

Peacebuilding Commission Meeting | 29 March 2023
Briefing by Mirko Manzoni, Personal Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Mozambique

The Peace Process in Mozambique

1. I thank the members of the Peacebuilding Commission for the invitation to speak about our peacebuilding efforts in Mozambique. Indeed, the process here in Mozambique has been unique in many ways.
2. The current DDR process in Mozambique is a product of a reflection on the need to do things differently on the part of President Nyusi and the leaders of Renamo, Afonso Dhlakama and Ossufo Momade. Along with a small mediation team of three others, I worked with the Parties to design a nationally owned and human-centred disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) process that was guided first and foremost by the needs of former combatants and communities.
3. Military affairs was one of the key issues between the Government of Mozambique and Renamo. For peace to be achieved and sustained the full DDR of all 5,221 Renamo combatants who remained in bases across the country had to be secured. Getting DDR right was therefore central to the success of the entire peace process.
4. From providing beneficiaries, communities and stakeholders with a clear understanding of the DDR process and facilitating them in all aspects of their return to society, to engaging with them on a regular basis as part of follow-up activities, ensuring that the **needs of former combatants and communities remain central to the process** is contributing to comprehensive, sustainable peace.
5. Tailored and focused support to former combatants through DDR is designed to respond to varying needs on the individual, family and community levels. Ensuring reintegration with dignity is at the heart of the process. The Parties have championed a gender-sensitive approach and have mainstreamed considerations for vulnerable groups, including former combatants with disabilities.
6. We engage regularly with the Government, development partners and the private sector to identify reintegration opportunities within the individual, family and community pillars of reintegration. This includes provisions to secure the sustainability of reintegration in the long-term and safeguard the health and wellbeing of DDR beneficiaries into the future, whilst accounting for the needs and priorities of their families and communities.
7. We know that women bear a disproportionate burden from conflict, and that their full, equal and meaningful participation is required for the sustainability of peacebuilding. We have integrated a gender perspective throughout the peace process in Mozambique. In practice, gender-sensitive DDR means that women's specific needs are catered for throughout all processes, and we prioritise reintegration opportunities for women.
8. The recent groundbreaking signing of a decree incorporating eligible demobilised DDR beneficiaries into the national pension system sets an example for reconciliation.
9. This process has been guided by the need to serve the interests of all Mozambicans. The ability of the Parties to come to an agreement on the challenging issue of pensions serves as a clear demonstration of the Principals human-centred approach to the process, and sets a precedent of national reconciliation. It is a milestone in our collective pursuit to achieve a peaceful and prosperous Mozambique.

10. Putting people at the centre of the process means creating the space and conditions for the Parties to speak and be heard freely. As early as late 2016, we supported the establishment of direct **dialogue** channels between the Parties and we emphasised that negotiations could not take place against a backdrop of conflict.
11. The announcement by Renamo of a temporary ceasefire in December 2016, which ultimately became a definitive ceasefire, facilitated discussions without the threat of violence. This demonstrated Renamo's commitment to approach the negotiations in good-faith, and increased confidence on both sides.
12. At the core of a peace process are the needs, concerns and emotions of people - DDR beneficiaries, their families, the Parties, the population at large and relevant stakeholders. Being sensitive to this reality, we have prioritised **discretion and tact** in our dialogue with all concerned actors. This helped to bolster trust in the process, encouraging open and direct communication while both Parties were kept informed and had access to information at each step along the way.
13. Joao Pereira, who is representing Mozambican civil society at today's event has also greatly contributed to adding a civil society perspective to the peace process.
14. From the beginning of this process, the Parties have put the people of Mozambique first, by placing a monumental amount of trust in one another. Following Renamo's announcement of a temporary ceasefire, **trust and confidence** grew from both sides, and confidence building measures were implemented as negotiations were ongoing. For example, the passing of a Decentralisation Bill in May 2018, and the signing of an MoU on military affairs in August of the same year were expressions of commitment from both Parties to forging peace.
15. Chaloka Beyani who is present here today, was a key adviser to the Commission on Decentralisation and can attest to the importance of these confidence building measures during the early stages of negotiations.
16. The fact that Renamo agreed to officially start the DDR process one week before the final agreement was signed was a testament to the levels of trust the two Parties had built with each other. In fact, by the time the Maputo Accord was signed in August 2019, seventy percent of the agreements between the Parties had already been implemented.
17. Based on the understanding that people's needs will differ across different conflict situations, the design of the DDR programmes needed to incorporate an assessment of the political, economic and social context in Mozambique. To ensure this, the **ownership of the process by national actors** from the outset has been imperative.
18. From the early days of the process in 2016, President Nyusi and the late leader of Renamo Afonso Dhlakama were trailblazers in their commitment to making sure that the process was forged by Mozambicans, for Mozambicans. Following the passing of Dhlakama, Ossufo Momade picked up the mantle of Renamo leadership. This set the tone and helped create wider buy-in at national, provincial and local levels.
19. The Parties have owned and led the process and the direction of discussions. We, as mediators, have played a supporting role, aiding the Parties at critical moments.
20. I would like to say a word on the national implementation structures. The Joint Technical Groups tasked with the oversight and monitoring of the entire DDR process have shown exemplary commitment to cooperation, coordination and dialogue, consistently maintaining cordial relations even through the more turbulent periods of the process.

21. National ownership extends to the local and community levels too. To ensure the sustainability of reintegration and to foster a culture of reconciliation, local communities and civil society are playing a key role in receiving former combatants. Peace Clubs, religious leaders, community leaders and local government officials, for example, have played an important role in the DDR process in Mozambique by helping to build sustainable ties between former combatants and receiving communities. Continual monitoring has shown us that this is working, with DDR beneficiaries consistently reporting satisfaction with their reception by their communities following demobilisation.
22. To conclude, as we near the end of the disarmament and demobilisation phase of the DDR process, we have an opportunity to take stock of the lessons learned, and challenges overcome. In Mozambique, getting the DDR process right was crucial to the success of the whole peace process.
23. By keeping people at the centre of the design and implementation of the entire peace process, the Parties ensured the process remained relevant and alive to the needs of Mozambicans. This in turn has strengthened the peace that has been achieved. I have enormous faith in the long-term sustainability of this peace process, and I look forward to seeing what the future holds for the people of Mozambique.
24. Thank you.