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Innovations for Post-Conflict Transitions:
The United Nations Development Program in the Democratic Republic of Congo

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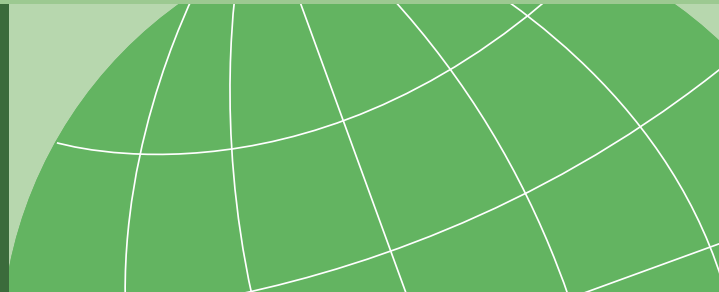
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Executive Summary

Between January and September of 2007, a team composed of Dr. Sarah Dix, Mr. Diego Miranda, and Dr. Charles H. Norchi appraised the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) country office programs, procedures, and management as implemented from 2003 to 2007. During the 2003 to 2007 period, the country program cycle focused on promoting good governance, conflict prevention, community recovery, and fighting HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis. Overall, the office managed more than $500 million for all programs, becoming among the three largest UNDP country operations in the world.

This report examines the organizational dimensions of the UNDP office in the DRC, and analyzes its most important program innovations. Section I describes the difficult country and regional contexts in which the office operated. Section II explores the unique institutional vision and leadership by which the UNDP emerged as a key agent in the DRC. Section 3III analyzes innovation and scope of procurement and delivery. Section IV discusses Security Sector Reform—disarmament, demobilization and reintegration—as keys to post-conflict development in the DRC. Section V offers conclusions based on the findings of the report.

The findings are as follows: The UNDP country office (CO) strategically leveraged its politically neutral image to effectively and creatively act as a behind-the-scenes development partner in the DRC. It operated with a shared vision that enabled managers and staff to meet contextual challenges as they arose. Staff was empowered to make decisions with a common purpose and this became an institutional expectation. Management endeavored to encourage an internal culture of knowledge sharing and substantive skills development, which in turn led to an enhancement of three capacities fundamental for delivering development services: innovative capacity, strategic capacity, and adaptive capacity. An entrepreneurial culture emerged, throughout support services and programs. In fact, some of the most notable innovations came in the area of procurement and logistics.

Overall, the CO demonstrated a remarkable capacity to act strategically and to fully exploit varied windows of opportunity that unfolded as peacebuilding and democratization in the DRC. The CO adapted best practices developed elsewhere to the Congolese context. The office reconfigured itself to become

an agent of change. Management and staff designed and implemented programs and procedures that were effective, innovative, and extensive in scope, that included collaboration with government and civil society, and that were transferable to other post-conflict contexts. Based on these findings, the United Nations Development Program Office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was formally nominated for the Innovations Award in Transforming Government, sponsored jointly by the IBM Corporation and the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Preface

This study appraises the capacity of a critical United Nations organization that had been perceived as lethargically bureaucratic to innovatively adapt. The work was undertaken during one of the most complex and demanding sociopolitical transitions in the Great Lakes region of Africa. The assessment team was confronted with the challenge of analyzing the behavior of an institution that was in the midst of a deep transformation within a country context undergoing intense change. Understanding the United Nations Development Program (UNDP)'s role in the Democratic Republic of Congo in the 2003–2007 period required appraising a large number of institutional, social, and political factors, while distinguishing between what was fleeting from what could endure. Although the balance of UNDP's intervention in the DRC will be continually weighed in the years to come, the initial indicators suggest that it has made critical contributions to the post-conflict transition owing to specific innovations.

The UNDP-DRC support of the elections operation—one of the UN's largest ever—was remarkable. The originality of its focus on "supporting the democratic cycle" broadened the view of the electoral process. This included conflict management leading up to election day, and acceptance of results, which constitute valuable lessons for future processes. The international community's support of the UNDP's current governance program in the DRC is a tribute to the UNDP's performance in the elections.

The UNDP-DRC efforts in Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) have been recognized by the Congolese government and the international community. As evidenced in the Ituri district, the DDR program integrated local governance, justice, and security reform. The quality of the disarmament process and the creativity of its community reintegration approach earned the DDR team the 2008 Innovation Prize, awarded by the UNDP Administrator. Today it is a good example of the application of the early recovery model the United Nations is trying to systematically adopt.

In the Kivus region, however, the work of the UNDP, and the United Nations in general, was less successful, and raises questions about the efficacy of the UN's integrated approach to conflict prevention. In 2008, just two years after the country's first successful democratic election, violence again broke out.

The multifaceted nature and cross-border dimension of the conflict in the eastern Congo was a nearly insurmountable challenge to any lead role that the UNDP could effectively perform.

I: Introduction

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is at a historical turning point. There are reasons for cautious optimism. For the first time in decades, the country has achieved a modicum of stability, positive growth rates, and a new political order based on a broadly accepted constitution. The right of a people to choose a government, a right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, was exercised in the DRC only once prior to 2006, in 1965. Yet it stands today as the means by which the Congolese people have elected presidential, parliamentary, and provincial leadership. To be sure, this relative stability rests on top of long-lived conflicts that could make the situation regress to civil war at any given moment. To further complicate matters, the nascent democratic institutions established by 2006 remain weak, under-funded, and lack trained personnel. Simply put, these untested law and governance institutions seem to be insufficiently robust to prevent, manage, and channel conflicts such as those the DRC endured over the last four decades. The unrest and violence in the Bas Congo province following the February 2007 gubernatorial elections (MONUC 2007a), the more than 200 deaths in Kinshasa in March 2007 (MONUC 2007b**),** and ongoing military conflict in the Kivus are clear indications that it is still too soon to declare victory over a recent history of senseless violence and human suffering.

However, the mere fact that open civil war is not currently a reality speaks loudly of the need to reassess the state of politics in the DRC. The political reality that the DRC is currently experiencing is promising, even considering the deficiencies of the regime. Following a civil war that from 1998 through 2004 resulted in the "the greatest death toll in a single country since the Second World War," (HDR 2005, 20) the DRC is relatively peaceful. A direct consequence of pacification, the 2002–2007 interval stands out as the *only* period when the DRC registered consistently positive GDP per capita growth, since 1970 (WBI 2007). Prior to that, positive income per capita rates were only achieved in 1971, 1973–1974, 1984, and 1986; and if we discount the 0.03 percent per capita growth in 1974, since independence only in 1962–1963 and 1968–1969 do we observe consecutive years of per capita growth (WBI 2007). The 2002–2007 period is without doubt a turning point that leaves questions unanswered: How has the DRC escaped its terrorizing history? What role has the international community played in this process? What lessons can be learned from what was done in the DRC, and applied to other failed states?

This report explores how the UNDP helped the Congolese people alter the path of history in the DRC. Specifically, this report is the story of how the UNDP helped close the gap between accelerated post-conflict recovery and stabilization in the DRC. The UNDP acted as a facilitator of development. It embedded itself in most areas of government, being high profile where strategically valuable, while consistently assuming low visibility in supporting the design, establishment, and strengthening of the DRC's current democratic institutions. Even though this low visibility has left many of the UNDP achievements unpublicized and underappreciated, the strategy has facilitated acceptance and national ownership of the resulting procedures and outcomes by the Congolese authorities. Furthermore, the UNDP's modus operandi in the Congo, particularly in the eastern regions, has fostered the growth and thickening of civil society in the most inhospitable areas of the world.

The innovations generated by the UNDP in the DRC have added an additional layer of sophistication to the UNDP toolkit, effectively infusing a thick development agenda in areas where it had rarely been a protagonist before: conflict resolution and peacebuilding. These interventions, their scope and innovative character, deserve recognition, appraisal and thorough assessment. This is both for what has been accomplished in the DRC, and for understanding the means and methods for altering the future in other cases where the state has failed under the weight of poverty and the brutality of civil war. This report is a search for and elucidation of such lessons.

Ceasefire Agreement, 1999

A ceasefire agreement was finally signed in Lusaka in August 1999, bringing together representatives of the six countries involved in the conflict at the time—Angola, the DRC, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe— and their associated Congolese allies. This marked the beginning of what became known as the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD) that eventually allowed the UN Security Council to send a peacekeeping mission (MONUC). Yet in spite of the high hopes this ceasefire agreement generated, the situation evolved into a tense balance of power game, rather than the peace it was expected to produce. The ICDC initiated in Lusaka mandated immediate "negotiations . . . which should lead to a 'new political dispensation and national reconciliation in the DRC'. But, instead of the 90-day time frame allotted to the Congolese parties to reach agreement, the ICD lasted

three months . . . and three years" before a firm accord was finally signed (Rogier 2003, 25). The consequences of this delay were lethal. While in 1999 there were 'only' 700,000 internally displaced persons (Kassa 2004, 81), by 2001 their ranks had swollen to 2 million people (Faubert et al 2006, 6). More dramatically, it was estimated that "2.5 million excess deaths . . . occurred during the 32-month period beginning in August 1998 and ending in March 2001" alone (IRC 2001, 3).

Two primordial factors explain this deadly stalemate. First, there was a deep incompatibility in the expectations of the warring parties. Due to these incompatible expectations, "low-intensity conflict remain[ed] the most attractive option" (ICG 2001b). Acceptance of the status quo, horrific as it was, was preferable to a scenario in which other groups would gain the upper hand.

A second factor contributing to the stalemate was that the DRC's plentiful mineral resources provided a continuous source of income for all warring factions (*Assemblée Nationale* 2004). The obvious victim of this stalemate was, of course, the population trapped in the middle of a constant state of low-intensity conflict. For in this 'second war,' all parties engaged in indiscriminate attacks on civilians, extrajudicial executions, mass rape, and destruction of property, resulting in massive population displacements.

Throughout this period, the UN first played a significant role in promoting peace talks, then in deploying a geographically limited involvement by its peacekeeping mission, MONUC. But while this presence was welcomed by the Congolese, the limitations of the MONUC mandate, and its lack of resources and personnel tarnished the initial welcome. As described by one observer, "I lived in the Congolese capital . . . when the UN peacekeeping forces . . . first arrived there in 2000. I remember the Congolese people lining the streets cheering and dancing as the first contingent of blue helmets drove down one of Kinshasa's main boulevards. I shared th[eir] hope. . . . In later years, [however] I also shared the frustrations of the Congolese when the UN did not intervene to stop renewed conflict and more killing of civilians. . . . The UN was simply overwhelmed with the task before it, lacking the mandate, the troops, and sometimes the resolve to stop the horrors" (Van Woundenberg 2004).

This critical view was very common in the early 2000s, but was probably unfair in light of the magnitude of the task at hand. It is remarkable that the

UN accomplished what it did, given the dimensions of the Congolese conflict, the lack of any state structure able to effectively support the work of MONUC, and the sheer enormity of the territory and population that UN troops were supposed to protect. MONUC's numbers were "woefully insufficient given the size of the country and the complexity of the problems it face[d]" (Amnesty International 2004, 5). Not only was financing for MONUC scarce, but the availability of well-trained troops remained a constant problem with which the UN had to routinely cope. Even as late as early 2003, "it proved difficult, however, to find troops for the DRC mission. No European or North American government would contribute [troops], nor were many African states enthusiastic about participating" (Human Rights Watch 2003, 52).

Beyond the general lack of pecuniary and human resources, however, the problem was that in the volatile context of the DRC at the time, nobody was really paying sufficient attention to the long term. Originally conceived as a means to contain the international conflict played out in Congolese territory, for example, up to 2003 MONUC's mandate limited its responsibility to the disarmament and repatriation of foreign armed groups based in the DRC, which then prevented it from engaging in the disarmament, demobilization, and reinsertion of the many different Congolese factions (Boshoff 2003, 138). As further discussed in Section 4, this badly hindered the effectiveness of the UN peacekeeping mission.

Moreover, the prevalent (but not always explicit) view at the time was that development activities should only begin once the situation was sufficiently stabilized by the peacekeeping operation. Today, this is a clearly recognized problem, for while "deploying peace enforcement and peacekeeping forces may be essential in terminating conflicts . . . [they] are not sufficient for long-term recovery. Serious attention to the longer-term process of peacebuilding in all [of] its multiple dimensions is critical" to success (UN 2004, 71). As we show in subsequent sections, eventually the CO helped infuse consideration of the long term into the planning of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs (DDR), constitution making, and the elections, among other policy areas. But back in 2000, this was far from the dominant view in the development community. As put by David Collier, "since post-conflict conditions face a high risk of conflict reversion, and such reversions account for around half of all civil wars, aid post conflict is a key instrument for conflict prevention. However, economic growth takes

time . . . [and h]istorically, donors have not provided sufficiently large and sustained aid flows . . . aid has tapered out, just as it should have been tapering in" (2006, 9). This argument continues to resonate, even today.

In fact, the CO at the time was itself a low-key actor, seemingly content with waiting for the right conditions to be set in place. While its continuous presence in the country allowed the CO to develop a close relationship with the DRC's authorities in Kinshasa, it failed—in the authors' opinion—to exercise all the leverage it could from such a privileged position. During the 1997–2000 period, in particular, the CO was the only significant development partner to the Congolese government. While there were other bilateral actors operating in the country, they had reduced staff and resources, and had almost no contact with the Congolese authorities, as their focus was working with NGOs. In 2001, then, as other development partners began to re-establish their presence in the DRC, the UNDP already had a relatively strong presence in the country, which partly explains the trust the government and most rebel groups put in its later endeavors. Given this continuous presence and its recognition as a neutral actor, the CO had the 'virtual' or potential capacity to make a difference. Reflecting the business as usual mentality that had given the UNDP the reputation for bureaucracy and cautiousness, however, the CO failed to make that difference at the time.

Despite being in such a good strategic position, in 2001 the UNDP downsized the CO in a reprofiling exercise that was part of a global initiative to reduce the UNDP's operation costs. The view at the time, as implicitly reflected in the Country Cooperation Framework of 2001 (UNDP-DRC, 2001), was that without consolidated peace and democratic rule, development activities of the type conventionally provided by the UNDP would be both impractical and potentially wasteful. Instead of seizing the opportunities that the evolving situation created, the CO strengthened the advisory roles of the country office, limiting activities to those that could be easily implemented through a national governmental partner (NEX spending in the UN jargon). Given the limited territorial penetration of the Congolese state, however, this meant concentrating most activities in the western and southern regions of the country, while abandoning the eastern and northern parts until MONUC could stabilize them.

The incipient peace process stalled due to the reasons outlined above, was thus heavily discounted in the eyes of the CO, headquarters, and the

9

Regional Bureau for Africa, which preferred to wait for the right conditions to be in place (UNDP 2001). As put by Resident Representative Herbert McLeod, "this was much as it was in late 1997 and 1998. The lack of effective engagement by the international community, the reluctance of the world major power to support President Laurent Kabila, and the failure of the UN to seize opportunities that arose over time, particularly immediately before the beginning of the 'second war' allowed the situation to evolve into a deadly stalemate" (McLeod 2007). And that stalemate literally cost millions of lives across the DRC, including that of Laurent Kabila, assassinated by one of his bodyguards on January 16, 2001.

Toward a Transitional Government, 2001–2003

While many feared the death of Laurent Kabila would lead to further destabilization of the country, his replacement by his son, Joseph Kabila, on January 26, 2001, actually jump-started the peace process in the DRC. The new president immediately began to court the international community, and initiated conversations with Uganda and Rwanda to restart peace talks. In particular, the new president allowed the deployment of MONUC forces to oversee troop withdrawals. Responding promptly, on February 22, 2001, the Security Council demanded that the parties to the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement disengage and redeploy forces immediately. And after initial reticence, the Congloese Rally for Democracy (*Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie* or RCD) and the Front for the Liberation of the Congo (FLC) rebel forces decided to cooperate under mounting diplomatic pressure. Rwanda and Uganda were also compelled to cease hostilities, at least in the open manner in which they were carried out before the senior Kabila's death.

This improvement in the situation led to a rekindling of the ICD. In May 2001, this in turn produced a declaration reaffirming the DRC's territorial integrity, a commitment to including opposition and rebel forces in government, and the granting of veto powers to all involved parties. However the situation remained stagnant, to some extent because of the new Kabila administration's reluctance to proceed with power sharing. This was partly due to the continuous presence of Ugandan and Rwandan forces in the eastern provinces, and of Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe in the west. While UN Security Council Resolution 1376 of November 9, 2001, called for the initiation of disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement, and

reintegration (DDRRR), MONUC was not granted the necessary powers to enforce the resolution (ICG 2001b), nor did the resolution contemplate the initiation of a parallel domestic disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) program. As a consequence of these factors, two rounds of ICD negotiations in Addis Ababa and Sun City in November 2001 and February 2002, respectively, ended up without achieving any concrete results. While agreement was reached between most parties—in particular Jean Pierre Bemba's Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (*Mouvement de Libération du Congo* or MLC*)* and the Kabila government—the RCD walked away from it, stalling the process once again.

Nevertheless, an agreement was eventually brokered as a result of a combination of international pressure on foreign warring parties and the knowledge domestic actors had that without foreign support their hegemonic dreams were baseless.. This agreement was reached in a third ICD round in Pretoria on December 17, 2002, and formally ratified at Sun City on April 2, 2003, in what was called the *Accord Global et Inclusive sur la Transition en République Démocratique du Congo*. The decompression of the situation on the international front was almost immediate, and by the end of 2002, the Angolan, Namibian, Zimbabwean, and Rwandan forces had withdrawn from the DRC. The last Ugandan army stronghold in Ituri withdrew from the country in May 2003, as well. Free (at least in a direct sense) from foreign occupation for the first time since 1996, a transitional Congolese government took office on June 30, 2003. The 1+4 formula had Joseph Kabila as president, with four vice presidents representing the main domestic rebel groups.

Throughout this process, the CO acted as a constant, behind the scenes adviser to all parties involved, eventually extending its influence from its traditional stronghold in Kinshasa, to areas as remote as the Ituri region. Especially important at the time was the advisory role the CO provided to the Kabila administration to recreate a national government that had practically ceased to exist between 1998 and 2001. As a first step, "the Government . . . followed up the Enhanced Interim Program (EIP), which was completed in March 2002 . . . [and started] the Emergency Multisector Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Project (EMRRP) 2003–2005, drawing on the guidelines laid down in the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP), which focused on three 'pillars': (1) restoring peace and good governance; (2) ensuring macroeconomic stabilization, and (3) rehabilitation" (UNDP 2002, 3). The EIP was fundamental to ending years of hyperinflation, leading to a

reduction of the annual inflation rate (at year's end) from around 500 percent in 1999–2000, to 135 percent in 2001, 15 percent in 2002, and under 5 percent in 2003 (IMF 2005, 4). This stabilization of the macroeconomy, in turn, allowed the government to establish "the legal framework for the financial system, strengthening the BCC's [Central Bank of the Congo] organization, and restructuring commercial banks" (IMF 2005, 6).

These reforms allowed the DRC to recover voting rights in the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Then as a consequence, it began to receive IMF and World Bank (WB) assistance on June 12 and 13, 2002, respectively (UNDP 2002, 3). This assistance was the conclusion of a lengthy return to the country by both Bretton Woods Institutions, beginning with "an initial multi-topic mission in March 2001" (IMF 2004b, 11). Throughout these negotiations in Kinshasa, the CO was able to provide timely and door-opening advice. As concluded by Jean Clément, "one key lesson [from the DRC experience] is that an early, proactive, and coordinated approach of the international community and the IMF and World Bank is critical for taking advantage of windows of opportunity opened by the willingness of country officials (even if they are few) to extricate their country from war" (2005, 1). The CO was fundamental to attaining this early, proactive, and coordinated approach, accompanying the situation as needed in 2001–2002. This was so even though the DRC government's trust was not a given, however, as it required the constant recognition of common interests, as well as the CO's assumption of a properly deferential approach toward strategic decisions the government took over time.[1]

The Promise of UN Reform

While up to standard, the role of the CO was, by 2002, relatively marginal to the process of pacification in the DRC. It was only since 2003 that the CO managed to effectively shape the Congo's path of history in increasing, painfully-attained coordination with other UN agencies and other strategic partners, and with a government that gradually had begun to develop some command over its territory. This report analyzes the mechanisms for this transformation in subsequent sections. The story told in this report, however, goes beyond the DRC, in that it showcases what the UN can accomplish when it allows itself the room to adapt and innovate. For ultimately, none of the achievements documented could have been attained without the significant

restructuring that the UN experienced in the DRC during the last five years. This is particularly true for the CO, which since mid-2002 has engaged in extensive change management exercises that fundamentally increased its effectiveness. As conventionally stated in the literature, change management is understood as "a means to move institutions, organizations, and entities from a current state to a desired state....[C]hange management is about bridging the gap between what is happening and what is possible"(Pascale and Sterling 2005). And the CO's endeavors to bridge the gap between what was happening and what was possible have been successful. The operations of the UNDP in the DRC demonstrate that the UN does have the capacity to proactively modify the environment in which it operates. Furthermore, it illustrates how such proactive intervention is fundamental to resolving the multiple problems that become evident as one attempts to rebuild a failed state.

As Section 2 of this report shows, the vision the CO began to frame in late 2002 was based on a perception that the DRC peace process was a unique opportunity to integrate a security agenda, crisis management, governance, and development. For the CO upper management, peace and stability were indeed preconditions of development, but in their view, a development agency like the UNDP had much to offer to ensure that those preconditions were fulfilled in a manner that could facilitate more conventional development activities once conflict ended. From the perspective of the CO, t the UN mission in the DRC in 2002 was missing "an appropriate framework within which the compromises of the peace negotiations, the pressures for peace dividends, and the rush for quick returns on private and public investment c[ould] all be rationalized" and coordinated so as to enhance the long-term prospects of development (McLeod 2003, 1). The CO rightfully saw the situation as a telling example of the claim that "development and security are inextricably linked" (UN 2004, viii). On this basis it developed a number of innovations documented in this report.

This holistic view, however, challenged then-dominant paradigms that stressed a sequential transition from relief to development, with peacekeeping operations and governance as somewhat separate activities. Proper development interventions, the argument went, should wait until relief and demobilization operations were over, and these in turn could only take place after sustainable agreements among well-committed actors (including a failed state) were signed. For example, the eligibility criteria (defined circa 2002) to receive funds from the Multi-Country Demobilization and

13

Reintegration Program (MDRP) for the Great Lakes Region,[2] clearly reflects this sequential approach to intervention in the DRC (among others).

Before being eligible for funds, a failed state such as the DRC was at the time had to (1) prepare a national demobilization and reintegration program; (2) establish a suitable institutional structure; (3) prepare "a letter of policy . . . outlin[ing] . . . commitments to the regional peace process, demobilization, and reintegration, and fiscal plans for social expenditure;" and (4) "provide assurances and monitoring measures to ensure consistency with environmental and social safeguards . . . [as well as] establish satisfactory financial management and procurement arrangements" (MDRP 2002a; MDRP 2002b). While sensible, these preconditions were well beyond the capabilities of the Congolese government, and could have hardly been fulfilled without the international support that, fortunately, eased the path of the DRC toward the umbrella proposed by the MDRP.

By contrast, the CO was then promoting and funding a framework able to take advantage of the synergies that the concurrent and coordinated implementation of relief, development, and peacekeeping operations would likely generate. As such, the CO was effectively fusing the broader vision and core goals articulated by the UNDP Executive Board[3] with conflict resolution and peacebuilding operations that had not been previously considered in the province of the UNDP. It did so by clearly rejecting the assumption that there was a 'continuum' between 'crisis and development' or 'relief and development.' On the contrary, the CO assumed that there was a highly complex coexistence between both settings, and sought to make the most of this coexistence.[4] As put by Gustavo Gonzalez, CO's senior DDR adviser, "our strategy tried to take into account the diachronic coexistence of different developmental contexts in the same country: war in Ituri, tension in the east and north, development in the south, [and] recovery in the west" (2007). And this required a constant process of innovation that allowed the CO to assume a leading role in the pacification and democratization of the DRC. The bottom line was that the UNDP was a change agent that used purpose and vision to recognize and seize hidden opportunities and synergies, in a context in which development thinking had not been usually applied. It is only today that we can clearly observe the fruits of the programmatic innovations the UNDP began to apply back in 2003.

The CO's success in helping the Congolese people begin a break from historical trends, also resulted from the way it complemented the work of other UN agencies, MONUC in particular. This coordination was initially a problematic process, since it ran against a history of institutional compartmentalization. However, the concept of an 'integrated mission' in which all UN agencies are supposed to act under a common purpose began to gain momentum during the implementation of DDR and community recovery in the East. And by early 2006, under Ross Mountain's stewardship, the 'integrated mission' became a reality, crystallized in Kinshasa and particularly in the provinces of the DRC. For example, the tight cooperation between MONUC and the UNDP made it possible to carry out the 2006 elections in the absence of almost all the elements one would consider necessary to sustain an event of this type. A similar case can be made regarding the constitution-making process, the Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Security Sector Reform, and the operations of the Global Fund, which will be explored later in this report.

Even more important for success, however, was the fact that the UNDP was extremely effective in helping the Congolese authorities develop a clear, if not always respected, road map toward pacification and democratization, providing the strategic and technical advice as well as funds for activities that were needed to achieve these two goals. In providing advice, the CO built on a wealth of UNDP experience in other less developed countries, and on the expertise of seasoned personnel. Fortunately, though, the CO did not just copy and paste from previous experiences, but customized its advice to the needs of the DRC. The provision of such customized advice allowed the UNDP to keep its eyes on the long run amidst stateless chaos. This in turn instilled the same forward-looking worldview in some key DRC authorities, as they adopted some of the policies advocated by the UNDP as their own.

As analyzed in Section 4, a paradigmatic case was the UNDP's early promotion of DDR as an entry point for a long-term development agenda in DRC (Gonzalez and Demetriu 2002), instead of merely a means to the (nevertheless important) task of putting an end to international conflict in the Great Lakes. Above all, since 2003, the CO had demonstrated a remarkable capacity to act strategically, putting itself in a neutral position in the eyes of all stakeholders, and from there being able to fully exploit the varied windows of opportunity that appeared over time. In so doing, the CO was able to

adapt best practices applied elsewhere to the Congolese reality, first reconfiguring itself so as to better accompany the peace process, and then the democratization of the DRC.[5] In most cases, this required the implementation of innovative programs such as the Rapid Response Mechanism, or the Service Center, today adopted globally as best practices by the UNDP.

Is the DRC sufficiently mature to be released from the stewardship of the international community? Have the UNDP's programs and operations in the DRC been flawless? Both questions have an easy and short answer: no. For while UN intervention has enabled the relative peace that DRC is currently enjoying, the human condition of most Congolese remains appalling, and the governance institutions upon which they increasingly depend remain fragile at best. As discussed in the conclusions of this report, the DRC clearly requires further engagement by the international community. And there are key areas in which the CO could increase its effectiveness, particularly in the areas of information gathering and dissemination, and in the systematization of feedback mechanisms and the organization, utilization, and capacity building of civil society organizations including NGOs.

Nevertheless, while one can discuss the sustainability of the changes introduced in the DRC during the last four to five years, there can be little doubt that what has been accomplished is an unforeseen success. The dramatic improvements in the DRC since 2002–2003 should not be overshadowed by the problematic choices facing its future. For the path the Congolese people are now traveling clearly forks away from the path the DRC seemed condemned to follow just a few years ago. Even if the situation were to deteriorate in the medium run, the mere fact that the achievements of the 2002–2007 interlude were accomplished remains a puzzling spark of sanity and hope amidst the apocalyptic horrors the Congolese population has experienced over decades. Even in the worst scenario of reversal in the medium run, the relative success of these last years deserves to be explored and explained. And that explanation necessarily requires analyzing the role played by the UNDP and other UN agencies.

The period following the conclusion of a peace agreement is foundational in the life of a new polity and its people. This period is critical because there are high popular expectations for a peace dividend. Yet it is also fragile, for resources are scarce amidst an explosion of public expectations. Following war and misery, people expect relief, security, service delivery, development

and responsive governance. That requires national ownership of the peace process, capacity building of national institutions, but also the effective engagement of the international community. The reality of the DRC, however, is that national capacity remains weak; there is distrust of state institutions; aid flows are uneven; and logistical challenges frustrate the delivery of humanitarian assistance. To top that, corruption seems widespread, jeopardizing the existence of even well-funded institutions like the National Commission for Demobilization and Reintegration (CONADER).

During this fragile and dangerous post-conflict period, there is a high risk of incremental deterioration, to the point of reverting to civil war. For both the incipient national institutions and the international community, then, the overwhelming task is to consolidate peace. Yet this requires a key change agent that innovatively helps create conditions for political stability, security, and good governance.

II: Vision, Values, Purpose

This section shows how the application of the UNDP's global development model fostered the flourishing of the vision, values, and purpose in the CO. As seen in the DRC, the UNDP has generated a dynamic and self-correcting organization for development.

In effective international agencies, vision is broadly defined at the headquarters or macro level, and redefined at the micro or country level with particular accounting for local needs and opportunities. In that manner, the model provided by headquarters is adapted to the realities in the field, transforming that vision into strategies that could lead the local situation from an undesirable ex-ante state, to an outcome aligned with that global vision. Insofar as there is an effective coordination of activities between the global and the local levels, then, vision enables an organization to mobilize present resources to achieve a preferable future condition or outcome.

Yet to advance these institutional goals, it is necessary to empower managers, officers, and staff so as to build and sustain three core organizational capacities: strategic, adaptive, and innovative. That is to say, for vision to have an effect on reality, it requires a purposeful actor capable of (1) correctly

transforming vision into a strategic plan of action; (2) effectively adapting core headquarter tenets into workable rules in the field; and then (3) innovating on the basis of those adaptations, so as to both enrich the original vision provided by headquarters, and better serve the population of concern. These strategic, adaptive, and innovative capacities are critical for institutional effectiveness, for achieving positive management results, and for agency leadership. They are the principle appraisal themes of this report.

The vision and purpose that shape core capacities emerge from organizational values. They are built through a constant process of self evaluation, and strengthened or modified on the basis of feedback provided by those being served with that vision and purpose. Managing with values enables operations to be implemented in a manner that advances institutional goals and vision at every level. Yet this requires a constant process of strategic planning, adaptation, and innovation. For the CO during the period analyzed in this report, 2003–2007, this process consisted of the definition of a clear and focused CO vision, and then the identification of its own weaknesses and strengths in light of that vision, as well as the crafting of the mechanisms necessary to make that vision a reality.

This was clearly in line with the management practices recommended by the UNDP at the global level. Institutional values were well considered at the highest levels of the organization, and served as the operational philosophy of the CO. Further, the innovations adopted by the CO have been affirmed at the global level, as they are now beginning to be integrated into the model of development provided by the UNDP, and adapted to countries other than the DRC.

The concepts of human development and poverty eradication have been long advocated by the UNDP, and they rest upon essential organizational values. These values were clarified and specified in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with precise targets. The MDGs were explicitly invoked by the UNDP Executive Board as the overarching values for policy formation, implementation, and operations. They naturally overlap the UNDP's purpose and vision at every level and have substantial international support (they have been signed by 189 countries) thus bringing a near political consensus to an overarching vision for the promotion of human development. Because the MDGs are clear, they promote strategic focus, orientation, and cohesion in development activities. Further, the MDGs are interconnected and thus

stimulate a unified approach for the UNDP strategy and operations, especially at the country level. For the UNDP globally and in country contexts, the MDGs have become integral to the organization's purpose and vision. They are instruments for policy reform and advocacy. Located at the core of the organization's strategic goals, the MDGs provide the building stones for the operations of the UNDP (Murphy 2006).

The United Nations secretary general has entrusted the administrator of the UNDP with the responsibility of coordinator for the MDGs in the UN system. This of course extends to the country level, where the UNDP works with counterparts to set national MDG targets, to implement monitoring systems, mobilize public support, and institute national MDG reports. Focus on the MDGs throughout the UN system is fostered by the fact that the UNDP resident representative is also the resident humanitarian coordinator of the UN Country Team and, in peacekeeping contexts, also the deputy special representative of the secretary-general.

In the case of the DRC, this office soon became a core agent within an integrated mission that has grown increasingly efficient in coordinating the activities of the peacekeeping mission (MONUC), the UNDP, UNICEF, and other UN agencies operating in the DRC. Building upon the recommendations of a report by the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (Brahimi et al 2000), the CO had slowly but steadily moved toward the design of more integrated combinations of development, relief, and peacekeeping operations, even before the mission in the Congo was formally integrated.

In addition to underscoring the value of the MDGs, the Executive Board of the UNDP adopted organizational goals that would guide the institution globally and at the country level while moving toward MDG targets. Specifically, while the core objectives remain the achievement of the MDGs and the reduction of human poverty, the UNDP international experience has made it evident that achieving those goals requires democratic governance, and support for crisis prevention and recovery programs. Almost by definition, then, the joint application of these principles requires crafting highly specific strategies to deal with local conditions, a consequently high degree of institutional adaptation so as to better implement those strategies, and then the capacity to innovate established practices so as to accomplish the job. As discussed later, while specific individual agency is fundamental to explain the increasingly relevant role played by the UNDP in the DRC, that

agency was able to flourish due to an enabling institutional culture that favored and fostered agency to begin with.

The UNDP is a global organization; it is present in 136 countries but more often than not deploys its activities in a very decentralized manner at the sub-national level in each of those countries. Given this global outreach, and the holistic character of its development model, it should not come as a surprise that the UNDP's programs are country driven and rooted in the local context. This stands in sharp contrast with the more hierarchical and universalistic approach assumed by the World Bank (Murphy 2006). For the UNDP, key management values are country ownership and sustainability, since short of replacing local government, none of the forgoing goals would be achievable without them.

In most countries, only one or two of the MDGs outlined above have been critically relevant at the time of defining a country strategy. By contrast, in the DRC all MDGs were for immediate and critical needs. The combination of civil war, international warfare, lack of effective government institutions, abject levels of poverty, environmental disaster, and a public health situation beyond critical, has made the DRC a most painful example of what is *not* conducive to development. That a relative peace has emerged out of this chaotic environment is testimony to the resilience of the Congolese people and to the engagement of the United Nations, spearheaded by MONUC and the UNDP.

Explaining the UNDP's Transformation

Up to 2001, the CO was a low-key actor playing a mostly advisory role. However, it was strategically well situated, since the UNDP's continuous presence in Kinshasa had allowed it to develop a close relationship with DRC's formal authorities and most rebel groups. In fact, for most of the 1997–2000 period, the UNDP was the only relevant development partner to the government, as even the Bretton Woods Institutions abandoned a country that was literally sinking into chaos. To be sure, there were other bilateral agencies operating on and off at the time. Contact with the Congolese authorities was not a priority for them, however, as their focus was to provide immediate relief to the social problems generated by the 'two wars,' outside the sphere of influence of a government that had little or no control over the territory.

Instead, the UNDP continuously provided close assistance to the government, which resulted in a number of important advisory activities. Among them, it is worth highlighting the publication of the first National Human Development Report for the DRC, in 2000; the elaboration of the macroeconomic framework that started a multi-donor joint assessment led by the World Bank, also in 2000; and the production, with other UN agencies, of a "United Nations Plan for the DRC, 2001–2002." Notably, the UNDP assumed active participation in the development of a first Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP), finalized in March 2002.

Following the death of Laurent Kabila, as the political situation registered a slight improvement, other development partners began to reestablish their presence in the DRC. By this time, however, the UNDP had maintained a consistent presence in the country, and this partially explains the trust the government and most rebel groups accorded the agency in later endeavors. Given this ongoing presence and its recognition as a neutral actor, the CO possessed the virtual or potential capacity to make a difference. At the time, though, the CO preferred to concentrate on its traditional areas of expertise, rather than intervening in the new development challenges unfolding in the DRC.

By contrast, the CO is today the third largest UNDP operation in the world, and has become a mandatory partner for all relevant actors in the Congo. Going well beyond a mere advisory role, the UNDP has been a protagonist in the promotion of good governance, conflict prevention, community recovery, and fighting HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis. The office has managed over 600 million dollars during the last three years, and it is fair to say that without its input and institutional leadership, neither the pacification nor the democratization of the DRC, fragile as they are, would have been achieved.

It is impossible to explain this transformation without first referring to the important changes the UN system has undergone during at least the last decade. Beginning in 1998, in particular, the UNDP began to shift to 'results-based management.' The UNDP approach to results-based management was based on three pillars to increase efficiency in the implementation of best practices.

The first pillar was the definition of strategic goals in order to provide a focus for action. The second pillar was the analysis of pivotal factors in the attainment of goals, or the specification of expected and measurable results

that contribute to goals and align programs, partnerships, and resources behind them. Third, program outcomes would be assessed via ongoing monitoring and assessment of performance, so as to integrate lessons learned into future planning. The management tool of appraisal, or continuous feedback to improve performance was stipulated, and soon efforts began to make this approach trickle down to the country offices. The transformation of the CO, again, had as a causal predecessor the global transformation of the UNDP.

Reenforcing other factors analyzed above, results-based management has meant an increased appreciation at headquarters of the importance of strategic programming and positioning at the country level. The skills with which country offices employed advocacy, policy dialogue, partnerships, and institutional presence to support national policies and to advance development outcomes were regarded fundamental to achieving broad organizational purposes. Vision and purpose at the level of the country office thus became the key to unleashing human capital to generate results. That is, to respond to country-level demands for the UNDP's support and to creatively identify and recognize new support opportunities became a mantra in headquarters, particularly in new institutions like the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR). It is in this context where the transformation of the CO took place. The change management exercises fundamentally modified the nature of the office, and with it, the future of the DRC.

The underlying force behind the adoption of results-based management was the need to transform the institutional culture of the UNDP from one that, self-admittedly, was focused on entitlements, controls, and inputs, to one concentrating on results, delegation, and outputs. In the view of the UNDP Executive Board, it was necessary to transform the UNDP from a bureaucratic, risk-adverse, and introverted institution, into a speedy, opportunity-driven, and partner-seeking one (UNDP 2004c, 2). This required the tight coordination of activities between the UNDP global or corporate level, and the activities of the operating units, that is, country offices around the world. Change management was then thought as the means to make sure that the activities of very autonomous country offices were in line with the global vision promoted by the corporate UNDP, while guaranteeing their ability to modify that vision to fit local needs.

Today, the CO in the DRC is one of the clearest examples of how powerful an instrument change management can be to allow for significant improvements

in performance, positioning and partner perception. Following a country office reprofiling mission in 2002, and then two other missions deployed in 2002 and 2003, the CO has demonstrated an impressive turnabout in performance and effectiveness. As put by Roberto Valent, deputy country director of the CO until mid-2007, these change management exercises "meant taking a hard look at management attitudes and problems, not as an abstract exercise, but as a close, face to face assessment of how these problems affected the environment in which the UNDP operated and how it performed" (2007). This assessment required the elaboration of a clear strategic plan so as to be able to identify the personnel needed to carry it out. and then the implementation of the resulting recommendations. These changes have allowed the CO to position itself as a lead development agency in the country and to improve partner perceptions of the UNDP activities.

These strategic changes represented a turning point in the life of the CO. From being a relatively small operation with total expenditures of US$8 million in 2002, the CO increased delivery to US$32 million in 2004, to US$223 million in 2005, and then to US$246 million in 2006, thus becoming the third largest UNDP operation worldwide, after Argentina and Brazil (data extracted from the Atlas system, in early October 2007). Unlike these two South American cases, though, where more conventional national execution (NEX) mechanisms are overwhelmingly dominant, most of the expansion in the DRC has been based mostly upon direct execution (DEX), which has in turn required a number of procurement mechanisms innovations assessed in Section 3.

This impressive growth was accompanied by a noticeable improvement in execution, as seen in the ratio of program expenditures over available program income, which rose from 44.8 percent in 2004, to 77.2 percent in 2005, and then to 85.5 percent in 2006. It is worth highlighting the significant improvement observed in the number of months the CO can operate on its extra-budgetary income (XB reserves): from only two months in 2004, to 42 months in 2005, and then to 46 months in 2006. For 2007, XB reserves are estimated at 42 months.[6] This is perhaps the best indicator of the success the CO has had in developing strategic partnerships with other bilateral and multilateral organizations, for it shows its ability to command their support. While one can argue that much of this improvement is a function of spending in the elections, this argument will likely be falsified once the expected level of spending in 2007–2009—currently estimated at US$250 million—is

23

actually realized. The improvement in the CO's operations is not a function of a one-time event (i.e., elections), but the result of a purposeful restructuring implemented by its upper management, and its success in assuming a lead role in the DRC's reconstruction.

To accommodate this expansion, the number of international UNDP posts increased to 42 in 2005, and then to 62 in 2006. This increase in personnel was extremely necessary to fulfill the new compromises the CO was assuming as it grew increasingly responsible for the operations of the DDR program, first, and then for the promotion of good governance. Nevertheless, this growth in international staff was dwarfed by the magnitude of operations carried out during these years. In 2005 and 2006, for instance, a management against program expenditures ratio of 1.26 and 1.81 respectively has positioned the country office among the most productive and least expensive ones worldwide. In a similar vein, the expenditure per post (expenditures from program-related funds over the total number of posts) was US$1.85 million in 2005, and US$2.5 million in 2006.[7] And again, this was overwhelmingly direct execution spending (DEX), adding an extra layer of complexity to the CO operations. Clearly, the combination of a seasoned and entrepreneurial leadership with change management exercises has resulted in a dramatic increase in productivity, allowing the CO to tackle gigantic operations with confidence and, comparatively speaking, a remarkable degree of success.

The transformation generated through change management has resulted in the consolidation of a shared vision and a common purpose in the CO. Value management at the local level, in particular, has enabled managers and staff to meet contextual challenges as they arose, resulting in a high level of adaptability and innovation. Of particular importance, staff was empowered to make decisions with a common purpose and this became an institutional expectation. Management endeavored to encourage an internal culture of knowledge sharing and substantive skills development which in turn led to an enhancement of three capacities fundamental for delivering development services: innovative capacity, strategic capacity and adaptive capacity. An entrepreneurial culture emerged and hence leadership flourished. Collaboration was pursued and this was in the common interest with the Congolese people the UNDP was serving.

Thanks to this transformation, the CO has been able to fully exploit the different windows of opportunity that appeared over time as the pacification

and democratization of the DRC unfolded. In so doing, the UNDP was able to adapt best practices developed elsewhere to the Congolese reality, reconfiguring itself over time so as to better accompany the highly sensitive and complex peace and democratization processes. This required in most cases the implementation of innovative programs that could not have been possible without the restructuring that resulted from change management. Simply put, change management was able to prepare the CO to tackle one of the most difficult peacebuilding and post-conflict operations in history, and did so with remarkable success.

Structure Meets Agency

The analysis above has one fundamental missing element: agency. For without agency—that is to say, the purposeful actions of an individual to alter the reality surrounding him or her—the essence of the choices that underpin the path of history is lost. As stated above, worldwide, UNDP programs are country driven and rooted in the local context, where senior managers refine vision based on a deep understanding of local trends and context. When effective, these managers use vision and purpose to position the organization in order to recognize, seize opportunities, and achieve outcomes on behalf of the beneficiary population. This is the work of individuals within organizations, and that work is the means through which those organizations evolve over time.

During the DRC transition period, the UNDP country office was led by and staffed with creative individuals. Key figures were the former UNDP Resident Representative, Herbert McLeod, who developed the strategic vision that shaped the CO experience since mid-2002, and his successors, Resident Representative Ross Mountain, who commanded the formal integration of the UN mission in the Congo, and ex-Country Director Babacar Cisse, who made that vision an effective reality.

Resident Representative McLeod was steeped in the DRC context. He had been in the country previously, as interim resident representative for the office at a time when the relationship between the government and the UN was at an all time low: November 1998 to May 1999. During that mission McLeod identified opportunities of intervention that the UN did not tackle at the time, and managed to forge a strong, close relation with some of the

main actors. For that reason, when he returned as resident representative in mid-2002, he knew and had earned the confidence of key leadership in the Congo. As McLeod told the authors of this report:

> First, I knew firsthand about how the UN had lost an incredible opportunity to make peace in the region in 1998 but failed because of pressure from a world power and lack of strong commitment by the UN leadership. . . . When a country is at its weakest state, it yearns for international support to legitimize itself as it were, and its government therefore is willing to pay a very high price for that. . . . This presents a window of opportunity that is often ignored by external actors. In 2003 I, however, knew about this window of opportunity and endeavored to use it, in a way that was not tried in 1997–1998. Second, I had access to . . . [all the relevant actors], combined with a certain degree of trust. It was therefore relatively less difficult to per-suade the actors about initiatives that I would launch. . . . My vision was to make the UNDP a key player in the reconciliation and recov-ery so that this time around we could influence the outcome of the peace process positively, and through economic development (2007).

Framing a vision, however, requires mapping the context, and not simply imposing a given development model on others. This means understanding the key actors, their expectations, their demands, and the resources they wield. As McLeod noted, in the DRC "the first task was to scope the land-scape of the political and economic space. Who were the players? What were the opportunities available for a small player [the UNDP] in terms of resources and also in terms of political clout?" (ibid). Good organizational leaders must be realistic as to resources at their disposal. Thus as McLeod further noted, "in order to carry out any vision, it was necessary to equip the office with the staff required to do the background and basic analysis work required. The existing staff was not appropriate both in terms of profile and work habits. Plus the number was woefully insufficient" (ibid). This entre-preneurial approach embodied the reform strategy outlined above, and found strong support in Babacar Cisse, then focal point for the DRC at UN head-quarters, and in the BCPR.

Implementing vision requires an organization capable of behaving strategi-cally. As McLeod further noted, "the CO needed to establish itself in the donor community as an institution that had something to offer. At the same

time, it was essential to prevent the usual rivalries and tensions with the special representative of the secretary-general," in charge of the peacekeeping mission (ibid) so as to be able to take advantage of the synergies that would result from a coordinated work. That is to say, for the CO it was necessary to establish an active but complementary role to that of MONUC, which was essential to the goal of transforming UN operations in the DRC into an integrated mission. To achieve this goal, the CO upper management proactively began to advance the office's agenda, not only before the Congolese authorities, but also with other development partners in the DRC, and within the UN itself.

The combination of these strategic changes transformed the CO into an organization that gradually began to shift the planning of the international community away from a sequential pacification relief development conceptualization, and toward a more complex scenario whereby all these activities could complement each other. The crowning moment for this shift was "when MONUC became an Integrated Mission, [and] UN Agencies . . . began to try to align their activities to contribute more effectively as a UN system to peace, stability, and the well being of the Congolese people" (Mountain 2005, 4).[8]

Many have interpreted that the UNDP's growing control over the UN agenda in the DRC "led to the incorporation of longer-term developmental strategies into the humanitarian coordination function . . . this seems to have been encouraged as much by the relief agencies as imposed by UNDP" (Stockton 2005, 1). This take seems to miss the point that the UNDP approach was, precisely, to forge and crystallize this convergent view, and not to impose its view on other developmental agencies, or on the DRC government.

Moreover, the UNDP's input on the international community agenda predated the establishment of the integrated mission, and was able to instill a long-term development view in its planning well before 2005. By 2002, for most of the international community, stabilization was the central goal (Faubert 2006, 9), however, the CO management's vision was to engage stabilization as an opportunity to achieve development goals in the areas of DDR, the design of transitional institutions, and the improvement of the critical humanitarian situation of eastern DRC. That is to say, for the CO, stabilization was another component of the development process, and a means of realizing potential synergies between pacification, relief, and traditional development

efforts, instead of executing them as if they could not be combined. Rather than waiting for the 'right conditions' to arrive before starting to implement a conventional development program, the CO sought to drive the situation toward the achievement of those right conditions, rethinking relief and peace-building operations so as to foster long-term, sustainable development from round one.

As such, the CO was taking to heart the notion that "United Nations operations . . . d[o] not deploy into post-conflict situations but tr[y] to create them" (Brahimi 2000, viii). It perceived the peace process as a unique opportunity to integrate a security agenda, crisis management, and development, and proposed DDR as an entry point linking and sequencing peace-building in the East with early recovery, security sector reform, elections, and poverty reduction. In this vision, the peace and stabilization processes were the opening, and the transformed CO was the agent helping the Congolese move toward a scenario of peaceful coexistence. A dedicated upper management and staff, in turn, transformed this vision into a purpose-ful drive to advance the agenda the CO had now defined.

Most of the DRC country office achievements analyzed in this report can be attributed to the qualities of this vision, and to the ability to operate with a clear and common purpose while managing with values. The subsequent pages describe how country office managers and staff met daunting challenges to pacify and democratize the DRC, with the support of local partners, and the increasingly coordinated activities of other UN agencies. These managers were empowered to operate in an entrepreneurial way, and to make decisions in the common interest with the Congolese people. It should not be a surprise that from this mix, leadership flourished. An institutional context of vision, values, and purpose provided the foundation for innovative, strategic, and adaptive capacity in service delivery, security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs, governance initiatives, and efforts to combat critical diseases.

III: Operations: Getting it Done in the Congo

To operate in the DRC during the 2003–2007 period required overcoming countless logistical challenges, as well as dealing with the extremely low-secu-

rity conditions of a country ending its bloody civil war. The lack of governmental counterparts with delivery capacity meant that agencies often found themselves obliged to distribute goods and services directly. This was in many cases business as usual for organizations that concentrated on relief operations. For a development agency like the UNDP, for which governmental capacity building and the strengthening of civil society are core values underpinning its daily operations, this situation multiplied the areas in which it had to intervene. This required delivering goods and services in the most inhospitable of environments and in conditions where the UNDP had barely attempted to operate before. For example, the security status of the areas where the CO launched its first programs in the East was phase IV, and intervening in such areas defied a procedural tradition that prevented the UNDP from carrying out development activities until the security situation had improved.

If this were not enough, though, operating in the DRC also entailed training and providing budgetary support to incipient governmental counterparts that, at least in the beginning of the democratization process, were piggybacking on the UNDP's efforts. Furthermore, if the vision described in the previous section was to be successfully implemented, there was also the need to train community organizations and NGOs (and in many cases foster the creation of new ones), so that they could properly bid for partnership with the UNDP, first, and then with the government. After that, more training was still needed, in order to increase the capacity of these civil society organizations to deliver according to the terms required by the UNDP. Up to 2001, only a few of the UNDP's offices worldwide had faced these challenges, for they generally implemented development programs in contexts in which governmental and societal counterparts were relatively established. When these conditions were not present, UNDP offices limited themselves to playing an advisory role. The low-key CO of 2001 was a case of the latter, and in that sense, quite typical. When the CO purposely chose to become a mandatory development partner in the Congo, however, it began to sail uncharted waters, scaling up efforts as it increased its level of involvement in a country torn by civil war.

Once the notion of waiting for the 'right conditions' was abandoned, operating in the DRC required searching for innovative mechanisms that would allow the UNDP to carry out its ambitious mandate: the achievement of the MDGs in the DRC. If history were an ironclad structure, of course, to attempt to do so was simply folly. When vision meets a purposeful actor

there is the chance for effective agency, however, and an alternative future might then be achieved. Limited and shaky as it may be, the recent democratization of the DRC is a telling tale that it is possible to twist history's arm. As a series of bloody conflicts during 2007 demonstrate, there is plenty of room for a regression. But for the first time in decades, the Congolese people have a *choice* to avoid that path. And encouraged by the UNDP and MONUC, the international community seems to have gotten on board to support the DRC so far.

The situation in the DRC inexorably pushed the UNDP toward direct execution (DEX) projects, along with the increase in both its advisory role and the expanding scope of its developmental agenda. This in turn required the setup of efficient and rapid procurement and delivery mechanisms, something that the UN had not often been accused of having. As put by a review of the CO's programs in 2004, "the complexity of the interventions . . . under the DEX modality [is] putting further workload on the staff. The program officers are required to attend to immediate administrative/operational issues [rather] than . . . more substantive programmatic matters," with the consequent loss in terms of delivery and output (UNDP 2004b, 9). And this report referred to the activities taking place before the big jump registered in 2005. To properly tackle the challenges that followed, it was evident that fundamental changes had to be implemented, both to position the UNDP as a reliable development partner, and then to procure and deliver the goods necessary to attain and maintain that position. The change management exercises of 2002–2004 aimed precisely at that.

In scaling up operations, the CO tried to take advantage of all the existing executing modalities, using NEX, NGO, AGEX, or DEX modalities (national, NGO, external agency, and direct spending mechanisms, respectively) according to the availability of partners in the areas where it was operating. For example, when the government had strategic assets that made its participation possible (for instance in the demobilization and reintegration of war disabled people), or necessary (the drafting of macro-level policy papers and strategies) NEX spending was always preferred. NGO execution was used when UNDP staff was unable to be deployed at the heart of the conflict (as in many parts of the Ituri), or when they were considered appropriate to the task (as in providing training during the elections). Likewise, AGEX spending was preferred when partner agencies had a comparative advantage, such as UNICEF in dealing with children soldiers. As it is often

the case, virtue is born out of necessity. The CO experience in the DRC makes it clear that capacity building, the promotion of civil society, and the formation of strategic partnerships are not mere niceties, but necessary instruments to advance a development strategy.

The first objective the CO set for itself in mid-2002 was to be a mandatory partner in the processes of pacification and democratization of the Congo. As analyzed in the next section, the CO achieved this goal, with BCPR support, by positioning itself as the lead agency for DDR in the DRC. To continue as a protagonist and thus promote the achievement of the MDGs, though, the CO needed to go beyond a mere advisory role and develop procurement and delivery infrastructure, almost from scratch. The CO, like most UNDP offices, did not have the functional elements needed to provide its own procurement and delivery services. Prior to 2004, most procurement in the Congo was implemented by subcontracting to other agencies within the UN system. The problem with that was the red tape and lengthy delays resulting from cumbersome, multilayered procurement mechanisms. Had the UNDP continued with a business as usual' mentality, the CO would have never played the leading role it ultimately did in the DRC.

As a first attempt to solve these multiple problems, the CO developed a NEX-DEX office in 2004, and staffed it with help from the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) program. This innovation was later adopted by the Regional Bureau of Africa (RBA), code named Advancing Resource Mobilization and Development for Africa (ARMADA) as a means to replicate the Congolese experience elsewhere (UNDP 2006e). The main functions of the CO predecessor to ARMADA were to identify potential bottlenecks in the existing delivery system, provide support for resource mobilization, and eventually, set up and staff a service center.

However, as the CO grew increasingly involved in the management of the transitional government agenda, so grew the level of activities to be implemented. This problem was clearly observed by a 2004 review of CO programs, when it stated that the procurement and contracting "requirements for the country office will become significant if they are to reach their intended target. . . . In many cases the present procurement/contracting processes are not coordinated, do not adhere to good international procurement practices, or follow proper UNDP procedures. There is also general lack of coordination and poor scheduling of procurement activities" (2004b, 10).

While innovative and effective in dealing with the situation that existed when the Congolese transitional government was first established, the dynamics of the transition process itself began to overwhelm and render insufficient the first round of innovations devised by the UNDP to solve its procurement problems in the DRC. Moreover, as the transitional government consolidated its hold over the territory, new and more complex institutional dynamics were initiated, including the drafting of a new constitution and the preparation for the first electoral process in the Congo since 1965.[9] The matter at hand was that the level of operations was growing quickly, burdening a country office that, while successful at dramatically increasing its profile, was not properly staffed or organized to deal with the challenges ahead. This was particularly obvious in light of the upcoming electoral process and of the leading role the UNDP was set to play in them.

In this context, a service center was created to procure and contract services for the office. Such services included the processing of payments, settling of claims, maintenance of monthly accounts, the organization of travel and logistics, organization of warehousing and transport mechanisms, and so forth. The idea was to centralize all procurement and contracting operations in a single entity, endowing that entity with the capacity to monitor the delivery of products, and thus increase the accountability and efficiency of CO operations.

To further advance that goal, the decision was made to allow the service center to charge programs for cost recovery, so as to infuse a more business-like approach to operations. A legal advisor was recruited, as well, to guarantee the coordinated fulfillment of international and Congolese legislation, in the context of UN procurement mechanisms. All together, the separation between program implementation and procurement meant a significant improvement in transparency and a boost to CO efficiency. A mildly negative consequence of this gain in efficiency and transparency, however, was the consequent reduction of agency spending, AGEX. This was because many activities that were previously subcontracted to other UN agencies to facilitate procurement were now more efficiently carried out by the service center.

Although UNDP service centers had previously been implemented in Latin America and the Philippines, the DRC service center was the first of its kind in Africa, and it radically departed from previous experiences. As put by the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa in his analysis of the DRC's service center,

"in most aspects the best practice in RBA, 2005 was the first time in years that a RBA office ranked in the top 10 of 'most delivering offices' (UNDP 2006a, 3). What made the DRC service center different was the volume of operations, the fact that the overwhelming majority of these were DEX disbursements and the daunting challenges of purchasing and distributing products in the Congolese context. This experience in DRC was clearly observed and later replicated throughout the continent by the Regional Bureau of Africa, and is currently included as one of the best practices promoted in the change management resources of the UNDP. Particularly notable was the practice of hiring people from the private sector and using their expertise to change the bureaucracy, respecting policies but getting rid of the habit of having little fiefdoms. This restructuring of procurement and contracting mechanisms was pivotal in facilitating the 2005 referendum and the 2006 elections.

Delivering in the Congo

After decades of misrule, civil war, and international conflict, the DRC has an extremely meager transportation system. The territory is divided both by natural barriers, and then by armed groups that even today continue to challenge government authority. Complicating matters further, no maintenance has been done in decades on existing infrastructure, and the proliferation of police, military, and paramilitary checkpoints has made the transport of goods throughout the country quite onerous. For example, one might think that an easy means of transportation could be the Congo River. However, the river has not been dredged in decades, and the scarce, low-depth transport system currently operating in it undergoes constant harassment from governmental and paramilitary checkpoints that further delay operations. Accordingly, the "1,000 kilometer trip between Kinshasa and Kisangani in the northeast should take 15 days . . . but with at least 20 checkpoints on the way, it takes almost twice that" (IRIN/OCHA 2006).

In terms of terrestrial transport, the situation does not improve much. According to most anecdotal accounts, there are just 400 kilometers of roads in good state (Huff-Rouselle 2007, 4) connecting Kinshasa with the Port of Matadi by the Atlantic Ocean, and then in southern Katanga. A more exhaustive survey, though, has found that "the actual roads network consists of 2,250 kilometers of paved roads; 15 thousand kilometers of unpaved roads; 43 thousand kilometers of tracks; 21 thousand kilometers of country

roads; and 90 thousand kilometers of footpaths" (UNJLC 2006, 1). Unfortunately, however, most of these roads have not been maintained since at least the early 1970s, and many have simply 'disappeared' in the Congolese jungle. For example, "National Road 9 is not operational and is not detectable by remote sensing methods;" simply put, the jungle has eaten up said national road (ibid). It is not uncommon to hear stories of cars and even trucks momentarily 'disappearing' too, under the sticky mud of those hard-to-find roads.

This situation has complicated UN operations in the Congo to a significant degree, and has forced MONUC, in particular, to deploy an impressive air force. As of 2006, MONUC, with over 100 planes, had the largest UN fleet in the world, and the largest fleet of any kind in Africa, even larger than that of South African Airways. Of course this has not been a cheap endeavor. Of MONUC's annual US$1.1 billion budget in 2005, for example, almost half went to aircraft maintenance and fuel (IRIN/OCHA 2006). A similar proportion was also expended in 2006. This lack of effective means for the transport of goods and services has represented a constant headache for the CO, and has increased costs phenomenally. DDR programs, electoral support, and the distribution of medical supplies through the Global Fund have all faced the same problem, and have devised innovative mechanisms for delivery.

The first recourse has been the utilization of the extensive MONUC system. Insofar as there is an airstrip and availability of MONUC airplanes, goods can be delivered at a reasonable cost. For example, the tight coordination between MONUC and the UNDP—perhaps the place where the integrated mission has been most effective—was fundamental for the delivery of elections materials, and to implement DDR in the eastern provinces. In many cases, though, the absence of airstrips made this collaboration impossible, and even when possible, the transport of said material from the airstrip to the final destination often required traveling significant distances, by unbearable country roads, and often by foot.

For those reasons, the UNDP was forced again to innovate, first to find ways to deliver on time as it increased its presences in the eastern provinces, and then as an alternative to the rigid mechanisms proposed by the MDRP. One such innovation was the Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM), which combined rapid procurement mechanisms and what can be called just-in-time delivery techniques. As part of the CO experimentation with DEX operations and fol-

lowing a fundamental increase in personnel and resources, the RRM was an attempt to develop procurement and delivery mechanisms able to expedite the different DDR operations it was fostering in the DRC (see Section 4).

Foremost among those experiments, the RRM was thought of and effectively worked as a means to facilitate the rapid establishment of DDR operations in the country. A DDR program sees the priorities of the moment constantly changing, as consequences of modifications in the political and security agendas. This in turn required a high level of flexibility and creativity, both to devise working demobilization mechanisms, and to take advantage of windows of opportunity that depend on the whim of military commanders, and the security environment in which they operate. As put in a review of the CO's DDR program, the problem can be summarized by answering the following questions:

> How to deal with spontaneous disarmament of hundreds of combatants when the establishment of the institutional framework for DDR has been put off again? What to do when the financial resources announced by donors are not yet available, or when the initial plan for transportation of demobilised soldiers has failed as a result of security conditions on the ground? Those are questions that the . . . RRM . . . confronts on a daily basis. Inspired by lessons learnt from other DDR programs, where the timely management of DDR urgencies and contingencies showed to be vital . . . RRM was set up as a financial and operational engine to support the resolution of emergencies that stem from the DDR process, which threaten, delay, or divert the evolution of the program (UNDP-DRC 2006c, 1).

At the operational level, the RRM has utilized a risk matrix to predict and deal with contingencies, and then applied a rapid disbursement system that delivers the goods necessary to deal with those contingencies within a range of three to five days. The program also relies in a pre-established network of service providers, in order to guarantee both stock availability and quality in the goods being delivered (UNDP 2006c, 30). Beyond DDR, this mechanism has also been used for security sector reform, whenever there was a need to facilitate the integration of ex-combatants into the new Congolese armed forces. As of today, RRM continues to play a significant role in funding community reintegration operations in the eastern provinces, and has been adopted as one of BCPR's best practices.

Another less dramatic but nevertheless important innovation was the adoption of a private sector partnership approach, whereby the UNDP would hire a private actor to deliver goods (and as this report reveals, money) throughout the Congolese territory. Given the limitations of an extremely thin banking system, for example, the payment of electoral officers for the referendum and 2006 elections, as well as the distribution of medical supplies by the Global Fund were outsourced to winning bidders from the private sector with quite successful results.

The electoral processes of 2005 and 2006 were massive operations that required a Herculean logistical effort and close collaboration between MONUC and the UNDP. Among the logistical challenges, there was a rather problematic and risky one: How to distribute the wages of electoral officials throughout a territory the size of the DRC, when beyond Kinshasa, there is no banking system to speak off? For the December 18, 2005 referendum alone, the APEC project needed to disburse approximately US$16,483,000 to the 40 thousand presidents of the electoral bureaus, 160 thousand electoral officers, and 33 thousand police officers. These funds were needed on the ground by December 5, for distribution to the operators between December 6 and 9, in 166 key population centers, only to be further distributed to the presidents of the electoral offices in over 40 thousand locations. As put at the time by Country Director Babacar Cisse, "this is the biggest ever operation the UN has been into in terms of direct payments. This can make or break the electoral process" (Cisse 2005). Because of the CO's entrepreneurship, the process did not collapse.

After having used the UNDP's personnel to carry these wages during previous, less onerous operations, it soon became clear that such an approach was not feasible. Once this was realized, the search began for a suitable partner to make these payments. The CO launched a tender for the referendum payments on October 14, 2005, published in the local media. By the October 25, 2005 deadline, a total of five offers were registered, but unfortunately, none fulfilled the geographical requirements of the operation. Beyond Kinshasa and a few key cities, these potential partners simply lacked the logistical capacity to operate on the scale required for payment of the electoral officials.

In a second round, following a call for proposals launched by the service center, a number of tenders were submitted but none were fruitful and conclusive. With time running short, the decision was taken, with headquarters'

approval, to proceed with direct negotiations and contracting with anyone having the credibility and financial and management capacities to support the payment of electoral operators throughout the country.

Finally, three providers were selected for this first operation: Caritas (a Catholic Church relief provider), MisterCash (a Congolese equivalent to Western Union) and Hewa Bora (a Congolese domestic airline). After Hewa Bora's withdrawal, the final contracts were US$ 5,716,813 for MisterCash and US$14,113,442 for Caritas. For the 2006 elections, only MisterCash remained as a provider, successfully distributing a total of US$51.5 million. By the end of the operation, not only had the UNDP fulfilled its objectives in the electoral arena, but also in so doing, had helped develop and fund the first truly countrywide money distribution system since Mobuto's heyday.

With different objectives, the CO's Global Fund took a similar private sector partnership approach for the procurement and distribution of drugs for its HIV/AIDS, malaria, and TB programs. In order to distribute the goods to the end user, the UNDP contracted out the entire supply chain, from procurement to delivery, while vertically integrating the whole operation. The main challenge was creating a comprehensive and tight delivery mechanism, including transporting tons of medical supplies and medicines into a country and then implementing the distribution of commodities to 130 facilities in widely separated destinations. By then there was also the need to secure procurement from many sources, and to coordinate and monitor product quality.

MissionPharma, a pharmaceutical firm with strong presence in the DRC, was awarded the contract at the end of 2005. Working with 60 pre-qualified suppliers in Asia, Europe, and the U.S., MissionPharma packed drug kits in India and Denmark to fill the orders from each end-user facility in the DRC. A track-and-trace system used bar coding linked to a computerized inventory system to follow every manufactured batch. In remarkable time, deliveries were made by air freight, except in Kinshasa and Bas Congo and some eastern areas accessible by truck. The multiplicity of entry points and the constant flow of goods through them, however, posed the further challenge of coordinating activities in dispersed locations in a country lacking a functional telecommunications system. This made it necessary to develop and train a host of local partners in order to monitor the arrival and distribution of these medical supplies.

The Global Fund program's main strength was the tight coordination of operations with a host of local and international NGOs. The combination of a vertically integrated operation with a network of delivering NGOs, together with what is now a tested business model and a well established logistical structure, lends itself to an easy transfer of these functions to government, once its democratically elected representatives assert control over the DRC territory.

Conclusion: On the Art of Building Strategic Partnerships

The UNDP has not just provided government with constant access to UNDP operations as a means to build capacity, but has done so in a quiet manner that allowed for the development of ownership by local authorities. Beyond this, however, the UNDP had to build strategic partnerships, both with other bilateral and multilateral donors, and with local NGOs and other civil society organizations. This dual approach to building strategic partnerships has allowed the UNDP to increase its operations in an exponential manner during the past three years. But most important, it has strengthened civil society, particularly in the eastern provinces. By fostering the creation of strategic partnerships with other bilateral and multilateral agencies, the UNDP has not only managed to fund its own projects and strategies, but helped strengthen governance and government capacity through it. As analyzed later on in this report, a growing fraction of the UNDP's operations is being funded through extra-budgetary (XB) contributions of this type.

Of particular import, this strategy has led to the formation of parallel partnerships between bilateral and multilateral agencies and the host of civil society organizations the UNDP and other partner agencies have nurtured over the last three to four years. Much of the behind the scenes capacity building has, by the UNDP's design, allowed the DRC government to become relatively independent of the UNDP support that used to be its only external source of advice and funding. Furthermore, the UNDP's interventions in the field have seeded the ground for deeper and more pluralistic relations between upper and lower echelon non-governmental agencies. While in the authors' view not always programmatically tight, this transmission- belt effect of the UNDP intervention has further promoted the thickening of civil society. As discussed in the conclusion, the report suggests that this dimension of the UNDP's activities should be further analyzed and systematized as the DRC moves, hopefully, toward a more conventional stage of development.

IV: DDR: Linking Security and Development

The launching pad for the new role that the CO began to assume in early 2003 was its disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) program. Worldwide, the UNDP had supported DDR since 1991 in more than 20 countries, in the context of both peacekeeping and non-peacekeeping operations (UNDP 2006c). While those previous interventions concentrated on the R component of DDR (reintegration), the CO assumed an implementing partner role in the full DDR cycle, thus playing a key coordinating role in the pacification of the country, and effectively shaping the design of the most basic state institutions of the DRC.

The proactive approach adopted by the CO enabled it not only to initiate the DDR process in one of the most affected war zones—the district of Ituri in the Oriental Province—but also to actively participate in the design of the national DDR program, the set up of the National Commission for Demobilization and Reintegration (CONADER), and the establishment of a new Congolese army. This required the UNDP's involvement in the full DDR cycle, and the forging of a strong linkage between DDR and security sector reform (SSR). Through these interventions, the UNDP's DDR program not only contributed to the reduction of armed violence in the most hard-hit war zones of the DRC, but also to the launching of community recovery activities in the country's most inhospitable areas.

For the CO, DDR was a vehicle for creating the security conditions that would later enable it to launch a broader development agenda once the conflict decreased. A key priority of the transition, DDR was seen as a tool to create the basis for security—including SSR—and as a means to start building the incipient institutions of the transition, such as CONADER. Moreover, when implemented in a manner conducive to the strengthening of civil society organization, the CO further assumed DDR could also be thought of as part of the development process itself. Insofar as DDR was implemented in a way that promoted capacity building and the thickening of civil society, many of the components the UNDP's broader development agenda would later require would now be in place. These were the premises upon which the CO operated, and they enabled it to gain a preeminent role in the DRC's pacification process.

Earning the Ear of a Multi-Headed Leviathan

The establishment of a transitional government in 2003 represented a first, fundamental step to ending an exceedingly violent civil war. The power sharing government structure established following the signing of the April 2, 2003 agreements in Sun City, while clumsy and inefficient on its face, gave the main actors in the Congolese arena a stake in the peace process that resulted in a relatively rapid de-escalation of the conflict. In spite of the political breakthrough represented by the establishment of the new transitional government, however, the challenges the DRC faced at the time seemed insurmountable. Specifically, the nascent Congolese authorities had to contend with four interrelated priorities.

First, the new transitional government needed to stop countless conflicts and reduce widespread weapons availability, particularly in Ituri, Katanga, and the Kivus. These were the districts that had most profoundly suffered the 'two wars.' Second, the transitional government had to deal with a critical humanitarian situation in communities devastated by armed conflict and its correlates. Third, it was necessary to promote the integration of combatants of various armed groups into a national army, under a unified high command. Finally, the government had to expedite the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of an estimated 150 thousand ex-combatants, excluding foreign forces—a gigantic endeavor with barely any precedent in the world. The transitional government seemed at the time to be too weak and compartmentalized to be able to deal with the many challenges the transition entailed.

Particularly daunting was that all these activities had to be carried out in a most inhospitable environment, with little or no means of transportation (see Section III), in a legal vacuum, and in the aftermath of a violent civil war. Furthermore, these interventions had to be financed by the resources provided by an economy that had failed to deliver positive growth rates during most of the previous 30 years, and where an overwhelming majority of the population was suffering from extreme poverty. The transitional government, compartmentalized among the different factions that had signed the Global and Inclusive Agreement, did not seem well suited to overcoming these limitations. And as in early 1998, there appeared to be no external actor, bilateral or multilateral, with the will and capacity to order and fund the enormous agenda of a government that did not seem up to the task.

Compounding the problem, the country was flooded with small and light arms. This added to a complex pattern of inter-ethnic and international conflict. It resulted in a continuous process of fragmentation and fusion between armed groups operating on the ground, which in turn made it extremely difficult to come to any sustainable negotiation strategy. Simply put, the quantity and substance of the actors that needed to be brought to the bargaining table were in a constant process of transformation, reality promptly rendering obsolete any agreement, particularly in the eastern half of the country. The 1+4 formula of the national transitional government (one president and four vice presidents representing previously warring factions) was exponentially replicated at the provincial and district level. A typical development practitioner would have no doubt given up this seemingly impossible mission. Yet giving up would have meant a continuation of a civil war that could further destabilize the situation in the region.

Moreover, even as late as early 2003, MONUC lacked the mandate to immediately support the transitional government in these four critical areas of interest. Its mandate was geared to stopping conflict among the national armies that had fought the 'second war.' Yet, as discussed in Section I, this task was in turn dependent on the actual pacification of the eastern provinces. Only that would put an end to the conflict in which the DRC, Rwandan, and Ugandan governments had been embroiled since at least 1994. As put by Gonzalez and Demetriou, "the current MONUC mandate for DDRRR (established by Security Council Resolution 1376) limits its responsibility to the foreign armed groups based in the DRC, as per Annex A, Chapter 9.1 of the Lusaka Ceasefire Accords" (Gonzalez and Demetriou 2002, 1). As late as February 2003, UN headquarters was still maintaining "the main operational activity of [MONUC] . . . is firmly based on disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement, or reintegration" (UN 2003, 5).

This approach curtailed MONUC operations in DDR, thus severely limiting the effectiveness of the peace mission, at a time when DDR was urgently needed both for the DRC's internal pacification and for the successful implementation of DDRRR. Nevertheless, the peacekeeping mission was not able to get a workable DDR mandate until July 2003, by Security Council Resolution 1493. Until then, if it had not been for the UNDP, the transitional government would have been left without international support at a crucial moment.

It was in this context that the UNDP office in the DRC assumed a proactive role that departed from its previous, cautious approach. After the change management exercises discussed in Section II, the UNDP was well situated to shape the agenda of a transitional government that, despite its demonstrated will to end the conflict, had close to zero credibility in the eyes of most multilateral agencies. According to one of the international community's most authoritative sources of information, for example, the transitional government was "a clumsy apparatus, not only because its decisions are disputed by the eight composantes of the Sun City Agreement, but also because it created a sprawling bureaucracy. The president shares the espace présidentielle with four vice presidents, 36 ministries . . . and 500 deputies and 120 senators . . . charged with drawing up and passing legislation in the transitional parliament" (International Crisis Group 2005, 6).

Rejecting this view, and in spite of its initially low level of operations, the UNDP intervened in a most effective manner, infusing its long-term development goals into the planning and operations of a government that was plagued by mistrust among its component parties. In turn, the active presence of a neutral actor capable of conjugating short- and long-term objectives facilitated the acceptance of the transition process by the different Congolese factions. This was particularly so as the UNDP was able to integrate other donors and multilateral agencies into this frame.

To explain the CO's ability to shape the DDR process and the transformation of a relatively low profile, small-scale operations institution, into one of the determining factors in the DRC's relative pacification, it is important to cite three key factors: presence, neutrality, and expertise. As analyzed in the introduction, unlike other major bilateral or multilateral organizations, the UNDP had an ongoing presence in the DRC and was perceived as a neutral actor by all relevant parties to the conflict. The CO went to great lengths to maintain neutrality.[10]

Owing to the change management exercises of late 2002, as well, the CO now had appropriate personnel, office structure and attitude to tackle the issues at hand.[11] In terms of expertise, in particular, the CO had the support of BCPR, which helped it set up the post-conflict unit, the first of its kind in Africa (UNDP-DRC 2003). Thanks to this support, the CO gained a technical and institutional reputation in DDR, while at the same time infusing its

long-term development agenda in an area of intervention where the UNDP had barely been able to intervene before.

For the CO, DDR was essential for establishing the conditions for political and socioeconomic development over the long run. The CO saw its engagement in DDR as the most effective way to address the complex relation between security and development, and interpreted that doing so would eventually allow it to carry out UNDP's 'regular' post-conflict programs, with the ground having been laid by previous intervention. In the CO's view, without embedding the UNDP's development agenda in the upcoming DDR exercises, it was unlikely that the outcome would have been conducive to development in the long run.

In particular, the CO's view was that a DDR program should be centered upon its R component, for only by providing a long-term horizon to would-be ex-combatants could demobilization and disarmament be sustainable. It is worth highlighting that aspects of the lessons outlined here have been captured in recent UNDP reports and best practices studies, and are now part of the UNDP corporate approach to DDR and post-conflict recovery worldwide (UNDP 2006c).

DDR: Launching the UNDP in the DRC

When Resident Representative Herbert McLeod arrived in mid-2002, he found only one person managing post-conflict activities. Recognizing both limitations in personnel and the windows of opportunity the CO was not taking advantage of, McLeod turned to the UNDP's nascent Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) so as to identify entry points for the UNDP to position itself in the post-conflict transition, and to define a post-conflict intervention strategy. Addressing McLeod's concerns, BCPR sent Gustavo Gonzalez, ex-senior DDR advisor in the DRC, on mission in August 2002. This resulted in the development of an ambitious BCPR Technical Assistance Project (ZAI/03/M02) that helped the CO define and specify its post-conflict strategy in the country, identifying DDR as the entry point for that strategy.

What this BCPR mission found striking was that unlike other peace processes in the region, in the DRC the UN peacekeeping mission had not foreseen a mandate for the DDR of domestic Congolese forces; rather, they were charged with the DDRRR of foreign combatants operating in Congolese territory, which handicapped its operations. The BCPR mission also found that in the government there was a proliferation of different institutions that were oriented toward DDR. These were BUNADER, a small pilot institution financed by the World Bank and the UNICEF to deal with child soldiers in late 2001, and the High Commission for Reinsertion. Parallel to these, there were vaguely similar institutions in zones controlled by rebel militia in the east and north of the country, creating what observers called 'institutional cacophony' at the time (Gonzalez and Demetriou 2002). Of utmost importance, the findings of this mission were fundamental in making the international community realize that DDRRR was not possible without effective DDR.

In this context, the CO decided to put DDR as a strategic first step in the post-conflict transition. Past experience suggested that once peace accords were signed, the security agenda would become a priority. DDR would then be an inevitable step toward being able to talk about an effective ceasefire, the formation of an effective police force, and the consequent freedom of movement of persons and goods. Moreover, DDR was both necessary and functional for a restructuring of the army, which was the greatest potential source of destabilization and insecurity in the country. As put by the UNDP in its Practice Note on DDR, Security Sector Reform (SSR), and DDR "efforts need to be timed carefully in order to complement each other. Key SSR decisions can impact on DDR, for example the size of the new army and other security forces or the extent of new recruitment, both of which may determine the number of ex-combatants that will participate in a DDR process" (UNDP 2006c, 58).

From an institutional standpoint, getting into DDR offered the CO an opportunity to quickly raise its profile in the country, to create alliances with the emerging government, to get donor attention, and in sum, to become a mandatory partner at the time of planning for development in the long run. In the CO's view, its only real competitor for this position, in early 2003, was the World Bank (WB), but having returned to DRC only in late 2001, this institution was hardlyon the ground. For example, the CO began to build the political and operational conditions for DDR in late 2002, while at the

same time the WB was in the process of launching its highly ambitious MDRP regional program. This mega-program, involving 11 donors, took much time defining its modalities of implementation and who the MDRP's 'entry point' would be in a transitional country. In other words, who would have the responsibility of speaking with the government on behalf of the MDRP? This choice was particularly problematic in the DRC, because there was no overwhelmingly dominant bilateral actor, or a bilateral actor locally perceived as 'neutral'. And at the time, the WB lacked institutional teeth in the country.

In contrast, the UNDP had a long, continuous presence in the country, and by late 2002 was poised to fully exploit its strategic position. While the WB at the time was in fact-finding mode, and waiting for the 'right conditions,' the CO was ready to hit the ground running, offering both know-how and operational capacity to a transitional government that was well aware that waiting would only allow for a repetition of what happened in early 1998: the rapid decay of governmental authority and the return to civil war. Well before the Lusaka Agreements were signed, "UNDP launched a multi-partners' mission to meet all the main political and military representatives of the armed opposition. Besides, regular contacts were held with the Kinshasa government . . . highlighting the importance of expediting discussions on legal dimensions related to the future national DDR program" (UNDP-DRC 2006c, 2).

In this context, President Kabila officially requested the UNDP to take the lead for DDR in October 2002. The MDRP officially accepted this request in February 2003, mainly due to the technical and institutional protagonism the UNDP had gained at that time, and to Kabila's strong support for the candidacy. That this was done in spite of the important programmatic differences between the UNDP's and MDRP's visions for DDR that is analyzed below, is testimony to the strategic position the CO had been able to attain in a relatively short period of time. Internationally, this was the first time the UNDP was the lead DDR agency in a country, since this function had almost always been taken by the peacekeeping operation.[12]

Following the establishment of the transitional government in June 2003, and the full deployment of MONUC troops in the second half of that year, the CO began to progressively expand the leading institutional role it had gained in the DDR process. Through its involvement in DDR, UNDP found an

entry point to progressively move into other areas, including support for the internally displaced persons (IDPs), community recovery, governance, and Security Sector Reform (SSR). In particular, the CO was in charge of setting up the Technical Committee for the Planning and Coordination of DDR, in what was the first CO institutional investment in terms of capacity building in DDR.

The CTPC/DDR was designed on the basis of lessons learned from previous DDR experiences around the world and was a clear example of the 'scaling up' approach advocated by the CO. Through its involvement in setting up the CTPC/ DDR, the CO began to also shape the pace of SSR and a national program for DDR (PNDDR), drafting the decrees that created said institutions, and defining the Joint Operational Plan, an operations manual for DDR and army integration. All these activities received full technical support from the BCPR.

During this period, called the Interim Phase, the CO thus exercised great influence on the post conflict transition, allowing it to promote an effective integration of top-down capacity building operations, with the development of bottom-up activities at the grassroots level, as described below. Moreover, during this period the CO was able to shape the DRC's most basic institutions, as the DDR agenda proposed by the UNDP included the synchronization of DDR and SSR activities, the creation of the Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC, in its French acronym), and the establishment of a national police force. This of course required a growing coordination of activities with MONUC, well before the integration of the UN mission in DRC was formally sanctioned.

Nevertheless, as the transition advanced and both the government and the MDRP gained institutional muscle in the DRC, the differences of criteria between the CO and the WB began to weigh on the leadership UNDP was exercising. These differences of criteria generated a number of frictions, particularly since the UNDP, as the lead DDR agency, was able to incorporate its long-term development agenda into the national DDR program (PNDDR). Although the MDRP's 11 donors and the WB initially accepted this role, they put significant pressure on the UNDP, as the latter began to shape the DDR process in directions that departed from their preferred models.

First and foremost, the MDRP position at the beginning of the transition period was to put all DDR operations in standby until a national DDR system was established, including both an institutional structure in charge of operations, and a clear assessment of the number of combatants to demobilize. As stated in the introduction of this report, before being eligible for funds, a failed state such as DRC at the time had to (1) prepare a national demobilization and reintegration program; (2) establish a suitable institutional structure; (3) prepare "a letter of policy . . . outlin[ing] . . . commitments to the regional peace process, demobilization, reintegration, and fiscal plans for social expenditure;" and (4) "provide assurances and monitoring measures to ensure consistency with environmental and social safeguards" (2002).

While sensible, the CO thought that these expectations were unrealistic and that they would seriously compromise the pace of the transition, proposing instead a more agile, incremental, and inclusive approach to DDR. The need to provide immediate solutions to the problems of child soldiers and war disabled, and the inclusion of internally displaced people and the extended family of the demobilized into the DDR scheme, for example, could be pursued while more encompassing measures were negotiated. Similarly, sensitization operations could be started without waiting for the signing of a final grand document. Above all, the CO understood that the decentralized nature of conflict in most of the DRC required, in turn, a more flexible approach than the one promoted by the MDRP. For the CO, only by dealing with these different conflicts in terms agreeable to each of them could the situation be sufficiently stabilized to allow for the effective establishment of a national government. Once again, scaling up was a mantra in the CO strategy.

Second, and related to this, the heavy R component of the UNDP's DDR model contrasted with the MDRP emphasis on DD.[13] For the CO, the DD component was to be as transitory as possible, minimizing costs for identification and disarmament, while promoting a rapid reintegration to the community. This, however, represented a short-term expansion of both the universe of beneficiaries that the MDRP seemed unwilling to assume and of the actors necessary to carry out a more ambitious program.

Furthermore, the UNDP advocated for a community reintegration approach that to some extent challenged the MDRP view of DDR as an individual entitlement to ex-combatants. Likewise, while the MDRP saw NGOs and

civil society in general as sub-contractors who could effectively provide specific services, the CO saw partnerships with diverse civil society organizations as an opportunity to strengthen civil society. The subcontracting of NGOs for the provision of services was thus understood by the UNDP both as an efficient delivery mechanism and as a means to give a voice to actors that had little before. This was another manifestation of the CO's emphasis on the R component of DDR.

In any case, the CO remained the lead agency in DDR until April 2004, when it transferred the lead role to the government's newly created CONADER. With MDRP funding, CONADER assumed full control of the DD component of DDR, to the exclusion of other traditional partners (like the UNDP and MONUC) while the R component, relatively downplayed, was left open to other international partners, including the UNDP. Unfortunately, this led to some stagnation of DDR initiatives.

By early 2007, a DDR process that started with a relative buzz of activity that allowed for the pacification and eventual democratization of the country was virtually stalled. First, CONADER began to face serious financial problems, amidst allegations of corruption, and with little accomplished on reintegration. Second, MDRP donors continued to discuss the eligibility of remaining armed groups to join the PNDDR, a 'methodological' discussion that, in the authors' view, seems to sidestep the main issue: without the demobilization and reintegration of armed groups (whatever their credentials) in eastern DRC, peace continues to be at peril.

Ituri: Rapid Response Mechanism and Community Recovery

By early 2003, the most daunting problem facing the new transitional government was how to deal with the pervasive conflict in the eastern provinces, specifically in the Ituri district, the Kivus, and Katanga. There, rebel groups (including dissident members of former rebel movements in government, Rwandan-backed Tutsi rebels, Hutu militias, Ugandan revolutionary troops, and different ethnic-based Congolese militia) continued to fight the government and rival groups. The lack of effective government authority and the illegal exploitation of natural resources overlapped with ethnic conflicts over land and heavy cross-border influence to generate a dramatic humanitarian crisis. This perennial state of conflict was particularly (and increasingly)

strong in the northeastern Ituri region, where inter-ethnic conflict over land and mineral wealth between the Lendu and Hema ethnic groups were causing constant violence, including the Bunia crisis of 2002–2003.

There was more at stake than humanitarian reasons and inter-ethnic politics, though. There was also a geopolitical component resulting from the internationalization of the Congolese conflict during the 'second war.' Both the pacification of the country and the stabilization of the Great Lakes Area required stabilization in Ituri, the Kivus, and Katanga, because conflict there could easily escalate into international warfare, thus compromising the whole peace process. Rumors about a possible Rwandan invasion of the Kivus to control the activities of the Hutu Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), in late 2004, were a clear example of this problem. Analyzing these events, the International Crisis Group sustained at the time that "history may be repeating itself in recent weeks as a Rwandan incursion stirs fears of a third catastrophe [on top of the previous 'two wars']. . . . There is uncertainty about what is actually happening on the ground in the isolated and rugged border terrain—including whether the Rwandans are holding territory. . . . At worst it [this unspecified crisis] could cause the Great Lakes region to go up in flames again" (International Crisis Group 2004, 1).

For this reason, intervening in these regions was (and continues to be) necessary. Yet to operate there also meant assuming the highest risks, both in terms of commission and omission. Most critiques of MONUC, for example, were founded on more or less real actions and inactions in the continuous crises that kept arising out of the Kivus, Katanga, and Ituri between 2003 and 2006. Nevertheless, both MONUC and the UNDP had the courage to step in to stop the senseless carnage, at great personal and institutional risk. As Ross Mountain, deputy-special representative of the secretary-general and UNDP resident representative in the DRC put it, "the Congolese people deserved a break, and we were...[both] capable of providing support . . . and willing to put our neck in the line for that break to become a reality."[14] In the authors' view, it is impossible to explain the relative pacification of the DRC (fragile as it is) without accounting for UN actions in these troubled areas.

The situation in Ituri was particularly problematic due to the multiple sources of conflict in the region. Originally only laterally related to the war in the rest of the DRC, the conflict in Ituri was based on a historical conflict between the Hema and Lendu ethnicities, and the way in which this conflict

49

was utilized by Ugandan and other Congolese factions during the 'second war.' Partly as a result of the remoteness of this region, this conflict grew in intensity as the international community focused on the peace negotiations in other regions of the Congo.

The turning point was 2002 when inter-ethnic conflict resulted in thousands of deaths across the Ituri region (Human Rights Watch 2003). Far from being under the control of the transitional government that was then being formed, Ituri grew increasingly controlled and functionally partitioned by different armed groups who were not part of the peace process initiated by the December 2002 Pretoria agreements, and therefore had little or no participation in the transitional government.

While loosely connected (if only in name in many cases) to other national warring coalitions in the DRC, these local groups were largely self-financed, as they preyed on civilians, controlling most mining operations in the Ituri, including gold, and effectively taxing transportation and other day-to-day operations. These forces resisted political control from Kinshasa and Bunia, or from Kampala or Kigali, for that matter, and engaged in some or the most heinous violations of human rights Human Rights Watch 2003). By early 2003, MONUC was clearly overwhelmed by the situation with a lack of proper mandate and insufficient personnel.

This became painfully evident in the Lendu-Hema micro-war over Bunia in May 2003, when given MONUC's inoperability, "a French-led Interim Emergency Multinational Force (IEMF) . . . [was] deployed to restore peace and order in the administrative centre—Bunia—and facilitate humanitarian relief. However, this intervention . . . is on the face of it totally insufficient" (ICG 2003, 1). A more potent intervention was needed in the Ituri not just for Ituri's sake, but also to build a template for future interventions in the Kivus and Katanga. Moreover, it was necessary to incorporate into the agenda a developmental approach that would not be lost in analysis that exclusively highlighted the military and humanitarian components of the conflict. It was precisely this niche that the CO was seeking to fill when it took charge of the Ituri operation.

Immediately after Uganda's final withdrawal from the region in May 2003, and following the massive conflicts that grew in the consequent power vacuum, the Security Council authorized an Interim Emergency Multinational

Force for Ituri with a Chapter VII mandate. With a more powerful MONUC presence, then, and the absence of (direct) foreign intervention, the CO managed to finally bring the five most representative military groups in Ituri to the bargaining table. With RRM funding and forceful advice from the CO, these factions finally signed an Act of Engagement, as a first attempt to end the conflict, which eventually led to the conformation of the Ituri Interim Administration (IIA).

Acting on this agreement, in July 2003, the UN Security Council approved the creation of a MONUC Ituri Brigade, and approved an expansion of MONUC troops that more than tripled its national presence, from around three thousand to almost 10 thousand by the end of 2003. More importantly, the UN Security Council finally extended MONUC's mandate to allow for DDR, thus giving teeth to the programs the CO was beginning to implement in the east. It is in this context that the CO commenced its Ituri operation in January 2004, through an ad hoc pilot program called 'Disarmament and Community Reinsertion.' This was the country's first attempt to effectively act on the peace agreements, and was also the first example of an integrated mission in the DRC.

A key element of the success of UNDP's DDR operation in Ituri was the cooperation and complementarity with a MONUC that now was involved in the coordination of the whole DDR process.[15] As during the elections discussed later in this report, MONUC assumed responsibility for the most bulky logistical operations, while the UNDP concentrated on administration and coordination, and on the delivery of goods in situations where rapid action was of utmost need. As discussed in Section II, besides security, MONUC provided trucks, tanks, and planes, while the CO managed and setup the demobilization camps. Furthermore, the CO engaged in a number of Congolese communities that had to be prepared for demobilization, first, and then for the reintegration of irregular armed forces that had committed the most heinous human right violations in the same communities where they had to be reintegrated. It was the CO that made sure that these negotiations took place and that the ensuing agreements were fulfilled.

As analyzed in Section II, to operationalize and orchestrate highly time-sensitive DDR activities in the east, the CO created a new Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM). Originally funded by France (the MDRP only reluctantly provided funds after RRM was already a functioning reality), this

mechanism was inspired by lessons learned from other DDR programs in Africa, where the timely management of DDR urgencies and contingencies proved to be vital to ensure the consistency and integrity of the national program. The RRM was set up as a financial and operational engine to support the resolution of emergencies that stemmed from the DDR process. It became the mechanism of choice to accomplish rapid demobilization, even after the UNDP ceased to be lead agency for DDR. Without UNDP's RRM, none of the essential activities in Ituri could have been carried out.

Parallel to traditional DD operations, the CO also promoted a number of community recovery activities that stood up in sharp contrast with the more DD-oriented operations the CONADER began to implement throughout the country later on in 2004. In particular the CO immediately expanded its Community Recovery Program (COMREC) coverage to the area, and started a joint UNOPS/UNDP project aimed to reinforce inter-ethnic dialogue through community recovery initiatives (Samset and Madore 2006). Through these programs, the UNDP also ensured that all stakeholders were on board and that their voices were represented. This not only allowed for a high degree of coordination in the activities promoted by the UNDP, but nurtured the development of a voice in actors that had none before UNDP intervention.

For that reason, the CO made it a regular practice to engage local authorities and communities in making decisions, so communities could accept the return of ex-combatants and exercise their voice before the return. This required negotiation for the acceptance of returning troops, on the one hand, and the facilitation of mechanisms for reinsertion in villages that had been decimated by the 'two wars.' Part of the relative success of the Ituri operation lies precisely in the constant feedback generated by this inclusive approach to DDR.

Nevertheless, in tune with its emphasis on capacity building, the CO has continuously (but unsuccessfully so far) tried to find a solution to what it thought was the main culprit for continuous conflict in the Ituri: the "lack of political engagement on the part of the national government. . . . While the district has the most fully trained and equipped integrated Congolese Brigade and the support of the largest MONUC deployment in the country, there has been minimal investment in the administrative authorities and the corresponding technical services to enable them to resume their functions" (UNDP-DRC 2006b, 7). Arguably, the CO's efforts to bolster a civil society

destroyed by years of war may eventually lead to improvements in future government responsibility, in a place where government is something still to be seen.

By July 2005 "the demobilization process was completed in Ituri with considerable success. In fact, by the end of the year, only two major pockets of militia remained in Irumu and Djugu" (UNDP-DRC 2006b, 9). At the time, a total of 14,678 ex-combatants, including 4,198 child soldiers were demobilized (Gonzalez 2005, 10). And of those an estimated 10 to 11 thousand were in the process of being reintegrated into their communities by early 2006 (UNDP-DRC 2006b, 22). By means of comparison, by December 2005, the MDRP-funded CONADER program had demobilized 35,869 ex-combatants and reinserted or reintegrated 31,849 (MDRP 2006, 4). These last numbers include those demobilized and reintegrated in Ituri, since beginning in June 2005, all Ituri ex-combatants were transferred to CONADER's jurisdiction (Gonzalez 2005, 10).

Beyond these rough numbers, the Ituri operation also had strong institutional and programmatic impacts. First, the Ituri operation succeeded in allowing for the establishment of transitional authorities, the arrival of the first integrated FARDC brigade, the collection of a significant number of weapons, and the initiation of community recovery activities. Second, most of its personnel were later absorbed by the PNDDR, providing trained and well-seasoned human capital to a program in dire need of it. Likewise, its disarmament and demobilization procedures were adopted by the national program, including the adoption of a biometric registry that is today the national program's only reliable measure of control. Last but not least, the Disarmament and Community Recovery sensitization modules were replicated in the PNDDR. Even though the national DDR program drifted away from UNDP control from mid-2004 onwards, the CO continued to provide significant input through these institutional legacies, particularly in the area of community recovery.

It is worth noting, though, that beginning in late 2005, the CO began to detect an "increasing tendency of demobilized combatants to remobilize as militia fighters for the Mouvement Revolutionaire du Congo (MRC), a collection of former members of militia movements officially created in 2005, which has refused to surrender [its arms]. . . . The formation of MRC may be interpreted as a reaction to the failure of the Transitional Government to

offer viable reintegration alternatives to former combatants" (Ituri Plan 7). Furthermore, while the introduction of the FARDC in the area was initially welcomed by the population, poor training and widespread corruption have resulted in a dramatic reversion of this situation. In particular, "numerous incidents . . . have demonstrated that . . . the lack of a unified vision resulting in frequent breakdowns in discipline, documented accusations of human rights violations and extortions against the population, coupled with non-payment of salaries, insufficient training and logistical support persist and undermine the effectiveness of the FARDC brigades stationed in Ituri. Equally problematic are the absence of housing for military staff and their families and the lack of provisions for soldier's dependents" (UNDP-DRC 2006b, 31–32). It is still to be seen if a workable solution can be found to this partial re-arming, and what role the UNDP will play in carrying out such a solution.

Conclusion: Creating and Supporting DDR Institutions

In assuming the leadership of DDR in the DRC in 2003, the CO facilitated and gradually integrated itself into the country's vast reconstruction process. Appointed as a lead agency for DDR by the transitional government, the CO played a coordinating role during the preparation and launching of the national DDR program, the so-called 'interim phase,' effectively assuming control of an area that in previous international experiences fell to the peace mission (the equivalents of MONUC). As lead agency, the UNDP launched the national DDR institutions, promoting an incremental approach that strategically allowed the UNDP and its national counterparts to lay the groundwork for a national program, while taking advantage of opportunities as they arose in the peace process. For the CO, the conflict-post-conflict continuum was not linear but rather a winding spiral whereby the UNDP's flexible approach was to address issues as they came up rather than expecting, let alone imposing, a set order on them.

In theory, optimal DDR activities should follow the adoption of a national program, with an established institution to implement them, and written governmental commitments specifying how many combatants are to be demobilized in a given timeframe. This was the position taken by the MDRP, for example, when it manifested its concern for the "possible further implications of 'ad hoc' reintegration packages and the absence of an appropriate

framework for the formulation and dissemination of messages in regard to reintegration assistance. The mission was concerned at the mention by government and some partners of allowances, training, micro-projects, income generating activities for ex-combatants in the absence of a fully developed national program, reintegration strategy/program, socio-economic profiling, and related national policies" (MDRP 2003, 49). These concerns about the programs the UNDP was carrying out in the Ituri and other eastern provinces were voiced again in the MDRP's joint supervision report of October 10–28, 2004, and often resulted in delays that the entrepreneurship of UNDP officials nevertheless managed to overcome.

However, as the CO recognized, it does not make much sense to wait years for these institutional conditions to be in place before addressing the obvious need to demobilize child soldiers and the war disabled, for example. Nor does one have to wait for the establishment of a national program to start preliminary activities such as the sensitization of the actors in the conflict in order for them to understand what DDR means, or the initiation of campaigns to foster gradual consensus-building among them.

With its development focus, the CO sought not to perpetuate institutions like the PNDDR, or categories like the 'demobilized soldier.' Rather, in first leading and then supporting the DDR process, the CO tried to contextualize it as a development activity, carrying out socioeconomic reintegration among those broadly affected by conflict, and supporting the reconstruction, national reconciliation, and stability necessary for development. To accomplish this, the CO prioritized national capacity building and partnership, while coordinating interagency support based on a participatory mapping of the government's needs.

As shown throughout this report, national ownership has been a constant feature of the CO's operations in the DRC. To transfer responsibilities to government institutions not ready (other than on paper) to tackle those responsibilities is not capacity building, however, but an invitation to graft and, potentially, disaster. CONADER's three years of continuous but still unfinished DD operations serves as a prime example.

Despite the CO initial success with its decentralized and flexible approach in the Ituri district, , a more structured and hierarchical MDRP funded DDR model prevailed. The original Joint Operations Plan, drafted by the UNDP

for the CTPC was modified, adopting a more top-heavy outlook under the CONADER. This included the creation of quasi-permanent disarmament points, orientation centers, and *brassage* centers[16] that required a complex operational architecture in a geographically large country in which communications were patchy, roads inexistent, and where armed groups lacked internal cohesion, and the peace mission's mandate was unclear on DDR.

Contrary to previous experiences in the region, in fact, the MDRP model made 'DD' operations fall under the government's sole responsibility, without any room for other traditional DDR partners, including MONUC and the UNDP, and with little investment in the R component. Strikingly, 75 percent of CONADER's budget was designated by MDRP to be for DD activities, leaving the R grossly under-funded. The distance between the CO's community-centered model and the one implemented by the CONADER has only increased over time.

That said, however, the imprint of the CO has continued to shape the DDR process, even when it was not in charge of the national program. Constantly behind the scenes, the UNDP remained a high-profile actor, informing the government about the necessary steps that the process of pacification required, while providing it with elements to better negotiate with other international partners. The capacity building exercise implicit in this constant, quiet dialogue in turn facilitated the generation of an environment in which win-win agreements could be concluded between the government and rebel forces. Whether openly involved or not, the UNDP allowed all actors to perceive that there was always an option to confrontation, while giving the losers of the pacification process options for exit that let them save face, and many times life.

At publication date, the CO's role in DDR may soon change, once again, as the democratically elected Kabila administration seems keen to get the UNDP to be more involved in the eastern provinces. If the new government is to succeed in its bid to bring the UNDP back into the driver's seat of its DDR program, though, it will first have to recognize that the DD process has taken more time than expected, and that the reintegration process needs to be restarted, in order to take care of various waves of disgruntled demobilized soldiers that are now rearming. This of course would mean readopting the community recovery approach to DDR that the CO developed with BCPR's support in the Ituri region, thus extending assistance to the local

communities receiving former combatants, and generating livelihoods for those ex-combatants (and their families) who are inclined to join the FARDC.

Moreover, a reintroduction of the UNDP into the national DDR program would also require the definition of a more reasonable support package than the one the CONADER had previously been willing to concede with MDRP funding. For the CO, for instance, "the per capita cost agreed between the government and the MDRP amounts to US$300–450 . . . is significantly lower compared to other per capita allocations in the [Sub-Saharan] region. Considering the logistical constraints of a country as large as the DRC and the current . . . cost of living . . . it is critical that the per capita allocations be reviewed upwards" (UNDP-DRC 2006c, 5). In its initiatives in support of reintegration, the CO had budgeted an average per capita cost of US$600, an amount comparable to that spent in other DDR operations in Sub-Saharan Africa.

This conflict over budgeting has profound human and sustainability implications. As the CO further complained, "contrary to lessons learnt from DDR experiences worldwide, in the DRC dependents of ex-combatants are not considered beneficiaries during the encampment process, for budgetary reasons. During this process, dependents are not benefiting from . . . temporary shelter, food, and drinkable water. . . . [T]his situation is generating humanitarian crisis at the borders of the encampments where thousands of dependents (women and children) wait for the demobilization of the spouse in deplorable living conditions" (UNDP-DRC 2006c, 5).

These positions are programmatically shared by UNDP, for it is now understood that

> To achieve the security objectives of a DDR program, support should be given to achieve full initial socio-economic reintegration of ex-combatants. However, in the context of longer-term reintegration, a balance must be struck between supporting ex-combatants' specific needs and the needs of the wider community in order to prevent resentment. Emphasis should be placed on moving quickly from ex-combatant-specific programs to community-based and national development programs (UNDP 2006c, 5).

That a return to the CO's DDR model in the DRC is being discussed at all, speaks to the success of its role as DDR lead agency in 2003–2004. The CO's DDR program was only a fraction of what the country office more broadly accomplished across the DRC. However, it is impossible to appraise what the UNDP has achieved in the Congo without taking into special account what it achieved in Ituri, and the way in which its innovations in DDR modified the profile of the agency, and probably the country itself.

V: Conclusion: Challenging a Dominant Development Paradigm

The UNDP in the DRC challenged and surmounted the dominant development paradigm of the period. UNDP effectively overcame the assumption that there was a 'continuum' between 'crisis and development' or 'relief and development.' On the contrary, UNDP professionals assumed that there was a highly complex coexistence between both settings, and sought to build on that coexistence to meet the needs of the affected population.

The UNDP strategic support and interventions, their scope and innovative character, deserve recognition and appraisal for what has been accomplished in the DRC. Further, it is important to understand the means and methods that might be employed for altering the future in other cases where the state has failed under the weight of poverty and the brutality of civil war. UNDP's low visibility in the DRC, owing to a preference to operate under other institutional radar, has facilitated acceptance and national ownership of the resulting procedures and outcomes by the Congolese authorities. However, this has left many UNDP achievements unpublicized, underappreciated, and unavailable to the larger development operational and research community. In some measure, this report aims to correct these lacunae so the world can draw on the lessons of the UNDP in the DRC.

This report demonstrates how the UNDP helped close the gap between post-conflict recovery and stabilization in the DRC. UNDP acted as a facilitator of development. It embedded itself in most areas of government, being high profile where strategically valuable, while consistently assuming low visibility in supporting the design, establishment, and strengthening of the DRC's current democratic institutions. The UNDP management and staff designed and implemented programs and procedures that were effective, innovative,

and extensive in scope. They included collaboration with government and civil society transferable to other post-conflict contexts, with notable innovations in operations, demobilization, disarmament, reintegration, governance, and the rule of law. Leading these innovations was a team of managers with a vision that aligned human and institutional needs in the DRC with the Millennium Development Goals.

With operations as an integral part of this vision, the UNDP succeeded in transforming this side of the equation into support for programs. In many development and humanitarian organizations, it can be a hassle or at the very least time consuming for programs to hire staff, procure materials, finalize contracts, or get payments made. Setting the tone by creating a service center, logistics, procurement, human resources, and the legal department created a service-oriented culture that facilitated the programs side.

While the impact of the UNDP's programs might be more visible than the operations, the innovations in operations as discussed in this report are what enabled programs to succeed. Indeed, they are one of the most striking aspects of the UNDP's work in the DRC. Aside from the service center concept itself, there was for example, the creation of the Rapid Response Mechanism, which enabled the UNDP to respond to spontaneous demobilizations and get biometric kits in time for elections registration. The UNDP also successfully partnered with the private sector to reliably distribute cash to thousands of election officials in remote and disparate locations, and efficiently take over the delivery chain for the Global Fund's medical supplies nationwide.

The UNDP strategically developed a new DDR approach as an entry point to development *and* as a component of the development process itself. Whereas in other parts of the world, the UNDP had limited itself to the R of DDR, in the DRC the CO operated in the whole process, transforming a conventional DD operation into an exercise of community reconstruction. Laying the groundwork for a leadership role while the peace process was still being negotiated, it crafted and then seized the opportunity to function as a lead agency at the request of the government. This was noticeable in the CO negotiations with the then warring factions, as the Resident Coordinator (RC) and his advisers met rebel leaders in their strongholds to explain the importance and implications of the DDR process. This proactive approach enabled the CO not only to lead the DDR process in one of the most affected war zones—the district of Ituri in the Oriental Province—but also to actively

participate in the design of the National Commission for Demobilization and Reintegration (CONADER) and the building of a new Congolese army.

Through these interventions, the UNDP's DDR program contributed to the reduction of armed violence in the most hard-hit war zones of the DRC. Equally, it contributed to the demilitarization of a country fragmented by the proliferation of armed groups that had resisted the establishment of any form of national authority. The UNDP's modus operandi in the Congo, particularly in the eastern regions, fostered the growth of civil society in the most inhospitable areas of the world. This will be among the lasting legacies of the UNDP's operations in the DRC.

Institutions that citizens accept as legitimately authoritative are now in place. This was remarkably achieved through two specific law and governance innovations. The UNDP was a core catalyst for the successful conclusion of one of the most complex and vast post-conflict election operations conducted. The UNDP is that rare development agency that can lay claim to being key to achieving a popularly ratified new constitution, to the election of leaders at every level of a nascent government, the adoption of legal codes including a constitution, and helping establish a new republic prepared to operate on the basis of good governance. It performed a pivotal function in supporting the constitutive process of the new state.

During this delicate and complex period, there were intense demands for rapid post-crisis recovery. The Congolese people expected a peace dividend and their expectation for concrete rapid results was high. Thus the entire process—elections, laws and institutions—was jumpstarted and put on a fast track. The UNDP office became an institutional leader in the organization of the electoral process, in contributing to the development of essential legislation, in stewarding the new Constitution, by discretely supporting the judiciary, by improving the capacity of transitional governance institutions, and by helping the transitional parliament draft laws for the elections and for the emerging polity. Equal or more important, the CO's involvement and support for the discussions surrounding Security Sector Reform, the reform of the civil service, and the general political economy of the transition helped shape the bedrock upon which the eventual democratization of the DRC took place. Undoubtedly, the UNDP was a critical agent in putting that foundation in place.

Across the units and programs reviewed in the course of this study, the UNDP-DRC office demonstrated a capacity to act strategically and a capacity to exploit varied windows of opportunity that unfolded over time during the pacification and democratization of the DRC. In so doing, the UNDP country office was also able to adapt best practices to the Congolese context that were developed elsewhere. It became a change agent by reconfiguring itself over time so as to better accompany the highly sensitive and complex peace and democratization processes. This required the implementation of innovative programs that may not have been apparent without the restructuring that resulted from change management. Thus, change management helped prepare the UNDP-DRC office to tackle difficult operations, with maximum success. It enhanced three critical post-conflict organization skills: innovative capacity, strategic capacity, and adaptive capacity.

Explaining this impressive performance is the successful implementation of change management. This was a means to bridge the gap between what was happening and what was possible. It required real leadership—adapting, innovating, and recognizing opportunities not readily apparent. Leadership in a change effort involves setting a direction, aligning people with a vision, and motivating them to achieve it. The CO achieved this by signaling change through the vision of its upper management, by enlisting constituents and collaborators, aligning the organization, and facing resistance. That enabled the institutional nimbleness that is critical for generating results in contemporary post-conflict development and to effectively challenge well-settled paradigms and practices. Thus, the office challenged the then-dominant paradigms that stressed a sequential transition from relief to development, with peacekeeping operations and governance as somewhat distinct activities.

When an organization demonstrates purposeful leadership founded on vision, it is transformed into a real change agent. Thus the CO became a purposeful actor capable of (1) transforming vision into a strategic plan of action, (2) effectively adapting core headquarter tenets into workable rules in the field, and then (3) innovating on the basis of those adaptations, so as to both enrich the original vision provided by headquarters, and better serve the population of concern. These capacities were critical for institutional effectiveness, for positive management achievements, and for agency leadership. The UNDP-DRC country office operated with a shared vision that enabled managers and staff to meet contextual challenges as they arose. Staff was empowered to make decisions with a common purpose and this became an

institutional expectation. Management endeavored to encourage an internal culture of knowledge sharing and substantive skills development, which in turn led to an enhancement of three capacities fundamental for delivering development services: innovative capacity, strategic capacity and adaptive capacity. An entrepreneurial culture emerged: staff demonstrated an ability to meet contextual challenges as they arose, and hence leadership flourished. Strategic collaboration was pursued, notably with the DRC government.

As the DRC now moves to a fuller post-conflict setting across many parts of the country, conditions are again signaling a restructuring of the CO. The UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in his address to the Summit of the African Union at Addis Ababa,[17] "I have just come from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where I saw first hand, how unity of purpose guided our common efforts there . . . the first free elections in more than 40 years. This endeavor was a remarkable peacekeeping achievement, and the largest electoral support engagement in UN history. Unity of purpose guides our collaboration for democracy, human rights and good governance . . . " Attuned to new realities, in early 2007 then Country Director Babacar Cisse continued the system and vision implemented by Herbert McLeod, and embraced a mission that has focused on the alignment of the country office with the new post-conflict and institution-building challenges. The outcomes are likely to be profound as the UNDP continues to support the Congolese people as they shape the path of history in the DRC.

Along with this praise, it is worth highlighting three areas where the UNDP and the CO in the DRC could improve its operations and programs. The first area for improvement is in the design of decentralization policies. Choices on the design of decentralization need to be more thoroughly thought out and acted on by the UNDP. In the African context, at times decentralization policy design seems to merely reflect the political maneuvering between the weak central governments the international community wants to shore up, and inscrutable local leaders with extremely short-term horizons. To design policies based on the balance of power between these two actors is an invitation to disaster. In the post-2007 elections period, the DRC is going through a profound restructuring of its federal system, including the creation of new provinces and the consequent reshuffling of its electoral coalitions. A faulty institutional design would be extremely destructive for the deepening and eventual consolidation of democracy in

the DRC. That said, the inter-provincial discussion on federal matters is being promoted by the CO. It is encouraged that more of this be done, and more systematically.

The second recommendation is specific to the Poverty Reduction Unit in the DRC, reviewed but not discussed in this report. Due to the country's particular characteristics, this unit has operated in the shadow of the Post-Conflict Unit. As the country moves to a more conventional development setting, however, it is urgent and necessary to do what the DRC office has been doing since late 2002: reconfigure itself now to tackle poverty, develop context sensitive social policies, and support the design of institutions able to garner the legitimacy of the Congolese people. If the DRC is truly going to be a democracy, and it is possible, it will require institutions with more conventional poverty reduction know-how that it could help design.

Finally, the last recommendation is aimed at UNDP's corporate level. As reiterated in the UNDP's Results Based Management literature, a dynamic organization requires visioning, creating the mechanisms to make that vision a reality, and then generating feedback mechanisms capable of detecting successes and mistakes in the processes above. In this last area, even though significant efforts have been made (witness the universalization of the Atlas system since 2004), there is still a long way to go. Specifically, the authors suggest more systematically collecting and making accessible program documentation in real time for monitoring and evaluation purposes, instead of relegating it to fact-finding missions. This is both technologically feasible today, and in tune with the management model analyzed in Section II of this report.

One interesting innovation by the Governance Unit in the DRC went half a step in this direction by consolidating all communications, documents, and memoranda circulating between the UNDP, the Congolese Supreme Court, and other claimants and associated actors. This was done using proprietary software, however, and was limited to servicing the Supreme Court. A better approach could be for the UNDP to adopt one of the many open source content management systems available today, adapting it to the UNDP's needs and then creating a repository for all communications and documents related to each program. This way, the flow from programs to Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) would be seamless, significantly reducing the cost of M&E and program time wasted in fetching long ago forgotten information.

The authors of this report can testify to the difficulty of gathering data from entrepreneurial program officers who are constantly on the move, and who have little time to compile or chase data. Rather, this function could be supported by a M&E focal point in the CO and by a global 'corporate' software unit that would customize a data gathering content management system, as needed.

There are reasons to be optimistic about the future of the DRC. There are difficult choices ahead, however, and the memory of the senior Kabila should be fresh in the current government. Excessive power concentration denounces weakness, and sooner rather than later is returned in kind. The Congolese people deserve better, including (1) the re-creation of a working health system, (2) the provision of education, and (3) the establishment of a modicum level of rule of law. That is to say, it is necessary to make effective the state structures that have been drawn from nothing between 2003 and 2007. It is necessary to plant the seeds for competitive, welfare-enhancing market mechanisms. And it is necessary to reassure the relevant parties that there is indeed a space for fruitful cooperation whose existence is guaranteed by the international community, spearheaded by the UN.

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Endnotes

1. Notably, Herbert McLeod was accepted by the government as UNDP Resident Representative, only after four previous candidates proposed by UNDP HQ were rejected. This shows some mistrust on the government's side.

2. See in particular MDRP 2003 and MDRP 2004. Namely, this consisted of achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and reducing human poverty; fostering democratic governance; supporting crisis prevention and recovery; and responding to HIV/AIDS (UNDP 2003).

3. See Macrae and Leader (2000) and Curtis (2001) for critical analysis of initiatives trying to coordinate humanitarian relief, development, and peacekeeping operations in conflict societies.

   As this report was being completed, DSRSG/RR-RC, Ross Mountain and the UNDP Country Director Babacar Cisse were building on this now established

tradition, reconfiguring the DRC-CO so as to support the new main challenges facing the Congo: strengthening and fine-tuning the democratic institutions of the country, providing the means to foster the constitution of parties capable to represent Congolese interests in an inter-temporally efficient manner, and helping the Congolese authorities develop the social infrastructure needed to reverse the socioeconomic losses suffered after years of virulent civil war.

4. This information is based on data available in the UNDP's Atlas system, as early as October 2007.

5. This information is based on data available in the Atlas system in the Snapshot and Landscape tools.

6. As put by Faubert, "the concept of integration within the UN Mission was present . . . [since] 2003 but the actual structure of the mission did not transform into an "integrated mission" until the appointment of Ross Mountain, at the end of 2004, as deputy-special representative of the secretary-general, while simultaneously serving as resident coordinator of the UN system and humanitarian coordinator" (Faubert 2006, 13).

7. At the time, the CO upper management decided to increase the number of international (yet still mostly African) officials, so as to change the dynamics of a staff that had grown too used to work with the dysfunctional state that was now being transformed and streamlined. According to McLeod, dealing with the interpersonal issues and political backlash that these changes created was one of the major achievements of his tenure (2007).

8. As seen in other countries, donors like the US in Nicaragua and El Salvador, the UK in Sierra Leone, or France in Chad, have taken the lead in coordinating or exercising overwhelming influence over DDR. This can put a shadow over the neutrality or ownership of the process itself. However, during the years of conflict, the CO maintained relations and partnerships with a range of different groups in the DRC. This established an image of neutrality that despite challenges, it has been able to uphold.

9. In terms of expertise, a wealth of resources was inherited from activities the CO carried out before mid-2002, particularly in the area of social and macroeconomic policy. The report briefly analyzes this in Section I. The 2000 *Human Development Report*, the 2002 *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper*, and the constant UNDP intermediation between Congolese authorities and the Bretton Woods organizations are clear examples of the capital the DRC-CO had to build its post mid-2002 strategy.

    Bureau National pour la Démobilisation et la Réinsertion was an institution created in 1996 and resurrected in the 2000–2001 to deal, mostly, with "special needs groups, such as child soldiers" (UNDP 2001, 53) Haut Commissariat à la Réinsertion.

10. In that sense, MONUC's experience in the DRC is somewhat unique, in that it never played a leading role in the DDR process. Instead, its original focus was

DDRRR, and up to 2004, its role in DDR was reduced to light support of physical disarmament, including activities such as arms collection and destruction, and registration and disarmament monitoring. As shown later on in this section, it was only in Ituri, during the 2004–2005 period, that MONUC was able to support the whole cycle of the DDR operation, under the operational leadership of the UNDP. This can be understood as the first attempt to integrate the UN mission in the DRC, even before this integration was formally launched in late 2004.

11. This became evident once the newly created CONADER, with MDRP funding, took the lead on DDR in April 2004. The division of labor induced by the MDRP made all DD operations fall under the exclusive responsibility of the government, without much room for other traditional DDR partners, including MONUC. The consequences of this approach have been almost disastrous. A government without any experience in DD and with only a basic hold on the territory has had to deal with highly complex operations in the name of national ownership, with what the UNDP considered to be not enough funding. Even more problematic for the CO was that, over time, CONADER has allocated only a quarter of the national DDR funds to the R component. By the CO's reasoning, even if shortchanging the R would reduce total operational costs in the short term, it would eventually impose higher costs if the demobilized fail to be socially reintegrated. Unfortunately, this prediction has been fulfilled, and it is still to be seen what the future will be for demobilized groups that have rearmed in Ituri, Katanga, and Kivus.

12. Personal communication, February 21, 2007.

   The operation was called 'disarmament and community reinsertion' so as to sidestep the specific legal and administrative implications of the term 'demobilization,' then being defined by the MDRP-WB.

13. Contrary to other regional experiences (such as Mozambique, Angola, Sierra Leone, or Liberia) where the UN peacekeeping mission played a leading role in setting up disarmament camps, actual disarmament, registration of ex-combatants, and providing resettlement support, in the DRC, MONUC's participation in DDR has mostly consisted of providing light support for physical disarmament. One exception to this was the Ituri operation here described.

14. *Brassage* is the process whereby ex-combatants are retrained and integrated into the FARDC, the DRC Armed Forces.

15. United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon Address to the Summit of the African Union, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, January 29, 2007.

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