



ORGANISATION DE COOPÉRATION ET
DE DÉVELOPPEMENT ÉCONOMIQUES



ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC
CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT



Synthesis of the Work

Regional Working Group on DDR, Post-conflict and Development in West Africa

Meeting organised by

Sahel and West Africa Club/OECD

28 February – 1^{er} March 2007, Praia, Cape Verde

The second meeting of the Regional Working Group on the DDR and Post-conflict in West Africa was held in Praia, Cape Verde from 28 February to 1 March 2007. Organised by the Sahel and West Africa Club/OECD in partnership with ECOWAS, this meeting was held under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister of Cape Verde H. E. Mr. José Maria NEVES who opened the meeting. Also in attendance were the Cape Verde Minister of Defence, Mrs. Maria Cristina LOPES ALMEIDA FONTES LIMA, Mrs. Patricia de MOWBRAY UNDP Resident Representative and coordinator of the United Nations system, Mr. Charles Goerens, President of the Sahel and West Africa Club, as well as representatives of the European Union and OECD member countries (Austria, France, Luxembourg, Portugal and Spain).

1. Working methods

The Praia meeting brought together regional development partners (CIDA – Canada, AFD – France, GTZ – Germany), Cape Verde Government and civil society representatives, actors on the ground and experts of the region involved in the DDR and post-conflict (Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone) as well as representatives from regional and international organisations (African Development Bank, Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), ECOWAS, International Organisation of French-speaking Communities (OIF), and the World Bank).

Unable to attend, the UNOWA sent their representative’s contribution to the Working Group. The USAID’s West African Regional Office intended to participate but was ultimately unable to do so.

The work carried out enabled the situation in West African post-conflict countries to be summed up through the sharing of experiences and expertise.

Three categories of countries were considered and discussed in-depth:

- **Countries in a stabilised post-conflict situation** (Guinea Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone)
- **Countries in which the exit from crisis process has been impeded** (Côte d’Ivoire and Casamance in Senegal).
- **Countries which risk falling back** into already resolved (Mali and Niger) conflict (Tuareg rebellions).

The discussions highlighted the State’s crucial role in all contexts and of its political, social and structural fragility which poses the greatest challenge.

- Post-conflict action is thus one of the first priorities of political reconstruction after establishing the rule of law rooted in social legitimacy and supported by effectiveness based on democratic legal values, transparency and equity.
- The work revealed the fact that **political reconstruction must support economic reconstruction in West Africa**, which cannot be achieved without truly implicating the national private sector often weakened indeed obliterated by armed crisis.

- International cooperation and development support organisations and agencies can only be sustainably effective with the in-depth understanding of risks as well as the veritable constraints of post-conflict crisis in countries of the region.
- The Regional Working Group also represents a dialogue framework between external actors such as international organisations and agencies (AFD, CIDA, CPLP, GTZ, OIF, UNDP, UNOWA, World Bank) and internal actors (States, civil society, regional organisations such as the AfDB and ECOWAS).

During the two day Praia meeting, the Regional Working Group's role was thus illustrated through fruitful exchanges between internal and external actors for a concerted and coherent approach to post-conflict in West Africa. Each of the regional or international organisations or agencies shared their experiences, their involvement, their approach and actions in the countries concerned and contributed to furthering the debate on the Group's orientations.

2. Draft Conclusions of the meeting and future work.

2-1 ECOWAS

The Group decided to work closely with ECOWAS whose role in the region must become concrete with regard to post-conflict. It concluded to:

- Capitalise on ECOWAS' experience, to rely on the basic instruments and mechanisms existing in the sub-region;
- Contribute to an ECOWAS reconstruction post-conflict strategy rooted in socio-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural realities of the region.

2-2 DDR and post-conflict, the meeting summed up:

- The obstacles to implementing DDR and the post-crisis perspectives in Casamance (Senegal) and in Côte d'Ivoire;
- The post-DDR situation, the challenges of reforming the security sector and the impact of the crisis on Guinea Bissau's private sector;
- The post-conflict situation in Liberia and Sierra Leone and the challenges with regard to socio-cultural, political and economic reconstruction;
- The risk of falling back into the Tuareg crisis in Mali and Niger and envisaged prevention policies.

2-3 Development of a regional approach

The meeting validated the conclusions of the Abidjan workshop concerning the regional approach with regard to post-conflict and reconstruction; it emphasised the need to concertedly meet the following challenges:

- The phenomenon of child soldiers in a region where 45% of the populations is under 15 years of age;

- The proliferation, illegal and criminal circulation of small arms and light weapons (there are an estimated 8 million in West Africa of which half are not held by the national defence and security forces).

2-4 The Regional Working Group's status, role and actions

- Participants adopted the ECOWAS proposal for the Group to be permanent and for its activities to be involved with ECOWAS' conflict prevention strategy, supporting the dynamics of exit from crisis, and post-conflict reconstruction;
- The Group should contribute to strengthening and coordinating multi-disciplinary expertise on post-conflict in support of development in West Africa;
- It will focus on factors hindering the exit from crisis process in Côte d'Ivoire and Casamance (Senegal);
- As agreed by represented international organisations and agencies, the Group will represent a facilitation and development dialogue framework between development agencies and actors of the region involved in post-conflict in West Africa;
- The SWAC, as the Group's coordinator will organise a restricted ad hoc steering committee, to finalise the Group's mission and work programme for which the main areas of concentration were defined at the meeting based on the discussions of the introductory document.
