

therefore be created which allow for it to proceed at any stage of the peace process continuum.

In war-torn societies deeply imbued with the culture of the gun, incentives will be required both from the international community and the national authorities to sustain and enhance the disarmament process. This aspect of the DDRP is one of the most delicate and difficult and will require much careful thought and planning in light of the specific circumstances of the society in question. Experience to date suggests that community support for, and input into, the programme is particularly important. "Buy-back" or other disarmament incentive programmes must also take place in the context of a larger weapons management programme including cooperation with neighbouring countries on customs and other procedures to prevent the DDRP being undermined by the importation of new weapons into the country.

To date, in most cases of post-conflict disarmament and demobilization, emphasis has been placed on the emergency stabilization phase to the detriment of the development phase. It is essential that the DDRP be planned and implemented as an integrated and often overlapping continuum within the overall peacebuilding process, with importance being attached not only to the disarmament and demobilization aspects at the front end but with equal attention paid to the reintegration aspects of the programme. If widespread banditry and other forms of criminality are to be avoided and a sustainable peace created, it is essential that demobilized combatants and disarmed citizens-at-large have viable socioeconomic options sufficient to keep them from returning to the culture of the gun.

While the attractiveness of keeping weapons surrendered for further use by the national military may be argued, it is suggested that, as a general rule, such weapons should be destroyed. The confidence building effects, both inside and outside the country/region, as well as the tangible security benefits which will accrue over the longer term as a result of the public destruction of these weapons will generally far outweigh any benefits that might have accrued by retaining them.

Conditions for Success and Obstacles to Overcome

In light of the foregoing description of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration aspects of the peace process continuum, the following elements can be identified as essential to the success of the DDRP, over both the short and the longer term:

- the commitment of the parties to disarmament and demobilization as an integral part of the peace implementation plan, with as much detail as possible in the peace agreement on the specific obligations to be undertaken;