (or 1,500 children) would be unable to return immediately to their families and would need to stay temporarily in transit centers run by SCF-UK or Don Bosco. The approach taken to the transit center changed from previous demobilizations. This time it was intended that there would be a minimalistic approach to meeting the children's basic needs. For example, the children would sleep on mats instead of on beds with mattresses. This minimal level of comfort was designed to minimize the children's desire to stay in the center (because of reluctance to reunify with a poorer family) and to minimize the community's potential jealousy over the use of scarce resources to house and feed ex-combatants.²⁰

Of the 4,306 child soldiers who demobilized, four-fifths (81%) said they were in the case of an adult and immediately left the demobilization site. Of the remainder (797 children) who declared they are unaccompanied, two-fifths (41%) chose to leave the sites on their own, and another 51 children were immediately reunited with family members. That left 416 children, almost ten percent (9.7%) of the demobilized children, to be placed in the transit centers.

Another way to view this is to say that the great majority (89.2%) left the demobilization site on their own the same day they arrived. They may have gone back to their commanders (in effect, never demobilizing) or gone elsewhere. They received essentially no counseling nor information about any reintegration programs and left that afternoon as militaristic and traumatized as when they came that morning.

The great majority of the children left in the transit centers were eventually reunited with their families, but earlier expectations about rapid family reunification turned out to be unrealistic, partly because of the continuing unrest throughout the country. Sending children back to their families who lived in areas controlled by opposing factions meant that the children were in danger. Therefore, family reunification efforts during the demobilization phase were halted. With the possibility of continued unrest, there was a concern that the transit centers might become long-term institutional homes for some of the children.

¹⁹ According to the David Kelly report (page 47), the interviews were to be conducted by graduates of a three-month trauma counseling program taught by AME Zion Community College.

²⁰ See David Kelly report, pages 42-43.

Profile of a Liberian Child Soldier 1996-1997²¹

This profile of a child soldier is based on an analysis of the data collected from the 4,306 child soldiers who demobilized in 1996-1997. This sample of child soldiers may not be representative of the entire population of child soldiers, estimated to total 15,000-25,000. Many child soldiers had self-demobilized (defected) earlier and never went through the formal DDR process.

Based on the collected data, the typical child soldier was a schoolboy in primary school between the ages of 8 to 12 years old when he joined an armed group. More than four-fifths (82%) of the children had been attending school when the war started. Almost one-tenth (9%) of the child soldiers had been in agricultural activities (farming), with the rest (7%) selling goods in the market (working in the informal economy).

Of the school children, more than four-fifths were attending primary school (first through fifth grades), and almost all the rest had been in junior high school (sixth through eighth grades). Only two percent had been attending high school.

More than two-thirds (69%) of the child soldiers were in the 15-17 age range with another one-fourth (27%) in the 12-14 age range. Most of the combatants (children and adults) had spent four or more years in the armed group. The adult soldiers were not asked whether they had been children when they originally were recruited, but it is possible that a good number of the young adult (18-22 year olds) combatants who demobilized were also children when they first became soldiers.

More than three-fourths (77%) of the children said they wanted to return to school, with the rest split between wanting to learn a vocation (10%) and wanting to go into petty trade (10%). Given their interests, support to the formal school system (especially primary and junior high schools) and to basic educational (literacy and numeracy) and alternative educational (non-formal or bridging) programs would have been the most sought-after and appropriate activities to fund to facilitate the reintegration of these child soldiers.

Fewer than two percent of the demobilized child soldiers were girls, and two-thirds (63%) of the girls demobilized in one site (Voinjama). As was noted elsewhere in this report, there are several reasons why so few girls showed in the group to be demobilized. It was not specified that all girls and women associated with the fighting forces (WAFs) should come to the disarmament and demobilization sites. Since each fighter was supposed to come with a weapon, perhaps a group with more fighters than weapons gave the weapons to the men for disarmament purposes. Perhaps the fighters considered the girls and women to be “wives” rather than fighters, and the fighters decided to keep the women and girls for sexual reasons and for their domestic labor.

Monrovia was the destination for one-third (32%) of all the children who indicated where they wanted to go after demobilization. Reasons for choosing the capitol ranged from those who found urban life more exciting (having visited while combatants), those who thought more

²¹ This profile comes from the David Kelly report.

employment and business opportunities were there, and those who thought they might more easily locate their displaced families through the IDP camps there.

The most prevalent health problems discovered among all fighters (children and adults) were malaria, skin rashes, worms, respiratory tract infections, and STDs. Substance abuse was reported at all demobilization sites. The substances included alcohol, tobacco, marihuana, Valium, gun powder mixed with home-brewed cane alcohol, and sometimes cocaine.

Almost two-thirds (61%) of the children said they knew both of their parents were alive, while almost all of the rest (37%) said they knew at least one of their parents was alive. Fewer than two percent said they were orphaned or did not know whether their parents were alive.

Issues Arising from the 1996-1997 DDR Process

The peacekeeping forces occupied and monitored only a limited number of “safe havens,” not the entire countryside,” leaving armed groups still in control in many locations. How safe or sustainable are disarmament and demobilization when the fighting forces have not fully agreed to stop fighting?

The short timetable for the complete war-to-peace process was rushed through to the formal end (holding national elections) without completely achieving the intermediate objectives of disarmament and demobilization. Elections were held before a complete disarmament and demobilization took place; “not all weapons were turned in and the command structures within the factions remained intact.”²² Disarmed combatants were not transported back to their original home areas, but instead returned to their nearby encampments.

One-fifth (20.3%) of the disarmed combatants were children. In some of the fighting forces (FFs), children represented 37 percent of the disarmed combatants.²³ Before the DDR process began, the UN had estimated that children comprised 15 percent of combatants. Did the increased proportion of children among the combatants mean that children comprised more of the FFs than anticipated, or that the commanders of the FFs were more willing to release their children than their adult fighters?

Refugees (one-fourth of the population) were not allowed to participate in the elections unless they repatriated in time to be registered. UNHCR did not sponsor an official return, and most refugees remained in exile and were disenfranchised.²⁴

The demobilization program for ex-combatants did not adequately address the needs of child combatants. There was a need to establish educational institutions (alternative or bridging programs) for children who could no longer return to the school level where they were before the

²² See Human Rights Watch World Report 1998.

²³ See the David Kelly report.

²⁴ See two 1997 Refugee Policy Group reports (Haeri et al. and Farr et al.).

war. There also was a need to establish vocational institutions for those children for whom school was no longer appropriate.²⁵

Family reunification implies that the ex-combatant goes home to a stable family and community. Where do ex-combatants return when regions of the country are devastated, infrastructure has been destroyed, security is still precarious, and many people are displaced in refugee and IDP camps? Does family reunification mean that child and women ex-combatants should be sent to join their families in refugee (outside the country) and IDP camps?

Liberian women and girls faced special gender-specific dangers. Sexual violence was reported to be “extremely prevalent during the Liberian war...Fighters from all the groups regularly raped women and girls, often forcibly keeping them for long periods, for sex and for menial labor.”²⁶ Added to this was the fear of being stigmatized, which prevented many women and girls from seeking or receiving appropriate counseling and assistance. “Often rape survivors do not tell anyone in their family about the rape because of feelings of shame, guilt, and self-blame. As a result, many Liberian women have been unwilling to seek the help they need to address the health complications, psychological trauma, and social isolation they have experienced as a result of the violence inflicted on them.”²⁷

Women comprised fewer than two percent of the people who went through the truncated DDR process, but this small proportion did not reflect the much larger number of women who were associated with the FFs (WAFs). Most of these had served as “wartime women,” which was their term for their forced attachment to boy or men combatants for sex and domestic labor. Women were not released for several reasons. Their release was not specified in the peace accord or cease-fire. They were considered to be “wives” of combatants rather than fighters, and women’s domestic labor and sexual services continued to be important during and after the DDR period, whereas boys’ work as fighters became less useful.

Planning for reintegration should occur in coordination with the plans for disarmament and demobilization in order to establish smooth transitions. This did not happen in late 1996 and early 1997. Earlier plans for reintegration were scrapped after the renewed fighting and looting in Monrovia in April-May 1996. The UN agencies and INGOs lost all of their equipment in the looting (vehicles, computers, etc.) as well as all of the supplies they had accumulated to use in reintegration. Afterwards, the UN agencies and INGOs were extremely reluctant to reinvest in preparing for reintegration (Once burned, twice shy!). This meant that when disarmament and demobilization did take place, the infrastructure and supplies needed for running reintegration programs were not available.

The plans for reintegration included counseling, education in the normal school system, and vocational skills training. The programs were designed to involve both ex-combatants and non-combatant youths; that way the ex-fighters would not be so visible (and stigmatized), and the community would not feel that ex-fighters were receiving all the benefits.

²⁵ See Human Rights Watch World Report 1998.

²⁶ Human Rights Watch World Report 1998.

²⁷ Human Rights Watch World Report 1998.

The reintegration programs seemed to have been more successful in family reunification and social reintegration than in economic reintegration. Family tracing became possible throughout the country after ECOMOG had deployed throughout the country, and many of the children seemed to have reintegrated socially. Economically, however, few of the ex-combatants who received vocational skills training were able to find self-sustainable employment.

Lessons Learned

Peace has a price. If the warring factions, political leaders, and international and regional donors are not prepared to pay the price, even the best DDR plans will falter or fail.

Peace agreements should detail DDR procedures and responsibilities as much as possible. This should include specific standards for the demobilization of children as a “special subset of fighters with exceptional needs.”²⁸

Planning for reintegration should occur in coordination with the plans for disarmament and demobilization in order to establish smooth transitions. Reintegration programs for ex-combatants should be in place before demobilization begins.

If one or more of the fighting forces have more fighters than weapons, then child soldiers should be allowed to demobilize without surrendering a weapon.

Accurate information about what to expect at the DDR sites should be provided to the members of the fighting forces (especially to the children) before they arrive at the sites. Too often, combatants will have received inaccurate information from their commanders. Learning the truth at the disarmament site can lead to violence and the disruption of the DDR process.

Children cannot (or should not) be demobilized in 12 or even 24 hours. Some form of temporary encampment for at least a week is necessary to protect the child from his or her former commander, to assess the child’s physical and mental condition, and to provide some education for peace and information about reintegration opportunities.

Many of the boys joined the FFs voluntarily to protect themselves or their families or to avoid being harassed, but the vast majority of girls were forcibly abducted.

Sexually-victimized women and girls will not step forward and easily identify themselves in order to be helped. Assistance programs should have privately sought out and identified the affected women and girls in ways that would not stigmatize them.

Fighting groups are less likely to release women and girls, so the number of demobilized WAFFs is not a true indication of how many women and girls are held by, or associated with, armed groups. Women and girls are not released for several reasons, especially if their release is not

²⁸ See the David Kelly report, page 71.

specified in the peace accord or cease-fire. They were considered to be “wives” of combatants rather than fighters, and women’s domestic labor and sexual services continue to be important during and after the DDR period.

The physical and psychological condition of child ex-combatants varied from one place to another, but all shared “trauma, uncertainty about their future, insecurity, and above all, a desire to go back to school or to learn a trade.”²⁹

The majority of child combatants were attending school when the war started, and child combatants generally expressed the wish to return to school after being demobilized.

The registration interview for children should be short because they have short attention spans. Unless there is enough time to gain the childrens’ trust, there is no reason to ask for sensitive information because the answers will be unreliable and untrustworthy.

The interim care center (ICC) should take a minimalistic approach to meeting the children’s basic needs. This minimal level of comfort will minimize the children’s desire to stay in the center (reluctance to reunify with a poorer family) and the community’s potential jealousy over the use of scarce resources to house and feed ex-combatants.

During the transition from combatant to schoolchild, the majority of child ex-combatants exhibited abnormal and aggressive social and interpersonal behavior. Most child soldiers were “highly agitated” when they arrive at ICCs or reintegration programs. The children will be “jumpy...suffer from extremely short attention spans...(and be) quick to overreact, often with violence.”³⁰

Some Child ex-combatants appeared apathetic and not interested or motivated to study or work. This was thought to be from a “deep-seated, paralysing sense of hopelessness” and a “profound lack of faith in the future” that is common to many war-affected children and youths.³¹

Every effort should be made to reunite the child with his or her family as soon as possible, but the reunion cannot be pursued at the expense of safety. The child should not be returned to an area where there is danger.

Family reunification was thought to be the solution for the reintegration of child soldiers, but family reunification was not always possible or was not always the best solution. The family may be living in an IDP or refugee camp, or the home region may still be too insecure. The family and community may not welcome back a child who has terrorized his family or neighbors. The family may be too poor to support another member, or the family’s poverty may be a reason why the child fled and joined an armed group in the first place. Rejoining a desperately poor family may mean that the child ex-combatant cannot afford to go to school or training programs; his

²⁹ See the Human Rights Watch/Africa 1997 Report Vol. 9, no. 7 (A).

³⁰ See the David Kelly report page 17.

³¹ See the David Kelly report pages 18-19.

family cannot pay the fees, or he needs to join the informal economy to support himself and help support his family.

Support to the formal school system (especially primary and junior high schools) and to basic educational (literacy and numeracy) and alternative educational (non-formal or bridging) programs was the most sought-after and appropriate activities that facilitated the reintegration of these child soldiers.

Other lessons included:

- Need to have broken the command and control structure between the youth and their commanders.
- Need to have integrated psycho-social programs into all vocational training and education programs
- (DD)R programs were too short to make a lasting impact.
- Need to insure flexibility in programming so that they can react to changes- both positive and negative in the peace /DDR process.

2. Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

The Democratic Republic of Congo has been torn by civil wars since 1996, has suffered invasions by the armies of neighboring states since 1998, and continues to be the center of warfare affecting four neighboring states (Congo-Brazzaville, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi). There is a multitude of armed groups in the country. Some are allied with neighboring states; others are opposed to neighboring governments; and others fight each other over internal (ethnicity and territory) enmities.

There are many child soldiers among the various armies and armed groups. The first major mobilization of child soldiers took place in 1996 during the “War of Liberation,” when Laurent Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL) toppled President Mobutu. The second major mobilization of child soldiers took place in 1998 when a rebellion by ethnic Tutsis (Banyamulenge), in collaboration with ex-Mobutu army elements and backed by Rwanda and Uganda, gained control of much of eastern Congo while other rebel groups controlled much of the North.

Civil warfare continues in the DRC, and children continue to serve as soldiers. No one knows exactly how many children are soldiers now, but the most conservative estimates are that more than 10,000 children are soldiers at any given time. The real number may be much greater, perhaps as high as 25,000, and this would not include the children who served during the previous years of warfare.³²

³² The two major sources for this case study are Hansen, et al. 2001 and Verhey 2003. Estimates of the numbers of child soldiers also come from the Report of the Secretary-General (July 2000), several UN appeals, and the 2001 No End in Sight report.

PART ONE: In December 1999, the Government published the outline of a comprehensive program for demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers. The National Bureau for Demobilization and Reintegration (Bureau National de Demobilization et de Reinsertion, or BUNADER) is the governmental unit that was created to take charge of coordinating the implementation of the program. This is an inter-ministerial unit that is directly supervised by both the Ministry of Human Rights and the Ministry of Defense. The Government's plan is nationwide, with demobilization being done province-by-province. Military people, communities, and children would be informed and sensitized regarding children's rights and abusive child labor. Children soldiers would be identified and their families traced. Once the child was demobilized, he/she would return to his/her family after a short stay in a transit and orientation center. One of the principles in the program is that the child should integrate into the family and society as soon as possible. This program has not been implemented because all of the warring parties have not agreed to peace and a cease-fire.

Process and Issues

UNICEF and a number of international and local NGOs are working in various regions of the country to encourage the demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers, but there is a major debate over what should be done given the absence of a comprehensive peace and cease-fire. UNICEF's position is that peace is the priority, and demobilization of child soldiers should wait until there is peace. Their position is supported by an earlier experience in DRC when UNICEF was demobilizing child soldiers, and warfare resumed. At least one of their transit camps of demobilized children was overrun, and all of the children abducted to be fighters again.³³

The other position is that demobilization of child soldiers should be encouraged, even in the absence of peace and a cease-fire. The most publicized program with this perspective is the one that is run by Save the Children-United Kingdom (SAVE-UK) and a large number of national NGOs and CBOs in eastern DRC (the North and South Kivu Provinces). More than 2,000 children are known to have demobilized with help from SAVE-UK and this regional network of NGOs and CBOs, and this does not count all of the child soldiers who demobilized on their own (self-directed, or spontaneous) and never identified themselves.

SCF-UK uses a community-based approach for the reintegration process. In collaboration with a network of national (primarily local) NGOs, SCF-UK established the following model:

1. Advocacy with the military.
 - a. They advocate for children's rights and for the release (demobilization) of child soldiers.
 - b. They advocate for children's protection and to stop recruiting new children.
2. Transit centers. They receive the demobilized (and other unaccompanied) children in temporary centers where the children stay for one to three months, while the NGOs do the following:

³³ See Hansen, et al. 2001.

- a. Trace the child's family.
 - b. Provide basic health services.
 - c. Provide psycho-social counseling.
 - d. Teach functional literacy and other bridging classes.
 - e. Provide vocational training.
3. Reinsert children into their families.
 4. Support families and communities.
 - a. Community education about children's rights. Create community child protection networks to advocate and protect children's rights and prevent recruitment.
 - b. Counseling for families.
 - c. Community development and self-help projects.
 - d. Individual or small-scale income-generating projects.
 5. Monitor children who are ex-soldiers or disadvantaged.

When a child arrives at the transit center, he/she is registered on a special form to start the process of tracing the family. Another form records the demobilization history to describe the profile of children who pass through the center.

Different types and levels of education need to be available at (or accessed through) the transit center to serve children who arrive with different educational backgrounds, needs, and capabilities. Children are organized into different levels at the center and assigned to a rapid non-formal education (bridging) program, or catch up lessons for children who are still able to reintegrate into formal school. Lessons include arithmetic, reading and writing, general culture, etc. Vocational skills (small scale production of soap, shoe polishing, farming and breeding techniques, etc.) are also taught.

The time a child spends in the transit center depends on several factors, including how much time was spent in a fighting unit, the traumatizing experiences, the duration of family separation, the possibility of family reunification (mainly for security reasons), and community attitudes towards the return of the child, as some children were involved directly or indirectly in atrocities in their own communities.

Except for the more complicated cases (children from insecure areas or those fearing for their security), the average length of stay in the transit center is about eight to ten weeks. Other organizations (including UNICEF) suggest that two months are not enough to assure the psycho-rehabilitation of children, especially children who present certain signs of traumatism. SAVE-UK believes that the above-mentioned period is sufficient for the following reasons.

Upon arrival at the Bukavu center, most children have had information about their families and their locations. The children were not sent far from their original regions or had maintained contact with their families through "line 11." Line-eleven in their slang means a place where children exchange messages with their relatives and friends using diverse channels.³⁴ Once at the

³⁴ See Hansen, et al. 2001.

transit center, the children wish to be reunited with their parents as soon as possible. In addition, the child often knows whether it is safe for him or her to return home.

As a consequence, it has been easy to locate most families, and almost all of the reintegrated children have been reunited with their proper families (except children coming from insecure zones). The bulk of the work has been identifying problems that the child will face in his community, and sensitizing and preparing the community to welcome and protect the child. This job is done through local structures and community networks and can be done in two months.

In terms of treating trauma, SAVE-UK notes that one of the first post-traumatic therapies for victims of violence is organizing and restoring a safe surrounding environment that can ensure their protection and help rebuild their self-confidence. Family support can restore confidence within the child and restore his protection and relationships with others more quickly and more effectively than the transit center. Therefore, SAVE-UK believes that reintegration of children in their families should be emphasized rather than keeping them in a center.

History of This Process

In South Kivu (Bukavu), SAVE-UK initiated an activity in 1994 to individually reintegrate unaccompanied children (children who were alone or away from home due to warfare) into families in their original communities. These 600 unaccompanied children were living alone and away from their families due to the various wars in the region. Most of the children were in IDP (internally displaced persons) camps; some were living by themselves; others were housed with foster families where the children usually served as domestic workers and were poorly treated.

About 400 of these 600 children were from Rwanda and were sent back to Rwanda to their family or their community after their identification and the tracing of their community or family. About 100 of the 200 Congolese children were also sent back to their family throughout the country. This repatriation and social reintegration program was implemented in collaboration with UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) and the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross). This activity stopped in 1998.

In 1999, more war-affected regions became accessible to the international community, and the number of unaccompanied children appeared to be greater than had been estimated in the 1994-98 phase. Therefore, SAVE-UK initiated another phase of activities to protect, recuperate, and orient these children who were victims of war. This history of involvement with unaccompanied children helps explain why SAVE-UK has merged child soldiers with other children in its reintegration program

The SAVE-UK approach to reintegrating former child soldiers does not target only them, but also considers other children in particularly difficult circumstances. Thus, the transit center is used for Rwandan and Congolese unaccompanied children who are awaiting their reintegration. This is another way to prepare ex-soldiers for their return to their families, as the children learn in the transit center that they do not have special privileges and have to learn again how to live with other children.

SAVE-UK became directly involved in the demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers in 1999 because it was asked by the RCD (Rassemblement Congolais pour la Democratie, or the Congolese Union for Democracy) Governor of South Kivu to help reintegrate about 120 child soldiers who had been captured by the RCD forces, after which the children apparently had volunteered to become RCD soldiers.

The majority of children who have passed through the transit center came from RCD troops as a result of the advocacy work by SAVE-UK and the network of affiliated national NGOs and CBOs. This worked through interpersonal relationships between the staff and local military. Most of the demobilized children were sent by military commanders, but sometimes the NGOs have been involved directly in collecting children. SAVE-UK does not work directly with other armed groups, and captured children are referred to SAVE-UK by the military, sometimes after being incorporated into RCD troops.

In the beginning, some military commanders blocked the program because they wanted to keep captured or released child soldiers in the RCD army instead of returning them to their families and communities. The personal intervention of the former High Military Commander of RCD was crucial in overcoming this opposition. Another early problem was that children did not get accurate information from their military commanders when they were demobilized. Most of the child soldiers were opposed to the transit center's education program due to misinformation by the military and non-involvement in the design of the program. When they were demobilized, they were told they would be cared for by an international organization in an orphanage, given money, and taught skills such as mechanics, carpentry, driving, etc. They did not understand why this did not happen at the transit center. Also, the educational program was initially more formal and not adapted to the level of the children, most of whom had not attended school for three or more years. The program was subsequently revised.

Many children ran away from the transit center immediately after their arrival. Most runaways happened during the first months of the program. Some of these children have probably returned to armed groups, and some of the runaways were adults who should not have been at the transit center. The chief military commander of Bukavu, who actively supported this project, sent messages to other military commanders to emphasize to children that they were demobilized due to their age, and expectations of children were reduced. Lack of communication equipment hampers circulation of information among military forces.

In the beginning of this program, a small number of children were re-recruited by force or willingly after they had reintegrated with their families. The information was rapidly referred to SAVE-UK through local NGOs and other structures involved in the follow-up of reintegrated children. After advocacy with military commanders, most of these children were subsequently re-demobilized. Their re-demobilization was an important lesson to children in the transit center as well as to the military commanders. Thus, children in the transit center became aware that they would be spotted and re-demobilized if they tried to rejoin the army. This reinforced children's preparation for their reintegration.

Another early problem concerned the location and transparency of the transit center in Bukavu. An agreement among SAVE-UK, the Governor of South Kivu's office, and the Provincial Division of Social Affairs (DIVAS) was signed in August 1999. DIVAS provided the building and the services of two educators, three care-providers, and two guards to staff the transit center. SAVE-UK provided the services of one transit center manager, two assistants for reintegration, and one nurse to staff the center, as well as and technical support for the staff.

DIVAS provided a building, which could hold 100-120 children, to house the transit center, but the building was not appropriate since it was centrally located in the middle of town on the main street and had no playground for children. The transit center was relocated to a bigger building (capacity for about 300 children) outside town near a residential neighborhood. This building, owned by a Protestant church, had housed a high school in the past.

An incident occurred just a week after the transit center moved to this new location. Neighbors threw stones at the center, and some of the children and their caregivers were slightly injured. A military logistics center was located nearby, and the military were able to intervene and restore order to the situation.

Afterwards, NGO staff talked with neighbors of the transit center and representatives of the neighborhood and learned that there was a lot of misinformation and some grievances about the center and its children. Some people thought the transit center was a re-education camp for captured ex-militia child soldiers who would be integrated into the RCD army. Others thought the center was going to be an orphanage run by a humanitarian international NGO. Some people were angry because the building could have been used as another school for the benefit of community children, but was being used by other children. Others complained that children at the center benefited from better treatment (diversified games, medical care, food, etc.) than their own children and wanted their children to be given access to the benefits of the center.

It became clear that the incident had occurred because the host community was neither informed about the establishment of a transit center nor prepared in advance for the arrival of the children. In order to inform and involve the neighborhood, SAVE-UK organized a meeting with community representatives to explain the demobilization program in general and the work at the transit center. That meeting took place at the transit center to reassure the children that they were accepted by the community and to give neighbors the opportunity to visit the center.

Community representatives prepared and broadcast a message to churches and community organizations to inform them about the existence of the center and their role in the security and the protection of the children there. Visits and joint games sessions were organized with the children in the neighborhood and those in the transit center. These became an integral part of transit center activities. People from civil society are allowed to visit the transit center and talk with children about specific issues.

Lessons

- Even in the absence of a comprehensive peace, partial demobilization can be arranged at the local level with local authorities, and children can be reintegrated. Local semi-autonomy seems in keeping with the inability of a collapsed state to control matters that are usually centrally administered.
- Local military commanders may facilitate or frustrate the processes of demobilization and reintegration. It is important to start a dialogue with the military so that they support the processes and provide correct orientation and information to children before they are demobilized. It is much more difficult to prepare children for reintegration and to implement reintegration successfully if armed forces are still recruiting children, especially re-mobilizing reintegrated ex-soldiers. Even in the absence of a comprehensive peace agreement, NGO advocacy and dialogue with local military authorities might encourage those local authorities to support demobilization and control re-mobilization.
- Although the population of child soldiers is heterogeneous, many will be anxious and able to reintegrate fairly rapidly. Probably the majority will move as quickly as possible through the transit center phase.
- Self-directed (spontaneous) demobilization and reintegration may characterize the future behavior of many, perhaps most, of the children who are currently soldiers.³⁵
- Transit and orientation centers are needed to shelter and orient children while the staff have time to trace families, decide which educational programs are appropriate, provide protection and counseling, and work out with the children and families the best placement options for each child.
- Formal education is under the Ministry of National Education, but DIVAS manages non-formal education, including the bridging classes that are an important component of transit center and reintegration programs. Reintegration programs deal more often with DIVAS than with the Ministry of Education, and provincial DIVAS staff seemed to be responsive and supportive to the needs for bridging programs.
- It is important to involve the local community in the transit center. This is a good place to start preparing the child and the community for the child's reintegration. Opening the transit center to the community is another way to facilitate the psycho-social rehabilitation of the child soldiers and to involve communities in the protection of these children.
- Reintegration programs have to be community-based. Transit centers are only temporary staging areas from which children move out to communities to reintegrate.

³⁵ See Hansen, et al. 2001 and Verhey 2003.

- Reintegration strategies that emphasize improving family livelihood provide more of an effective impact than programs that emphasize providing vocational training to ex-soldiers.³⁶
- Public information and awareness programs are important to keep the community informed and to communicate the importance of human rights and communal reconciliation. NGOs, including churches and community-based organizations, can play important roles in broadcasting these messages.
- These children have a variety of needs. Almost all of the international and national NGOs involved in reintegration of child soldiers emphasized an integrated approach. Each sector (education, vocational training, economic self-sufficiency, health, counseling) is important. Programs to assist these children need to take into account their education and training, their health, their future economic life, their social behavior in society, and their psychological and moral needs. Income-generating projects or scholarships may be a necessary component of reintegration programs to help the children and their families pay for school, food, or other items.
- A functioning network of NGOs and CBOs is the crucially important institutional structure that facilitated and made possible the demobilization and reintegration programs in DRC.
- Community-based child protection networks (or committees) raise local awareness of child protection issues and empower community members to defend their children.

A Network of International and National NGOs

National and international NGOs politically reinforce each other and complement each other in terms of services and access to resources. International NGOs have better access to the donor community, funding, international political support, and technical support, including training.

National NGOs, especially local NGOs, are essential in the DRC environment of insecurity and hostility.³⁷ Reintegration will require ex-soldiers to spread out across the countryside to reach their families and communities. The local NGOs provide access to remote locations and communities where the leaders and members of the local NGOs are well-known to local people. Foreigners and strangers would confront mistrust and suspicion, whereas local NGOs have the advantage of an established communal trust.

Humanitarian activities to reconstruct and develop the DRC will be more efficient and sustainable if they are implemented by local human resources, specifically local NGOs. Provinces are big and subdivided into territories, and no one other than local people can easily access the rural and remote areas or the areas of greatest insecurity. Most international NGOs

³⁶ See Verhey 2003.

³⁷ See Verhey 2003 and Hansen, et al. 2001.

and multilateral organizations for humanitarian relief or for development stay in the big cities where communications with the international world are possible.

Only local indigenous populations can have easy access to their communities and territories, especially during wartime. As an example of this, at a conference in November 2000, all of the international NGOs that were present, in collaboration with urban NGOs, explained that they could not survey a specific area because of the problem of security of access. However, a member of a local NGO, not a member of the UN-affiliated group, was in that same area before coming to the conference.

By 2001 the local NGOs that collaborate with SAVE-UK noted that they had helped demobilize and reintegrate approximately 1,200 child soldiers during the past few years. Almost 500 had gone through the transit centers, but the other 700 had chosen to take care of themselves (auto-reintegration) without the assistance of the transit centers. The NGOs thought that most of these children had gone home to their families and had not re-enrolled.

Community Child Protection Networks (CCPN)³⁸

In addition to generalized networks of NGOs and CBOs around the issues of child protection or human rights, SAVE-UK has also sponsored the creation of a number of community child protection networks (CCPNs). Each CCPN relates to only one specific community and is defined by that community. The CCPN provides an informal forum for community members to meet and discuss issues relating to child protection. Each sector of the community is supposed to elect representatives to the CCPN. To some extent the CCPN acts as a counterbalance to CBOs and NGOs to identify community needs and priorities.

The formation of the CCPN also empowers community members and gives them more authority in defending themselves and their children. The network works to protect and promote the interests of all local children, not just demobilized soldiers. In addition to raising the local community's awareness of child protection and human rights issues, the local network also allows people to respond immediately to abuses of children and has improved the collaboration between the local community and local authorities.

The Issue of Gender

Very few of the child soldiers who have been demobilized are girls.³⁹ Probably thousands of girls, some of whom are now women (18 and older), have been abducted or have volunteered to join the armed groups, and sexual exploitation is widespread. Part of the reason for this is that few people in DRC consider these girls to be soldiers. Therefore, the attention paid to demobilizing child soldiers does not apply to girls. Another reason is the stigma attached to girls may inhibit them from demobilizing and trying to reunite with their families.

³⁸ See Verhey 2003.

³⁹ See Verhey 2003 and Hansen, et al. 2001.

3. *Rwanda*

Many children were involved in the 1994 genocide that killed 800,000 Tutsis. 130,000 persons were detained for their alleged participation, including almost 4,500 children. At the time it was estimated that 5,000 persons under the age of 18 were members of the Rwandan Patriotic army. From 1995 through 1998 the GOR ran a demobilization program for child soldiers, called kadogo or “little ones” in Swhaili. The program was supported technically and financially by UNICEF.

The Ministry of Defense initiated, and was initially responsible for, the demobilization of child soldiers. DDR responsibilities were later transferred to the Commission of Demobilization and Reintegration. 2,922 kadogos were demobilized by the end of 1996 and the GOR claimed there were no children under 18 left in the armed forces.⁴⁰ The international community, however, believes there is still continuing recruitment of child soldiers by the army and other armed groups.

Process

- The Ministry of Defense identified the child soldiers and immediately demobilized 50% of them by sending them to the Kadogo school (originally established as a UNICEF transit center for the child soldiers).⁴¹ There were no assessments done on the situation of girls and only five girl soldiers went through the Kadogo school.
- Tracing and reunification activities started after arrival at the Kadogo school where the children were institutionalized until they could be reunified and reintegrated back with their families and communities.⁴²
- The Kadogo school provided primary education (literacy and numeracy training), basic health services, sport and leisure activities. GTZ provided vocational training with workshops by the NGO Feed the Children Europe.
- Almost 500 children believed to have participated in the genocide attended targeted re-education courses aimed to help them return to their communities. At the time of demobilization they were 14 to 18 years old but were all under 14 at the time of the genocide.
- Follow up services for children reunited with their families was done through UNICEF support to Save the Children/UK and the Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Affairs. Social welfare committees were organized in 5 prefectures to ensure community-based follow up of vulnerable children.⁴³ This was facilitated by Red Barnet and Barakabaho (*which is?*).
- An Education for Peace program supported team sports with frequent tournaments and cultural activities such as traditional singing and dancing.

⁴⁰ The legal age for recruitment in Rwanda was 16.

⁴¹ UNICEF established two transit centers for the reintegration of child soldiers that were used as boarding facilities/schools.

⁴² Various reports cite different numbers of child soldiers going through the Kadogo school. 2,922 is used most often, but UNICEF documents also list 3,500 child soldiers as having gone through the school.

⁴³ Program was designed to target children in need of special protection measures, including child soldiers.

- UNICEF's second reeducation center (Gitagata) was converted into a long term center for children under 14 accused of genocide.

Issues

- A UNICEF survey in 1996 found that less than 30% of the children identified by the Ministry of Defense as child soldiers had actually been in the armed forces. Most had affiliated themselves with the armed forces during the liberation days, primarily seeking protection. These children were allowed to remain in the demobilization/reintegration program.
- The Rwandan government opposed immediate reunification of the children believing this would worsen social problems and thought placing children in institutions would be a better temporary solution. These children were isolated from society and by 1998 less than half the children were reunited with their families.⁴⁴
- UNICEF placed no conditions on its participation in the DDR process (such as giving priority to family reunification and the non-institutionalization of child soldiers) because it felt that establishing a partnership with the GOR whereby "common goals could gradually be shared" was of overriding importance.
- Hutu child soldiers were not included in the demobilization. Accused of genocide crimes, they were imprisoned along with adults. By 1998, 2,893 children remained in custody as genocide suspects, some as young as 8. Under Rwandan legislation, the minimum age for criminal responsibility is 14.
- Some children asked to return to the army because many secondary schools refused to accept them or because they had no homes or means of financial support.

Lessons

- Assessments are needed to identify the child soldiers from the war-affected children that are found in and around military camps.
- Successful reintegration into the families and communities requires the provision of follow-up social and psychological support to the families of ex-child soldiers.
- A monitoring system to follow up on demobilized child soldiers was needed as the program lost track of more than half of the demobilized children.
- Official demobilization documents were needed to prevent the drafting of former child soldiers back into the army.
- The continuing recruitment of child soldiers needed to be addressed and specific measures needed to be put into place to prevent re-recruitment.
- Government capacity to work with NGOs and intra-governmental coordination needed to be strengthened.
- Children were stigmatized through their institutionalization.
- The objective of reintegrating children with their families was overwhelmed by the immediate need of providing long term basic services at the boarding centers. Kadogo school received double the number of expected child soldiers and some of the services

⁴⁴ After a 1997 evaluation, the program emphasis switched to family reunification and community based follow up and the Kadogo school was closed in 1998.

provided were better than what could be found on the outside. This level of services was unsustainable without continued donor assistance.

Remaining issues in Rwanda

There has been continuing conflict between the members of the Hutu dominated former Rwandese Armed Forces (ex-FAR), the exiled Interhamwe Hutu militia and the Tutsi dominated Rwandese Patriotic Army (RPA). The RPA also supported opposition forces in the DRC and there was fighting between Rwanda and the DRC inside the DRC borders. Government and paramilitary groups continue to recruit children as soldiers and human rights groups estimate that 10,000-18,000 children between 7 and 14 are recruited annually. Over 45,000 children are thought to be in schools for non-commissioned officers.

The Interahamwe militia (associated with armed groups in the DRC) has recruited Kenyan street boys as soldiers, paying Kenyan agents over \$500 for every 150 street boys delivered.⁴⁵ In 2001, a DDR program was established for child soldiers captured during rebel incursions by the RPA. 350 child soldiers (out of the 2,000 rebels captured), were placed in rehabilitation centers for a transitional period and then were reintegrated back to their communities.⁴⁶

4. Uganda

The National Resistance Movement came into power in 1986 after a 15 year civil war. When the military opposition was defeated in 1991, the Government of Uganda (GOU) started a demobilization/reintegration program (Uganda Veterans Assistance Program or UVAP) to help the ex-combatants and their families. The program went from 1992-1995. This program was not child specific.

Process

- Combatant received a military discharge certificate.
- They were provided with transportation from the discharge center to their destination district.
- Veterans and their spouses received a post-discharge orientation meeting for information and counseling in the district capitals.
- Veterans were allowed to receive either formal education or vocational training.
- The UVAP set up a Directory of NGOs to inform veterans where they could get non UVAP assistance. UVAP and international assistance included counseling, loans, community sensitization, community awareness through a media campaign and extension of benefits to wives of chronically ill and severely disabled veterans.

Lessons

⁴⁵ www.child-soldiers.org/cs/childsoldier.snf

⁴⁶ According to World Vision, they provided rehabilitation and reintegration services to more than 5,000 child soldiers in the north.

Access to land was a major factor in successful economic reintegration.⁴⁷

Issues

Child soldiers continue to be recruited in the ongoing conflict in Uganda and the Great Lakes region by government and opposition forces. Post-demobilization conflict in Uganda continued with the flight of opposition fighters to northern Uganda/southern Sudan and intensified with Sudanese support for the Lord's Resistance Army (RLA) starting in 1993 . When relations between Sudan and Uganda later improved, Sudan cut off its support to the RLA and allowed the Ugandan People's Defense Force (UPDF) access to LRA bases in Southern Sudan.

Both sides in the conflict used child soldiers, with estimates of more than 20,000 children having been abducted. The rate of abductions increased dramatically with the return of the RLA to Uganda from their bases in southern Sudan.⁴⁸ UNICEF estimates that 80% of the RLA are abducted adolescents.⁴⁹

UPDF attacks on the RLA have resulted in the "rescue" of abducted children, however, according to human rights groups, many of the children rescued are treated as enemies. In 1999, the Ugandan army executed five boys between 14-17 suspected of being members of the rebel group Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). Some child soldiers in UPDF custody are as young as 10.⁵⁰

The UPDF was also actively involved in the conflicts in Great Lakes region, particularly the DRC. In 2001 the GOU granted the UN access to combatants from the DRC conflict who were in military training in Uganda, and agreed to turn over any child soldiers among them to UNICEF.

Process for the rehabilitation of child soldiers/abductees

- Children rescued by the UPDF are either sent to a rehabilitation center or directly home. Samples done by UNICEF indicated that 73% go to a center, 25% go home and 2% to relatives.⁵¹
- Rehabilitation centers provide medical, mental health, hygiene and material assistance.
- Children received a documented security clearance so they could return to their communities without "suspicion."

Issues

⁴⁷ The Case of Uganda. www.ginie.org/ginie-crises-links/childsoldiers/uganda.html

⁴⁸ 100 in 2001 and 5,000 in 2002 according to hrw.org/reports/2003/uganda

⁴⁹ Mazurana, Dyan and McKay, Susan, Girls in Fighting forces in Northern Uganda, Sierra Leone and Mozambique.

⁵⁰ Genie- OpCit.

⁵¹ Numbers vary according to the source, but as an indication of magnitude: almost 6,000 children went through the reintegration program in two rehabilitation centers in Gulu to early 1999. www.childsoldiers.org

- Human rights abuses were reported by children held in UPDF barracks. These included assault, murder, a lack of physical security, and sexual harassment.
- UPDF did not systematically take all rescued girls to civilian rehabilitation centers.
- Children in rehabilitation were pre-occupied that they would not be accepted back by their families and communities.

Lessons

- Returned girls needed follow up as they were often stigmatized and threatened by their husbands, family members and the community when they attempted to reintegrate.
- Returning children to insecure environments in attempts to reintegrate them back into their communities resulted in some re-abductions and killings of the children.
- Community-based organizations needed to be strengthened to enable them to follow up and assist/promote the reintegration rights of returning children.
- Additional assistance was needed for the 30% of returnee girls who were girl mothers.
- Cleansing ceremonies were important so the community did not see the ex-child soldier as “contaminated.”⁵² This was especially needed for girls who were forced to serve as “wives” as this war-time experience diminished their prospects for marriage.

5. Mozambique

The peace accords signed in 1992 ended a 16 year civil war in Mozambique between the Government of Mozambique forces (FRELIMO) and the rebel group Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO). UNDP estimated that almost 1 million Mozambicans died in the war, 45% were children under the age of 15.⁵³ Demobilization data revealed that 27% of the demobilized soldiers (25,000) had been under the age of 18 at the time of their recruitment (of these, about 16,500 belonged to FRELIMO and almost 9,000 to RENAMO).⁵⁴

The issue of child soldiers was not addressed in the peace accords and at the end of the war RENAMO denied their existence. UNICEF negotiations with RENAMO and an agreement of the Cease-Fire Commission finally resulted with UNICEF being provided access to the children in February 1994.

UNICEF undertook an initial assessment of 60 children found at one base camp and used this information to develop their reintegration strategy. This strategy gave priority to the transfer of the children from the RENAMO military camps to RENAMO civilian zones and to immediate family and community reunification. Follow-up for psycho-social needs was to be done after reunification.

⁵² Verhey, Beth, Africa Regional Working Paper, Series 23, World Bank 2001.

⁵³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan. A survey of programs on the reintegration of former child soldiers. 2. Country Profiles, 2.6. Mozambique, 2.6.1 Current State of Armed Conflict. Ww.mofa.go.jp/policy/human/child/survey/profile6.thml printed 10/11/03

⁵⁴ Ibid

The FRELIMO child soldiers were demobilized through the regular demobilization process. UNICEF organized the demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers on RENAMO bases along with its NGO partners. A few RENAMO commanders disagreed with having a separate program for children and put their child soldiers into the regular demobilization process. The UNICEF process registered 850 child soldiers who were reunified with their families by December 1994.

Few women combatants went through the official DDR process. It was thought that the Government of Mozambique (GOM) did not want to admit to their use of girls or to have their experiences documented during DDR. The long period of encampment by troops awaiting demobilization benefits (several months to two years), poor security for women and the need to care for their children, also resulted in many women leaving the DDR camps before the end of the process.

Process

- UNICEF identified the RENAMO child soldiers (about 850 on 19 military bases). This was estimated to be about half of the number of child soldiers in RENAMO camps at the time of the peace accord.
- UNICEF took photos and basic information about the child's identity and assessed the child's health and nutritional status.
- Children stayed in transit centers (12 centers in 7 provinces) under UNICEF (or their NGO partners⁵⁵) supervision until they were reunified. UNICEF provided shelter, food, water, sanitation, medical assistance and school kits. The child soldiers received a different demobilization package than the regular soldiers and were not eligible for the demobilization incentive payment.
- Reunification was done by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and SCF/US. Logistical support was provided by the UN peacekeeping mission (UNOMOZ).

- Traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution were reactivated by returnees.⁵⁶ According to UNICEF, ex-child soldier were welcome, considered as returnees and went through the tradition ceremonies for purification. Former child soldiers were also monitored by traditional healers.
- Home visiting programs were organized by UNICEF and the Ministry of Social Welfare for all reunified children and after reunification social workers monitored the children's social reintegration, identified problems and other needs. This was done as a pilot project in 17 selected districts with UNICEF providing TA to the Ministry to help them train social workers in trauma counseling and in assessing the needs of the children. 2,000 children

⁵⁵ Partners included WFP, UNHCR, UNDRO-DHA, ICRC, MSF/France and Switzerland, Action Nord-Sud, CVM, Terre des Hommes and ARPC (a RENAMO NGO).

⁵⁶ Special purification ceremonies were organized by religious leaders and curandeiros (traditional healers) for ex-child soldiers and ex-combatants. The purpose of the ceremony was to enable the individuals to cope with their own past. It was also a process of community forgiveness. The implicit consensus was that whatever happened during the war must be forgotten by everyone.

were regularly visited by social workers and, according to UNICEF, the results were encouraging.

Issues

- Some RENAMO commanders were reluctant to release children and in some cases the intervention of representatives of the Cease-Fire Commission was required.
- Some child soldiers resented not going through the adult demobilization process and in camps with large numbers of child soldiers they demanded the demobilization pay that was being given out to regular troops. This demand was dropped after UNICEF guaranteed that they would be reunified with their families and provided with support for their education.⁵⁷
- Only half the child soldiers estimated to be under RENAMO control at the end of the war went through the program.
- The DDR process did not address the issue of girls on RENAMO bases and many girls/women were either taken by demobilizing forces as they were demobilizing or left abandoned on the side of the road.⁵⁸
- Former child soldiers are now of draft age and may be drafted because their prior service was not recognized by a demobilization certificate. Conscription was abolished in the peace agreement, but was re-adopted in the late 1990s despite RENAMO objections that the draft legislation ran contrary to the peace agreement.

Lessons

- UNICEF thought it should have advocated for the demobilization of child soldiers at an earlier stage. Negotiations with RENAMO took 18 months.
- Direct involvement by former child soldiers in the management of transit centers was seen to be positive. (what does this mean?)
- Protracted demobilization periods needed to be avoided and priority given to family and community reintegration.
- Paying close attention to the proper registration of the name and location of the family was necessary in order to be able to provide the follow up care.
- Reintegration with families dispersed the former child soldiers throughout Mozambique making their follow up more costly and complicated. As a result only half of the children going through the UNICEF program received vocational training or were able to participate in income generating projects after reintegration.
- Importance of the use of local traditions for reintegration purposes. The community saw the purification ceremonies as a means to cleanse the ex-child soldier of his/her contamination and subsequently did not feel threatened by taking in the child. The child felt cleansed and welcomed in the community.

6. Ethiopia

⁵⁷ More than 90% of children interviewed by UNICEF in RENAMO bases said re-unification with their family was their first choice for the DDR process.

⁵⁸ www.waraffected.chchildren.gc.ca/girls

Demobilized women combatants who had started out as child soldiers found that their values, socialization experiences and expectations ran counter to the traditional feminine values of Ethiopian society. Their resistance to adopting traditional values led to conflict with that society and personal frustration. But it also impacted on the broader issue of women's political and military participation in post-conflict Ethiopia.⁵⁹ For DDR purposes one study⁶⁰ says these women saw themselves as empowered by their experiences, rather seeing themselves as the victim. The study concludes that the DDR process for women combatants needs a different DDR process than for men as their entire construction on what it means to be a "female" is based on their child soldier/women combatant world. During and after DDR they face a different world where these constructs may no longer apply and where they are immediately placed into conflict with traditional society.

7. *Sudan*

Sudan has suffered from civil war since 1983 and it has an estimated 31,000 child soldiers under 18 Soldiers as young as 12 were in the Popular Defense Forces (PDF) and in the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLA). Some local customs encourage child soldiers as initiation rites for young males in southern Sudan confers on them the social responsibility for fighting in wars. Many of these child soldiers grow up to become adult soldiers. Displaced children from other countries such as Ethiopia have also been absorbed into government and opposition armed groups.⁶¹

20,000 Sudanese children have been separated from families by war and disasters and are used by military groups to attract food and other types of humanitarian assistance. In Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS), donor strategy was to mainstream the program for war-affected children, and to not provide a program specifically for child soldiers. It was a humanitarian principles project working to get the rebels to commit to the principles of the Geneva Conventions and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). It also worked to raise the awareness of the public and connected humanitarian principles with traditional Sudanese values.

Under the Children in Extremely Difficult Circumstances program, over 1,000 children have been reunified with their families since 1994.

OLS Process

- Social history of the child was documented as extensively as possible.
- A "going home" kit was given to each child that includes basic materials such as a mosquito net, blankets, fishing lines and hooks, plastic mugs, plates, cooking posts. They also received a reunification kit to help them get started in school including clothing and basic school supplies.

⁵⁹ Veale, Angela. From Child Soldier to Ex-Fighter. Female Fighters, Demobilization and Reintegration in Ethiopia. P6.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ginie. The case of Sudan/OLS. OpCit

DDR process

In 1998 a demobilization project was started for child soldiers implemented by the military groups with help from UNICEF, Save the Children and Radda Barnen. The project targeted all soldiers under 18. Demobilization continued in 2001 with 3,500 children going through the program.

- A Child Rights Officer was established in each military group and trained in how to implement the CRC and how to demobilize child soldiers.
- All children in the SPLA and SSIA were to be identified and their families traced.
- As many as possible were to be reunified with their families, provided with psychosocial counseling, education and training. Support to families and the community for the return of demobilized child soldiers was also provided.
- The program worked through existing and traditional structures such as clan networks and churches.

Issues

- Churches were reluctant to become involved for fear of offending the armed movements or being seen as partisan.
- NGOs were reluctant to provide information to UNICEF because they were afraid it would compromise their ability to continue their programs.

Lessons

- UNICEF and the NGOs needed to remain neutral in the ongoing conflict.
- Importance of tying humanitarian values and principles to the traditional cultural values.
- Importance of building the capacity of local communities and leaders to initiate and carry out demobilization and reunification programs themselves.
- Children were often stigmatized by their communities for having served in the military and were likely to be recruited as young adults back into the SPLA .
- More attention should have been given to the issue of traditional reintegration rituals

Attachment 4—Cape Town Principles

CAPE TOWN

ANNOTATED PRINCIPLES AND BEST PRACTICE

**ON THE PREVENTION OF RECRUITMENT OF CHILDREN INTO
THE
ARMED FORCES AND DEMOBILIZATION AND SOCIAL
REINTEGRATION OF CHILD SOLDIERS IN AFRICA**

Adopted by the participants in the Symposium on the Prevention of Recruitment of Children into the Armed Forces and Demobilization and Social Reintegration of Child Soldiers in Africa, organized by UNICEF in cooperation with the NGO Sub-group of the NGO Working Group on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Cape Town, 30 April 1997

DEFINITIONS

"Child soldier" in this document means any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers, and those accompanying such groups, other than purely as family members. It includes girls recruited for sexual purposes and forced marriage. It does not, therefore, only refer to a child who is carrying or has carried arms.

"Recruitment" encompasses compulsory, forced and voluntary recruitment into any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group.

"Demobilization" means the formal and controlled discharge of child soldiers from the army or from an armed group.

The term **"psycho-social"** underlines the close relationship between the psychological and social effects of armed conflict, the one type of effect continually influencing the other.

By **"psychological effects"** is meant those experiences which affect emotions, behaviour, thoughts, memory and learning ability and how a situation may be perceived and understood.

By **"social effects"** is meant how the diverse experiences of war alter people's relationships to each other, in that such experiences change people, but also through death, separation, estrangement and other losses.

"**Social**" may be extended to include an economic dimension, many individuals and families becoming destitute through the material and economic devastation of war, thus losing their social status and place in their familiar social network.

PREVENTION OF CHILD RECRUITMENT

Establish 18 as the minimum age for any participation in hostilities and for all forms of recruitment into all armed forces and armed groups.

Governments should adopt and ratify an Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child raising the minimum ages from 15 to 18.

Governments should ratify and implement pertinent regional and international treaties and incorporate them into national law, namely:

- The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child which upon entry into force will establish 18 as the minimum age for recruitment and participation;
- The two Additional Protocols to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which currently establish 15 as the minimum age for recruitment and participation.

Governments should adopt national legislation on voluntary and compulsory recruitment with a minimum age of 18 years and should establish proper recruitment procedures and the means to enforce them. Those responsible for illegally recruiting children should be brought to justice. These recruitment procedures must include:

- a. Requirement of proof of age;
- b. Safeguards against violations;
- c. Dissemination of the standards to the military, especially the recruiters;
- d. Publicization of the standards and safeguards to the civilian population, especially children at risk of recruitment and their families and those organizations working with them;
- e. Where the government establishes, condones or arms militias or other armed groups, including private security forces, it must also regulate recruitment into them.

A permanent International Criminal Court should be established whose jurisdiction would cover, *inter alia*, the illegal recruitment of children.

Written agreements between or with all parties to the conflict which include a commitment on the minimum age of recruitment should be concluded. The SPLM/Operation Lifeline Sudan Agreement on Ground Rules (July 1995) is a useful example.

Monitoring, documentation and advocacy are fundamental to eliminating child recruitment and to informing programmes to this end. Community efforts to prevent recruitment should be developed and supported.

- a. Local human rights organisations, the media, former child soldiers, and teachers, health workers, church leaders and other community leaders can play an important advocacy role.
- b. Establish a dialogue between government and communities in which children are regarded as adults before the age of 18 about the importance of the 18- year limit for recruitment.
- c. Provide children with alternative models to the glorification of war, including in the media;
- d. Government representatives, military personnel and former opposition leaders can be instrumental in advocating, negotiating and providing technical assistance to their counterparts in other countries in relation to the prevention of recruitment of child soldiers, as well as their demobilization and reintegration.

Programmes to prevent recruitment of children should be developed in response to the expressed needs and aspirations of the children.

In programmes for children, particular attention should be paid to those most at risk of recruitment: children in conflict zones, children (especially adolescents) separated from or without families, including children in institutions; other marginalized groups (e.g. street children, certain minorities, refugees and the internally displaced); economically and socially deprived children.

- a. Risk mapping can be helpful to identify the groups at risk in particular situations, including such issues as areas of concentration of fighting, the age and type of children being militarized and the main agents of militarization;
- b. Promote respect for international humanitarian law;
- c. To reduce volunteerism into opposing armed forces, avoid harassment of or attacks on children, their homes and families;
- d. Monitor recruitment practices and put pressure on recruiters to abide by the standards and to avoid forced recruitment.

All efforts should be made to keep or reunite children with their families or to place them within a family structure.

This can be done for example through warnings (e.g. by radio or posters) of the need to avoid separation, or through attaching identification to young children, except where this would expose

them to additional risk. For further ideas, see "Unaccompanied Minors: Priority Action Handbook for UNICEF/UNHCR Field Staff".

Ensure birth registration, including for refugees and internally displaced children, and the provision of identity documents to all children, particularly those most at risk of recruitment. Access to education, including secondary education and vocational training, should be promoted for *all* children, including refugee and internally displaced children.

Adequate economic provision or opportunities also need to be considered for children or their families.

Special protection measures are needed to prevent recruitment of children in camps for refugees and internally displaced persons.

- a. Refugee camps should be established at a reasonable distance from the border, wherever possible;
- b. The civilian nature and humanitarian character of camps for refugees and internally displaced persons should be ensured. Where this is a problem, specific educational and vocational programmes for children, including adolescents, are even more critical;
- c. Host governments, if necessary with the assistance of the international community, should prevent the infiltration of armed elements into camps for refugees and internally displaced persons, and provide physical protection to persons in such camps.

The international community should recognize that children who leave their country of origin to avoid illegal recruitment or participation in hostilities are in need of international protection. Children who are not nationals of the country in which they are fighting are also in need of international protection.

Controls should be imposed on the manufacture and transfer of arms, especially small arms. No arms should be supplied to parties to an armed conflict who are recruiting children or allowing them to take part in hostilities.

DEMOBILIZATION

All persons under the age of 18 should be demobilized from any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group.

Direct and free access to all child soldiers should be granted to relevant authorities or organizations in charge of collecting information concerning their demobilization and of implementing specific programmes.

Children should be given priority in any demobilization process. In anticipation of peace negotiations or as soon as they begin, preparations should be made to respond to children who will be demobilized.

- Prepare initial situation analysis/needs assessment of children and their communities; Ensure coordination between all parties to avoid duplication and gaps;
- Where there is access to governmental and other local structures, incorporate and (where necessary) strengthen existing capacities to respond;
- Ensure training of staff who will be involved in the process;
- Organize logistical and technical support in collaboration with agencies responsible for the formal demobilization process;
- Ensure that the demobilization package is of a long-term, sustaining nature rather than in the form of an immediate "reward", taking into account the implications of the nature of the package for future recruitment of children.

The issue of demobilization of children should be included in the peace process from the beginning.

Where children have participated in armed conflict, peace agreements and related documents should acknowledge this fact.

The demobilization process should be designed as the first step in the social reintegration process.

The demobilization process should be as short as possible and take into account the human dignity of the child and the need for confidentiality.

- Ensure adequate time and appropriate personnel to make children feel secure and comfortable so that they are able to receive information, including about their rights, and to share concerns;
- Wherever possible, staff dealing with the children should be nationals;
- Special measures must be taken to ensure the protection of children who are in demobilization centres for extended periods of time;
- Children should be interviewed individually and away from their superiors and peers;
- It is not appropriate to raise sensitive issues in the initial interview. If they are raised subsequently, it must be done only when in the best interest of the child and by a competent person;

- Confidentiality must be respected;
- All children should be informed throughout the process of the reasons why the information is being collected and that confidentiality will be respected. Children should be further informed about what will happen to them at each step of the process;
- Wherever possible, communication and information should be in the mother tongue of the children;
- Particular attention should be paid to the special needs of girls and special responses should be developed to this end.

As soon as possible start establishing family tracing, contacts and reunification.

Health assessment and treatment should be priorities.

- As soon as possible during the demobilization process, all children should undergo assessment of their physical health and receive treatment as necessary;
- Particular responses should be developed for girls;
- Particular responses are needed for children with special needs, e.g. children with disabilities, child soldiers with children of their own, children with substance abuse problems and sexually transmitted diseases (HIV/AIDS, etc.);
- Ensure linkages between the demobilization process and existing programmes which are competent to deal with the health needs of children.

Monitoring and documentation of child involvement, as well as advocacy for demobilization and release of children, should be undertaken throughout the armed conflict. Community efforts to this end should be supported.

Children who leave any armed forces or groups during on-going hostilities have special needs for protection which must be addressed.

During on-going hostilities there is rarely any formal demobilization. However, children may leave the army, for example by escaping or as a result of being captured or wounded. This may compromise their security, protection and access to services. Despite difficulties in identifying such children, there must be recognition of their special needs for protection:

- Efforts should be made for an early start to programmes and family tracing for unaccompanied children;

- Efforts should be made to ensure that re-recruitment does not occur. The likelihood of rerecruitment can be reduced if: (i) children are returned to their care-givers as soon as possible; (ii) children are informed of their rights not to be recruited; and (iii) where children have been formally demobilized, others are informed of this fact;
- Any assembly areas must be sufficiently far from the conflict zones to ensure security. Particular problems may include: (i) some children may not be able to go home; (ii) some areas may be inaccessible for tracing; (iii) families of some children may be in camps for refugees or internally displaced persons; and (iv) the risk of the children being placed in institutions.

Illegally recruited children who leave the armed forces or armed groups at any time should not be considered as deserters. Child soldiers retain their rights as children.

Special assistance and protection measures must be taken on behalf of children and those recruited as children. See for example "Basic Rights Recognized for the Angolan Under-aged Soldiers".

Ensure to the extent possible that demobilized children return to their communities under conditions of safety.

Ensure that demobilized children are not discriminated against in services and benefits for demobilized soldiers.

Ensure that the rights of children involved in the demobilization process are respected by the media, researchers and others.

With specific regard to journalists, a code of conduct should be developed in order to prevent the exploitation of child soldiers by the media. Such a code should take account of *inter alia* the manner in which sensitive issues are raised, the child's right to anonymity and the frequency of contacts with the media.

RETURN TO FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LIFE

Family reunification is the principal factor in effective social reintegration.

- For family reunification to be successful, special attention must be paid to re-establishing the emotional link between the child and the family prior to and following return;
- Where children have not been reunited with their family, their need to establish and maintain stable emotional relationships must be recognized;
- Institutionalization should only be used as a last resort, for the shortest possible time, and efforts to find family-based solutions should continue.

Programmes should be developed with the communities, built on existing resources, taking account of the context and community priorities, values and traditions.

- Programmes responding to the needs of the children should be developed. They should seek to enhance the self- esteem of children, promote their capacity to protect their own integrity and to construct a positive life. Activities must take into account the age and stage of development of the child and accommodate the particular requirements of girls and children with special needs;
- Programmes can only develop through relationships of trust and confidence, require time and a commitment of resources, and will necessitate a close and on- going cooperation between all actors involved;
- The impact of the conflict on children and their families must be assessed in order to develop effective programming. This should be undertaken through interviews and discussions with the children concerned, the families and the community as well as, where appropriate, the government. The information should be gathered as early as possible to enable preparation and planning;
- Policies and strategies to address the situation of demobilized child soldiers should be developed and implemented on the basis of such assessments.

The capacity of the family and community to care for and protect the child should be developed and supported.

- Identify and support traditional resources and practices in the community which can support the psycho-social integration of children affected by war;
- Assess and understand the socio-economic context with specific reference to poverty, and food and nutritional security;
- Identify and build on the traditional ways of generating income, traditional apprenticeships, credit and money-making schemes;
- Initiate dialogue with communities to understand their main concerns for their children and their perception of their own roles and responsibilities with regard to the children.

Programmes targeted at former child soldiers should be integrated into programmes for the benefit of all war-affected children.

- Whilst stressing that it is essential to normalize the life of child soldiers, it is important to recognize that all children in a community will have been affected to some degree by the conflict. Programmes for former child soldiers should therefore be integrated into efforts to

address the situation of all children affected by the conflict, while ensuring the continuing implementation of specific rights and benefits of demobilized children;

- The existing health, education and social services within the communities should be supported.

Provision should be made for educational activities which reflect: the loss of educational opportunities as a consequence of participation; the age and stage of development of the children; and their potential for promoting development of self-esteem.

Provision should be made for relevant vocational training and opportunities for (self-) employment, including for children with disabilities.

- Upon completion of vocational skills training, trainees should be provided with the relevant tools and, where possible, with start-up loans to promote self-reliance.

Recreational activities are essential for psycho-social well-being.

- Recreational activities should be included in all reintegration programmes for war-affected children. These contribute to the children's psycho-social well-being, facilitate the reconciliation process and form part of their rights as children.

Programme development and implementation should incorporate the participation of the children and, with due regard for the context of reintegration, reflect their needs and concerns.

Psycho-social programmes should assist children to develop and build those capacities that will facilitate a re-attachment to families and communities.

Monitoring and follow-up of the children should take place to ensure reintegration and receipt of rights and benefits. Use community resources for this, e.g. catechists, teachers or others, depending on the situation.

In order to be successful, reintegration of the child within the community should be carried out in the framework of efforts towards national reconciliation.

Programmes to prevent, demobilize and reintegrate child soldiers should be jointly and constantly monitored and evaluated with communities.

Cape Town, 30 April 1997.

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Attachment 5—Liberian Peace Agreement

Comprehensive Peace Agreement Between the Government of Liberia and the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) and Political Parties

Accra 18th August, 2003

Peace Agreement Between the Government of Liberia (GOL), The Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), The Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) and the Political Parties

Accra, Ghana, 18th August 2003

We, the Government of The Republic of Liberia, The Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), The Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) and the Political Parties

Having met in Akosombo and Accra, Ghana, from 4 June, 2003 to 18th August 2003, to seek a negotiated settlement of the crisis in Liberia, within the framework of the ECOWAS Peace Process for Liberia, under the auspices of the current Chairman of ECOWAS, His Excellency John Agyekum Kufuor, President of the Republic of Ghana, and the mediation of General Abdulsalami Abubakar, former Head of State of Nigeria;

Gravely concerned about the current civil war that has engulfed our country leading to loss of innumerable lives, wanton destruction of our infrastructure and properties and massive displacement of our people;

Recalling earlier initiatives undertaken by the Member States of ECOWAS and the International Community, aimed at bringing about a negotiated settlement of the conflict in Liberia;

Moved by the imperative need to respond to the ardent desire of the people of Liberia for genuine lasting peace, national unity and reconciliation;

Reaffirming the objective of promoting better relations among ourselves by ensuring a stable political environment in which our people can live in freedom under the law and in true and lasting peace, free from any threat against their security;

Determined to concert our efforts to promote democracy in the sub-region on the basis of political pluralism and respect for fundamental human rights as embodied in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and other widely recognised international instruments on human rights, including those contained in the Constitution of the Republic of Liberia;

Guided by the principles of democratic practice, good governance and respect for the rule of law enunciated in the ECOWAS Declaration on Political Principles of 1991 and the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance adopted in 2001;

Committed to promoting an all inclusive participation in governance and the advancement of democracy in Liberia, as well as promoting full respect for international humanitarian law and human rights;

Concerned about the socio-economic well being of the people of Liberia;

Determined to foster mutual trust and confidence amongst ourselves and establish mechanisms which will facilitate genuine healing and reconciliation amongst Liberians;

Also Determined to establish sustainable peace and security, and pledging forthwith to settle all past, present and future differences by peaceful and legal means and to refrain from the threat of, or use of force;

Recognising that the Liberian crisis also has external dimensions that call for good neighbourliness in order to have durable peace and stability in the Mano River Union States and in the sub-region;

Re-committing ourselves to the scrupulous observance of the [Ceasefire and Cessation of Hostilities Agreement](#) signed at Accra, Ghana on 17th June, 2003, which constitutes an integral part of this Peace Agreement and is thereby appended as Annex I to the present Agreement;

Re-calling the establishment in 2002, of an International Contact Group on Liberia to support the efforts of ECOWAS in bringing durable peace to Liberia;

Committed to the establishment of an orderly transition process, to prevent the outbreak of future civil conflict in Liberia and the consequences of conflicts;

Desirous of seeking international assistance and support in restoring peace and stability to Liberia;

**HEREBY AGREE AS FOLLOWS:
PART ONE
ARTICLE I**

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this Agreement:

"AU" means the African Union;

"Ceasefire Agreement" means the Ceasefire and Cessation of Hostilities Agreement signed by the GOL, the LURD and the MODEL on 17th June 2003;

"CMC" means the Contracts and Monopolies Commission;

"DDRR" means Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration;

"ECOWAS" means the Economic Community of West African States;

"EU" means the European Union;

"GOL" means the present Government of Liberia;

"GRC" means the Governance Reform Commission;

"ICGL" means the International Contact Group on Liberia;

"ICRC" means the International Committee of the Red Cross;

"IMC" means the Implementation Monitoring Committee;

"INCHR" means Independent National Commission on Human Rights established under Article XII of this Agreement;

"Irregular Forces" mean all forces that are not established in accordance with the Constitution and laws of the Republic of Liberia

"Interposition Force" means the ECOWAS Mission in Liberia which will be part of the ISF;

"ISF" means the International Stabilisation Force established under paragraph 7 of the Ceasefire Agreement;

"JMC" means The Joint Monitoring Committee established under paragraph 6 of the Ceasefire Agreement;

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"JVT" means the Joint Verification Team established under paragraph 3 of the Ceasefire Agreement;

"LNP" means the Liberian National Police;

"LURD" means Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy;

"MODEL" means Movement for Democracy in Liberia;

"NCDDRR" means the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration established under Article VI of this Agreement;

"NEC" means the National Electoral Commission;

"NTGL" means the National Transitional Government of Liberia;

"NTLA" means National Transitional Legislative Assembly;

"Parties" means the Parties to this Agreement;

"Political Parties" means Political Parties registered under the laws of the Republic of Liberia.

"The Agreement" means this Comprehensive Peace Agreement;

"Chairman" means the Head of the NTGL;

"Vice-Chairman" means the Deputy Head of the NTGL;

"TRC" means Truth and Reconciliation Commission established under Article XIII of this Agreement;

"UN" means the United Nations Organization;

"UNCIVPOL" means the United Nations Civil Police Component of the United Nations Stabilisation Force;

"UNICEF" means United Nations Children Fund;

"UNHCR" means the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights;

"UNDP" means the United Nations Development Programme.

**PART TWO
CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES**

**ARTICLE II
CEASEFIRE**

The armed conflict between the present Government of Liberia (GOL), the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) is hereby ended with immediate effect. Accordingly, all the Parties to the Ceasefire Agreement shall ensure that the ceasefire established at 0001 hours on 18th June, 2003, results in the observation of a total and permanent cessation of hostilities forthwith.

**ARTICLE III
CEASEFIRE MONITORING**

1. The Parties call on ECOWAS to immediately establish a Multinational Force that will be deployed as an Interposition Force in Liberia, to secure the ceasefire, create a zone of separation between the belligerent forces and thus provide a safe corridor for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and free movement of persons.
2. The mandate of the ECOWAS Interposition Force shall also include the following:
 - a. Facilitating and monitoring the disengagement of forces as provided under Article V of this Agreement;
 - b. Obtaining data and information on activities relating to military forces of the parties to the Ceasefire Agreement and coordinating all military movements;
 - c. Establishing conditions for the initial stages of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) activities;
 - d. Ensuring respect by the Parties for the definitive cessation of hostilities and all other aspects of the Ceasefire Agreement;
 - e. Ensuring the security of senior political and military leaders;
 - f. Also ensuring the security of all personnel and experts involved in the implementation of this Agreement in collaboration with all parties;
 - g. Monitoring the storage of arms, munitions and equipment, including supervising the collection, storage and custody of battlefield or offensive armament in the hands of combatants;

3. The Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) established under the terms of the Ceasefire Agreement, and composed of representatives of ECOWAS, the UN, AU, ICGL and Parties to the Ceasefire Agreement shall continue to supervise and monitor the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement. ;
4. Prior to the deployment of the International Stabilisation Force, a representative of ECOWAS shall chair the JMC.
5. The JMC shall:
 - a. Resolve disputes concerning implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement, including the investigation of any alleged violation and also recommend remedial action for confirmed ceasefire violations.
 - b. Submit for approval, its recommendations to the Implementation Monitoring Committee (IMC) referred to under Article XXVIII(2) and (3) in this Agreement which is seized with the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of this Peace Agreement.
6. The Parties shall provide the JMC with any relevant information on the organisation, equipment and locations of their forces, and such information will be kept confidential.

**ARTICLE IV
INTERNATIONAL STABILIZATION FORCE**

1. The GOL, the LURD, the MODEL and the Political Parties agree on the need for the deployment of an International Stabilization Force (ISF) in Liberia. Accordingly, the Parties hereby request the United Nations in collaboration with ECOWAS, the AU and the ICGL to facilitate, constitute, and deploy a United Nations Chapter VII force in the Republic of Liberia to support the transitional government and to assist in the implementation of this Agreement.
2. The ECOWAS Interposition Force is expected to become a part of the International Stabilisation Force.
3. The Parties request the ISF to assume the following mandate:
 - a. Observe and monitor the ceasefire;
 - b. Investigate violations of the security aspects of this Agreement and take necessary measures to ensure compliance.

- c. Monitor disengagement and cantonment of forces of the Parties and provide security at disarmament/cantonment sites;
 - d. Collect weapons at disarmament sites and elsewhere and ensure that the weapons so collected are properly accounted for and adequately secured;
 - e. Assist in the coordination and delivery of humanitarian assistance to displaced persons, refugees, returnees and other war-affected persons;
 - f. Facilitate the provision and maintenance of humanitarian assistance and protect displaced persons, refugees, returnees and other affected persons;
 - g. Verify all information, data and activities relating to the military forces of the Parties;
 - h. Along with ECOWAS and the International Contact Group on Liberia, provide advice and support to the Transitional Government provided for in this Agreement on the formation of a new and restructured Liberian Army;
 - i. Assist with security for elections;
 - j. Take the necessary means whenever the need arises and as it deems within its capabilities, to protect civilians, senior political and military leaders under imminent threat of physical violence;
 - k. Coordinate with ECOWAS in the implementation of this Agreement;
4. The Parties expect that units of the ISF shall be selected from countries acceptable to all the Parties to the Ceasefire Agreement.
 5. The Parties to this Agreement call on the ISF to remain in place until otherwise determined by the UN Security Council and the elected Government of Liberia.

**ARTICLE V
DISENGAGEMENT**

1. There shall be immediate disengagement of forces of the Parties to the Ceasefire Agreement in line with the principles of that Agreement.
2. Disengagement of forces shall mean the immediate breaking of tactical contact between opposing military forces of the GOL, the LURD, and the MODEL, at places where they are in direct contact or within range of direct fire weapons.
3. Immediate disengagement at the initiative of all military units shall be limited to the effective range of direct fire weapons. Further disengagement to pull all weapons out of

range shall be conducted under the guidance of the ISF. The Parties to the Ceasefire Agreement undertake to remain in their disengagement positions until the conclusion of cantonment plans by the International Stabilisation Force and the NCDDRR established under Article VI(8) of the Agreement. They are also responsible for armed groups operating within their territories.

4. Where immediate disengagement is not possible, a framework and sequence of disengagement shall be agreed upon by all parties to the Ceasefire through the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC).
5. Wherever disengagement by movement is impossible or impractical, alternative solutions requiring that weapons are rendered safe shall be designed by the ISF.

PART THREE

ARTICLE VI

CANTONMENT, DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION (CDDRR)

1. The Parties commit themselves to ensuring the prompt and efficient implementation of a national process of cantonment, disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration.
2. The ISF shall conduct the disarmament of all combatants of the Parties including paramilitary groups.
3. Following disengagement, all forces shall withdraw from combat positions to cantonment locations in accordance with the withdrawal and cantonment plan to be published by the International Stabilisation Force and the NCDDRR, no later than thirty (30) days after installation of the NTGL. The current Armed Forces of Liberia shall be confined to the barracks, their arms placed in armouries and their ammunition in storage bunkers.
4. All arms and ammunition shall be placed under constant surveillance by the ISF.
5. The JMC shall verify the reported data and information provided by the GOL, the LURD and the MODEL about their forces. All forces shall be restricted to the declared and recorded locations and all movements shall be authorized by the JMC and the ISF.
6. All combatants shall remain in the declared and recorded locations until they proceed to reintegration activities or training for entry into the restructured Liberian armed forces or into civilian life.
7. The ISF is requested to deploy to all disarmament and demobilization locations in order to facilitate and monitor the program of disarmament.

8. There shall be an interdisciplinary and interdepartmental National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (NCDDRR), to coordinate DDDR activities.
9. The NCDDRR shall comprise representatives from relevant NTGL Agencies, the GOL, LURD, MODEL, ECOWAS, the United Nations, the African Union and the ICGL.
10. It shall oversee and coordinate the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration of combatants, working closely with the ISF and all relevant international and Liberian institutions and agencies.
11. Upon the signing of the present Agreement, the Transitional Government provided for in this Agreement, shall request the International Community to assist in the implementation of the Cantonment, Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration program through the provision of adequate financial and technical resources.

**PART FOUR
SECURITY SECTOR REFORM**

**ARTICLE VII
DISBANDMENT OF IRREGULAR FORCES, REFORMING AND
RESTRUCTURING OF THE LIBERIAN ARMED FORCES**

1. The Parties agree that:
 - a. All irregular forces shall be disbanded.
 - b. The Armed Forces of Liberia shall be restructured and will have a new command structure. The forces may be drawn from the ranks of the present GOL forces, the LURD and the MODEL, as well as from civilians with appropriate background and experience. The Parties request that ECOWAS, the UN, AU, and the ICGL provide advisory staff, equipment, logistics and experienced trainers for the security reform effort. The Parties also request that the United States of America play a lead role in organising this restructuring program.
2. The following Principles shall be taken into account in the formation of the restructured Liberian Armed Forces:
 - a. Incoming service personnel shall be screened with respect to educational, professional, medical and fitness qualifications as well as prior history with regard to human rights abuses;

- b. The restructured force shall take into account the country's national balance. It shall be composed without any political bias to ensure that it represents the national character of Liberia;
 - c. The Mission of the Armed Forces of Liberia shall be to defend the national sovereignty and in extremis, respond to natural disasters;
 - d. All Parties shall cooperate with ECOWAS, the UN, the AU, the ICGL and the United States of America.
3. All Parties together shall organise Information, Education and Communication (IEC) programs to sensitise the Liberian public as to the mission and activities of the restructuring plan.

ARTICLE VIII
RESTRUCTURING OF THE LIBERIAN NATIONAL POLICE (LNP)
AND OTHER SECURITY SERVICES

1. There shall be an immediate restructuring of the National Police Force, the Immigration Force, Special Security Service (SSS), custom security guards and such other statutory security units. These restructured security forces shall adopt a professional orientation that emphasizes democratic values and respect for human rights, a non-partisan approach to duty and the avoidance of corrupt practices.
2. The Special Security Units including the Anti-Terrorist Unit, the Special Operations Division (SOD) of the Liberian National Police Force and such paramilitary groups that operate within organisations as the National Ports Authority (NPA), the Liberian Telecommunications Corporation (NTC), the Liberian Refining Corporation (LPRC) and the Airports shall be disarmed and restructured.
3. Until the deployment of newly trained national police, maintenance of law and order throughout Liberia shall be the responsibility of an interim police force.
4. The Parties call on the United Nations Civil Police components (UNCIVPOL) within the ISF to monitor the activities of the interim police force and assist in the maintenance of law and order throughout Liberia.
5. The Parties also call on UNCIVPOL and other relevant International Agencies to assist in the development and implementation of training programs for the LNP.
6. The interim police force will only be allowed to carry side arms.
7. All large calibre weapons shall be turned over to the ISF.

**PART FIVE
RELEASE OF PRISONERS AND ABDUCTEES**

**ARTICLE IX
RELEASE OF PRISONERS AND ABDUCTEES**

All political prisoners and prisoners of war, including non-combatants and abductees shall be released immediately and unconditionally by the Parties.

**ARTICLE X
ASSISTANCE TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS
AND RELEVANT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES**

All Parties shall provide the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other relevant national and international agencies with information regarding their prisoners of war, abductees or persons detained because of the war, to enable the ICRC and other relevant national and international agencies visit them and verify any details regarding their condition and status before their release.

ARTICLE XI

The Parties call on the ICRC and such other relevant national and international agencies to give all the necessary assistance to the released persons, including re-location to any part of Liberia.

**PART SIX
HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES**

**ARTICLE XII
HUMAN RIGHTS**

1a. The Parties agree that the basic civil and political rights enunciated in the Declaration and Principles on Human Rights adopted by the United Nations, African Union, and ECOWAS, in particular, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, and as contained in the Laws of Liberia, shall be fully guaranteed and respected within Liberia.

b. These basic civil and political rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from torture, the right to a fair trial, freedom of conscience, expression and association, and the right to take part in the governance of one's country.

2a. The Parties agree on the need for the establishment of an Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR).

b. The INCHR shall monitor compliance with the basic rights guaranteed in the present Peace

Agreement as well as promote human rights education throughout the various sectors of Liberian society, including schools, the media, the police and the military.

3. The INCHR shall work together with local Liberian human rights and civil society organizations, international human rights organisations and other relevant U.N. agencies to monitor and strengthen the observance of human rights in the country.

4. Technical, financial and material assistance may be sought by the INCHR from the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR), the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights and other relevant international organizations.

ARTICLE XIII TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

1. A Truth and Reconciliation Commission shall be established to provide a forum that will address issues of impunity, as well as an opportunity for both the victims and perpetrators of human rights violations to share their experiences, in order to get a clear picture of the past to facilitate genuine healing and reconciliation.
2. In the spirit of national reconciliation, the Commission shall deal with the root causes of the crises in Liberia, including human rights violations.
3. This Commission shall, among other things, recommend measures to be taken for the rehabilitation of victims of human rights violations.
4. Membership of the Commission shall be drawn from a cross-section of Liberian society. The Parties request that the International Community provide the necessary financial and technical support for the operations of the Commission.

PART SEVEN HUMANITARIAN ISSUES

ARTICLE XIV HUMANITARIAN RELIEF

1a. The Parties re-affirm the commitment made in the Ceasefire Agreement, to provide security guarantees for safe and unhindered access by all humanitarian agencies to vulnerable groups throughout the country, in order to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance in accordance with international conventions, principles and norms governing humanitarian operations.

b. Accordingly, the Parties agree to guarantee the security and movement of humanitarian personnel, that of their properties, goods transported, stocked or distributed, as well as their projects and beneficiaries.

2. The Transitional Government provided for in this agreement shall ensure the establishment of effective administrative and security infrastructure to monitor and support the implementation of these guarantees contained in sub-paragraph 1b of the present Article XIV.

3. The said Transitional Government shall request the International Community to assist in providing humanitarian assistance for those in need, including internally displaced persons, refugees and returnees.

4. The Parties shall ensure the presence of security guarantees for the safe return and resettlement of refugees and internally displaced persons and the free movement of persons and goods.

ARTICLE XV INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

The Parties undertake to respect as well as encourage the Liberian populace to also respect the principles and rules of International Humanitarian law in post-conflict Liberia.

PART EIGHT POLITICAL ISSUES

ARTICLE XVI ESTABLISHMENT OF A GOVERNANCE REFORM COMMISSION

1. A Governance Reform Commission is hereby established. The Commission shall be a vehicle for the promotion of the principles of good governance in Liberia.
2. The mandate of the Commission shall be to:
 - a. Review the existing program for the Promotion of Good Governance in Liberia, with the objective of adjusting its scope and strategy for implementation;
 - b. Develop public sector management reforms through assessment, reforms, capacity building and performance monitoring;
 - c. Ensure transparency and accountability in governance in all government institutions and activities, including acting as the Public Ombudsman;
 - d. Ensure subsidiarity in governance through decentralisation and participation;
 - e. Ensure a national and regional balance in appointments without compromising quality and integrity;
 - f. Ensure an enabling environment which will attract private sector direct investment;

will support sustainable development goals;

e. Collaborate with the international institutions to provide finance to Liberia in carrying out its functions

3a. The Commission shall consist of five (5) members appointed by the Chairman, on the approval of the NTLA, from the broad spectrum of civil society, who may or may not be technocrats.

b. The members shall be persons of sound judgement and integrity who are independent of the commercial sector. The members must have sufficient experience to be able to review contract documents and procedures to ensure that public funds are used without favour and with complete transparency.

c. The members of the CMC shall be assisted by independent national and international experts.

ARTICLE XVIII ELECTORAL REFORM

1. The Parties agree that the present electoral system in Liberia shall be reformed.

2a. In this regard and amongst other measures that may be undertaken, the National Elections Commission (NEC) shall be reconstituted and shall be independent. It shall operate in conformity with UN standards, in order to ensure that the rights and interests of Liberians are guaranteed, and that the elections are organized in a manner that is acceptable to all.

b. Appointments to the NEC shall be made by the Chairman with the advice and consent of the NTLA within three months from the entry into force of this Agreement. It shall be composed of men and women of integrity.

ARTICLE IX ORGANISATION OF ELECTIONS

1. The Parties agree that, given the present circumstances, and until appropriate conditions are met, the Presidential and General elections scheduled for October, 2003 shall be postponed.

2. National elections shall be conducted not later than October, 2005.

3. In order to create appropriate conditions for elections, a re-demarcation of constituencies shall be carried out in order to take account of newly created Counties.

4a. The Parties agree that the Transitional Government provided for in this Agreement shall request the United Nations, the African Union, ECOWAS and other members of the International Community as appropriate, to jointly conduct, monitor, and supervise the next elections in the country.

b. Voters education and registration programs shall be organized by the newly reconstituted NEC, in collaboration with other national and International organisations under the supervision of the United Nations.

**ARTICLE XX
INTERIM PERIOD**

1a. With the exit of the President Charles Taylor of the Republic of Liberia, the GOL shall be headed by the Vice President for an interim period.

b. The Vice President shall assume the duties of the current President for a period not beyond 14th October 2003, whereupon the Transitional Government provided for in this Agreement shall be immediately installed.

**ARTICLE XXI
ESTABLISHMENT OF A TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT**

1. An all-inclusive Transitional Government to be called the National Transitional Government of Liberia, (NTGL), is hereby established to replace the present Government of Liberia.
2. The NTGL shall be inaugurated and fully commence operations by 14th October, 2003 and its mandate shall expire on the third Monday of January 2006 when the next elected Government of Liberia shall be inaugurated.
3. Immediately upon the installation of the NTGL in Liberia, all cabinet Ministers, Deputy and Assistant Ministers, heads of autonomous agencies, commissions, heads of public corporations and State-owned enterprises of the current GOL shall be deemed to have resigned. This does not preclude re-appointment according to the appropriate provisions of this Agreement.
4. The authority of the NTGL shall be established and recognised throughout the territory of the Republic of Liberia, immediately upon its installation in Monrovia. The NTGL shall have control over the entire territory of Liberia.
5. The LURD, MODEL, and all irregular forces of the GOL shall cease to exist as military forces, upon completion of disarmament.
6. There shall be no restriction on members of the LURD and MODEL to engage in national politics through the formation of political parties or otherwise, save and except those restrictions imposed on all parties and associations by the relevant laws of Liberia.

ARTICLE XXII
MANDATE OF THE NATIONAL TRANSITIONAL
GOVERNMENT OF LIBERIA

1. The primary responsibility of the NTGL shall be to ensure the scrupulous implementation of this Peace Agreement.
2. In addition to normal State functions, its mandate shall include the following:
 - a. Implementation of the provisions of the Ceasefire Agreement;
 - b. Overseeing and coordinating implementation of the political and rehabilitation programs enunciated in this Peace Agreement;
 - c. Promotion of reconciliation to ensure the restoration of peace and stability to the country and its people;
 - d. Contribution to the preparation and conduct of internationally supervised elections in October 2005, for the inauguration of an elected Government for Liberia in January 2006.

ARTICLE XXIII
STRUCTURE OF THE NTGL

The NTGL shall consist of three branches, namely:

- i. The National Transitional Legislative Assembly (NTLA);
- ii. The Executive; and
- iii. The Judiciary.

ARTICLE XXIV
THE NATIONAL TRANSITIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (NTLA)

1. There is hereby established a National Transitional Legislative Assembly (NTLA) in Liberia which shall reflect a broad spectrum of the Liberian society.
2. The NTLA shall be unicameral in nature and shall replace, within the transitional period, the entire Legislature of the Republic of Liberia.
3. The NTLA shall have a maximum of Seventy-six (76) members who shall come from the following entities:
 - a. Each of the fifteen (15) Counties.
 - b. The present Government of Liberia, the LURD, MODEL, the Political Parties, Civil Society and Interest Groups including the National Bar Association, the Liberian Business Organisations,

Women Organizations, Trade Unions, Teachers Union, Refugees, the Liberians in the Diaspora/America and the Youth.

4. The formula for the composition of the NTLA shall be as follows:

GOL -12 seats LURD -12 seats MODEL -12 seats Political Parties -18 seats Civil Society and Special Interest Groups -7 seats Counties -15 seats

5 a. Selection of members of the NTLA shall be carried out in Liberia and shall be subject to internal consultations amongst the different entities identified in paragraphs 3 and 4 above.

b. The Mediation Committee from the Accra Peace Talks may be present during consultations for the selection of members of the Legislative Assembly and shall ensure that the members of the Assembly meet the criteria prescribed in Appendix 1 to Annex 2

6 a. The NTLA shall elect a Speaker to head the Assembly as well as one (1) Deputy Speaker.

b. Guidelines for the elections are defined under Annex 2 which is attached to this Agreement and is an integral part of the Peace Agreement.

c. The Speaker and Deputy Speaker within the NTGL shall not contest for any elective office during the 2005 elections.

7. The NTLA shall have responsibility for the following:

a. Assuming responsibility for the country's legislative functions;

b. Approving the policies and programs of the NTGL for implementation by the Cabinet;

c. Encouraging and supporting the emergence of a new democratic space, particularly in the areas of human rights and freedom of expression.

8. Two-thirds (2/3) of members of the NTLA shall form the quorum for meetings of the Assembly.

9. The decisions of the NTLA shall require the approval of at least 51% of the entire membership of the NTLA.

10. The NTLA shall adopt rules of procedure for the conduct of its proceedings.

**ARTICLE XXV
THE EXECUTIVE**

1. The NTGL shall be headed by a person to be called the Transitional Chairman. The Transitional Chairman shall be assisted by a Transitional Vice-Chairman.
2. Selection of the Transitional Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be by consensus arising from a process of consultations undertaken by the accredited delegates and observers to the Peace Talks. The selection procedure is defined in Annex 2 to this Agreement.
3. The positions of Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be allocated to the Political Parties and the Civil Society.
4. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman, as well as all principal Cabinet Ministers within the NTGL shall not contest for any elective office during the 2005 elections to be held in Liberia.

**ARTICLE XXVI
THE CABINET**

1. The NTGL shall maintain the profile and structure of the Executive Branch of the present Government of Liberia.
2. In addition to the Commissions established by this Agreement, all existing public corporations and autonomous Agencies/Commissions shall operate under the present transitional arrangement, excluding the existing Commissions that have already been referred to under Articles XII and XIII of this Agreement.
3. The ministers, deputy and assistant ministers, heads of autonomous agencies, commissions, public corporations and state-owned enterprises, who should preferably be technocrats, shall be representatives of a broad cross-section of the Liberian society.
4. Allocation of ministerial positions, deputy and assistant ministerial positions, headship of autonomous agencies, commissions, public corporations and state-owned enterprises shall be made to the Parties to this Agreement through a process of negotiation. The allocations as agreed to by the Parties are contained in Annex 4 attached to the Agreement. Annex 4 is an integral part of this Agreement.
- 5a. The Parties shall forward to the Transitional Chairman within a period of seven (7) days, the name of one nominee for each position allocated to them.
- b. The Transitional Chairman shall within a three (3) day period, forward from the individual list of nominees from the Parties, the candidate for each position, to the NTLA. The NTLA shall, within seven (7) days, confirm or reject the candidate from each of the Parties' list for each position.

c. Where the NTLA is unable to confirm a candidate from any of the Parties' list so submitted, the Chairman shall, following the same procedure as in ěbi above and within three (3) days of receiving notification of non-confirmation from the NTLA, submit other name(s) which shall be obtained for the relevant Parties to the NTLA. The NTLA shall thereafter, within the same seven (7) day period, make a final selection thereon.

6. The mandate of the Cabinet shall include:

- a. Implementation of the decisions of the NTGL.
- b. Conduct of the usual activities of government ministries.
- c. Initiation of policies and recommendation of same to the Transitional Chairman for approval.

7. The Parties call on the United Nations, the ECOWAS, the AU, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, African Development Bank and other international institutions in a position to do so, to assign trained personnel and international experts for the purpose of providing technical support and assistance to the NTGL, especially for the functioning of its ministries and parastatals.

ARTICLE XXVII THE JUDICIARY

1. The Judiciary shall be the third organ of the NTGL. Its structure shall remain unchanged.
2. Immediately upon the installation of the NTGL, all members of the Supreme Court of Liberia i.e. the Chief Judge and all its Associate Justices shall be deemed to have resigned.
3. Under the NTGL, all new judicial appointments shall be made by the Chairman of the NTGL and approved by the NTLA. Nominations for such judicial appointments shall be based on a shortlist of candidates for each position recommended by the National Bar Association, including the female lawyers.
4. The Chief Justice and all Associate Justices within the NTGL shall not contest for any elective office during the 2005 elections to be held in Liberia.

ARTICLE XXVIII NATIONAL BALANCE

The Parties shall reflect national and gender balance in all elective and non-elective appointments within the NTGL.

**PART NINE
POST-CONFLICT REHABILITATION AND RECONSTRUCTION**

**ARTICLE XXIX
INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE**

1. In view of the recent appointment of the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative in Liberia, the Parties call for the urgent establishment of a consolidated United Nations Mission in Liberia that will have the resources to facilitate the implementation and coordination of the Political, Social, Economic and Security assistance to be extended under this Agreement.
2. The Parties also call on ECOWAS, in collaboration with the UN, AU, EU and ICGL, to set up a monitoring mechanism in the form of an Implementation Monitoring Committee (IMC) in Monrovia that will ensure effective and faithful implementation of the Peace Agreement by all the Parties.
3. The Parties agree on the need for regular joint meetings between this Implementation Monitoring Committee and representatives of the NTGL, in order to assess implementation of the provisions of this Agreement and agree on recommendations for enhanced implementation.
4. The Parties also agree on the need for ECOWAS, in collaboration with the UN, AU and International Community, to organise periodic donor conferences for resource mobilisation for post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction in Liberia.

**ARTICLE XXX
REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS**

- 1a. The NTGL, with the assistance of the International Community, shall design and implement a plan for the voluntary return and reintegration of Liberian refugees and internally displaced persons, including non-combatants, in accordance with international conventions, norms and practices.
- b. Refugees or internally displaced persons, desirous of returning to their original Counties or permanent residences, shall be assisted to do so.
- c. The Parties commit themselves to peaceful co-existence amongst returnees and non-returnees in all Counties.

**ARTICLE XXXI
VULNERABLE GROUPS**

1a. The NTGL shall accord particular attention to the issue of the rehabilitation of vulnerable groups or war victims (children, women, the elderly and the disabled) within Liberia, who have been severely affected by the conflict in Liberia.

b. With the support of the International Community, the NTGL shall design and implement a program for the rehabilitation of such war victims.

2a. The NTGL shall, in addition, accord special attention to the issue of child combatants.

b. It shall, accordingly, mobilize resources with the assistance of the International Community, especially in cooperation with the Office of the U.N. Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict, UNICEF, the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and other relevant agencies, to address their special demobilization and re-integration needs.

3. The NTGL, in formulating and implementing programs for national rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, for the moral, social and physical reconstruction of Liberia in the post-conflict period, shall ensure that the needs and potentials of the war victims are taken into account and that gender balance is maintained in apportioning responsibilities for program implementation.

**PART TEN
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PEACE AGREEMENT**

**ARTICLE XXXII
RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PARTIES**

1. The Parties to this Peace Agreement undertake that no effort shall be spared to effect the scrupulous respect for and implementation of the provisions contained in this Peace Agreement, to ensure the successful establishment and consolidation of lasting peace in Liberia.
2. The Parties shall ensure that the terms of the present Peace Agreement and written orders requiring compliance, are immediately communicated to all of their forces and supporters.
3. The terms of the Agreement shall concurrently be communicated to the civilian population by radio, television, print, electronic and other media. An Implementation Timetable for the Agreement is hereby attached as Annex 3

**ARTICLE XXXIII
ROLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY**

The Parties call on ECOWAS, the UN, the African Union and the International Contact Group on Liberia (ICGL), to use their good offices and best efforts to ensure that the spirit and content of this Peace Agreement are implemented in good faith and with integrity by the Parties.

**ARTICLE XXXIV
AMNESTY**

The NTGL shall give consideration to a recommendation for general amnesty to all persons and parties engaged or involved in military activities during the Liberian civil conflict that is the subject of this Agreement.

**ARTICLE XXXV
SPECIAL PROVISIONS**

- 1a. In order to give effect to paragraph 8(i) of the Ceasefire Agreement of 17th June 2003 signed by the GOL, the LURD and the MODEL, for the formation of a Transitional Government, the Parties agree on the need for an extra-Constitutional arrangement that will facilitate its formation and take into account the establishment and proper functioning of the entire transitional arrangement.
- b. Accordingly, the provisions of the present Constitution of the Republic of Liberia, the Statutes and all other Liberian laws, which relate to the establishment, composition and powers of the Executive, the Legislative and Judicial branches of the Government, are hereby suspended.
- c. For the avoidance of doubt, relevant provisions of the Constitution, statutes and other laws of Liberia which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Agreement are also hereby suspended.
- d. All other provisions of the 1986 Constitution of the Republic of Liberia shall remain in force.
- e. All suspended provisions of the Constitution, Statutes and other laws of Liberia, affected as a result of this Agreement, shall be deemed to be restored with the inauguration of the elected Government by January 2006. All legal obligations of the transitional government shall be inherited by the elected government.

PART ELEVEN

**ARTICLE XXXVI
SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES**

Any dispute within the NTGL, arising out of the application or interpretation of the provisions of this Agreement shall be settled through a process of mediation to be organised by ECOWAS in collaboration with the UN, the AU and the ICGL.

**ARTICLE XXXVII
ENTRY INTO FORCE**

The present Peace Agreement shall enter into force immediately upon its signature by the Parties.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the duly authorized representatives of the Parties have signed this Agreement.

Done at Accra, this 18th day of the month of August, 2003, in three original texts in the English and French languages, each text being equally authentic.

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA (GOL)

FOR LIBERIANS UNITED FOR
RECONCILIATION & DEMOCRACY
(LURD)

FOR NATIONAL PATRIOTIC PARTY

FOR LIBERIAN PEOPLE'S PARTY

FOR LABOR PARTY

FOR LIBERIAN ACTION PARTY

FOR NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY

FOR REFORMATION ALLIANCE PARTY

FOR TRUE WHIG PARTY

FOR LIBERIA NATIONAL UNION

FOR PROGRESSIVE PEOPLES PARTY

FOR THE MOVEMENT FOR
DEMOCRACY IN LIBERIA
(MODEL)

FOR UNITY PARTY

FOR NATIONAL REFORMATION PARTY

FOR LIBERIA UNIFICATION PARTY

FOR PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY

FOR FREE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

FOR ALL-LIBERIAN COALITION PARTY

FOR UNITED PEOPLE'S PARTY

FOR EQUAL RIGHTS PARTY

FOR NEW DEAL MOVEMENT

AS WITNESSES:

FOR INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL
FOR LIBERIA (IRCL)

FOR LIBERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION

FOR LIBERIA LEADERSHIP
FORUM

THE MEDIATOR

FOR UNITED NATIONS

FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION
CO-CHAIR OF THE INTERNATIONAL
CONTACT GROUP ON LIBERIA

FOR THE MANO RIVER WOMEN
PEACE NETWORK (MARWOPNET)

FOR LIBERIANS IN DIASPORA

FOR CIVIL SOCIETY
ORGANISATIONS IN LIBERIA

FOR ECOWAS

FOR THE AFRICAN UNION

FOR THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA
CO-CHAIR OF THE INTERNATIONAL
CONTACT GROUP ON LIBERIA

Attachment 6—UN Report for UNMIL

United Nations
Security Council
Distr.: General
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Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on Liberia

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1497 (2003) of 1 August 2003, by which the Council authorized the deployment of a multinational force in Liberia and declared its readiness to establish a follow-on United Nations stabilization force to support the transitional government and to assist in the implementation of a comprehensive peace agreement for Liberia. By that resolution, the Council also requested that I submit recommendations on the size, structure and mandate of such a United Nations force. I dispatched a multidisciplinary assessment mission to Liberia to assess the situation on the ground and consult with the Liberian parties and other stakeholders.

2. The present report provides a brief historical background and update of the situation in Liberia. It also outlines my recommendations on the role the United Nations can play to facilitate the effective implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed on 18 August 2003 by the Liberian parties, including through the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation.

II. Historical background

3. In September 1997, upon the completion of the 1990-1997 peace process, the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) withdrew from the country. The last contingent of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) also withdrew from Liberia in November 1999. On 1 November 1997, I established the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Liberia (UNOL). The primary task of the Office was assisting the Government of Liberia in consolidating peace after the election of President Charles Taylor in the multiparty elections of July 1997.

4. With the full support of the Security Council, the United Nations country team, and national stakeholders, including prominent civil society organizations, UNOL tried to facilitate the promotion of national reconciliation, good governance and respect for the rule of law and human rights. The Office also helped to mobilize international assistance for the implementation of

reconstruction and development programmes. On 23 April 2003, the Security Council endorsed the revised mandate of UNOL as agreed with the Government of Liberia. In addition to its initial tasks, UNOL was to focus on assisting the Government of Liberia in addressing its expressed capacity-building needs in the areas of human rights and preparations for elections, as well as on developing a peace-building strategy integrating political objectives, programme assistance and human rights considerations.

5. Those peace-building efforts were seriously hampered by the inability of the Government and opposition party leaders to resolve their differences over key issues of governance. The Government's policy of exclusion and harassment of political opponents, as well as systematic abuses of human rights, especially by government militia and security agencies, gravely undermined efforts to promote national reconciliation. This situation, coupled with the absence of effective reform of the security sector, contributed to the resumption of the civil war in Liberia. The two rebel groups that emerged in 1999 and 2002, respectively, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), vowed to overthrow President Taylor's Government. Many of the LURD rebels are adherents of the various factions that participated in the first civil war (1989-1997) but were not absorbed into the armed and security forces of Liberia after President Taylor took office.

6. Several attempts by civil society organizations to promote dialogue between the Government of Liberia and the rebel movements proved unsuccessful. As part of the confidence-building process facilitated by King Mohammed VI of Morocco among heads of State of the Mano River Union countries, a summit meeting was convened at Rabat on 17 February 2002. The leaders pledged to resolve their differences through a Joint Security Committee established at the subregional level. The Rabat dialogue process, which was expected to also help resolve the Liberian conflict, was suspended when President Taylor failed to attend a follow-up summit scheduled for 9 September 2002 in Guinea, citing concerns for his personal security.

7. On 17 September 2002, a 10-member International Contact Group on Liberia was established in New York under the co-chairmanship of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the European Union, as a means of involving the international community further in efforts to resolve the Liberian crisis. The Contact Group held four meetings to chart the way forward. On 13 December 2002, the Security Council, in a presidential statement (S/PRST/2002/36), proposed that the Council and the international community cooperate to develop a comprehensive strategy to address the situation in Liberia and the threat it posed to international and regional peace and security. The Council further expressed its commitment to an expanded role for UNOL.

8. From 4 to 9 May 2003, at the request of President Taylor, I dispatched a joint United Nations-African Union-ECOWAS multidisciplinary needs assessment mission to Liberia. The purpose of the mission was to evaluate the conditions for the holding of free and fair elections and to explore ways in which the international community could help to find a peaceful and lasting solution to the civil conflict. The assessment mission noted the overwhelming view of the Liberian political parties that the prevailing conditions in Liberia were not conducive to the holding of elections then scheduled for October 2003. The Liberian parties also indicated that the

immediate and unconditional cessation of hostilities and the convening of peace negotiations among all concerned parties were the most pressing requirements for restoring peace to the country.

III. Recent political and military developments

9. By early May 2003, the two rebel movements had gained control of nearly two thirds of the country and were threatening to seize Monrovia. By intense regional and international pressure, the Government and the rebel movements were compelled to seek a negotiated settlement to the civil war. The efforts by the international community to help resolve the conflict culminated in the convening on 4 June 2003 in Accra, by the current Chairman of ECOWAS, the President of Ghana, John Kufuor, of direct peace negotiations involving all concerned Liberian parties. Attending were representatives of the Government of Liberia, LURD, MODEL, 18 registered political parties, and civil society organizations. The peace talks were facilitated by the ECOWAS mediator, former Nigerian Head of State General Abdulsalami Abubakar, with the support of representatives of the United Nations, the African Union, the United States of America and the International Contact Group. At the opening ceremony, President Taylor said that he was prepared to step down in the interest of peace. On 17 June 2003, a ceasefire agreement was signed. The agreement was subsequently broken, however, when the LURD forces entered Monrovia on several occasions, plunging Liberia into a new cycle of violence.

10. On 28 June, I wrote to the President of the Security Council calling for the deployment of a multinational force, under the lead of a Member State, to reverse Liberia's drift towards total disintegration. I later requested the United States Government to consider spearheading the deployment of that force. At a summit meeting held at Dakar on 2 July, ECOWAS leaders decided to deploy a vanguard force to Liberia to help to stabilize the security situation and facilitate the handover of power by President Taylor. The United States subsequently announced that it would position a military force off the coast of Liberia to support the deployment of ECOWAS forces but that its role would be limited in time and scope.

11. On 8 July, I informed the Council of my decision to appoint Jacques Paul Klein as my Special Representative for Liberia. In a further letter dated 29 July to the President of the Security Council, I outlined a three-phased deployment of international troops to Liberia, which would include an ECOWAS vanguard force, followed by a reinforced multinational force, which in turn would be relieved by a United Nations peacekeeping operation. At an extraordinary summit in Accra on 31 July, ECOWAS leaders decided that the deployment into Liberia of the ECOWAS vanguard force would begin on 4 August. As mentioned above, on 1 August the Security Council adopted resolution 1497 (2003), authorizing the establishment of a multinational force in Liberia and declaring its readiness to establish a follow-on United Nations stabilization force to be deployed no later than 1 October 2003.

12. The deployment of the first elements of the ECOWAS Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL) began on schedule on 4 August. Since then, approximately 3,500 soldiers, comprising two Nigerian battalions, one battalion from Guinea-Bissau and companies of varied size from the Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Senegal and Togo have been deployed to Monrovia and its surroundings. A

contingent from Benin is expected shortly. In accordance with resolution 1497 (2003), the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) provided support for the initial deployment of ECOMIL. The United States Government also provided support for ECOMIL and positioned a task force of over 2,000 marines off the coast of Liberia.

13. On 11 August, President Taylor handed over power to Vice-President Moses Blah and, at the invitation of the President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, left Liberia for Nigeria. The handover ceremony was witnessed by several African leaders, including the President of Mozambique, Joaquim Chissano; the current chairman of the African Union, the President of Ghana, John Kufuor; the current chairman of ECOWAS, and the President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki.

14. On 17 August in Accra, my Special Representative negotiated the conclusion by the Liberian parties of an agreement on the distribution of humanitarian aid and assistance in Liberia. Under the agreement, the parties undertook to provide free and unimpeded access for humanitarian actors and to guarantee the security and safety of all humanitarian actors in Liberia.

15. On 18 August, at the peace talks in Accra, a Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed by the parties. My Special Representative for West Africa, Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, and other high-level representatives of key regional and international partners, played an important supportive role in the negotiations leading to that Agreement. The Agreement declared an immediate end to the war and provided for the establishment of a National Transitional Government of Liberia that would take over from the interim Government headed by President Blah by 14 October 2003. The primary responsibility of the National Transitional Government is to ensure the implementation of the Peace Agreement, including preparation of elections to be held in October 2005; the elected government would come into power in January 2006. On 21 August, Gyude Bryant, a Monrovia businessman and head of the Liberia Action Party, was appointed as Chairman of the National Transitional Government, and Wesley Johnson, an opposition politician and university lecturer, was appointed Vice-Chairman. Under the Peace Agreement, the parties are to immediately disengage and comply with the ceasefire agreement of 17 June and ECOWAS is called upon to immediately establish a multinational force that would secure the ceasefire, assist the transitional government in the implementation of the Agreement, create a zone of separation between the belligerent forces and provide a safe corridor for the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The parties to the Agreement also committed themselves to ensuring the presence of security guarantees for the safe return and resettlement of refugees and internally displaced persons. By the Agreement, the parties also requested the United Nations to deploy a force to Liberia under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations to support the National Transitional Government and assist in the implementation of the Peace Agreement.

16. The Agreement also calls for the establishment of the Joint Monitoring Commission provided for in the ceasefire agreement of 17 June to supervise and monitor its implementation. The United Nations will be represented by a senior military officer. The early establishment of the Commission is an essential element in creating the confidence necessary for long-term stability.

17. Other key provisions of the Peace Agreement include (a) the commitment of the parties to the prompt implementation of a process of cantonment, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; (b) a call for the establishment of an Implementation Monitoring Committee to

ensure the effective and faithful implementation of the Agreement; (c) the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a proposal that the National Transitional Government consider a general amnesty for persons involved in military activities during the Liberian civil conflict.

18. Liberian women participated in the peace talks in Accra. Some were concerned, however, at the inadequate representation in the delegations. A strategic planning meeting was held on 15 August 2003 to analyse lessons learned at the talks and to form strategies for the inclusion of women in decision-making during and after the transitional period, including all components of the Government of Liberia and in all structures leading to the post-conflict peace-building phase. As a result of the deliberations, they prepared the Golden Tulip Declaration, which sets out their priorities for the peace process and reconstruction period, and decided to establish a follow-up committee to ensure women's full participation in post-conflict reconstruction and nation-building.

19. On 27 August, an ECOWAS ministerial delegation led by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ghana, Nana Akufo-Addo, briefed the Security Council on the Peace Agreement. The delegation stressed that, in implementing the Agreement, special attention should be accorded to three important issues, namely (a) the demobilization and reintegration of the various armed groups that have been moving freely within the Mano River Union countries, including several thousand nationals of other West African countries; (b) curbing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the subregion; and (c) reviewing the current regime of sanctions against Liberia.

IV. Assessment mission

20. In order to prepare recommendations regarding the size, structure and mandate of the follow-on United Nations peacekeeping operation requested by the Council in resolution 1497 (2003), I dispatched a multidisciplinary assessment mission to Liberia, led by my Special Representative. The mission began its work in Monrovia on 21 August, and comprised representatives from several Secretariat departments and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, as well as the World Bank. The mission held meetings with relevant stakeholders in Liberia, and members of the mission travelled to accessible parts of the country.

21. In the course of the assessment mission, my Special Representative also conducted consultations with regional leaders. From 24 to 29 August, he met with the President of Côte d'Ivoire, Laurent Gbagbo; the President of Sierra Leone, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah; and the Prime Minister of Guinea, Lamine Sidime; as well as other senior government officials, members of the diplomatic community, the Commander of the French forces in Côte d'Ivoire, the Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and United Nations officials. On 1 September, he met in Monrovia with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria, Oluyemi Adeniji, during the visit there of President Olusegun Obasanjo and the Minister. All interlocutors commended the United Nations peace efforts in Liberia and pledged full cooperation with the future United Nations peacekeeping operation.

V. Security situation

22. With the recent political and military developments in Monrovia, the security situation in the country continues to improve. Liberia remains highly unstable, however, as armed groups, militia and criminal elements operate throughout the country. While there are no exact figures regarding the strength of the various armed groups, government forces are estimated to consist of some 20,000 to 30,000 elements, comprising armed forces of Liberia soldiers, militia formed outside the armed forces around local leaders and including a large number of child soldiers, and elite paramilitary personnel. The Government controls the greater Monrovia area and the centre of the country. The LURD rebel movement is estimated to have a strength of some 5,000 fighters concentrated primarily in western Liberia, while MODEL, which has an estimated 1,500 to 3,000 fighters, is operating in eastern parts of the country.

23. Since the conflict in Liberia started in 1989, many armed elements and criminal gangs have been moving unimpeded in and out of Liberia and the neighbouring countries of Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone. The armed groups generally have weak command and control mechanisms and poor communication systems, but have contributed considerably to the instability of the entire subregion. Furthermore, widespread population displacement, poverty, high unemployment and a proliferation of small arms compound the insecurity.

24. Judicial institutions throughout Liberia have suffered an almost complete breakdown as a result of years of violent conflict and the disregard of the Taylor Government for the rule of law. The Liberian national police is said to have functioned more as an instrument of repression than as an enforcer of law and order. Its 3,500 officers lack training and have not been paid since early 2002. Corruption has been endemic. Similarly, the judiciary sometimes does not enjoy public confidence and has suffered from corrupt practices and political interference. Most courts are not functioning and much of the infrastructure has been destroyed or looted. It also appears that various prisons throughout the country are empty and dilapidated, and that former prisoners are on the loose.

25. Despite the parties' declared commitment to respecting the provisions of the Peace Agreement and supporting an international military presence, the high level of suspicion among the parties, continuing attempts to consolidate territorial gains, and the presence of criminal elements add to the volatility of the situation.

VI. Human rights situation

26. The armed conflict in Liberia has also resulted in serious violations and abuses of human rights and humanitarian law, including deliberate and arbitrary killings, disappearances, torture, widespread rape and sexual violence against women, girls and young boys, arbitrary arrests and detention, forced conscription, recruitment and use of child soldiers, systematic and forced displacement, and indiscriminate targeting of civilians. Of the estimated 250,000 people who have lost their lives in war-related circumstances since 1989, at least half were civilian non-combatants. There are eyewitness accounts of massacres of civilians and reports of mass graves, some dating back to the early 1990s. All sides have been responsible for violations and abuses.

Torture was widely used by all parties to the conflict. Government militias, police and paramilitary units are known to maintain torture chambers.

27. The conflict militarized Liberian society with a proliferation of militia groups that lacked any statutory command and control structures. Children were forcibly recruited and constituted a substantial portion of the fighting forces on all sides. Estimates indicate that one out of every 10 children may have been recruited at some time or another into the war effort.

28. There has been a severe deterioration and gradual attrition of the institutions for the protection and promotion of human rights and the rule of law. As noted above, the police and judiciary have been severely degraded. In these circumstances, extortion has become institutionalized. Civil society is extremely weak and lacks the resources and capacity to be effective.

29. For several years, Liberia has been a focus of attention for the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and human rights special procedures. In December 2002, an independent expert appointed under the confidential (1503) procedure visited Liberia and submitted a report, which was subsequently made public. The Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-ninth session appointed an independent expert on Liberia to facilitate cooperation between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Government by providing technical assistance and advisory services. In August 2003, the Acting High Commissioner submitted an emergency report on Liberia (E/CN.4/2004/5) to the Commission, calling attention to the grievous deterioration of the human rights situation and urging international support in bringing perpetrators to justice irrespective of their position and status. Since the signing of the Peace Agreement, a number of human rights assessment missions have been conducted in some of the parts of the country that have recently become accessible. The Office of the High Commissioner has been supporting a protection programme implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to improve security in camps for internally displaced persons. By means of that programme some monitoring mechanisms were established and maintained in the camps, including the posting of 20 monitors there.

VII. Humanitarian situation, recovery and development issues

30. Liberia's protracted conflict has had terrible consequences for the civilian population, including the Sierra Leonean and Ivorian refugees as well as third country nationals who had sought asylum in the country. Nearly 1 million Liberians, or a third of the population, are displaced. In addition to some 500,000 internally displaced persons, about 300,000 Liberians are refugees in neighbouring countries. Some 50,000 refugees from Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire remain in the country. The recent spread of fighting to Monrovia further aggravated the situation, as internally displaced persons and refugees were subjected to repeated abuse and most urban residents were made vulnerable. Civilians were not only the accidental victims of the fighting but also direct targets of armed groups who unleashed a campaign of terror against them. The evacuation in June 2003 of most international aid personnel left the civilian population with virtually no international protection or support. Despite the situation, United Nations national staff continued essential humanitarian interventions.

31. The cumulative impact of the conflict has further reduced the already declining living standards of Liberians throughout the country. Liberia is one of the world's poorest countries, with high illiteracy rates and an unemployment rate of 85 per cent. The national debt is \$2.8 billion, and over 75 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line. Even before the most recent upsurge in conflict, only 26 per cent of the population had access to safe drinking water and less than 40 per cent had access to acceptable standards of sanitation. Fewer than 50 per cent of children of primary school age were enrolled in school. UNAIDS does not currently have data on the prevalence of HIV/AIDS infection in Liberia, but conflict and post conflict environments are considered high-risk areas for the spread of the pandemic.

32. On 11 August, following the deployment of ECOMIL, the Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Carolyn McAskie, led the United Nations country team back to Monrovia. The presence of United Nations international staff in Liberia has grown over the past month to more than 170. Since returning, the humanitarian community is giving immediate priority to conducting simultaneous rapid assessments and emergency interventions, particularly in the food, health, nutrition, water and sanitation, education and protection sectors.

33. The World Food Programme (WFP) and its partners have helped to stabilize the food security situation in Monrovia and are currently extending distributions to accessible counties outside Monrovia. The general distributions and gradual resumption of commercial activities have reduced hunger in Monrovia and contributed to addressing the needs of severely malnourished children and other vulnerable groups. The first round of food distributions to over 400,000 internally displaced persons in Monrovia has been completed. Under the leadership of the World Health Organization (WHO) and in close collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and non-governmental organizations in the health field are intensifying efforts to manage and prevent disease outbreaks, including a cholera epidemic, which has been a serious concern particularly in the overcrowded centres for the internally displaced in Monrovia. The situation has now been stabilized and the number of new cases is decreasing as the camps for internally displaced persons gradually become less congested and sanitary and hygienic conditions improve. The serious reproductive health problems which accompany large-scale population movements are being addressed by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and non-governmental organizations. Health and nutrition services are also being extended to counties outside Monrovia, following assessments. Meanwhile, UNICEF is leading efforts to address the critical water and sanitation situation in Monrovia, where 5,000 wells have been chlorinated. Elsewhere in the country, UNICEF is vaccinating vulnerable populations against measles and launching a back-to-school campaign. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have taken the lead in assisting with shelter and relief supplies to the internally displaced persons as UNHCR also responds to the needs of refugees.

34. Since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, protection issues have continued to dominate the concerns of internally displaced persons and the general civilian population. A Protection Steering Committee, chaired by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on behalf of the Humanitarian Coordinator, has been established to raise awareness of the

issue and coordinate response to the situation. A Joint Monitoring Committee, which was established under the UNDP-funded protection programme, has been reinforced to undertake monitoring and reporting activities, which will form the basis for a more comprehensive response in respect of issues such as sexual and gender-based violence, protection of internally displaced persons, forced recruitment and other human rights violations. The proposal to deploy a senior protection adviser in the Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator could further enhance linkages with child protection activities led by UNICEF, and continue to draw from UNHCR protection experience with refugees. The adviser will also support a collective United Nations system-wide approach in implementing protection programmes.

35. It is expected that the majority of internally displaced persons will, for the time being, remain in camps and will be dependent on aid for months to come. Their decision to return to their places of origin will largely depend on progress in the peace process and the deployment of peacekeeping troops throughout the country. United Nations agencies and non-governmental organization partners are developing strategies for an effective response to the situation of these persons, including efforts to relocate those in Monrovia to their previous camps in the outskirts of the city. As the huge internally displaced populations cannot yet return to their areas of origin, the humanitarian effort needs to concentrate on the protection and assistance of those populations living in temporary camps and centres. In this regard, UNHCR has provided ECOMIL with logistical and other support to secure refugee and internally displaced person camps. Furthermore, UNHCR has offered its expertise to assist with the registration of the internally displaced persons. A feasibility study to that effect is being undertaken in collaboration with WFP. A registration exercise would not only provide urgently needed baseline data for humanitarian relief, but would also help at a later stage to deliver and target reintegration assistance effectively in the areas of return.

36. In the meantime, amid the conflict, UNHCR successfully organized an emergency evacuation and repatriated 2,000 Sierra Leonean refugees from Monrovia by sea. It has since restarted other operations. Several hundred refugees from Sierra Leone who had fled the camps in the outskirts of the city to seek shelter in central Monrovia have been assisted to return to their camps. At the same time, those Sierra Leonean refugees who wish to do so are being encouraged to return to Sierra Leone. For that purpose, UNHCR is running a vessel between Monrovia and Freetown and expects to begin repatriation by land soon. UNHCR is also preparing to resume, once access is regained to the area, assistance to the 38,000 Ivorian refugees and 43,000 Liberian returnees who fled to eastern Liberia following the outbreak of fighting in Côte d'Ivoire late in 2002. In addition, UNHCR foresees the return of 300,000 Liberian refugees once security and resettlement conditions have been met inside Liberia. Whatever is done at this stage has direct implications for UNHCR in this regard.

37. In all these efforts, securing safe access to beneficiaries, wherever they are, remains a challenge for the humanitarian community, as well as ensuring that beneficiaries have access to basic social services. The deployment of ECOMIL has improved the security situation in the greater Monrovia area, and agencies have been able to make useful contacts with the leadership of the rebel groups to initiate programmes in areas they control. The signing of an agreement on the delivery of humanitarian assistance by the parties in Accra on 17 August has also helped in

negotiations to expand humanitarian access beyond Monrovia. However, the security vacuum in most of these locations continues to hamper efforts to fully reestablish humanitarian activities.

38. Effective coordination is a top priority in the current environment of tenuous security, limited resources and diverse needs. In August, I designated Ross Mountain, Assistant Emergency Relief Coordinator, as Special Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance in Liberia, to provide overall direction and management of the United Nations humanitarian programme in Liberia. A comprehensive structure involving all humanitarian actors — United Nations, international and national nongovernmental organizations, the Red Cross Movement and donors — has been established and access negotiations with LURD, MODEL and the Government of Liberia have permitted agencies to start operations. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has reinforced its presence to facilitate intersectoral coordination, lead cross-line missions outside Monrovia, promote civil-military communication, and establish humanitarian operations and information centres. Agencies have also taken advantage of the presence of the multidisciplinary assessment mission to discuss issues of mutual concern and map out areas of cooperation and support between the humanitarian actors and the proposed United Nations peacekeeping operation. Other common services for the humanitarian community have been attached to the Office of the Special Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance, under the leadership of WFP, including a joint logistics centre, a humanitarian air service, and information communications technology support.

39. The priorities of humanitarian agencies in the short term are to continue lifesaving interventions in Monrovia, to work towards maximizing the protection of civilians against violence, to accelerate efforts to re-establish relief operations upcountry, including areas currently under the control of LURD and MODEL, and to continue voluntary repatriation and other assistance to refugees and returnees.

40. To ensure effective response to these needs, adequate and timely funding will be crucial. Donors have so far been generous in providing start-up resources for lifesaving activities, but more will be needed quickly to sustain and expand the efforts. An urgent response to the revised United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal of July 2003 for \$69 million is required. The Appeal focuses on activities in the vital sectors of food aid, agriculture, health, family shelter, non-food assistance, education, protection, coordination and support services, refugee and returnee protection and assistance, water and sanitation, multisector interventions and staff safety and security. A Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for 2004 will be launched at the end of the year, further elaborating the common humanitarian action plan, including immediate support to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, resettlement of internally displaced persons and repatriation and reintegration of refugees.

41. In the medium term, the focus will shift to rehabilitation, resettlement and reintegration efforts in preparation for longer-term reconstruction and development. The United Nations intends to support the National Transitional Government of Liberia in developing a broad peace-building and recovery framework that will include a medium-term strategy for rebuilding State institutions, economic recovery, employment generation, reintegration of ex-combatants, internally displaced persons and war-affected communities, and reconciliation. Ultimately, the

safe and sustainable return of refugees and other displaced persons is of critical importance in consolidating the peace process.

VIII. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

42. One of the greatest challenges in Liberia and the neighbouring countries is the presence of thousands of combatants, including children, of various nationalities. Successful disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of all of those ex-combatants will be crucial to sustainable peace and security. It is estimated that Liberia has some 27,000 to 38,000 combatants, many of whom are children. The success of the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process will ultimately rest, however, on the political will of the warring parties to comply with the terms of the Peace Agreement and to commit themselves fully to the peace process.

43. All stakeholders, particularly the National Transitional Government and all other Liberian parties, ECOMIL, the proposed United Nations peacekeeping operation, UNDP, the World Bank, UNICEF, UNHCR, WHO, WFP and nongovernmental organization partners must coordinate efforts to develop an effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme that would identify a clear division of labour. Adequate and secure funding will be required for maintaining cantonment sites, supporting ex-combatants and their families during the process, transporting them, and providing cash and other incentive packages to encourage them to disarm and demobilize. Priority should also be given to resource allocation for rehabilitation and reintegration programmes and a long-term commitment from donors to ensure the sustainability of these efforts. Lessons learned, particularly in this subregion, highlight the disastrous consequences of unsustained support for disarmament. Of particular concern is the possibility of renewed recruitment by armed groups of demobilized children. In view of their numbers and specific problems, a separate disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme should be in place for children, particularly girls.

44. In the cantonment sites, the combatants should be disarmed and demobilized by the United Nations peacekeeping force, formally interviewed for reintegration suitability and, for some, possible absorption into the national army and civilian police. An identification card, civilian clothes and a partial reintegration package should be issued and ex-combatants should receive medical examinations. Referral arrangements should be made for those who are seriously wounded or sick, pregnant, or with children. Gender and HIV/AIDS awareness programmes should also be available. Accurate and up-to-date information on the numbers, types and locations of forces and armaments, including storage, depot sites, stockpiles and weapons caches is critical for the success of the process.

45. Before reintegration and resettlement programmes are ready, a bridging arrangement, in the form of various stopgap programmes, could be organized through community-based food-for-work projects, for which resettled ex-combatants would be organized into civil reconstruction teams or work brigades and given the task of rehabilitating school buildings, clinics, roads, and culverts and sanitation facilities etc., in coordination with United Nations agencies and nongovernmental organizations. Such rehabilitation would be expected to make the resettlement sites habitable and encourage the voluntary return of internally displaced persons and refugees. It should be noted that most of the combatants in Liberia and the subregion lack formal education,

training or work skills. There is therefore an urgent need to provide them with formal education, vocational training, and farming skills as an alternative to bearing arms.

46. Any disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme should pay particular attention to the needs of child combatants, women among the fighting forces, dependants of combatants, camp followers and abductees. There should be a clear definition of beneficiaries, screening for vulnerabilities should be carried out and interim care facilities should be established to cater to their needs and reintegration. Special measures and programmes should address the gender-specific needs of female ex-combatants, as well as the wives and widows of former combatants. Briefing, counselling and training in programmes for the eventual reintegration of ex-combatants should take into consideration the differences in the experiences during conflict of women and girls, as compared to men and boys. Because of the high rates of sexual violence perpetrated in the conflict, reintegration programmes must include prevention of sexual violence.

47. The Cape Town Principles of 2002, as observed by UNICEF, define a child soldier as any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force in any capacity. It is imperative that such child soldiers be admitted to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process without the prerequisite of possession of a weapon. Often, fighting forces and factions do not disclose the presence of child soldiers, especially girls, within their ranks, thus preventing them from benefiting from the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. Parallel plans, including outreach programmes, must be developed to document, track and provide support to children who may be bypassed by the disarmament process.

48. The Peace Agreement has established a clear timetable for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, which includes a ceasefire and ceasefire monitoring, disengagement, cantonment, disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration. The Agreement also provides for the establishment of a coordination mechanism, the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration, which is to comprise representatives from relevant National Transitional Government agencies, LURD, MODEL, ECOWAS, the United Nations, the African Union and the International Contact Group. The Commission is scheduled to begin its work on 15 November, and cantonment, disarmament and demobilization is scheduled to begin by 15 December. In view of the tight timetable, preparations for the cantonment of combatants would need to start immediately, while peacekeepers are being deployed throughout Liberian territory and the various stakeholders are designing plans and securing resources for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme.

49. In view of the subregional dimensions of the conflict, any disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme for Liberia should be linked, to the extent possible, to the ongoing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process in Côte d'Ivoire and benefit from lessons learned in Sierra Leone and other peace initiatives in the region that take into account the reintegration needs of internally displaced persons and war-affected communities. Consequently, an effective programme should also form part of a strategy directed towards the political and

economic recovery of the Mano River Union countries and the wider West African subregion. For the planned disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process in Liberia to succeed, a subregional approach which takes into account the presence of foreign combatants in Liberia and Liberian ex-combatants in neighbouring countries would be essential. Special attention should be given to young people and other vulnerable groups by a multi-country approach. Ultimately, failure to adequately plan for and implement the various stages of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, including obtaining timely and adequate funding, would jeopardize the entire peace process and destabilize Liberia and the entire subregion. During a visit to United Nations Headquarters in August, an ECOWAS ministerial delegation called for financing for the reintegration elements of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process to be included in the budget of the proposed peacekeeping mission. I support the need for these vital provisions to be included in the budget of the planned operations, in addition to the operational disarmament and demobilization requirements.

50. Finally, effective weapons management in the long term will also require a comprehensive national policy for the demilitarization of civilians. Such a policy should include a clear national legal framework for civilian ownership and possession of permitted weapons and prohibition of proscribed weapons; effective enforcement mechanisms; impartial law enforcement and an independent judicial system; control of inter-State transfers through customs controls, such as export and import permits; regional cooperation on weapons management, including the induction of a moratorium on the transfer of specific categories upon the expiration of the United Nations-mandated arms embargo on Liberia. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the subregion is a matter of serious concern, in particular as it relates to the phenomenon of youth violence. Well-planned and executed national disarmament efforts will ultimately prove futile if no attention is paid to cross-border arms flows. Cutting off supply routes within the West African subregion for the illegal flow of small arms, explosives and ammunition and preventing illegal flows of arms into the subregion would have to be part of the disarmament and demobilization exercise.

IX. Proposed United Nations mission in Liberia

A. Mandate

51. As envisaged by resolution 1497 (2003) and the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 18 August 2003, I recommend the establishment of a multidimensional United Nations peacekeeping operation in Liberia, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). On the basis of the findings of the multidisciplinary assessment mission, I recommend that the mandate of the mission, under Chapter VII of the Charter, include the following:

- (a) To support the National Transitional Government of Liberia and the other parties in the effective and timely implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 18 August 2003;
- (b) To monitor adherence to the ceasefire agreement of 17 June 2003, in accordance with the provisions of that agreement;

- (c) To assist the National Transitional Government in extending State authority throughout Liberia;
- (d) To provide security at key government installations, in particular ports, airports and other vital infrastructure;
- (e) To ensure the security and freedom of movement of United Nations personnel;
- (f) To facilitate the free movement of people, humanitarian assistance and goods throughout Liberia and across its borders;
- (g) To support the safe and sustainable return of Liberian refugees and internally displaced persons and to support the provision of assistance and protection for Sierra Leonean and Ivorian refugees in Liberia by ensuring a secure environment for their return;
- (h) To protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence in the areas of immediate deployment of United Nations formed military units;
- (i) To advise, train and assist the Liberian law enforcement authorities and other criminal justice institutions, including the judiciary and corrections systems, and facilitate bilateral and multilateral assistance;
- (j) To assist the National Transitional Government in the implementation of a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme;
- (k) To guard weapons, ammunition and other military equipment collected from ex-combatants and to assist in their subsequent disposal or destruction;
- (l) To assist the National Transitional Government with preparations for elections;
- (m) To monitor and report on the human rights situation and provide training and capacity-building in the field of human rights and child protection;
- (n) To provide support for gender mainstreaming, including training in gender issues;
- (o) To support the establishment and operations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission;
- (p) To cooperate with ECOWAS, the African Union and United Nations political and other presences in the West African subregion on cross-cutting political and security issues of particular relevance to peace consolidation in Liberia.

52. The holding of free and fair elections by October 2005 and the installation of a democratically elected Government in January 2006 would be very important milestones in the peace process in Liberia. The exit strategy for the Mission should however be based on precise

and realistic benchmarks relating to progress in the consolidation of peace, to be defined in due course.

B. Structure and concept of operations

53. The United Nations Mission in Liberia would be a multidimensional operation composed of political, military, civilian police, criminal justice, civil affairs, human rights, gender, child protection, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, public information and support components, as well as an electoral component in due course. The Mission would include a mechanism for the coordination of its activities with those of the humanitarian and development community. UNMIL would coordinate closely with ECOWAS and the African Union. In order to ensure a coordinated United Nations response to the many subregional issues, UNMIL would also work closely with UNAMSIL, the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI) and the United Nations Office for West Africa. The Mission would be headed by my Special Representative, who would have overall authority for the activities of the Mission and of the United Nations system in Liberia. The Special Representative would be assisted by a senior management team consisting of, among others, two Deputies, a Force Commander with the rank of Lieutenant General, and a Police Commissioner.

54. A senior gender adviser, with staff, will be part of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to undertake and support gender mainstreaming within the various pillars of the Office and with civil society and other external partners. An HIV/AIDS policy adviser, with supporting staff, will also be attached to the Office of the Special Representative, to coordinate activities in the Mission area for the prevention of HIV transmission among civilian and military personnel and host communities.

C. Political component

55. The political component of the Mission will provide political advice and assessments to the Special Representative and assist him with contacts with Liberian parties, including civil society organizations; address any political issues which may arise in the implementation of the Mission's mandate; maintain close liaison with ECOWAS, the African Union and with United Nations political presences in the subregion; keep abreast of all political developments which may have an impact on the implementation of the Mission's mandate; provide daily and other reports to United Nations Headquarters; assist in the coordination of activities and information sharing with the United Nations country team, as appropriate; and provide inputs, as appropriate, for the dissemination of public information of a political nature.

D. Military component

56. The primary task of the military component will be to create a secure and stable environment throughout Liberia to enable the Mission to accomplish the mandate outlined above. Specific tasks will include providing support for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, monitoring the terms of the ceasefire agreement including human rights violations, facilitating humanitarian relief efforts, protecting civilians from violence, establishing the conditions for a

safe and sustainable return of refugees and internally displaced persons, supporting the National Transitional Government, supporting the creation of conditions under which elections can be held and eventually supporting those elections, supporting quick-impact projects, in liaison with the humanitarian community, and monitoring Liberia's borders. In the Comprehensive Peace Agreement the United Nations force, together with ECOWAS and the International Contact Group on Liberia, is also requested to provide advice and support to the National Transitional Government on the formation of a new and restructured Liberian army. While UNMIL would be prepared to provide advice in this regard, the Liberian parties in the Peace Agreement requested that the United States play a lead role in the restructuring of the army. I believe it would be very helpful if the United States would assume this critical role.

57. In planning the structure and deployment of the United Nations force, emphasis has been placed on incorporating the lessons of past deployments when insufficient and inadequately equipped troops were deployed for peacekeeping duties with disastrous consequences. The proposed concept of operations has been structured on the assumptions that the recommended size and capabilities of the force reflect a thorough analysis of what is required to execute the tasks, and that the full force is deployed from the outset with a robust mandate and adequate resources, particularly in terms of the need for well-trained and equipped troops. This will enable the Mission to take a robust approach, to have the capacity to react adequately to changing circumstances and pre-empt potentially destabilizing events.

58. The concept of operations for the military component consists of a preliminary phase in the form of the ongoing ECOMIL deployment and the United States military capabilities positioned off the coast of Liberia, and four subsequent phases of United Nations induction. Of these, the first phase of deployment, which covers the period from 1 October until the force headquarters is operational on 1 November 2003, will include the establishment of an interim headquarters, the transition of ECOMIL elements to UNMIL and the deployment of logistic assets and other key capabilities such as engineers and aviation. This phase of deployment will constitute an "initial operating capability" and the first step towards the main deployment. The objective of this phase is to lay the foundations for the following phases and it is unlikely to include any major expansion in the number of troops. Consequently, there is little likelihood of increasing the operational deployment much beyond the general area of operations currently covered by ECOMIL. Nonetheless, there is likely to be an expectation that the newly established United Nations force will project its operations into other parts of the country in support of the broader objectives of the international community. It should be noted, however, that at the initial stage the United Nations capability to do so will be very limited, and will be dependent on certain key assets, such as military air assets, being deployed early. It will also be constrained by issues of force protection and logistic sustainability.

59. During this first phase of "initial operating capability", there will be a requirement to allow ECOMIL headquarters to play the role of brigade headquarters for the Monrovia sector. The interim United Nations headquarters must not only be capable of assuming responsibility for military operations, but must also act as a key element in the transition to the main force headquarters when it deploys. It will draw on some ECOMIL personnel but it will need augmentation, possibly drawing temporarily on key staff from other United Nations missions and

other sources. Given the fact that ECOMIL is thinly spread in its current deployment and that the United States has declared its intention to withdraw its forces in whole or in part by 1 October, it is essential that a credible military reserve is established as quickly as possible. In this regard, it may become necessary to draw upon resources from UNAMSIL until such time as sufficient troops have deployed to Liberia. An over-the-horizon capability of one or more Member States with the required military capabilities would also be highly desirable in the potentially fragile period of the Mission's initial establishment. Such a capability would also serve to strengthen the confidence of troop contributors, and I call on Member States with the necessary capacity to assist in this respect. Finally, the initially limited number of United Nations troops on the ground will necessitate the rapid deployment of certain key assets such as attack helicopters.

60. The second phase of the concept of operations covers the period after 1 November 2003, and the establishment of "transitional operating capability" as the force expands and deploys into four sectors, including the existing one in Monrovia, each sector containing a brigade-size formation of approximately 3,000 troops. Those ECOMIL contingents with the appropriate level of capability which will have transitioned to the United Nations force will constitute a brigade that will operate in the Monrovia area. Those troops currently on the ground that cannot meet the necessary level of capability would be potentially vulnerable and could jeopardize the overall effectiveness of the force. Every effort should therefore be made to help them to achieve the required capability but, in the event that this is not possible, they would have to be repatriated to be replaced by well-equipped forces.

61. The proposed sectors and force levels have been defined by a number of factors which include the centres of gravity of each of the three main Liberian parties, the need to monitor the border areas, areas of humanitarian priority, administrative boundaries, lines of communication and the need to have a balanced deployment throughout the whole country. In addition to the four brigades, there is a requirement for a properly constituted reserve and key assets such as logistics, aviation and engineers which will bring the total strength of the force to 15,000, including 250 military observers and 160 staff officers. Particular emphasis is placed on the military observers whose role in monitoring the terms of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, monitoring the borders and acting as a point of contact for matters relating to the work of the Joint Monitoring Commission and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration will be fundamental to ensuring success. Every effort will be made to ensure good representation of women in the uniformed personnel components of the Mission. Deployment will commence with the three additional brigade headquarters, their lead battalions and support elements and will be followed by the remaining battalions as quickly as possible. It is expected that the full force will not be complete until approximately March 2004.

E. Criminal justice component (police, judicial and corrections)

62. The Peace Agreement calls for the immediate restructuring of police and other security services, maintenance of law and order by an interim police force, eventual deployment of a newly trained national police force and the resignation of all Justices of the Supreme Court. Under the Agreement the United Nations is also requested, among other things, to monitor the

activities of the interim police force, assist in the maintenance of law and order, and help to develop and implement police training programmes, including gender training.

63. Experience in past peacekeeping operations indicates that, in order to establish sustainable peace and internal security, police, justice and correctional issues must be addressed in an integrated fashion. I therefore recommend the inclusion in the proposed Mission of a robust civilian police component, inclusive of judicial and corrections elements. These components will work alongside national and international actors as they assist in rebuilding national criminal justice institutions. In most instances, international police, judicial and corrections experts should be co-located with their counterparts in national institutions. All the institutions in the criminal justice sphere will require substantial support from the National Transitional Government of Liberia, UNMIL, and the wider international community in order to resume even basic functioning.

64. In addition, UNMIL civilian police and prosecutorial experts will have to work together with their Liberian counterparts, where appropriate, to help investigate serious violations of international humanitarian law or other serious crimes. For this reason, in order to gather and preserve evidence early on while it is still possible, I recommend the establishment of a crime investigation capacity within UNMIL, including officers trained in gathering testimony from children and women, mandated to support investigations and to turn collected evidence over to Liberian or other authorities, including to prosecutors of the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Civilian police

65. Until a newly trained and restructured Liberian national police service is deployed, the Peace Agreement provides that maintenance of law and order throughout Liberia will be the responsibility of an interim police force.

66. To address this transition in a transparent, credible and efficient manner, the UNMIL civilian police component will establish a Technical Committee to help determine the composition, selection and vetting of would-be members of the interim police force. The Committee will also develop a plan for restructuring and reorganizing the Liberian national police. Subcommittees could focus on areas of potential reform, including (a) police restructuring, and any revision of the legal framework governing the police; (b) establishment of the criteria for the selection and vetting of new and former police officers; (c) assessment of infrastructure and logistical needs and planning renovations or repairs; and (d) development of an office to coordinate international assistance to the police service. The UNMIL civilian police component could also provide advisory and other support to the Technical Committee as it undertakes the many tasks that will come before it.

67. A robust UNMIL civilian police component will be gradually deployed in phases to provide advice and operational support to the interim police force and to help restructure, train, and advise in the development of a professional Liberian national police. The concept of operations for civilian police consists of four phases. The first phase will cover the period from 1 October to December. The focus of this phase will be on determining the mission action plans and

establishing the foundations for the eventual deployment of the core group of civilian police to assist the interim police force in their law and order functions. Two formed police units will also be deployed during this phase to stabilize the law and order situation in and around the capital city. The second phase, from December to February 2004, will be the deployment of additional civilian police advisers, trainers and an additional three formed police units in the remaining three regional headquarters. Reconstitution and rehabilitation initiatives will commence during this phase. The third phase, from March 2004 to the end of the mission, will principally be a training development phase with a focus on coordinating and integrating all capacity development efforts. United Nations civilian police will retain some core advisers during the final period to help local police carry on the reform and capacity enhancement initiatives.

68. In addition, because of the time needed to establish the new police service, I recommend that the Security Council authorize the deployment of five formed police units to UNMIL with a mandate (a) to support the interim police force in its law and order functions in several major population areas; (b) to assist the interim police force to address civil disorder problems; (c) to assist in the development of local structure and capacity to meet such challenges in the future; and (d) to act in support of the protection of civilian lives and property in areas of deployment. The presence of the formed police units will support local police operationally, allowing them to concentrate on fast track training initiatives.

69. Other priority tasks for the UNMIL civilian police component will be (a) assisting in the restructuring of the police service, including the vetting and certification of interim law enforcement officers; (b) reactivating the Police Academy and helping to develop general and thematic police training programmes, including mentoring and on-the-job training; (c) advising, reporting and following up on the activities of the interim police force regarding their compliance with professional standards and human rights obligations; (d) assisting in the social reintegration of the disarmed and demobilized combatants into civil society through mutual confidence-building initiatives of community policing practices; and (e) assisting in overall law enforcement capacity enhancement including border policing, customs, immigrations, port authority and other related sectors of the internal security. To ensure sustainability, the UNMIL civilian police component will work closely with UNDP and other development agencies.

70. In order to fulfil these tasks, I recommend that the civilian police component eventually comprise up to 875 unarmed civilian police, including senior advisers, trainers, planners and police experts on human rights, serious crimes and human trafficking investigators and, in addition, five armed formed police units, each comprising 120 officers.

Criminal law and judicial

71. UNMIL should have the capacity to provide substantive assistance focusing on three principal areas, namely, legal and judicial system reform; legal training and education; and legal system advising. UNMIL should also play a central role in coordinating international assistance in the legal and judicial sector.

72. With respect to legal and judicial system reform, a team of UNMIL experts will provide assistance and advice to the various components of the system — including prosecutors' offices, the defence bar, the courts, and the Ministry of Justice. These advisers should, for the most part, be co-located in national institutions with their national counterparts.

73. Another key component of reform and stability is the revitalization of the legal education system, including the university's law school and the continuing legal education or retraining of legal professionals. I recommend the establishment of a specialized unit in UNMIL to undertake initiatives in this regard, utilizing also the assistance of other national and international actors.

74. A third element necessary for effective legal and judicial system reform — and for rebuilding the much-decayed public trust in the system — is a robust legal system advisory programme. The programme will focus on advising both criminal and civil trials and publishing clear recommendations on needed improvements. While the rights of the criminal defendant are to be one focus, the unit will also strive to improve the fair and efficient functioning of the system as a whole, paying particular attention to the specific needs of children, in accordance with international juvenile justice standards. Although initially run by international experts within UNMIL, the programme will include national legal professionals, and the effort could later be passed on to another national or international body outside UNMIL.

Corrections

75. UNMIL should have the capacity to provide substantive assistance on issues relating to the prison system, focusing on three principal areas: prison reform; training and development of prison service personnel; and prison system monitoring. UNMIL should also play a central role in encouraging and coordinating international assistance for prison system reform and development.

76. A team of correctional system experts will provide assistance, advice and mentoring support to regional institutional and headquarters prison personnel, including administration, human resources and finance, and the Ministry of Justice. They should be co-located in the prison facilities and the headquarters with their national counterparts.

77. The reform and upgrading of the prison system is also vital to the redevelopment of a national training capacity. The deployment of corrections training and development specialists working with national staff to develop a national training plan, develop and deliver training programmes for prison personnel at all levels and develop a national training capacity is recommended. Support for this element would be sought from international agencies, through bilateral arrangements and from Member States.

78. The final element necessary for the development of a humane and secure prison system is the development and implementation of accountability mechanisms. A monitoring programme that focuses on prison conditions and management practices and provides comprehensive reports which contribute to the implementation of a penal reform plan is recommended. International

human rights monitors will also participate in them, developing a robust national prison monitoring capacity.

F. Civil affairs component

79. To help create the conditions for a functioning democracy, the Mission would include a significant civil affairs component, which would work closely with the National Transitional Government of Liberia and civil society organizations. The civil affairs component of the Mission would perform the following tasks, among others: (a) assist the National Transitional Government in extending and consolidating State authority throughout the country, in close coordination with other United Nations agencies; (b) provide advice and assistance to the National Transitional Government to the extent possible, inter alia with regard to preliminary planning for elections, including the participation of women; (c) assist and build the capacity of civil society organizations; (d) assist in the formulation of programmes to reintegrate and reconcile victims and perpetrators of the war; (e) assist the civilian police in reforming and restructuring the local police and promoting the participation of women, and auditing the performance of the police and other agencies involved in the maintenance of law and order; (f) coordinate the activities of a committee charged with investigating and reporting on conduct of personnel throughout the mission area; and (g) carry out induction training for all civilian and military staff of the Mission.

80. Civil affairs officers would be deployed alongside military contingents at the early stage of the establishment of the Mission. This would enable the Mission to support the operation of the National Transitional Government and help to demilitarize Liberian society. Some of the activities of the component would need to be funded through a trust fund and resources in the mission budget for quick-impact projects.

G. Human rights and protection component

81. The United Nations Mission in Liberia, in an integrated and multifaceted manner, would encourage and coordinate international protection efforts and the promotion of human rights in Liberia. The abuse of human rights and the crisis of protection in Liberia have been defining characteristics of the conflict of the last 14 years. Violations against children and sexual and gender-based violence have been particularly widespread. Priority attention would be given to the improvement of the human rights situation and the protection of civilians, including women and children. This component will also support work to address impunity, build national capacity, develop a national human rights strategy and plan of action, establish transitional justice mechanisms, provide human rights education, and create sustainable and resilient institutions for the protection and promotion of human rights. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement provides for the establishment of an independent National Human Rights Commission and a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. These are important institutions for the consolidation of peace based on justice and would be supported as a matter of priority.

82. To these ends, a human rights and protection unit would be established, staffed by experts on human rights, the protection of civilians, national institutions, transitional justice, child rights and

gender. The unit will work closely with the military, civilian police and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration components. It would be supported initially by at least two human rights protection monitors posted to each of the four sectors of the Mission's deployment. At full strength, the unit would be supplemented by at least one monitor in each of the 15 counties. Work in this area would be addressed in a coherent, multidisciplinary manner. In addition to monitoring developments on the ground, the unit will focus on both policy development and policy-making on human rights and protection issues, and ensuring that the policies are integrated into the overall political strategy and all operations of the Mission. Accordingly, the human rights protection mandate should include monitoring and publicly reporting on the human rights situation and on humanitarian law, credible robust protection activities, technical cooperation and capacity-building, training for law enforcement officers, government officials and United Nations peacekeepers, advocacy, assistance in implementing international standards, support for the National Human Rights Commission and for transitional justice mechanisms, including the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and support for the work of the independent expert of the Commission on Human Rights.

83. To ensure that the rights, protection and well-being of children remain a priority throughout the peacekeeping and peace-building phases of the Mission, there would be two child protection advisers. They will assist the Special Representative in advocating against the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict and seek the collaboration of parties to support disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for child soldiers. The advisers would also monitor and report on child protection issues, provide training, and raise awareness among the Mission staff as well as national military and police forces.

H. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration component

84. In order to provide assistance for the planning and implementation of a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, a senior adviser on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, with staff, will be attached to the Office of my Special Representative in order to coordinate all efforts in this field. The Senior Adviser will work closely with the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration, UNDP and other members of the country team, the World Bank and other stakeholders on all aspects of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. The military component of UNMIL will assist in the actual implementation of the disarmament and demobilization parts of the programme.

I. Public information component

85. Freedom of expression in Liberia has been severely curtailed under successive regimes, and journalists have been subjected to intimidation and threats of physical violence, leaving them with no choice but to impose self-censorship or cease publication. The current media environment is characterized by a virtual collapse of the infrastructure, severely limiting the population's access to information and leaving them prey to rumours and misinformation. In order to help rectify this situation, the United Nations must establish a credible and effective means to communicate its goals to the Liberian people, provide them with accurate information on developments in the peace process and support the efforts of the transitional government in

carrying out the provisions of the Peace Agreement, including respect for the right of freedom of expression. A robust public information capacity attached to the Office of my Special Representative should undertake a full range of activities to promote understanding of the United Nations presence and underpin the United Nations role, including humanitarian and developmental activities.

86. Given Liberia's high illiteracy rate, the most efficient way to reach the Liberian population is through radio. Although efforts to strengthen local media structures should be undertaken by the Mission as soon as possible, provision is currently being made to establish an emergency United Nations broadcasting capacity to cover the heavily populated greater Monrovia area, so as to inform Liberians of the establishment of UNMIL and to provide vital humanitarian information during the initial period. This emergency capacity should subsequently be converted to broadcasting capabilities covering the entire country. In addition to United Nations programming, a variety of local programmes could be aired, with the aim of strengthening Liberian media structures.

87. The information component would also include a public outreach unit to support, among other things, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities, a media monitoring and development unit and a small video unit. During the period preceding the elections, the component would be expanded to assist in voter education. The information capacity would also open up channels of communication with local, regional and international media outlets. This effort should be well coordinated with the efforts of other United Nations public information resources in Liberia and the region to help increase awareness in donor and regional countries of the needs of the Liberian people and progress towards resolving the crisis.

J. Support component

88. The Mission's support element will create the essential infrastructure to enable my Special Representative to reach the required operational capacity within 90 days after the beginning of the mandate, and to maintain that capacity throughout the different phases of the Mission. The build-up of the operation will continue until March 2004, when the military component will be fully deployed. Mission activity will reach its peak during the preparations for and conduct of free elections.

89. Support to military units operating out of Monrovia and the four sector headquarters will follow United Nations standards for self-sustainment. Civilian police, military observers and civilian staff will be stationed in regional offices and numerous other locations throughout Liberia and will need to be supported accordingly, mainly with office accommodation, security, medical services, communications and transport.

90. The mobility of military and police units will be essential to the success of the Mission. I will therefore request that substantial air assets be made available.

91. Logistical and administrative support to the operation have been planned in a manner that will allow my Special Representative to establish the Mission and his office in Monrovia rapidly

with a small advance team, which includes mission planners. The office has been liaising with ECOMIL forces in theatre to lay the ground for a seamless phasing-in of logistical and administrative operations.

92. A pre-mandate financial commitment authority to initiate contracts for critical services, equipment and supplies has been approved by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. Initial requirements for personnel and equipment are being met through the rapid deployment mechanisms that the United Nations has put in place as a result of the recommendations made in the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (S/2000/809), such as the strategic deployment stocks, and are being moved into theatre by a combination of strategic airlift and sealift. Supplies such as fuel and rations will be drawn from previously concluded systems contracts from other missions until such time as mission-specific supply contracts can be set up.

93. The logistics concept closely and fully integrates the Mission's military and civilian staff. Logistics operations will be controlled and managed under the integrated support services concept, whereby all military and civilian support requirements are pooled for optimal effectiveness and efficiency. Logistics services will be controlled through a Joint Logistics Operations Centre, co-located with the Mission Joint Operations Centre. Staffing of the joint centres will provide for geographical distribution and a balanced mix between military and civilian personnel.

K. Safety and security

94. While in the Mission area, United Nations staff will be exposed to a variety of considerable hazards and risks. In such an environment, and in the light of the recent attack against United Nations premises in Baghdad, I attach paramount importance to supporting the efforts of staff in carrying out their duties while limiting to the extent possible the risks to their security and safety, in keeping with the position taken by the Security Council in resolution 1502 (2003) of 26 August 2003.

95. Prior to the most recent round of conflict, Liberia was reported to be a country affected by landmines and unexploded ordnance, although few specifics on the scope or impact of the problem were available. Until now, landmines, unexploded ordnance and explosive ordnance have not posed a notable risk to United Nations staff, humanitarian agencies or the public at large in the areas of the country to which the United Nations has had access. As the activities of the United Nations mission and humanitarian actors expand and movements of civilian populations increase, however, it is inevitable that the threat posed by explosive and unexploded ordnance will grow, even if the problem with landmines proves not to be significant. The United Nations Mine Action Service has sent its team to the country to assess the situation and will submit recommendations for future action by the Mission, based on the results of that assessment.

96. Proper security arrangements will have to be established during the very first days of the Mission in Liberia. From the first day it must operate in compliance with the United Nations

Minimum Operational Security Standards. The choice of locations, staff accommodation and transit routes and facilities will be determined to a large extent by security considerations. Preparedness and prevention are absolutely essential, as are clear delineation of security responsibilities and adequately staffed security personnel. Buildings and other facilities must be professionally secured, necessary communications systems established and effective procedures implemented and understood by all. The Mission will need to be adequately supported by a sufficient number of security staff, at Headquarters and in all sectors, to implement the minimum operational security standards and to effectively coordinate security management operations between UNMIL and other United Nations and associated organizations operating in Liberia.

97. The Mission will work closely with the United Nations humanitarian and development agencies operating in Liberia and the subregion. The agencies will be provided with security protection and, where possible, the Mission will also provide them emergency logistical support within its means. Prudence will be exercised to ensure that there is no unnecessary duplication of support structures and assets. Cooperative agreements will therefore be put in place to share assets, know-how and other resources, especially in the areas of air and sea transport and communications.

98. The particular health hazards associated with service in the Mission area will be addressed by providing medical coverage in theatre from basic care up to level 3 hospital medical services. It is expected that military units will deploy with a level 1 medical facility per battalion. Adequate medical evacuation capacity will be established.

99. Induction training for all incoming headquarters staff officers and civilian staff will be mandatory and, apart from the main mission brief, will focus on security issues, expected standards of conduct, sensitivity to local culture and risk and stress management. Training will also be provided to those concerned in the concept of integrated logistics.

L. Coordination

100. The various components of the United Nations system in Liberia must develop an integrated understanding of and a common approach to the crisis in the country and its consequences. In this connection, my Special Representative has already started consultations with the humanitarian and development agencies aimed at defining an appropriate coordination mechanism that will ensure an enhanced effectiveness of the United Nations system's response within Liberia and linkages with the regional dimensions. The humanitarian and development agencies have also initiated the process of reviewing the existing coordination mechanisms with the purpose of developing a strong functional relationship between the political, humanitarian and development actors within the United Nations system. Three special liaison officers will be appointed in the Office of one of the Deputy Special Representatives to cooperate closely with the humanitarian and developmental community. In addition, two officers will be appointed to support the coordination functions stemming from the responsibilities as Resident Coordinator.

101. Coordination between UNMIL and ECOWAS and other key international players will also be of critical importance. In addition to initiating the creation of the Implementation Monitoring

Committee as envisaged in the Peace Agreement, my Special Representative will explore with ECOWAS, including the Monroviabased Special Representative of the ECOWAS Executive Secretary, the possibility of setting up a high-level United Nations-ECOWAS coordination mechanism. Such a mechanism will principally aim at addressing potential threats to the peace process and harnessing regional and international support for the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

X. Observations and recommendations

102. The transfer of power from President Taylor to Vice-President Blah and the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement by the Liberian parties offer a unique window of opportunity to end the suffering inflicted on the people of Liberia and to find a peaceful solution to a conflict that has been the epicentre of instability in the subregion.

103. These important developments would not have been possible without the tireless peace efforts made by African leaders, notably President Kufuor, the current chairman of ECOWAS, President Obasanjo of Nigeria, and the ECOWAS mediator, General Abdulsalami Abubakar. I wish to commend them all for their invaluable contributions to the cause of peace and security in Liberia.

104. I would also like to commend ECOWAS leaders for their quick deployment of ECOMIL to Liberia. At the same time, I also wish to express my appreciation to the United States Government for its support to the deployment and operation of ECOMIL, and for positioning significant United States military capabilities off the coast of Liberia. These military contributions have been instrumental in the initial efforts to stabilize the situation in and around Monrovia.

105. The road to lasting peace and security in Liberia is still fraught with multiple and formidable challenges, however. While the United Nations and the international community at large stand ready to support the Liberian peace process, the effective and successful implementation of the Peace Agreement remains the primary responsibility of the Liberian parties themselves. I therefore call on them to continue to support the transitional arrangements they have agreed upon and to fully cooperate with the ECOMIL forces on the ground as well as with my Special Representative and the proposed United Nations peacekeeping mission. I also call upon former President Charles Taylor to abide by the terms of the agreement reached with Nigeria regarding his exile and to disengage completely from Liberian politics.

106. The immediate activation of the Joint Monitoring Commission as well as the early establishment of the Implementation Monitoring Committee would also serve the purpose of securing the continuing commitment of the Liberian parties to implement the Peace Agreement in good faith. Pending the deployment of the proposed United Nations peacekeeping mission in Liberia, additional logistical support should be provided to ECOMIL to enable it to perform its tasks, including the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance. To ensure proper integration with ECOWAS and to assist in building the capacity of this subregional organization, it would be

advisable if the proposed mission could provide limited logistical assistance to the expected political presence of ECOWAS in Liberia.

107. The effective functioning of the National Transitional Government of Liberia will be crucial to facilitating the implementation of the Peace Agreement. To enable the National Transitional Government to perform its mandate fully, all Liberian parties and the Liberian people as a whole should make all efforts to ensure national cohesion and promote the process of reconciliation.

108. Once fully established and operational, the National Transitional Government should indicate how it intends to perform the tasks envisaged for it in the implementation timetable of the Peace Agreement. This would enable the United Nations to determine further steps that may be needed to facilitate key aspects of the Peace Agreement, including disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and the disbandment of paramilitary groups, preparations for elections, and post-conflict rehabilitation, reconstruction and recovery. Indeed, substantial resources would need to be mobilized to help the Transitional Government implement relief and recovery programmes, including the return, repatriation and resettlement of internally displaced persons and refugees, by organizing, among other things, a reconstruction conference within a year. I call on Member States to provide all possible political and financial support to the National Transitional Government of Liberia.

109. Enhancing the overall security situation should greatly facilitate freedom of movement for persons and goods, and help to give humanitarian agencies safe and unhindered access to the civilian population in dire need of relief assistance. At the same time, I would like to encourage Member States to respond generously to the appeals made for humanitarian assistance. Only through timely and generous contributions can the dividends of peace be felt by ordinary Liberians in terms of improvement in basic services, particularly health, education and food security.

110. The gross violations of human rights in Liberia require that special attention be paid to the protection of civilians, in particular the response to the widespread sexual violence against women and children. Furthermore, the early establishment of a functional national capacity for the protection and promotion of human rights and transitional justice mechanisms would greatly help to address the question of impunity and respond to past abuses and violations of human rights, thus facilitating the process of national healing and nation-building. Special efforts should be made to ensure that women and girls are involved in the process.

111. Eliminating the culture of violence in Liberia is an essential prerequisite for ensuring that peace takes root. I cannot overemphasize the need to secure adequate and timely funding for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, with particular emphasis on identifying predictable funding arrangements for the reintegration component. Unless we address the reintegration problem early and effectively enough, the thousands of disarmed youth, in a dire economic situation, are likely to return to the bush and become hired guns, not only inside the country but also in a subregion already awash with small arms and mercenaries. It is therefore imperative that not only disarmament and demobilization, but also the initial phases of reintegration be funded from the assessed peacekeeping budget. The reintegration programme

should be undertaken with a long-term view. Adequate and sustainable resources will be required to ensure its completion.

112. The subregional dimensions of the Liberian conflict, in particular with regard to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, should be kept under close review because they have the potential to destabilize the entire West African subregion. Particular attention should be paid to the interlinkages between the conflict in Liberia and developments in Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire. My Special Representative will examine, in consultation with his colleagues in UNAMSIL, MINUCI and the United Nations Office for West Africa and other relevant components of the United Nations system, the various aspects of the impact of the Liberian conflict on the subregion and explore ways of addressing them. He will also explore ways of strengthening United Nations efforts to contribute to the consolidation of peace in the subregion, as well as ensuring an optimal use of United Nations human and material assets. Consideration should be given to developing and implementing a subregional programme for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. I call on all Member States, particularly the countries neighbouring Liberia, to cease any support that may have been given to armed groups in Liberia and to ensure that their national territories are not used by armed groups to destabilize the country.

113. The success of the United Nations Mission in Liberia will depend on the availability of adequate financial and logistical resources, not only for the implementation of key provisions of the Peace Agreement but also for creating a conducive environment for Liberians to reconstruct their lives. I strongly recommend that substantial provisions be made in the budget of the Mission for the implementation of quick-impact projects. I also recommend that a trust fund be established to support the implementation of various aspects of the Peace Agreement that may require considerable funding. In addition, consideration should be given to the need for resources for the equipping and remuneration of the national police force to be provided through a trust fund. Furthermore, the United Nations should insofar as possible provide ECOWAS and its Special Representative for Liberia with all necessary support, including through the possible provision of logistics assistance and funding for personnel.

114. The major functions performed by the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Liberia will be transferred to the new United Nations operation in Liberia, together with staff of the Office, as appropriate. Meanwhile, I would like to express my appreciation to my Representative for Liberia and the staff of the Office for the work they have carried out under often difficult circumstances.

115. Since his appointment, my Special Representative has already established contact with important regional and international players to secure their support for the Liberian peace process. He intends to continue to work closely with them, including through their representatives in Liberia. Similarly, I count on the support of all Member States and regional and subregional organizations for my Special Representative and the important mission that I have entrusted him with.

116. I would like to emphasize that the situation in Liberia requires a comprehensive, multidimensional and sustained response from the international community. A secure environment countrywide will be a vital factor in ensuring the successful implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Any erosion of the ability to provide a level of security commensurate with the task, particularly the need for a properly structured force with a sufficient number of troops, and an appropriate range of capabilities will jeopardize the ability of the military component to carry out its tasks and is likely to prolong the time frame. Similarly, a strong civilian police component is essential.

117. I recommend that the Security Council, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, authorize the deployment of a multidimensional United Nations peacekeeping operation with a mandate in line with my recommendations in paragraph 51 and with adequate resources, including a troop strength of up to 15,000, including 250 military observers, 160 staff officers and up to 875 civilian police officers and an additional five armed formed units each comprising 120 officers and a significant civilian component and necessary support staff.

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Attachment 7—UNICEF Guidelines for assisting children associated with the fighting forces in the DDRR Program

DRAFT⁶²

Operational guidelines for assisting children associated with fighting forces in the DDRR Program

1. Preparation for Children's DDRR

It is important for all actors to understand why children need to be released early from the fighting forces and conditions should not be placed on the release of and acceptance of children in the DDRR. Roles and responsibilities of UNMIL, UNICEF, Child Protection Agencies (CPAs), UNDP must be clearly spelt out from the onset so as to promote better communication and coordination when the process starts. There must be genuine commitment by UNMIL, UNDP, the NTGL and leaders of the fighting forces and the civil society to children's disarmament and demobilization.

All Military Observers who are going to monitor the disarmament and demobilization process must be able to speak English and they should appoint Child Focus Officers within their teams, who will link directly with the CPAs in their operational area. All Military Observers will be briefed on policies and procedures for the disarmament and demobilization of children prior to deployment. Military Observers will also be given training on child rights/child protection.

UNMIL will prepare the Reception Centres and demobilization/ cantonment sites ahead of the formal DDRR programme beginning. The sites will be structured to allow for separate provisions for children from the adults during demobilization. UNICEF will co-ordinate with CPAs to ensure staff are trained in the operational policies and procedures and are positioned within the demobilization sites prior to their opening.

2. Definitions

- In accordance with the internationally accepted Cape Town Principles⁶³, the definition of **children associated with fighting forces (CAFF)**, who will be eligible for the DDRR programme in Liberia, is: "Any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including, but not limited to: cooks; porters; messengers; and anyone accompanying such groups other than purely as family members. It includes girls and boys recruited for sexual purposes and/or forced marriage. It does not, therefore, only refer to a child who is carrying, or has carried,

⁶² Details of the forms to be completed will need to be added once the monitoring and evaluation unit of the JIU is in place.

⁶³ Cape Town Annotated Principles and Best Practices on the Prevention of Recruitment of Children into the Armed Forces and Demobilization and Social Reintegration of Child Soldiers in Africa. UNICEF, Cape Town, April 1997.

weapons.”

- The term ‘**separated child**’ is used to refer to a child who has not attained the age of 18 years of age or the legal age of majority, who is separated from both parents and not being cared for by a guardian or another adult who by law or custom is responsible to do so. This includes: children without any adult care, children in dangerous situations and children who are in families other than their own.

3. **Information and Sensitization**

- UNICEF to ensure coordination with the UN system to maximize information out put.
- DDR messages must be consistent
- DDR messages should be in Liberian English and/or local language of the target beneficiaries.
- Children should participate directly in the design and delivery of messages on DDRR.
- Military Observers must also have clear information on dates and venues of demobilization, roles, names and operation areas of key child protection agencies and an understanding of the reintegration programme.

4. **Children at Disarmament Centres (Reception Centres)**

- A. Children will report independently or in-groups (with commanders or with other soldiers) to designated reception centres for disarmament.
- B. Children will be processed **with or without weapons** or ammunition.
- C. Children will be prioritized for disarmament by UNMIL and in any disarmament exercise children will be immediately separated from adults and, if possible, transported first to demobilization centres.
- D. After registration all child combatants (males and females under the age of 18 years of age) and other separated children (under the age of 18 years of age) from the fighting forces will be transferred to demobilization site.
- E. Only UNMIL will be present at the reception centres. The registration form for disarmament informs UNMIL that the children are eligible to be transferred to the demobilisation sites.
- F. Any child/person whose age is questionable (i.e. under 18 years of age) will be moved to the age verification centre. The Military Observers’ Child Focus Officer will liaise with the designated child protection agency to ensure that age verification is carried out by social workers. **The final decision on age remains with the social worker.** After verification, those who are classified as children will move directly to the children’s section of the demobilization camp. Those who are classed as adults will be processed according to procedures and policies for adults.

5. Children at Demobilization Sites

Upon arrival of all combatants to the Demobilization Centres from reception points (disarmament centres) all ÇAFF and separated children will be handed over to the child protection agency present in the centre.

(a) General screening

All separated (unaccompanied) children will be transferred immediately to the demobilization site from the reception centres. It is the role of the child protection agency at the site to screen the children in order to identify which children should go through the demobilization process and which children need to be transferred immediately to the emergency interim care site.

Screening will be done to identify the various categories of children by the social workers based at the demobilization centre.

1. Child combatants
2. Non combatant children who do not qualify for demobilization but are separated children and need care provisions.
3. Non combatant children who do not qualify for demobilization and are not separated children.
4. Children (including child combatants) who are identified as having parents/ family members (combatants) in the demobilization centre.

(b) Verification of age

Premise

In some cases adolescents (usually around 14 to 16 years of age) will claim to be adults. It is the role of the social workers to inform them that they will not be transferred into the adult section and that as children they will go through the process with the other children. Many of these adolescents have achieved rank within the forces and do not want to be separated from their commanders. The same will apply for girls who do not want to be separated from their ‘protector’/‘provider’, especially those who are pregnant or who have young infants. There will also be children who will find the services available in the adult programme more attractive and believe they are “entitled” to these services if they have surrendered a weapon. The social workers will have to brief and counsel these adolescents on the programme very clearly to demonstrate that the programme for children is based on “in kind” not cash assistance.

Process

Age verification will be carried out by a representative from the CPA stationed at the demobilization centre in collaboration with a designated Child Focus Officer from the Military Observer team. The interviews will be carried out by CPA social workers in Liberian English/local languages. To facilitate the process, the social will do the following:

1. Separate the persons in question from the main group for individual interviews.

2. Engage with the child to determine the child's age according to techniques known by the staff in question (physical assessment including, if practicable, teeth verification, memory of historical events in Liberian history etc.).
3. Request an opinion from the medical personnel should there be any doubt surrounding the actual age.
4. Brief the person on the programmes for children and on the programmes for adults
5. Ascertain upon completion of interview and teeth verification which category the person belongs to: adult/child and inform the Military Observers Child Focus Officer
6. Ensure that if the person is classified as an adult he or she is separated from the children and treated according to the policy for adult combatants.
7. Make the final recommendation on age to the Military Observer and ensure the CPA's right to make the decision on age is followed by UNMIL.
8. Accompany children registered as eligible to the children's section of the camp.

c) Eligibility criteria to enter demobilization

Children will be considered eligible for demobilization according to whether or not they are assessed to fit the Cape Town Principles' definition of a "child soldier". CPAs prefer to use the term "children associated with the fighting forces" rather than "child soldier" to demonstrate the breadth of this definition. It is the role of the social worker to determine if the child falls into this definition *and* if it is in the child's best interests to go through the demobilization process. Experience has shown that irrespective of the involvement of the child in the conflict, the fact that they have spent a period of time with the fighting forces will mean they will be perceived by the families and communities as participants in the conflict. Children and families may gain a sense of reassurance from knowing their children have passed through the process and UNMIL has verified them. For children who have been part of the fighting forces, demobilization cards have proved to be very instrumental in their reintegration with their families and communities.

There is no scientific method of determining if a child is or is not associated with the fighting forces when social workers carry out the screening for eligibility for the DDRR programme. The assessment will be made on the basis of an interview with the child and the social worker's own experience of working with other CAFF and his/ her knowledge of the various factions. Information that has proved decisive in other contexts to demonstrate the child as a CAFF includes the child's account of where he/she was trained, place and method of recruitment, length of time with the factions, function, rank etc. Clearly the experience of the social worker is critical and it will be important to choose staff who understand children in the context of the current conflict.

(d) The demobilization process

Briefing

It is the responsibility of the child protection agency at the demobilization site to brief the children on what will be the process during their stay in the camp. The UNMIL representative at

the centre and the Military Observers Child Focus Officer should be aware of the briefing to ensure that conflicting messages are not given to the children.

1. Children who qualify for the demobilization process will stay at the site in order to go through the process. Once the registration commences it is estimated that the children will only be at the sites for up to 72 hrs before onward transfer to the interim care centres.
2. Children will be registered and photographed by UNMIL who will be responsible for the production of I.D. Cards. The Military Observers' Child Focus Officer will ensure that children are given priority in the registration and issuing of ID cards. The Child Focus Officer will liaise with the Child Protection Agency on site for information on numbers and coordination of registration. Children will be processed before adults to ensure that the length of stay in the demobilization site is minimized.
3. Children who do not qualify (non-combatants) and are separated children will be transferred immediately to the nearest interim care centre/ or selected foster family. Young babies of female children who have been classified as combatants will remain with their mothers until the mother is transferred after the demobilization process to an interim care programme. The carers on site will ensure that the baby receives appropriate care during the period it is with its mother at the demobilization site. After the mother has gone through the demobilization process she and the child will be transferred to the interim care centre.
4. In the overall Joint Plan of Operations, UNMIL is responsible for the transportation of combatants from the demobilization or cantonment site to their place for reintegration. UNICEF and CPAs will liaise with the UNMIL representative and the Military Observers' Child Focus Officer on site to co-ordinate on children's transfer from the demobilization site to the Interim Care Centre. Provision of transport should ensure that children are not delayed in demobilization centres because of logistical issues.
5. Children who are classed as combatants (following the adult and child verification process) and who are accompanying their parent who is also classified as a combatant will:-
 - Be given the option (in consultation with the parent) to undergo the demobilization process with the other children and be reunified with a family member named by the parent.
 - Remain with the parent and undergo the demobilization process and leave the camp with the parent once he/she has completed the demobilization process.
 - It will be recommended to the parent (combatant) that it is in the best interest of the child that he/she should not remain in the adult camp but be reunified with another member of the family. Smaller children should remain with their mothers as separation can lead to psychological problems for the children.
6. Should a combatant arrive at the camp for demobilization accompanied by his/her children, the children will be screened by the CPA for eligibility to the demobilization programme. For older accompanied children who do not qualify for demobilization but whose parents do, the following services will be offered:

- placement in an interim care centre while awaiting the discharge of the parent (in this case good communication links need to be kept with the parents to ensure that the child is returned to them upon their departure from the demobilization site)
- tracing in order to find other family members who could look after the child
- placement in foster care in the area where demobilization is taking place

(f) Special Considerations for girls and young women

Many of the girls between the ages of 13 and 18 years of age will have a ‘husband’ among the male combatants. These ‘marriages’ are not recognized by Liberian Laws or by customary laws if the ‘marriage’ did not go through the usual process. Female combatants and non-combatants who are 18 years of age and below are to be treated as children and as such are referred to the children’s section for screening, counseling and registration. Female children will lose all benefits of the programme if they are not given the opportunity to register with the CPA. The Military Observers’ Child Focus Officer will liaise with the Camp Management and the CPA to ensure that all female children are referred to the children’s section for screening. The following principles and programme provision will apply:

- i. Security and protection of girls and young women must be available at the cantonment sites. Separate facilities such as bathrooms and toilets must be in place for girls and young women and girls.
- ii. Special security and protection arrangements must be in place for girls and women who may want to separate from their ex-combatant partners. These security arrangements should include relocation from original domain;
- iii. Interviewers must be gender sensitive and efforts must be made to ensure presence of female military observers at all cantonment sites.
- iv. There must be recognition that girls and young women who associated with fighting forces as wives, domestic support, cooks etc, but were not in active combat can go through the formal process.
- v. Childcare facilities should be put in place for girl mothers and their children and special considerations must be made for girls and young women who are pregnant.
- vi. All female non combatants (18 years of age and under) will be transferred with the other children to the interim care centre if they are separated children.
- vii. All female child combatants and non-combatants are entitled to a visit from their partners (upon request by the female and not by the partner) before departure from the camp and this visit will be facilitated under the supervision of a social worker.
- viii. Under no circumstances will an underage female be allowed to go to the main camp to visit with her partner.
- ix. All threats against the females will be reported to the Camp Management, Military Observers Child Focus Officer and UNMIL security.
- x. Demobilization centers must have at least one qualified female counselor with training in sexual and gender-based violence.
- xi. Medical screening should be provided and treatment given for STI and pelvic inflammatory diseases. The medical screening and treatment should cover infants and children of the women and girls.

- xii. Special care must be taken to ensure that mothers and their children are not separated during movements from demobilization centers to ICCs.

(g) Designated area for children

The designated CPA in conjunction with UNMIL will have identified a separated area within the camp for children. This area will be fenced off from the main area of the camp. A fence (using plastic sheeting and wood) should be erected during the finalization of the campsite. The area/site should take into account the type of activities to be undertaken:

1. Sleeping facilities for approximately 200 children – separate areas for girls and young women (but with the capacity to expand to cater for larger numbers) (UNMIL)
2. Feeding of children (UNMIL/ WFP)
3. Access to water (UNMIL)
4. Access to toilets (separate facilities for male and female) (UNMIL)
5. Separate cooking and or feeding facilities (UNMIL)
6. Space for recreation (UNMIL)
7. Stock of basic supplies for children – blankets, sleeping mats, basic hygiene kits (UNMIL)
8. Clothing, baby kits (UNICEF)
9. Supplies for eating: - mugs, spoons, plates (UNMIL)
10. Area for securing basic supplies (UNMIL)
11. Work area for social workers to include tables and chairs (UNMIL)
12. Recreation material. – Footballs, skipping ropes, paper, crayons etc (UNICEF)

(h) Activities for children at demobilisation sites

The following are the activities, which will be provided: -

- Registration for demobilization (UNMIL)
- Taking of photograph and preparation of ID cards (UNMIL)
- Medical screening and medical assistance (UNMIL/ WHO/Medical NGO assigned to camp)
- Recreation (UNICEF/ CPA)
- Feeding (food provided by WFP and co-ordination of feeding done by child care agency)
- Initial counseling by social workers (UNICEF/ CPA)

Should for any reason there be a delay in the process of demobilization or the transfer of children to the interim care centre, support staff from the interim care centre will be deployed to the demobilization site to carry out the following: -

- Interviews and registration for tracing
- Expansion of recreation programme to include organized activities such as drama, dancing, music etc.
- Educational and skills training orientation
- Peace education

- Provision of more specific counseling by counselors i.e. on SGBV and substance abuse.

(i) Movement of children within or outside the camp

The designated area for children will be restricted to the children, personnel of the child care agency, camp manager, medical staff, logistical staff, UNICE, CPAs and UNMIL.

Children will be accompanied to the Demobilization registration area and to the clinic by social workers in small groups. A caregiver will accompany children who may be admitted to the clinic due to illness. If a child is transferred outside the demobilization centre for medical treatment he/she will be accompanied at all times by a carer. Upon completion of medical treatment the child may be returned to the demobilization site to go through the demobilization process.

Should a child be deemed a danger to himself/herself or the other children within the children's section he/she will be removed to a safe area within the children's area of the camp or within the main camp (in a zone identified by the UNMIL Site Co-ordinator in consultation with the site co-ordinator for children.) He/she will be supervised at all times by a social worker. The medical personnel and social workers on the site will assess the child and a recommendation will be made to the UNMIL Site co-ordinator. Should a decision be made to remove the child from the demobilization site UNICEF will be contacted to assist in the transfer of the child to another facility i.e. interim care centre, hospital etc.

Children will be informed that they should not leave the camp area at any time.

6. Transfer of children to interim care sites

1. Upon screening those children who will not go through the demobilization process and are separated children will be transferred immediately to the nearest interim care site. It is the responsibility of the CPA working at the demobilization site to co-ordinate with UNMIL to arrange transportation to the interim care centre.
2. Upon completion of the registration for demobilization, taking of pictures for ID card and medical screening the child (children) will be transferred to the interim care centre.
3. Children will not be required to stay at the demobilization site or the nearest interim care centre to await issuing of ID cards. It is the role of each CPA to keep appropriate records of the children in order for cards to be dispatched to the centre of final destination of the child.
4. The following exceptions apply:
 - Children who have been admitted to the medical facilities and are too sick to be transferred.
 - Security problems in the area of the demobilization site and transfer of children is delayed until clearance is given.

7. Retroactive and Retrospective DDRR for Children

Children will have demobilized before or after the formal process and will have gone to interim care facilities.

Response mechanisms to the different ways that children exit from the armed groups should be formalized, harmonized and the information on how to access services should be disseminated throughout the country

Target group: Early release of CAFF

Steps

1. In the event there is information about children willing to demobilize or fighting units willing to release children, UNICEF will be contacted;
2. UNICEF will inform JIU, UNMIL Child Focus DDRR Officer and MILOBs;
3. MILOBs will enter in negotiations with the Commanders of the Unit willing to release children and will agree with them on the location, date and time of the release;
4. Children (with or without a weapon) will be accepted for screening and registration;
5. The registration forms used will be the same as for the formal demobilization;
6. Children will then be handed over to UNICEF for subsequent transfer into an ICC/ demobilization centre (as appropriate);
7. CPAs running the ICC will screen all the children at the centre for registration and care;
8. Children released will undergo medical screening;
9. UNMIL Registration forms will be entered into the central database to facilitate the participation and access to benefits under the formal DDRR.

Target group: Already demobilized CAFF⁶⁴

Steps

1. A CPA attending to the needs of former CAFF will inform UNICEF about the number of children in their care and the location of their ICC;
2. UNICEF will verify the accuracy of the information;
3. Upon confirmation of the existence of the caseload, UNICEF will contact JIU, the UNMIL Child Focus DDRR Officer and MILOBs;
4. MILOBs along side with the representatives of UNICEF, JIU, UNMIL DDRR Child Focus Officer will visit the ICC for formal interview and registration of the caseload;
5. The registration exercise will use the same forms that will be used during the formal process;
6. Registration data will be entered into the central database to facilitate the participation and access to benefits under the formal DDRR.

⁶⁴ This is an exception rather than a rule and this exception will be valid for any demobilization that will have taken place prior to November 1, 2003.

Attachments

Attachment 8—Guidelines and Protocols for Interim Care Centers in Liberia

Guidelines and Protocols for Interim Care Centers in Liberia

FINAL DRAFT

October 31, 2003

1) Definitions

Interim Care Center (ICC) – a residence to provide temporary care, services and protection for children associated with the fighting forces and other separated children while family tracing and reintegration activities are ongoing.

In accordance with the internationally accepted Cape Town Principles⁶⁵, the definition of **children associated with fighting forces (CAFF)** in Liberia is: “Any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including, but not limited to: cooks; porters; messengers; and anyone accompanying such groups other than purely as family members. It includes girls and boys recruited for sexual purposes and/or forced marriage. It does not, therefore, only refer to a child who is carrying, or has carried, weapons.”

2) The term ‘**separated child**’ is used to refer to a child who has not attained the age of 18 years of age or the legal age of majority, who is separated from both parents and not being cared for by a guardian or another adult who by law or custom is responsible to do so. This includes: children without any adult care, children in dangerous situations and children who are in families other than their own. **Who enters the ICC?**

- CAFF referred to the ICC through the formal DDR process
- CAFF who spontaneously demobilize
- CAFF and separated children in need of family tracing
- CAFF and separated children who feel unsafe or uncertain about returning to their families or communities of origin
- CAFF and separated children with severe psychological problems caused or exacerbated by their experiences
- CAFF and separated children with serious medical conditions or disabilities
- Female CAFF and separated children who are pregnant and/or with children

3) intake to the icc, registration and data collection process

Children will either be referred to ICCs through the formal DDR process or will arrive on their own. It is important to note that some children may have demobilized before the formal DDRR

⁶⁵ Cape Town Annotated Principles and Best Practices on the Prevention of Recruitment of Children into the Armed Forces and Demobilization and Social Reintegration of Child Soldiers in Africa. UNICEF, Cape Town, April 1997.

process and are already in the ICC, such children will be treated in the same manner as other children who are referred to the ICCs through the formal DDRR process.

During any intake, registration and data collection process involving children associated with fighting forces or separated children the following guidelines shall be adhered to:

- Children should be interviewed individually and away from their superiors and peers.
- Children should not be pressured into discussing sensitive issues. When these issues are raised, they must be raised only when in the best interest of the child and only by a person qualified to raise such issues and provide adequate follow up.
- The child's confidentiality must be respected at all times.
- Throughout the process, all children should be informed as to why the information is being collected and should be assured that confidentiality will be respected. Children should be further informed about what will happen to them at each step of the process.
- All communication and information should be in the child's mother tongue.
- Based on the complete information provided about the process, children should be allowed to ask questions, make comments and suggestions regarding the process, and give their consent to participate in the process.
- Children should not be made to endure repeated interviews. Structured interviews should be designed to gather all of the information required for each sector or data collection purpose.

4) Length of Stay

All efforts should be made so that children stay in the center for as short a time as possible prior to family reunification or alternative care placement. A child's stay at the center should be approximately 4-6 weeks and should never exceed 12 weeks. To assure the child's stay in the ICC is within this timeframe, family tracing should begin as soon as the documentation is complete; and if family reunification is not possible within 4-6 weeks for any reason (including tracing efforts hindered by the security situation), alternative care arrangements should begin to be explored.

5) Staffing the ICC

In hiring ICC staff, the gender and ethnic background of the children as well as the host community must be considered in order to protect the children and avoid tension as much as possible. These considerations, however, must be balanced with the need to create an environment that fosters tolerance and respect for differences. All staff should be treated with respect, including being given full, accurate and timely information regarding the larger DDR process, ICC policy, short and long term program plans, etc.

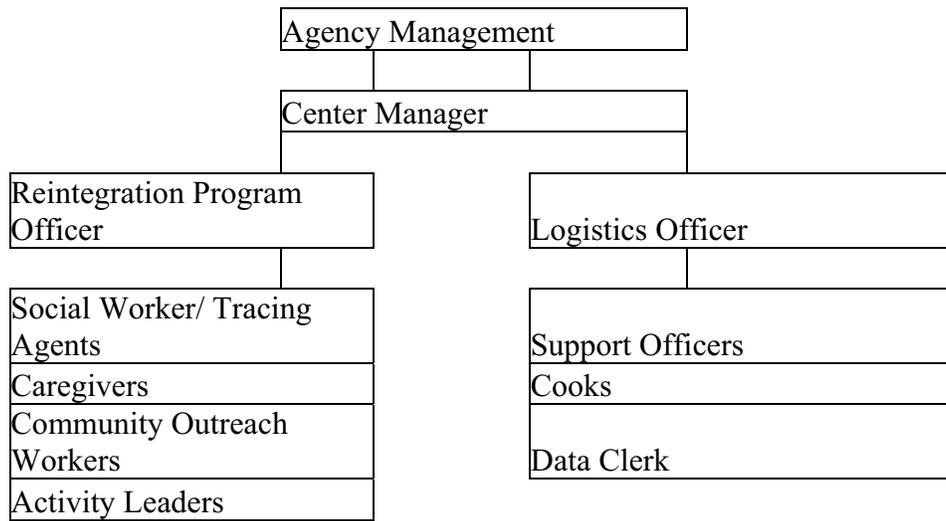
The following staff should be hired to run the Interim Care Center. Exact numbers of staff should be determined according to facility capacity. Titles underlined represent supervisory roles.

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- Center Manager (1) – Overall responsibility for ensuring that the center operates as planned, ensuring standards are adhered to, report writing and coordination with other agencies. Supervises Logistics Officer.
- Reintegration Program Officer (1) - Liaise with DDR officials to ensure process observes child rights and to help prepare and obtain lists and referrals to the ICC. Supervise social workers/tracing agents, caregivers, activity leaders and community outreach workers.
- Social workers/tracing agents (1 per 20 children) – interview and assess children arriving at the center, carry out ongoing discussions, both individual and group, with the children, ensuring their psychosocial well-being and supporting their transition to civilian life, carry out tracing and family mediation, oversee family reunification and follow up to ensure successful reintegration. Specialists should be on staff with expertise and experience working with drug abuse/addiction and survivors of sexual violence. Female social workers should be hired to work with girls and male social workers should work with the boys.
- Caregivers (1 per 8-10 children) – Create a family-like atmosphere by providing care and support to a consistent, small group of children, track children’s well-being, make appropriate referrals to social workers and assist with planning and organizing recreational activities. Female caregivers should work with the girls and male caregivers should work with the boys.
- Community Outreach Workers (2- depending on geographical coverage) – Help to establish and support child welfare committees to advocate on behalf of returning children. Work closely with community members and local agencies to ensure a smooth reintegration process for children, including tracking follow-up provided by committee members. Half of the outreach workers should be males and half females.
- Activity Leaders (1 per 40 children) – organize and play games with children, run non-formal school, organize story telling and cultural activities in partnership with community members. Half of the activity leaders should be males and half females.
- Logistics Officer (1)– oversees procurement and tracking of supplies and materials for center, supervises support officers and cooks
- Support Officer (3) – maintains 24 hour security for center and supports other activities. Coordinates security with UNMIL. At least one female guard should be employed at the girls’ facility.
- Cooks (4 for 100 children) – works with children to prepare nutritious daily meals
- Data Clerk (1) – Enters intake information and child assessment data into database, produces program records and reports.

Sample Organizational Chart:



6) TRAINING

Interim Care Centers require staff with a good professional knowledge of working with children. Ongoing, inter-agency training for all staff, as well as training of trainers for selected staff, should include child rights, child development, child participation and working with resourcefulness in children, communicating with children, listening to and supporting children emotionally, how to recognize more severe forms of psychological distress, working with children with physical disabilities, discussions on various models of rehabilitation, community-based approaches to integration, special issues in working with girls, awareness of gender based violence and survivor issues, issues around drug abuse and addiction, life skills, career counseling, child protection issues such as physical abuse, etc. as staff and needs determine. Careful thought needs to be given to the issue of staff support, burnout prevention and dealing with stress among staff. Staff training should be undertaken to assure high quality performance within the ICC, but also always with an eye towards building skills for the next, long term, community-based stages of the reintegration process.

7) CHILD PROTECTION

CPAs providing interim care and the ICC management will ensure that all children under their care are protected from stigmatization, abuse, exploitation, discrimination and bullying.

ICC staff must ensure that all children in the center are given equal treatment and equal access to services and recreational facilities, special attention will be given to children with disabilities and pregnant girls.

Children will be informed that they will have no contact with their former commanders, faction leaders and other military leaders neither will such people be allowed to visit children in the centers.

Special security and protection arrangements must be in place for girls who may have separated from their ex-combatant partners. These security arrangements should include relocation from original domain.

CPAs managing ICCs and their staff will ensure that Code of conduct for the staff is developed and adhered and children at the centre will also be encouraged to develop their own conduct of conduct.

Staff recruitment for ICC will be carefully done to ensure the best interest of the child is upheld all the time.

8) ICC Facilities

All ICC facilities must meet or exceed relevant minimum standards established in the Sphere Project's Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response. (See the Annex for some key indicators from the Sphere standards.)

ICC facilities and services must be provided in a manner that avoids tension between the ICC community and the host community. While maintaining Sphere standards, ICCs should also maintain standards similar to those of the surrounding community. In cases where Sphere standards are higher than those of the host community it is important to provide the local community with access to the services in the ICC. For example, if there are not sufficient water points in the community, consider opening the ICC water point to the larger community or building additional water points outside of the ICC. The center management should be aware that this may have security implications for the children in the center and should put in place mechanisms to prevent and/or deal with security incidents.

- An ICC is a building with enough space to adequately accommodate no more than 100 children. According to Sphere standards, the covered area available per child must be at least 3.5- 4.5 meters squared and the whole ICC compound must provide at least 45 meters squared space for each person.
- The ICC must have adequate ventilation and protection from direct sunlight
- It must be fenced to provide security.
- There must be an ICC office.
- There will be different sites for boys and girls.
- All facilities must be easily accessible to children with disabilities
- Child friendly spaces should be provided for center-based educational activities, psychosocial support activities, workshops and for indoor and outdoor play.
- The ICC must be located in a reasonably secure environment. For example, it should not be within 50 kilometers of an active military area. How far from the cantonment site?
- The ICC should be accessible to vehicles to facilitate transport of children and supplies
- The following should be present: A kitchen, separate storage areas for food and non-food items, constant water supply, toilets, bathing rooms. Adequate lighting should be provided

for security whether electric, solar, lanterns, etc. (see the Annex for Sphere standards regarding water, toilets and bathing rooms.)

9) Services

All ICC services must meet or exceed relevant minimum standards established in the Sphere Project's Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response. (See the Annex for some key indicators from the Sphere standards.)

Efforts must be made to ensure that all children benefit fully from all of the services available at the ICC. For example, special arrangements may need to be made to organize recreational activities appropriate for children with physical disabilities or to create a childcare arrangement for those girls with children.

- *Food* – Quality nutritional food should be provided to children in the ICCs. Special care will have to be taken to meet the unique nutritional needs of pregnant or lactating mothers as well as young children. The children should assist in the preparation and clean up of meals.
- *Water and sanitation* – Safe drinking water and proper latrines should be available for children in the ICCs.
- *Hygiene* – The environment at the ICCs should be healthy and hygienic. Children should be guided to attend to their own personal hygiene and actively involved in maintaining the cleanliness of their surroundings. ICC management NGOs should secure regular and adequate supplies of cleaning materials and personal hygiene items.
- *Health* – As soon as possible, all children should undergo assessment of their physical health and receive treatment as necessary. Children in the ICCs should also be provided with ongoing health care. Children that need special medical attention and care should be referred to the proper health institutions and services. All ICC staff and children should be educated in general health promotion, first aid, prevention of STDs and gender-based violence. Appropriate care and medical services for pregnant girls, infants and young children and other special needs groups including disabled children and victims of sexual abuse should be readily available onsite or by referral. The centre needs to have at least one health worker who will provide on site medical services.
- *Education* – Center-based non-formal educational activities in each ICC should focus on basic literacy and numeracy to help children who have missed schooling for significant periods of time. Educational activities will help create a sense of normalcy for the children as well as prepare those children who wish to re-enter the regular schooling system and impart basic functional skills to children who opt to pursue skills training. NGOs should provide adequate and quality supplies of didactic material for the educational activities. More advanced students should be referred to community schools.

- *Life Skills* – The educational activities should include life skills education to better prepare the children for life in families and communities. Lessons on peace building, conflict resolution, decision making, reproductive health, child care, human rights, self esteem, responsibility, leadership, etc. should be incorporated into the children’s daily activities.
- *Recreation* – A full program of recreational activities for children should be carried out. These activities are essential for psychosocial well-being and they facilitate the reconciliation process and constitute part of their rights as children. Trained groups of animators and caregivers should organise sports, games (including traditional indoor and outdoor games), arts and crafts, etc. Sporting events should be organised with local schools, youth groups etc. to promote interaction with the wider community.
- *Cultural activities* – NGOs should promote cultural re-integration of children in ICCs by encouraging children to learn about and participate in the different positive cultural traditions of Liberia. This will include role-plays, songs, story telling, dances and drama activities led by activity leaders and caregivers. Close cooperation with community based culture institutions, and non-formal culture and art groups should be facilitated.
- *Expression* – Children will be encouraged, as they are ready, to express themselves individually with staff as well as in group activities, which take into account the age and stage of development of each child. Social workers and animators should organize regular group discussions with the children during which a range of topics will be explored, such as military versus civilian life, expectations and fears about going home, suggestions for improvement in the ICC activities, etc. Children should also be encouraged to draw and keep journals as a means of self expression.
- *Healing activities* – All psychosocial activities are understood to contribute towards healing but some children may require individual attention. Each child’s progress and emotional needs should be monitored by his or her key caregiver and social worker. In addition to group work and peer group support children may benefit from individual counselling and/or opportunities to participate in traditional healing ceremonies.
- *Agriculture* – Where appropriate, children should be encouraged to engage in agricultural activities in order to prepare them for reintegration in rural communities.
- *Pre-vocational orientation* - For children and adolescents who express an interest in skills training, vocational counselling will help children to determine the most appropriate option according to their interests, abilities and the characteristics of the area to which they will return. Visits can be arranged with skilled and well-respected craftspersons from the community to discuss and demonstrate what is involved in various trades and to assist in assessing the talents and qualifications of various children.
- *Community Learning* – Just as communities need to be educated about the needs and experiences of the returning CAFF and separated children, the children will need to be reacquainted with their communities. Discussions between children and community

members should be organized around topics such as local customs, norms and values as well as the appropriate family and community roles of the returning children, the roles of their parents/families and other community members, etc.

- *Religious Activities* – Children should have the opportunity to attend a local church or mosque. It has been observed that for many children their involvement in the religious community is important to them and a direct benefit to their emotional well-being.
- *Family Tracing* – Family tracing should be undertaken as soon as possible. The ICC social workers should liaise closely with members of the ICC tracing team and/or relevant FTR agencies to affect tracing and reunification. Prior to reunification, ICC social workers should carry out individual reintegration plans with each child to help set individual goals and address any issues requiring special attention or mediation. Where tracing is unsuccessful after 4 weeks the social workers will work with the child and the community team to identify the most appropriate option for alternative care and education, skills training or apprenticeships.
- *Alternative Care* – When children cannot be reunited with their families, their need to establish and maintain stable emotional relationships must be recognized. Community-based alternative care arrangements, such as temporary foster families, group independent living for older youth, apprenticeships or educational or vocational training programs should be identified with maximum child and community input. To keep the child's stay in the ICC short, alternative arrangements should begin to be explored if tracing is unsuccessful within 4 weeks.
- *Community Reintegration* - The reintegration process must be informed by the unique factors and circumstances that define each child's situation. Programs should incorporate a child rights approach to reintegration, which ensures children's participation in plans and procedures to facilitate their return to civilian life. Dialogues with communities should be undertaken to clarify their main concerns for the children and the community's perception of their own roles and responsibilities with regard to the children. Traditional resources and practices in the community, which can support the psychosocial integration of children affected by war, should be identified and supported. Community members should be involved in identifying sustainable initiatives including educational, skills training, and economic opportunities that support recovery for all community members, rather than intensive interventions focused solely on former child soldiers.

10) Supplies to Children

It is recommended that the following supplies be provided to the children staying in the ICC:

Used clothing (3 sets- pants/skirts, shirts, underpants)	Bathing bucket (1 per group of 8-10 children)
Blankets (2 per child)	Washing tub (1 per group of 8-10 children)
Mats (1 per child)	Laundrysoap (per group of 8-10 children)*

Toothbrush (1 per child)	Bathing soap- 250g per person per month* ⁶⁶
Small toothpaste (1 per child)*	Refugee bag
Small Vaseline (1 per child)*	Girls – Brassier (2 per child)
Small towel (1 per child)	Rapper (if babies)
Eating Bowl (1 per child)	Slips (2 per child)
Spoons (1 per child)	Slippers/ sandals (1 pair per child)
Drinking cup (1 per child)	Babies – used clothing, and diapers (3 sets)
Drinking bucket with lid (1 per group of 8-10 children)	

One first aid kit for each ICC and Center management will take of replenishing the kit whenever necessary.

* These items will be distributed weekly, fortnightly or monthly as deemed fit by center management.

The following supplies are recommended for recreational activities:

Football	Whistle
Volleyball	Socks (for tether ball)
Volleyball net	Swing (rope)
Basketball	Sticks
Musical instruments – drums, sassas, etc	Ludo
Drawing and art supplies	Radios
Games – (playing cards, checkers, scrabble, local games, etc)	Other items as identified by the children
Sportswear for one team (for play against outside teams)	

11) Child Participation

The children must be involved in the planning and implementation of ICC and reintegration activities through group and one-on-one discussions.

The children should be encouraged to organize their own leadership closely monitored by the caregivers and other ICC staff.

Children should be given timely information regarding changes in the program and they should be involved in new decisions so that they understand and are a part of the process.

The interim care center shall be child-friendly and actively involve the children in every aspect of center operations in order to increase the children’s sense of personal responsibility, build skills relevant to normal family and community life and foster growth and development. Special considerations must be taken to assure full participation of children with special needs, for example children with disabilities.

⁶⁶ Sphere minimum standard. See Annex.

An enabling environment should be created to allow children to report issues affecting them. Children and staff should jointly develop ground rules and openly discuss roles, rights and responsibilities of all persons at the ICC.

12) Community Involvement

Agencies should work with communities surrounding the ICCs to involve them in the overall monitoring and evaluation of the presence or the impact of the ICC children in the larger community, and to coordinate joint activities.

Integration with community youth – recreation, cultural and other activities should be organized jointly with youth from the community surrounding the ICC in order to facilitate the children’s transition to civilian life and to foster greater community involvement.

Meetings and workshops should be held with communities of return about acceptance of returning CAFF and other separated children.

Child welfare committees – Agencies should work through existing community structures or where there are none, help communities to initiate child welfare committees. Any response to the real needs of children associated with the fighting forces can be better articulated and conceptualized by their families and communities while child protection agencies provide technical support to ensure that systems are in place.

Community Outreach Workers and Child Welfare Committees should work closely with communities to identify of children, especially girls and children with disabilities, who may informally demobilize.

13) Coordination (referrals, information sharing, linkages)

General coordination will occur under the national child protection coordination committee supported by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and UNICEF. During these meetings agencies will network, share information, trouble-shoot and discuss referrals.

Agencies operating ICCs will form a core management committee to develop a Code of Conduct for ICC employees, coordinate referrals and family tracing, coordinate movement of children from one center to another closer to the child’s place of origin, and establish standards for inter-agency work such as providing 48 hours notice prior to moving children, having children accompanied by social workers (maintaining a 10 to 1 child to social worker ratio), etc.

Agencies operating ICCs will also coordinate with health services and other relevant agencies in order to make proper referrals.

14) Documentation

The documentation process should be carried out between individual children and their assigned social worker and include standard forms for family tracing, as well as the recording of case histories and a comprehensive child assessment form that is updated regularly during the child's stay and before departure. Special attention should be given to obtaining information for family tracing purposes and noting any special needs the child might have. Confidentiality should be strictly followed with regard to any sensitive information that may be shared with staff or external agencies.

All agencies carrying out family tracing will sit together to develop common forms to record data to be inputted into a common database and also to be linked to the formal DDR process led by UNDP.**15) Monitoring**

Each agency operating an ICC, in collaboration with UNICEF's overall monitoring system, will be responsible for monitoring program effectiveness and tracking program details such as the number of children at the center, program activities, etc. Each interim care center will prepare internal monthly reports.

ANNEX: Excerpts from the Sphere Project's *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response*

Below are just some of the key indicators from the Sphere minimum standards. See the Sphere standards for more specific technical information.

WATER SUPPLY

Water supply standard 1: access and water quantity

Key indicators

- At least 15 liters of water per person per day is collected
- Flow at each water collection point is at least 1.25 liters per second
- There is at least 1 water point per 250 people
- The maximum distance from any shelter to the nearest water point is 500 meters

Water supply standard 2: water quality

Key indicators

- There are no more than 10 fecal coliforms per 100 ml at the point of delivery for undisinfected supplies
- Sanitary survey indicates low risk of fecal contamination
- For piped water supplies to populations over 10,000 people, or for all water supplies at times of risk or presence of diarrhea epidemic, water is treated with a residual disinfectant to an acceptable standard (e.g. residual free chlorine at the tap is 0.2-0.5 mg per liter and turbidity is below 5 NTU)
- Total dissolved solids are no more than 1,000 mg per liter, and water is palatable to users
- No significant negative health effect due to chemical or radiological contamination from short term use, or from the planned duration of use of the water source, is detected (including carry-over of treatment chemicals), and assessment shows no significant probability of such an effect

Water supply standard 3: water use facilities and goods

Key indicators

- Each household has two water collecting vessels of 10-20 liters, plus water storage vessels of 20 liters. Water collection and storage vessels have narrow necks and/or covers
- There is 250g of soap available per person per month
- Where communal bathing facilities are necessary, there are sufficient bathing cubicles for bathing at an acceptable frequency and at an acceptable time, with separated cubicles for men and for women

- Where communal laundry facilities are necessary, there is 1 washing basin per 100 people; private laundering areas are available for women to wash and dry undergarments and sanitary cloths

EXCRETA DISPOSAL

Excreta disposal standard 1: access to, and number of toilets

Key indicators

- Maximum of 20 people per toilet
- Use of toilets is arranged by household(s) and/or segregated by sex
- Toilets are no more than 50 meters from dwellings, or no more than one minute's walk
- Separate toilets for women and men are available in public places (market, distribution centers, health centers, etc.)

Excreta disposal standard 2: design and construction

Key indicators

- Technically sound design and construction specification, approved by the intended users, are used for all forms of household and public toilets
- Cleaning and maintenance routines for public toilets are in place and function correctly
- Toilets are designed, built and located to have the following features:
 - They are easy to keep clean enough to invite use and not to present a health hazard
 - They are accessible and easy to use by all sections of the population including, children, old people, pregnant women and physically and mentally disabled people
 - They are lit at night if necessary for security or convenience
 - Hand washing facilities are close by
 - They minimize fly and mosquito breeding
 - They allow for the disposal of women's sanitary protection, or provide women with the necessary privacy for washing and drying sanitary protection cloths
 - They provide a degree of privacy in line with the norms of the users
- Latrines and soakaways in most soils are at least 30 meters from any groundwater source and the bottom of any latrine is at 1.5 meters above the water table. Drainage or spillage from defecation systems does not run towards any surface water source or shallow ground water source
- People are provided with tools and materials for constructing, maintaining and cleaning their own toilets if appropriate

VECTOR CONTROL

Vector control standard 2: physical, environmental and chemical protection measures

Key indicators

- The population of malaria-bearing mosquitoes is kept low enough to avoid the risk of excessive malaria infection
- Rats, flies and other nuisance pests are kept within acceptable levels
- Intensive fly control is carried out in high density settlements when there is a risk or presence of diarrhea epidemic

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Solid waste management standard 1: solid waste collection and disposal

Key indicators

- Domestic refuse is removed from the settlement or buried on site before it becomes a nuisance or a health risk
- Final disposal of solid waste is carried out in such a place and in such a way as to avoid creating health and environmental problems

Solid waste management standard 2: solid waste containers/ pits

Key indicators

- No dwelling is more than 15 meters from a refuse container or household refuse pit, or 100 meters from a communal refuse pit
- One 100 liters refuse container is available per 10 families, where domestic refuse is not buried on site

DRAINAGE

Drainage standard 1: drainage works

Key indicators

- There is no standing wastewater around water points or elsewhere in the settlement
- Storm water flows away
- Shelters, paths and water and sanitation facilities are not flooded or eroded by water

Drainage standard 2: installation and tools

Key indicators

- Water point drainage is well planned, built and maintained. This includes drainage from washing and bathing areas as well as water collection points

GENERAL NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT

General nutritional support standard 1: nutrient supply

Key indicators

- There are no cases of scurvy, pellagra or beri-beri
- There is access to a range of foods- staple (cereal or tuber), pulses (or animal products), fat sources, etc.
- There is access to vitamin C rich or fortified foods or appropriate supplements
- There is access to vitamin A rich or fortified foods or appropriate supplements
- There is access to additional sources of niacin (eg pulses, nuts, offal) if the staple is maize or sorghum
- Infants under six months have access to breast milk (or appropriate substitute)

General nutritional support standard 2: food quality and safety

Key indicators

- There are no outbreaks of food-borne diseases caused by distributed food
- There are no unreasonable complaints about the quality of foods distributed- from recipients or program staff
- Adequate storage structures are in place and proper management of stores is conducted
- Staff have adequate knowledge about potential health hazards caused by improper handling, storage and distribution of food

General nutritional support standard 3: food acceptability

Key indicators

- People are consulted on the acceptability and appropriateness of the foods being distributed and results are fed into program decisions
- Foods distributed do not conflict with the religious or cultural traditions of the recipient or host populations (this includes any food taboos for pregnant or breastfeeding women)

HOUSING (SHELTER)

Housing standard: living quarters

Key indicators

- The covered area available per person averages 3.5-4.5 meters squared
- In warm, humid climates, shelters allow optimal ventilation and provide protection from direct sunlight

HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

Household items standard 1: items for households and livelihood support

Key indicators

- Each person has: 1 eating plate, 1 metal spoon and 1 mug
- Each person has access to 250g of soap per month

SITE SELECTION AND PLANNING

Site standard 1: site selection

Key indicators

- The requirements for the form of the settlement are tested against the physical constraints of the each potential site. The site meets the following requirements, regardless of seasonal variations:
 - It is located at a safe distance from possible external threat to physical security, usually not less than 50km.
 - It is near existing social and economic facilities where appropriate
 - There are adequate quantities of water (for drinking, cooking, hygiene and sanitation)
 - It is not less than 3 meters above the anticipated water table in the rainy season
 - There are sufficient grasses, shrubs and trees for shade and to avoid soil erosion
 - Sufficient sustainable resources of fuel wood and construction materials are available
 - Sufficient and appropriate land is available for the required levels of agriculture and animal husbandry. The impacts of these are understood, and land use is negotiated as necessary
 - The site is not prone to endemic diseases that might affect inhabitants or their livestock, to standing water or to flooding; it is not situated on land at risk from landslides and is not close to an active volcano

Site standard 2: site planning

Key indicators

- The site provides 45 meters squared space for each person.

Attachment 9—U.S. Government Humanitarian Assistance to Liberia⁶⁷

U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO LIBERIA

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Sector</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
LIBERIA – FY 2003 AND FY 2004				
USAID FY 2003 and FY 2004				\$37,879,507
USAID/OFDA				\$9,479,507
FY 2003	ACF	Nutrition	Monrovia	\$517,773
	Merlin	Health and Water/Sanitation	Monrovia, Harbel	\$751,011
	IRC	Water/Sanitation and non-food items	Monrovia	\$580,281
	Oxfam	Multi-sector IDP response	Monrovia	\$330,662
	U.N. OCHA	Coordination and protection of IDPs	Country-wide	\$320,000
	OFDA	Logistics and relief commodities	Monrovia	\$224,352
	WFP	Joint Logistics Center	Country-wide	\$500,000
	Johns Hopkins*	Malaria Control and Prevention	Country-wide	\$546,713
	CRS	Food distribution to unregistered IDPs	Montserrado County	\$1,033,522
	SCF-UK	Measles campaign, IDP health and protection	Monrovia	\$739,572
FY 2004	Oxfam	Water/Sanitation and protection of IDPs	Monrovia	\$1,058,193
	IRC	Measles	Monrovia	\$413,003
	Merlin	Water/Sanitation, health, and non-food items	Monrovia, Harbel	\$1,433,476
	ACF	Nutrition	Monrovia	\$265,873
	ARC	IDP camp management	Margibi County	\$455,076
	U.N. OCHA**	Humanitarian Information Center	Country-wide	\$310,000
USAID/FFP				\$28,400,000
FY 2003	WFP	P.L. 480 Title II Food Assistance – 24,480 MTs	Country-wide	\$16,700,000
FY 2004	WFP***	P.L. 480 Title II Food Assistance – 19,330 MTs	Country-wide	\$11,700,000
STATE/PRM ^o				\$12,410,896
FY 2003	UNHCR	Annual Refugee Operations	Country-wide	\$4,300,000
	WFP	WFP Support	Country-wide	\$826,164
	UNICEF	Water/Sanitation	Country-wide	\$1,597,500
	IRC	Sexual and Gender Based Violence	Country-wide	\$251,177
	UNDP/ UNSECOORD	Field Security Office Operations	Country-wide	\$298,000
	WHO	Water/Sanitation, disease monitoring and assessment	Country-wide	\$738,095
	ICRC	Emergency health and relief distribution	Country-wide	\$4,400,000
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO LIBERIA IN FY 2003 AND FY 2004.....				\$50,290,403

* Included in this figure is \$113,208 provided by USAID's Bureau for Global Health.

** Funding is in process; award to be made shortly.

*** Estimated value of food assistance.

^o State/PRM figures include funding within Liberia. State/PRM also provides additional Africa-wide and regional assistance not reflected in this total. Please see the USG Humanitarian Assistance section for further details.

⁶⁷ USAID, Liberia: Complex Emergency Situation report #5 (FY2004). November 52, 2003

Appendices

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Appendix 1—Contacts

PHASE 1 CONTACTS

Action for Greater Harvest

Mr. Kemayah S. Dee-Maxwell, Sr. Executive Director, Monrovia

Australia

Justin Whyatt, Attaché, Australian Embassy, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Center for Justice and Peace Studies

Hilary Norris, Monrovia

Cherish the Kids Liberia

Kelvin Fallah, Monrovia

Cooperation Center for Afghanistan

Abdullah Ahmadi, Director, Kabul Afghanistan

Development Alternatives, Inc.

Ruchira Gupta, Anti-Trafficking Expert, Anti-Trafficking Task Order

Nicole Zdrojewski, Program Associate, Anti-Trafficking Task Order

Global Age Sustainable Program

Moses Kiadii, Executive Director, Monrovia

Individuals

Pauline Kwabo, former child soldier counselor, Liberia 1997

International Association for Volunteer Effort

Moses Soribah, Country Representative, Monrovia

International Labor Organization

Vera Paquete-Perdiango, Labor Specialist for African Children, Abidjan

International Rescue Committee

Kristina Koch, Deputy Country Director, Sierra Leone

Catherine Weinsler, Former Child Protection Adviser, Sierra Leone

LICADHO

Ms. Naly, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

National Adult Education Association of Liberia

Guloh Jensen, Executive Director, Monrovia

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Save the Children/US

John Mitchell, Field Office Director, Mozambique

Search for Common Ground

Oscar Bloh, Program Director, Search for Common Ground/Liberia

Uganda

Dr. Byabashaija, Johnson, O.R., Deputy Commissioners of Prisons, Uganda Prison Service

UNICEF

Patricia Hugyebert, Child Protection Officer, UNICEF NY

USAID/Cambodia

Brad Bessire, Project Officer for Human Rights

USAID/Liberia

Edward Birgells, Mission Director

Korto Reeves Williams, Civil Society Program Coordinator

USAID/Mozambique

Sidney Bliss, Former Project Officer for the Reintegration of Child Soldiers and Abducted Girls program

Tim Born, Former Project Manager for Demobilization and Reintegration program

USAID/REDSO

Lynn Cripes, Regional Technical Advisor for DCOF, REDSO/EA

USAID/Washington

Katherine Blakeslee, Director WID Office

Lloyd Feinberg, Manager, Displaced Children and Orphans Fund, Office of Democracy and Governance

Stephanie Garvey, Desk Officer for Liberia, Africa Bureau

Mary Knox, Deputy Director, WID Office

Carla Komich, Policy Advisor, AFR/DP

Cathy Savino, DCOF Technical Expert

Sara Taylor, Research Analyst, USAID Development Information Services

PHASE 2 CONTACTS

I. LIBERIA

A. International Community

Action Aid-Liberia (AAL)

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James Logan, Country Director

Catholic Relief Services

Matt Davis, Program Manager

Christian Children's Fund (CCF)

Roger Hollo, Regional Coordinator, Child Protection, Sierra Leone

DFID

Simon Mansfield, Team Member

Nick Weatherill, Senior Program Officer

European Union (EU)

Geoffrey Rudd, Resident Administrator and Chargé d'Affaires

Arthur Dela Cruz, Finance Controller, Program Management Unit

Christian Ermgodts, Team Leader, Local Community Development

Francis Wellens, Head of the Program Management Unit

FAO

Dr. Tiru Nanasambantha, Country Representative

Peter Kluzny, FAO, Rome

France

Francois Prkic, Humanitarian Attaché, French Embassy

IFESH

Selma S. Gibson

Elizabeth Frank-Neufville

International Committee of the Red Cross

Guilhem Ravier, Protection Delegate

Mr. Stocker, Head of Delegation

Yayoi Hayashi, Tracing and Child Protection Delegate

International Organization of Migration (IOM)

Andrew Choga, Chief of Mission, Liberia and Sierra Leone

International Rescue Committee

Sophie Read-Hamilton, Gender Based Violence Program Coordinator

Amy Wachtel, Child Protection Officer

Mercy Corps

Denise Barrett, Chief of Party

Samaritan's Purse

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John Peays, Country Level Authority
Courtney Peays

Save the Children, UK

Paul Roberts, Program Director
Leila Bourahla, Emergency Program/Health Manager
Ina Christiansen, Liberia
Alice Adbullah, Sierra Leone Child Protection Officer

Search for Common Ground

Oscar Bloh, Program Director

UNDP

Elizabeth Odour-Noah, Deputy Resident Representative Program
Charles Achoda, DDR Project Officer

UN HABITAT

Dr. Lake, Lancelot Ayo, Urban and Regional Planner, Urban Recovery and
Reconstruction Program for Liberia

UNICEF

Babita Bisat, Consultant, Education, UNICEF Regional Office, Dakar
Andy Brooks, Regional Child Protection Officer
Dr. Dina Craisati, Regional Advisor Education, Regional Office Dakar
Merricall Dawes, Assistant Project Officer, Education, UNICEF/Sierra Leone
Sarah Gudiyama, UNICEF Education Officer
Fatuma Ibrahim, DDR Officer
Jean-Claude LeGrande, Regional Advisor/Child Protection, Dakar
Samuel Momany, Program Coordinator
David Moussa Ntambara, Child Protection Officer
Tom Shafer, Project Officer, Education
John Y. Sumo
Sophie Yannoutsou, Back to School Planning Coordinator

UNMIL

Abou Moussa, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General
General D.I. Opande, Force Commander
Major Hassan Nahdy, Commander Mali Contingent, Compound One
Captain Jeff Beeland, MILOG, U.S. Marines
General Irfan, Pakistani Reconnaissance Mission
Lt. Col. Rauf, Pakistani Reconnaissance Mission
Lt. Col. Jawed, Pakistani Reconnaissance Mission

UNOCHA

Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa, Head

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U.S. Embassy

Ambassador Blaney
Douglas Kent, Political/Economic Officer
Bradley Lynn, RSO

USAID/Liberia

Edward Birgells, Mission Director
Adams Lincoln, Health Program Specialist
William Massaquoi, Agricultural Development Specialist
Korto Reeves Williams, Civil Society Program Coordinator
Rick Quinby, Field Officer DART Team, OFDA
Stephanie Sobel, Regional Emergency Disaster Relief Coordinator, Mano River
Countries, USAID—based in Freetown
Katharina Lauer, Regional Emergency Food for Peace Officer (West Africa)—
based in Freetown

World Health Organization

Dr. Omar Khatib, Representative, Liberia

World Vision

Dr. Johnson Olufowote, National Director
Francois Batalingaya, Relief Coordinator
Christine Hah, Communications Officer
Jeanette Johnson, Health and Nutrition

B. Government of Liberia

Liberian National Assembly

Ruth Caesar, Assembly Member, Chairman of the Committee on Gender, Women and
Children

Militia

General Perry Farlee, Militia, Compound One

Ministry of Agriculture

George Karmee, Minister

Ministry of Education

Dr. Evelyn Kandakai, Minister
Mr. Marcus Downe, Deputy Minister (Admin)
Mr. Peter Behn, Deputy Minister
Mr. Saku Dukuly, Deputy Minister
Jacob Tarlowah, Ministry of Education (ALP)

Ministry of Health

Dr. Peter Coleman, Minister
Julius McGill, Bureau of Social Work
Dr. Edward Grant, Chief Psychiatrist
Macidilla Howard, National AIDS and STI Control Program

Ministry of Youth and Sport

Samuel Y. Mulbah, Youth Development Officer
Lewis Thompson, Director/Vocational and Technical Services
James O. Jarbine, Director/Sports

C. Liberian Organizations, Institutions, and Individuals

Action for Greater Harvest Association (AGRHA)

Kemayah S. Dee-Maxwell, Executive Director

AEL

Marconi Kartakpah

Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia (AFELL)

Elizabeth Boyenneh, Consultant

Boys Town

F. Atoo Williams
James Lazelibah
Garzeawu Kokulo
J. Titus Karmorh
Raymond Bruce, Project Manager, Episcopal Church of Liberia

Center for Peace and Justice (CPJ)

Hilary K. Norris, Executive Director
Silikpols Korlotton

Cherish the Kids

B.F. Fallah Kelvin, Executive Director

Child Art Liberia

Futo Wheremongar

Child Soldiers at Don Bosco

Bobby, Field Commander, 12 years old, 3 years a soldier
-----, Former RUF fighter, 17 years old

Child Soldiers and WAFF at THINK

Jerry Decontee, Commander, 23 yrs old, 10 years a soldier

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Katuma Macurley aka General Pigeon, 20 years old, 10 years a soldier
Rosezin, Brigade Commander, 15 years old, 3 years a soldier
Korpo aka Diamond, 18 years old, 2 years a fighter
Jemama Juah, 19 years old, 2 years a WAFF

Child Soldiers and WAFF from Compound One (GOL Militia)

George P., 14 years old, 5 years a fighter
Beatrice, 25 years old, 6 years WAFF
-----, Female commander, 23 years old
-----, WAFF, 25 years old
-----, Female combatant from Guinea
-----, Boy combatant, 12 years, 3 years a fighter
-----, Boy combatant, 14 years, 3 years a fighter

Children's Aid Program (CAP)

Deroe Weeks, Executive Director
Morris, Dorothy, CAP
Mariah B. Mah, CAP
Victor Smith, CAP
Peter Johnson, CAP – Buchanan
David Brown, CAP
Juanita B. Tamba, CAP
Adolphus G. Nelson, CAP/YDIC

Christian Association of the Blind (CAB)

Beyan G. Kota
James Y. Williams

Christian Health Association of Liberia (CHAL)

James N. Doe

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Community Empowerment Project (CEP)

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Development Education Network—Liberia (DEN-L)

Dorothy K. Toomann

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Wellah Bohlen
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Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)

Meima Sirlef-Karneh, FAWE-Liberia

Foundation for International Dignity (FIND)

Thomas Teage

Family Planning Association of Liberia (FPAL)

Annette Kiawu

Individuals

Dr. Harris, Psychiatrist

IDPs

Hameh Pewee, Formal Chairlady, Jah Tondo Camp
From Jah Tondo Camp:
Bendu Kennedy, Jenneh Taweh, Helesia Moulton, Jumah Roberts,
Marina Seh, Jartu Armah, Maima Varney, Tenneh Varney

Interfaith Religious Council

Archbishop Michael K. Francis
Reverend William Brown
Reverend Christopher W. Toe
Bw. David Kiazolu
Imam Habib Sheriff

Liberia National Red Cross Society (LNRCS)

Boweh H. Barduae

Liberia Opportunities Industrialization Centers, Inc (LOIC)

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Mr. Gbakanama J. Gbamakollie, Finance Director
Mrs. Brenda Sims, Administrative Secretary

Liberians United Against Drug Abuse (LUADA)

Curtis Jarette, Executive Director

Liberians United to Serve Humanity (LUSH)

Patrick K. Farnaga

Mother Pattern

Grace Boiwu, Women Health & Development Program

National Adult Education Association of Liberia (NAEAL)

Guoloh Jensen, Executive Director

National Women Commission of Liberia (NAWOCOL)

Pearl Fahnbulleh, Executive Director

OCAM

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Peace Building Resource Center

Edward Mulbah, Executive Director

THINK

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West African Network for Peace (WANEP)

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Mrs. Wata Modad

Women for Peace Network (WIPNET)

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Young Men Christian Association (YMCA)

Peter Z. Kamei

Young Women Christian Association (YWCA)

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II. SIERRA LEONE

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Appendix 2—Assessment Scope of Work**SCOPE OF WORK**

for

**Technical Services to Assess the Situation of Women and Children Combatants in the
Liberian Post Conflict Period, and to
Provide Recommendations for Successful Reintegration*****I. Background***

There are about 20,000 to 30,000 participants in militias in Liberia and approximately 50 percent are child soldiers¹ between the ages of 10 and 18 (10,000 to 15,000), according to the Defense Attaché Office. Archbishop Michael Francis and others estimate there are approximately 25,000 child soldiers now in Liberia. In addition, he estimates there are approximately 10,000 women combatants. Estimates are derived from numbers at the trauma centers that the Catholic Church and religious organizations administer.

Child Soldiers and Gender Issues:

Factors important in re-integration programs for women and child soldiers include:

1. Family reunification, foster parents, or support for independent living;
2. Community sensitization to facilitate their reintegration;
3. Psychosocial support;
4. Education;
5. Economic opportunity/family livelihood—the World Bank² has found that apprenticeships and microenterprise support are more effective than vocational training; and
6. An approach to the disarmament, demobilization, and rehabilitation (DDR) process that includes all women and children associated with the fighting forces.

¹ The recruitment of children into the armed forces and their demobilization and social reintegration in Africa is covered by the Cape Town Principles, developed in April 1997, at a symposium in Cape Town South Africa. A “child soldier” is any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers, and anyone accompanying such groups, other than family members. The definition includes girls recruited for sexual purposes and for forced marriage.

² World Bank, Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit, Child Soldiers: Prevention, demobilization and re-integration, May 2002. This report covered both Sierra Leone and Liberia.

A World Bank study in Liberia, also found that the following are the most important social reintegration factors:

- Getting the child into a “normal environment,”
- Achieving a sense of cleansing and forgiveness through religious and cultural ceremonies or rituals, and
- Reunification with the child’s parents.

An assessment of reintegration programs by USAID’s Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF) in Sierra Leone found that at least six kinds of intervention seem to have contributed to successful family and community reintegration:

1. Community Sensitization
2. Demobilization and Transition Period
3. Tracing and Family Mediation
4. Return to Family and Community and Follow-Up
5. Traditional Cleansing Ceremonies
6. School or Skills Training³

It is essential that the DDR process take adequate account of the particular vulnerabilities and needs of the following:

- Girls and women combatants;
- Noncombatant girls and women (In Sierra Leone they either had limited access to benefits and resources when peace and demobilization came or they were treated just as men and their specific needs were not addressed.)⁴;
- Women and girls in the families of combatants; and
- Women and girls associated with the fighting forces.

³ “Assessment of DCOF-Supported Child Demobilization and Reintegration Activities in Sierra Leone.” June 2002, John Williamson and Lynne Cripe.

⁴ World Bank, Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit, Addressing Gender Issues in Demobilization and Reintegration Programs, May, 2002.

Summary of USAID responses in Liberia:

1. The cornerstone of the USAID conflict and peace building effort is the five year \$12 million Community Peace-Building and Development Program, which began operation in January 2003. The program is implemented under a cooperative agreement with the Academy for Educational Development (AED), Mercy Corps (MC), and the Search for Common Ground (SCG). In Liberia the program is called *Diompilor*, a Kesi word meaning togetherness or oneness. *Diompilor* is now working in 100 communities in Margibi, Montserrado, and Grand Bassa counties, and with security plans to expand its program to Lofa and Grand Geddah counties in the future. With additional resources the program can be expanded further.
2. The African Education Initiative has provided \$800,000 for a three-year expanded Ambassador's Girls Scholarship Fund. Approximately half of the funds will be used to provide scholarships for women and girls between the ages of 8 and 25 associated with the fighting forces.
3. USAID, with funding from the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF) will soon begin a three-year \$1.5 million project that will deal directly with child soldiers and vulnerable children.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this SOW is to obtain the services of the Anti-Trafficking Task Order (ATTO) to assist the USAID/Liberia Mission to review existing programs on women and child soldiers and recommend next steps to design age and gender-sensitive programs for the demobilization and reintegration of child/women combatants and other vulnerable war-affected children and women.

The ATTO Team will conduct this activity in close coordination with the WID Office and with the other Agency offices in the assessment planning process so that it compliments the overall program on the ground. Special attention will be paid to determining current and planned activities, stakeholders, and implementers, in addition to identifying best practices, in order to ensure optimum program design to address the special considerations for women and children during the DDR process.

The ATTO will secure the services of 2 consultants for 15 days each during the first phase of the assignment, and 4 consultants (3 expats and 1 CCN) for the second and third phases. The consultants must have strong research, writing, and interview skills. Among them they must have program experience regarding gender and conflict issues, child soldiers, and DDR. All three will preferably have field experience in conflict or post-conflict situations.

III. Scope of Work

The assignment will have three interrelated steps:

1. Look at past or existing programs dealing with DDR of child soldiers and vulnerable girls/women affected by war. Determine what works, what does not, and why. It is important to help the Mission build on what has been learned, both successes and mistakes, so that key issues and approaches can be considered at the early stages of post-conflict planning. The Mission/USAID's support for the DDR process will promote a gender sensitive approach to demobilization and reintegration programs for child soldiers and vulnerable girls/women affected by war, as part of all relevant programming and planning for overall post-conflict activities (by USAID and other donors), to help assure success and sustainability.

(Note that lessons learned in Sierra Leone are potentially applicable in Liberia and there are also war-affected women and children, including former child soldiers in Sierra Leone. While the context in Sierra Leone may have particular relevance for Liberia, the DDR experience in Mozambique and Angola, as well as the experience of formerly abducted children in northern Uganda, may also have programmatic salience.)

2. Conduct a good review of the current situation and experience on the ground in Liberia and, possibly, at appropriate sites in other countries, to be determined in consultation with the Mission. The review should identify specific issues facing women and children combatants and vulnerable girls/women affected by war, as well as opportunities and obstacles to their successful reintegration. To the extent possible with data available within the timeframe of this assessment, provide an estimate of the socio-economic profile of female ex-combatants and child soldiers. The report should also provide illustrative criteria for a committee with the responsibility of identifying female ex-combatants and child soldiers.
3. Develop both broad and specific recommendations for USAID-funded interventions or programs to fill in gaps not already addressed in Liberia. This will contain:
 - Recommendations for near- and medium-term interventions,
 - A detailed program description for activities to be chosen for a proposed USAID activity, and
 - Cost estimates for the recommended program interventions.

IV. Methodology

Phase 1:

Collection and analysis of background information on demobilizing and reintegrating child soldiers in Africa prior to arrival in Liberia, including:

1. A desk review of programs for child soldiers in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Angola, Rwanda, Uganda, and other relevant countries. Programs reviewed should

include the USAID Office of Transition Initiatives' Youth Reintegration Training and Education for Peace (YTREP) program in Sierra Leone.

2. Developing tools to be used by team members for e-mail-based questionnaires, as well as U.S.- and field-based interviews and focus group discussions with USAID, other donors, and stakeholders.
3. Conducting U.S.-based discussions with USAID⁵, as well as representatives of organizations implementing programs to address women and children affected by war.
4. Analyzing responses, background documents, and published material on ongoing projects.
5. Preparing a matrix summarizing key aspects of successful short- and medium-term programs and activities for the demobilization, rehabilitation, and reintegration of child and women combatants and war-affected women and girls.

Phase 2:

1. Taking into account information compiled and analyzed in Phase I, and gather background information and data for a rapid assessment of:

- Programs targeting women and girls in Liberia and Sierra Leone; and
- Work by international and local NGOs on child soldiers in Liberia and, as appropriate, Sierra Leone.

2. Conduct field-based data collection and analysis.

- Collect data in the field in Liberia and, as determined in consultation with the Mission, in Sierra Leone, including the border of Liberia. Through one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions, conduct rapid assessments of the responses to the needs of women combatants and child soldiers at reception centers, discharge centers, transition camps, and economic reintegration programs run by NGOs, international agencies, and host governments. Consult with USAID Mission and Embassy personnel before and during this process.
- Complete an assessment of Liberia-specific factors affecting women and children affected by war.

⁵ The Office of Women in Development in the Bureau for Economic Growth and Trade (EGAT/WID), the Displaced Children's and Orphans' Fund (DCOF), the Africa Bureau (AFR), the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), and other appropriate offices/bureaus.

- Taking into account the findings of a concurrent review by the USAID/Liberia Mission of key ongoing programs, the ATTO team will explore ways to integrate child and gender-sensitive components and procedures into the DDR process and ongoing projects.
- Draft and submit to the Mission and EGAT/WID a preliminary report with recommendations USAID-funded interventions.
- Debrief the USAID Mission and obtain feedback on preliminary findings and recommendations.

Phase 3:

Completion of the report: Taking into account feedback from the Mission and EGAT/WID, prepare a final draft of the report. The final draft will include a detailed program description for the components to be chosen for a proposed USAID activity.

V. Deliverables

The team will complete the following outputs:

1. A desk review of ongoing programs for the demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers, including specific issues facing women and children associated with fighting forces or affected by war, and the opportunities and obstacles to their successful reintegration.
2. A report on in-country data collection that incorporates the situation in Liberia and the situation in Sierra Leone relevant to Liberia; offers a menu of options based on experience; and integrates a gender-sensitive demobilization program into existing or new USAID projects in Liberia.
 - A preliminary draft report shall be submitted on paper and in electronic form to the Mission upon completion of fieldwork, with electronic copies forwarded to EGAT/WID and DCOF. The recipients will provide written comments to the ATTO Team Leader electronically within five working days of receipt.
 - A revised draft report, incorporating Mission, DCOF, and EGAT/WID comments, shall be submitted not later than five working days after receiving the above comments. The revised draft report will include a program description of the components to be chosen by the Mission for a proposed activity. The Mission, DCOF, and EGAT/WID shall provide any additional written comments electronically within five working days of receipt of the revised draft.
 - The final report will be submitted within 10 working days after receiving comments on the revised draft.

VI. Reporting Requirements

The team will work closely with Korto Williams from USAID/Monrovia, who will provide guidance and oversight while in country. The team will meet with Mission leadership at the beginning and conclusion of the assignment, and have regular briefing meetings with Korto Williams as needed.

VII. Estimated Level of Effort

The assignment will be divided into three phases: (1) Pre-Departure Research, (2) Field Consultation, and (3) Documentation.

- It is anticipated that the services of two STTA consultants will be required for Phase 1. Each consultant will have 15 days for pre-departure research. The consultants will work under the guidance of an ATTO core team member.
- The services of four STTA consultants (three expats and one CCN) will be required for Phases 2 and 3. One ATTO core team member will accompany the STTA consultant team in the field, and will serve as Team Leader for phases 2 and 3. The LOE required for each of the STTA consultants is anticipated to be 4 days for travel to and from the field (for the expats); 18 days for all consultants in the field for consultations, interviews, and focus groups with the Mission, Embassy, and partners in Phase 2, and 10 days at home to complete the final draft and all other final documents in Phase 3. A six-day workweek will be authorized in the field. The total LOE is 32 days for each expat STTA consultant, including travel, and 28 days LOE for the CCN consultant.

VIII. Performance Period

The assignment will begin on or about September 15, 2003, and be completed by December 31, 2003. Field Activity will take place when the security situation stabilizes to allow for travel outside of Monrovia. It is estimated that travel to the field will begin on or about November 1, 2003, if the security situation has stabilized by that date.

IX. Travel and Per Diem

For Phase 1: Travel and per diem to and from the homes of the consultants to Washington and/or New York for appropriate consultations and information gathering, as determined by the ATTO Team Leader.

For Phase 2:

- Travel and per diem for pre-departure consultations with USAID and the ATTO Team in Washington;

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- Air travel needed to complete fieldwork (from the homes of the consultants to and from Monrovia, Liberia, as well as travel within the country and/or Sierra Leone) will be paid for by the ATTO; and
- ATTO will provide per diem for each consultant:
 - In-country: 21 days (18 work days covering 3 work weeks, plus 3 non-work days on weekends); and
 - Travel to and from the field: up to 2 days each way.

X. Technical Support

The team members should have the following skills:

- Knowledge of and experience with post-conflict issues and their impact on successful reintegration of children and women associated with fighting forces;
- Knowledge of prevention programs on human trafficking;
- Knowledge of past or ongoing programs to aid in the reintegration of women and children associated with fighting forces;
- Experience in assessing donor-funded programs focused on gender and children's issues;
- Ability to research, analyze, and synthesize information and to write reports;
- Ability to work under short deadlines;
- Strong interpersonal skills;
- Experience with USAID a plus, but not required; and
- Ability to speak Creole a plus, but not required.

Appendix 3—Methodology

The work for this assessment and design was done in several phases.

Phase 1 (October 2003)

Collection and analysis of background information on demobilizing and reintegrating child soldiers in Africa, including:

- A desk review of programs for child soldiers in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Angola, Rwanda, Uganda, and other relevant countries. Programs reviewed included the USAID Office of Transition Initiatives' Youth Reintegration Training and Education for Peace (YTREP) program in Sierra Leone.
- Development of tools to be used by team members for e-mail-based questionnaires, as well as U.S.- and field-based interviews and focus group discussions with USAID, other donors, and stakeholders.
- U.S.-based discussions with USAID and representatives of organizations implementing programs to address women and children affected by war.
- Analysis of responses, background documents, and published material on ongoing projects.

Phase 2 (November 2003)

A field assessment in Liberia and Sierra Leone of the situation of child and women combatants, ex-combatants, and WAFF. The assessment included:

- Programs done by international and local NGOs on child soldiers in Liberia and, as appropriate, Sierra Leone.
- Collection of data in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Conducted rapid assessments of the responses to the needs of women combatants and child soldiers at reception centers, discharge centers, transition camps, and economic reintegration programs being planned and run by NGOs, international agencies, and host governments through one-on-one interviews, focus group discussions, and field visits.
- Assessed Liberia-specific factors influencing women and children affected by war.
- Explored ways to integrate child and gender-sensitive components and procedures into the DDR process and ongoing USAID projects in coordination with USAID/Liberia.

- Submission of a summary of findings and recommendations for USAID-funded interventions.
- Debriefed the USAID Mission and obtained feedback on preliminary findings and recommendations.

Phase 3 (November-December 2003)

Completed and finalized the report and program description for a proposed USAID activity taking into account feedback from the Mission and EGAT/WID.

Assessment Tools

There are several specific questionnaires developed for use in interviews of child soldiers/women combatants. These include:

- The International Labour Organization (ILO) has a set of six questionnaires for each category of respondent (children in armed conflict, child soldier, children who were never recruited, parents of children in armed conflict, parents of former child soldiers, and parents of those who were never recruited). They also developed a guide for administering the questionnaires and a topic guide for individual interviews and focus group discussions. “Wounded Childhood. The Use of Children in Armed Conflicts in Central Africa.” April 2003. www.ilo.org/childlabour
- In its “Assessment of the Demobilization and Disarmament Process in Liberia,” Creative Associates lists sample questions for the demobilization process, current situation and stability of the peace process. Appendices, p. C-7.
- Vanessa Farr in “Gendering Demilitarization as a Peacebuilding Tool” has a checklist for the demobilization and reintegration of women combatants, wives of male soldiers, and war widows. This checklist is essentially a list of questions that covers all aspects of the DDR process including gender-sensitive planning, networking to assist reintegration, economic concerns, DDR implementation, and health and well-being once they are resettled in urban and rural areas. Appendix A, pp. 40-47.
- Nathalie de Watteville in addressing “Gender Issues in Demobilization and Reintegration Programs” has a list of Gender Sensitive Suggestions for Questionnaires. Annex 1, p. 28.
- Beth Verhey in “Child Soldiers, Preventing, Demobilizing and Reintegrating” has a demobilization checklist for child soldiers. World Bank Africa Region Working Paper Series No. 23., p. 12.

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- (3) Mathematics Teacher's Manual, Level I.
- (4) Curriculum Mathematics Teacher's Manual, Level II.
- (5) Mathematics Teacher's Manual, Level II.
- (6) Prevocational Studies Teacher's Manual, level III.
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Appendix 5—Draft Scope of Work for A Program for Reintegration of Child Combatants and Children and Women Affected By the War

The following is a proposed program for USAID/Liberia for its assistance to the reintegration of former child and women combatants. It is a result of the findings of the Assessment and in-depth discussions with USAID/Liberia. The reintegration of former child and women soldiers and WAFF and their transition to a civilian life will require an integrated and flexible program of assistance that blends education and vocational training with needed psycho-social care and social assistance. Programs should help address the trauma suffered by victims, perpetrators, and witnesses to the violence of the war, as well as pervasive problems of substance abuse and SGBV within these target groups.

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is to assist with the educational, social, and economic reintegration of approximately 16,000 former child soldiers, women ex-combatants, and women associated with the fighting forces (WAFF) throughout Liberia.

The program will be community-based to the extent possible and focus on the following:

- Re-establish and extend accelerated learning programs for ex-child and women combatants and WAFF throughout Liberia. Training of teachers, provision of essential materials, and capacity building of associated learning institutions, organizations, and Ministry of Education should be part of the program.
- Vocational skill training for older ex-child soldiers, women ex-combatants, and WAFF that includes basic literacy and numeracy. Training in marketable skills and basic management should be part of the program. A small micro-credit component could also be included for graduates of the training programs.
- Provision and strengthening of psycho-social support to beneficiaries using existing structures and networks. Awareness-raising on reintegration issues related to its target groups and cross cutting issues such as substance abuse, HIV/AIDS/STDs and SGBV. Referral mechanisms and structures for those needing special care should also be developed.

2. BACKGROUND

The most recent civil war in Liberia between the Government of Liberia (GOL), Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) ended in August 18, 2003 with the signing of a Peace Agreement. The Peace Agreement calls for the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) of all irregular and paramilitary forces. This includes large numbers of child and women soldiers. Although the

actual numbers are unknown, the UN is planning for up to 50,000 soldiers of which 15,000 are thought to be under 18 and 1,000 are women.

A. Child and women soldiers

The definition of child soldier being used in the Liberia DDR process and by USAID is based on the Cape Town Principles. This is:

“A person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed forces or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers, and anyone accompanying such groups, other than family members. The definition includes girls recruited for sexual purposes or for forced marriage. It does not, therefore, only refer to a child who is carrying or has carried arms.”

Children were used extensively by all sides in Liberia’s civil war as soldiers, porters, and “wives.” For the most part, these children and women have been inaccessible to international agencies and their actual number and condition are unknown. It is also not known if they will be released in the first phase of the DDR process or held to the last. Some observers believe the planning numbers used by the UN are under-estimated and the actual numbers could run as high as 25,000 child soldiers and 10,000 women combatants.

From the few child and women combatants who have started to spontaneously demobilize, it appears that a significant percentage of these combatants use drugs, have little or no education and for the WAFF and women soldiers, were sexually used and abused. HIV rates are thought to be significantly higher than in the general population and all will need psycho-social assistance. A considerable number are also thought to have committed atrocities and reintegrating them back to their families and communities will not be easy.

B. USAID Program

USAID has a range of programs addressing immediate humanitarian needs as well as strategic objectives that seek to (1) increase use of essential primary health care (PHC) services through civil society, (2) increase food security in targeted areas, and (3) increase and strengthen the role of civil society in democratic governance. Its programs will work within the current political and economic transitional context now facing Liberia, but will also address long-term development issues. Health activities will increasingly focus on community capacity building and USAID will also continue assistance in civic education and human rights.

USAID intends to award a \$30-50 million contract for the rehabilitation of Liberia’s community infrastructure using labor-intensive construction brigades. This project, the Liberia Community Infrastructure Program (LCIP), is designed to directly assist the social and economic reintegration of approximately 10,000 adult ex-combatants. Activities will include:

- Training and establishing labor intensive construction brigades to rehabilitate roads, water systems, community buildings, clinics, homes, and government offices that were destroyed or neglected during the war. Training will be in relevant skills, such as surveying, carpentry, masonry, and vehicle/machinery operation and maintenance.
- Provision of assistance and micro-credit for the establishment of small business in construction and related fields for ex-combatants.

USAID also intends to solicit proposals for a project to strengthen the role of civil society in democratic governance through a Next Steps in Peace Program (NSPP). This program is intended to support the early stages of the peace process and facilitate a peaceful reintegration of displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, and ex-combatants. In particular, the NSPP program will:

- Strengthen constituencies for peace by increasing awareness and providing information about the peace process. Provide peace education, peace advocacy, and faith-based or inter-ethnic messages or dialogue.
- Mitigate imminent and ongoing violence and address its immediate aftermath through mediation, community based reconciliation, and peace media.
- Address some of the causes and consequences of conflict through conflict management programs.

The proposed child and women combatant reintegration project will coordinate its activities with the on-going USAID programs and especially with the LCIP and NSPP. The program will cut across USAID/Liberia's strategic objectives, but will also directly respond to the planned intermediate result to foster reconciliation and strengthen community organizations.

3. APPROACH

The successful reintegration of former child soldiers, women combatants, and WAFF takes time, acceptance, education, and opportunities for practical and productive employment. It is a complex process with multiple social, economic, and political factors that affect the reintegration process and its outcome. It is also a sensitive process that requires great care and understanding.

Social reintegration deals with the issue of reintegrating demobilized child soldiers and women combatants back to a civilian life with their families and communities. Many of these children and women have witnessed, committed, or been victims of atrocities. Many have little or no education but have held power through the use of a gun. Their families and communities may be reluctant to take them back and some of them may be unwilling to return home. On almost every level, their reintegration and return to a civilian life will not be easy.

The project can assist these children, women, and their families and communities through (1) the provision of accelerated education for over-aged students and (2) needed psycho-social assistance; (3) strengthening social support networks and building capacity of existing support

institutions; (4) raising awareness on issues related to the reintegration of these target groups and cross cutting issues such as substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, STDs and SGBV; and (5) developing referral mechanisms and structures for those needing special care.

The project's economic reintegration activities focus on the older children and women ex-combatants and WAFF. It should be an integrated program of skill training in marketable vocational skills and basic literacy/numeracy. The ultimate goal is to enable the targeted ex-combatants to become self-supporting and have income generation options other than fighting. In addition to the literacy/numeracy component, program activities can include (1) skills training and basic management techniques, (2) apprenticeships, (3) referral services for employment, and (4) the provision of micro-credit for graduates.

Reintegration Strategy

The UN is planning a DDR process for 38,000 combatants. This includes 15,000 child soldiers and children associated with the fighting forces (CAFF), and 1,000 women combatants and WAFF over 18. Of the 15,000 child soldiers and CAFF, 8,000 are thought to be 15 years of age and under. Demobilization is to be done in phases with the first phase of 11,000 combatants (including 4,000 child and 1,000 women combatants) starting in December 2003. A second phase of 22,000 combatants (including 4,000 child combatants) is anticipated in March 2004. A last phase of 5,000 will follow.

UNMIL will disarm and demobilize combatants, including children, while UNDP will process the demobilized combatants and issue ID cards. UNICEF will be responsible for the child soldiers who, along with most women combatants and WAFF, will be sent to Interim Care Centers (ICCs) immediately following demobilization.

The UN DDR process for women and child combatants follows the Cape Town Principles which calls for a short demobilization process, early reunification of children with their families and special attention paid to the needs of girls. Children are not to be discriminated against in the services and benefits provided to demobilizing adult soldiers. Family reunification is considered as the most important factor in social reintegration and special attention is to be paid to re-establishing the bonds between the child and family. Community resources, priorities, values, and traditions should be built into the reintegration process and all reintegration done within the framework of national reconciliation. Reintegration also requires follow-up care and monitoring of the children.

Liberia is a failed state. The failure of previous governments to effectively harness and manage the country's resources for the common good of its people fostered ethnic rivalries and conflicts, social discontent, political dissent, and other factors that resulted in the Civil War of 1989. There is little for the ex-combatants to reintegrate back to other than poverty and a destroyed society. For the reintegration of the former child and women soldiers to be successful, they must have viable alternatives for economic livelihood and life-style to prevent them from being re-recruited for another African war or becoming street children or prostitutes. This takes time and assistance.

The child and women combatant reintegration program takes a long-term approach that addresses the immediate reintegration needs of the ex-combatant children/women and WAFF as well as addressing their longer term needs for an alternative future. Because the process is still unfolding, many variables are yet unknown. This requires a flexible response that can pick up these children and women as they leave the ICCs or, for those who do not go through the official DDR process, identify and pick them up in the communities. It also requires an integrated approach that addresses their social/health, educational and economic needs. As the reintegration of these children and women is part of a larger peacekeeping and assistance effort, coordination with and building on the synergies of other programs, organizations, and the GOL national reconstruction and rehabilitation plans is essential.

The program's three-year time-frame will also bridge the transition from the formal DDR process and programs to post-DDR programming, and from a national transition government to a nationally elected government. These factors must also be taken into consideration in the design of specific activities, especially those targeted at capacity building of government programs and institutions.

The reintegration project will directly complement UNDP's "Liberian Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Program," UNICEF's DDR, child protection and education programs, USAID's Liberia Community Infrastructure Program, Next Steps in Peace Program and other on-going USAID programs.

In addition to UNDP and UNICEF, it is expected that other donors will provide funding for programs related to ex-child and women combatants either through one of the UN Trust Funds for Liberia or directly to UN agencies or international NGOs. So far, this includes DFID and the Japanese Government.

4. OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Healing Opportunities through Productive Employment is to assist the social and economic reintegration of approximately 16,000 ex-combatant children and women for up to 3 years. Although these ex-combatants are the primary beneficiaries, it is anticipated that significant numbers of war-affected children, women, and communities will benefit from project activities.

A. Social Reintegration

1. Accelerated learning. Most women and child combatants have little or no formal schooling. Much of this is a direct result of the war and their military service or affiliation with the fighting forces. Most are too old to be able to return to their actual grade level, yet when interviewed almost all wanted an education. Without an education, their options are limited and they are easy prey for another war or unsavory occupation. UNICEF, with the Ministry of Education, has developed an Advanced Learning Program (ALP) that condenses the normal primary school from six years to three years. This program can assist over-aged children and women catch up to their grade levels or complete primary schooling. The reintegration project

can assist ALP extend its reach to 16,000 or more ex-child and women soldiers by (1) coordinating the rehabilitation of approximately 50 ALP centers with the infrastructure development activities of the LCIP project, including wells and sanitation facilities; and by (2) providing support to teachers and teacher training for ALP; (3) capacity building with associated institutions, such as the MoE; (4) providing needed educational materials; (5) supporting students; and (6) providing school/job placement counseling.

2. Psycho-social support. The transition to civilian life and back to families and communities that may not want them will be stressful for ex-combatants and WAFF, as well as their families and communities. Support should be based, to the extent possible, at the community level and using existing support structures and informal networks, including women's groups. These networks should be strengthened where possible and appropriate. Short-term training of counselors, teachers, volunteers, and others could be provided along with more intensive training for specialized needs. For those in need of specialized care, such as victims of SGBV, victims of torture, and substance abusers, special programs and strengthening of facilities should be considered. For the families and communities, activities such as sports, cultural activities, boys and girls clubs, and PTAs should be included. Psycho-social and related health support should be considered as an integral part of all reintegration program components.

3. Sensitization. In coordination with the other project components, active sensitization programs need to be developed. Beneficiaries, communities, and families need information and sensitization on the range of reintegration and related issues. These include drug awareness, HIV/AIDS/STD awareness, SGBV, and available referral services. Mediums and mechanisms used could range from in-service and community training to radio programs, theater, and publicity at sporting events.

B. Economic Reintegration

All economic reintegration activities undertaken will include a basic literacy/numeracy component or participation in an accelerated learning program. Student and teacher support should be considered where appropriate and needed. Income generation activities from skills training should be incorporated wherever possible to provide support to the students as well as to help cover the recurrent costs of the training. All training programs should include job counseling and referrals system. Links should be made between the training, LCIP income generation activities, and other contracts that could provide training opportunities as well as income.

1. Vocational and skills training. Skills training should provide beneficiaries with a marketable skill to give them alternative options for income generation. Such training cannot be achieved in the usual six-month DDR packages and needs to be of an adequate length to ensure full technical competence. This could be up to two years. Skills including carpentry, masonry (particularly focusing upon producing roofing tiles, latrine slabs, well linings, clay and cement blocks, and construction techniques), auto and hand-pump mechanics, metal working, improved agriculture, and tailoring could be developed. Care would be taken to ensure that there is an existing and continuing market for the skills within the catchment area. Other skills may be

appropriate to certain areas (for example, net making and fish drying) and should be included based on market assessment.

2. Apprenticeships and on the job training. Apprenticeships and on the job training can be provided for older beneficiaries who wish to earn a living to support their families while learning a trade. This could be done in conjunction with LCIP. Mentoring and involving the private sector in this training should be included where possible. To the extent possible, training should be linked directly to paying contracts such as the production of school uniforms or roofing tiles for schools being renovated.

3. Small enterprise development. Some beneficiaries may be interested in setting up small businesses. These could range from market sellers to construction companies making cement blocks, roofing tiles, or wells and latrines. It could also include service providers such as childcare for the children of women being trained or schooled, or the establishment of a food stall for workers on an LCIP road gang. Training could be provided in business management, market assessments, and elementary bookkeeping. For those with viable proposals, the provision of micro-credit could be considered.

C. Targeting

Children and women program beneficiaries will be identified through their participation in the official DDR process. These ex-child and women combatants and WAFF will have a UN-issued DDR card. Former child and women combatants and WAFF who do not go through the official DDR process would still be eligible for the reintegration programs but an identification and referral mechanism will need to be created with UNICEF, community groups, and health agencies.

Target areas for the project will be undertaken in conjunction with the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (NCDDRR) which will be established under the Peace Accords to coordinate DDR activities. This will also need to be done in conjunction with the USAID/Liberia's LCIP program, the DDR programs of other donors, and in coordination with relevant GOL ministries. An advisory board (or boards by sector of intervention) could be established to assist with targeting and coordination needs.

5. MANAGEMENT

Given the complexity and integrated nature of the interventions, a single contractor should be responsible for all aspects of the program. Its duties would include:

1. Organizing, implementing, managing, and monitoring the child and women ex-combatant reintegration program. Working with the NCDDRR, GOL ministries, international organizations, international and local NGOs, and CBOs to design, target, implement, monitor, and evaluate project activities. The management of the project should be expatriates, but local organizations should be used and strengthened wherever possible through subcontracts, subgrants, and other mechanisms.

2. Providing expert technical assistance and capacity building to local institutions and organizations.
3. Coordinating the rehabilitation of project-assisted infrastructure with the LCIP program and those of other donors.
4. Working toward the longer-term sustainability of the services and mechanisms used under the reintegration program, as appropriate, while ensuring the immediate education/training and related health and integration needs of the beneficiaries, their families, and communities are met.
5. Ensuring resources reach their intended beneficiaries and that corrupt practices are not part of any part of the reintegration program.

Skills needed include:

1. Capability to access experts in all related fields including DDR, education, skills training, health, psycho-social support, community development, business development, and post-war rehabilitation.
2. Ability to design and manage a program that ranges from handling hard core ex-combatants to abused young women and children under uncertain and difficult circumstances. Maximum flexibility and ability to react quickly is essential.

Selection criteria for the contractor should also include these factors:

- Quality of the proposal in terms of strategy, approach, and interventions. An evident understanding of the historical, cultural, psychological, and socio-economic needs of the project's target groups, their diversity, and special reintegration needs.
- Quality and appropriateness of the proposed results framework, performance monitoring plan, and indicators.
- Impact expected from the proposed program, in terms of primary and secondary beneficiaries as well as its geographic coverage.
- Cost-effectiveness of the proposed program and the extent to which it uses existing structures and avoids duplication of programs.

6. REPORTING, MONITORING, AND EVALUATION

The contractor should provide reports on a regular basis on the ongoing activities of the program. The reports do not need to be lengthy but should outline the activities undertaken, constraints encountered, and how they were (or were not) overcome. They should also detail coordination

activity and keep USAID/Liberia abreast of other programs assisting the same target groups. Each quarterly report should include activity tables that quantify activities by number/type of beneficiaries, gender, and location. These tables should complement and feed into the performance monitoring plan. Bi-annual reports should include tables summarizing actual progress made compared to target expectations.

Given the complexity of the project, there should be an internal evaluation done at the end of Year I and an external evaluation done before the end of Year III. A baseline should be done at the beginning of the project. Financial audits should be part of any subcontracting/subgrant component and performance-based audits should be used for not only monitoring and compliance purposes but as a means to strengthen capacity of participating local organizations and institutions.

7. ROLES

The contractor should work closely with the GOL institutions, NCDDRR, UN Joint Implementation Unit, UNICEF and the UN agencies, other donors, and international and national NGOs. It should be a collaborative planning process to avoid duplication of efforts and to ensure maximum impact and longer term sustainability. The contractor will also need to develop a good working relationship with village leaders and elders, local government, and security forces, as well as organizations working on related DDR programs.

The contractor should be represented by a Chief of Party or Country Representative who has the authority to represent the contractor in all matters relating to the execution of the program and contract.

Technical assistance provided under the project will play multiple roles—in addition to providing the expertise needed to run the program and activities, TA should act as mentors and help build the capacity of the Liberian staff and institutions affiliated with the project.

8. PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS

Implementation of the project will require long- and short-term advisors and staff. Expatriate advisors should be provided who are experienced with DDR as well as the components of programs to support the reintegration of child and women ex-combatants and WAFF. Expatriate advisors should be kept to a minimum and qualified Liberians hired where available. Maximum use should be made of existing Liberian institutions and organizations for subcontracting/subgranting.

9. DURATION

The child and women reintegration project should start as soon as possible and run through three full school years.