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HIGHLIGHTS:

| | |
|--|----|
| ▪ Revised ISSSS is ready: Take a look at the main features of the new strategy | 3 |
| ▪ ISSSS at the core of regional and national strategic developments: | 6 |
| ▪ Revised strategy supporting the PSCF and the World Bank's Country Assistance Strategy | 6 |
| The Islands of Stability: an ISSSS operationalization modality | 7 |
| Providing the framework for the reintegration of ex-combatants | 7 |
| ▪ And some updates from the provinces | 9 |
| SSU helps alleviate conditions in over-crowded South-Kivu prisons | 9 |
| SSU leads the first assessment mission in Rutshuru since M23 occupation | 9 |
| Joint Monitoring Teams are reactivated and already operational in the field | 10 |

Foreword:

Over the reporting period, the Stabilization Support Unit (SSU) has worked intensively to finalize the strategic revision of the ISSSS, as well as to ensure coordination of ongoing programmes, and support the mission's leadership in developing its new vision to stabilize Eastern Congo.

The past three months were marked by the workshop on Sexual Violence bringing key partners together to develop the concept note. The revision of the ISSSS framework has now come to an end and the conclusions will be presented shortly to the GCP members.

*The mission has also advanced in its reflection on stabilization, particularly in relation to the demobilization of armed groups through the “**Islands of Stability**” concept – one of the implementing modalities of the revised ISSSS.*

*These developments are well embedded in the Peace, **Security and Cooperation framework (PSCF)** signed in February 2013 by the Great Lakes states.*

PSCF benchmarks have been adopted and include a strong focus on the promotion of peace, security and justice, including advancements on national reforms, fight against impunity and return, reintegration of refugees

*The Government of the DRC (GoDRC) has organized the **National Consultations**, bringing together civil society, political parties, national and provincial authorities and other relevant stakeholders. In addition, the GoDRC has, with the support of MONUSCO, made progress in developing the **new DDR/RRR plan**.*

Two areas have already been examined for potential implementation of this concept – Bakano secteur of Walikale territory in North-Kivu and South Irumu in Ituri district of Province Orientale.

***The revised ISSSS** – product of intense analysis, consultations, and inputs from various stakeholders, both national and international, is now finalized and it represents one more tool in the international community's efforts to ensure the establishment of durable peace in the region. The ISSSS will work in synergy with the PSCF, and the World Bank's Country Assistance Strategy, more specifically under its fourth pillar, stabilization, complementing national and regional peace initiatives.*

This newsletter provides an overview of the work accomplished by ISSSS over the last 3 months, and focus in particular on the revised ISSSS strategy and its operationalization in coming months. It also includes highlights on its links to ongoing national and regional processes mentioned above. Finally, it presents a brief overview of current projects and their status.

***The Stabilization Support Unit** seizes this opportunity to express its gratitude for the unerring support provided by its partners.*

The Stabilization Support Unit, October 2013

Strategic Review of ISSSS

The SSU has finalized the review of the ISSSS. The revision involved a process of thorough analysis and consultations with the GoDRC and implementing partners, bilateral donors, 6 workshops and countless bi-lateral meetings.

The revised strategy recognized the fundamentally political character of stabilization objectives and places a strong focus on the changes of state-society relationships.

The new strategy recognizes that the conflicts in the East are a result of a complex dynamics with local, national, and regional dimensions, which require a holistic response.

Considering the lessons learned from ISSSS first

phase, the continuity of armed violence in the East, slow progress on national reforms, and the absence of a sound and inclusive peace dialogue, the revised ISSSS proposes an innovative **top-down and bottom-up, holistic, integrated, but focused, response** to the various dynamics hampering stabilization in the East.

This innovative approach has been tailored not only to reflect the reality on the ground, but to ensure a sustainable and long term impact. It provides the international community with a tool to address conflict dynamics at the local level, assisting other frameworks aiming to provide responses at the national and regional levels, such as the PSCF, and the World Bank's Country Assistance Strategy.

Strategic Concept: the 3-pronged approach

1. Re-engagement of high-level government and international support for stabilization

- Revitalizing coordination structures to increase Government engagement and participation;
- Developing cooperation between the GoDRC and the international partners;
- Link ISSSS to broader peace processes and national reforms

2. Development of complementary mechanisms and inclusive peace process

- Place communities directly affected by conflict at the heart of stabilization initiatives when seeking solutions and providing alternative livelihoods after dismantlement of, or negotiations with, armed groups;
- Link peace dividends to peace efforts and ensure that economic recovery-activities are focused on supporting peace processes and social

3. Re-orientation of the pillars towards local community-based solutions

- Development of alternative ways of producing visible changes on the ground
- Start a long-term process of behavioural and structural changes
- Development of socio-economic activities with a clear conflict transformation objective.

Democratic Dialogue: Relaunching a bottom-up inclusive, peace process

This pillar will be the cornerstone of the new strategy. It will work to support existing peace dialogues among groups in conflict at the local level, ensuring a coordination of efforts and a link with national institutions at local, provincial and national levels. The Support to Democratic Dialogues will enable communities and civil society to develop capacities in analyzing sources of conflicts and formulating solutions to their own problems, this will allow a fertile ground for transformation of land issues, helping to transform the conflict.

Key actions:

- Community-level identification of causes of conflict and solution for transformation;
- Establishment of dialogue platforms;
- Anchor all other ISSSS interventions within the local context as defined by the populations themselves.

Theory of Change

“If a culture of dialogue is established and institutionalized in the process of finding solutions for peace in Eastern DRC, and the authorities respect commitments made, and if national and international stabilization strategies are coordinated and reinforce each other, then trust will increase among communities and towards the State, and conflicts will increasingly be managed non-violently, and causes of conflict will be addressed better, creating the basis for stable institutions and consolidating peace”

Security: Improving FARDC’s civilian protection capability

Actions under this pillar will seek to assist the GoDRC to have the minimum capacity to provide security to its citizens within its territory and borders. The pillar will work to include Protection of Civilian (POC) principles into the FARDC, creating a culture of protection and increasing the national army’s capacity to prevent pendulum setbacks movements of and armed groups and FARDC troops.

Key Actions:

- Training and mentoring programmes on PoC principles;
- Improved cohabitation between the FARDC/PNC and civilians;
- Strengthening of civilian oversight;
- Handover of security tasks to the police and civilian authorities.

Theory of Change

“If principles of protection of civilians and of accountability are integrated in the functions of the FARDC, and if the Army’s capacity to “hold” key areas increases, then the Government of DRC will be increasingly able to protect its civilians and implement a gradual transition to civilians.

Restoration of State Authority: Re-establishing the legitimate authority of the State

The revised RSA pillar will work to ensure that ISSSS beneficiary populations perceive the GoDRC as a legitimate enabling authority. It will concentrate on activities that can bring together state actors and society, and reinforce the capacities of the DRC institutions to provide rights-based access to security, justice and administrative services.

Key Actions:

- Consultation mechanisms and participatory governance;
- Support the operations of institutions and infrastructure construction, emphasize the GoDRC's responsibility to deploy and screen personnel, and consultation process with the beneficiary themselves;
- Training and mentoring, as well as participatory governance at the local level;
- External control and support through the revitalization of the Joint Monitoring Teams.

Theory of Change

"If the population has an increased access to quality essential services provided equitably (justice, police, and basic administrative services) and a constant negotiation is ensured between the State and the population, creating mutual accountability, then the institutional insecurity endured by the population will decrease, and it will not need to resort to community strategies for their protection and that of their interests."

Return, Reintegration, and Recovery: Addressing the socio-economic causes of conflict

RRR activities will attempt to reduce the risk of new conflicts by introducing conflict transformation and peaceful co-existence mechanisms into activities taking place in the ISSSS zones of intervention. Directly linked to mobilization around land and identity, and the natural resource curse problematic, the pillar will help create new livelihood options which will then reduce tensions and set the scene for a response to the underlying root causes of poverty, socio-demographic pressure, access to land, and fragmented national identity.

Key Actions:

- Agricultural recovery, employment creation for at-risk groups, addressing community grievances and tensions coming out of displacement;
- Address the socio-economic causes of conflict support the reintegration of at-risk groups into communities;
- Activities also centered on mining areas, promoting the reduction of tensions and the creation of alternatives to mining;
- Conflicts mediation.

Theory of Change

If the population of Eastern DRC engages in socio-economic recovery activities that focus on social cohesion and resilience, and if the authorities and the international community are aligned in their support for these initiatives, then communities will be able to manage external shocks more peacefully, and there will be a possibility for development and more equitable distribution of wealth.

Sexual Violence: Ensuring that SGBVs does not fuel further conflicts

The 5th pillar of the ISSSS will move beyond palliative measures and focus on the root causes of sexual violence, as well as on addressing externalities of sexual violence which have the potential to further spur conflicts.

Key Actions:

- Support to increase participation of women in national decision making structures;
- Empowering women and men, particularly religious leaders and traditional leaders to champion SV/SGBV issues in local dialogue platforms;
- Provide institutional support and training of judicial Institutions in order to enable adequate prosecution of sexual violence cases,
- Confidence building activities between communities and PNC/FARDC on sexual violence issues.

Theory of Change

If civil and state structures are empowered to fulfill their responsibilities in terms of protecting men and women against sexual violence and if gender roles are perceived and challenged as factors perpetuating sexual violence, then trust in peaceful prevention and response actions will increase, and incidents of sexual violence will decline, and the needs of survivors and their communities will be addressed and peace-building efforts will be more resilient to external shocks.

ISSSS AT THE CORE OF MONUSCO STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS

ISSSS – A PSC Framework Supporting Tool

The recently signed PSC framework defines measures to address the regional and national dimensions of the root causes of the Eastern DRC conflicts. The framework sets out regional and national commitments, (1) by asking countries in the region to refrain from interference in each other's affairs; (2) by calling the GoDRC to advance on key reforms – SSR, consolidation of state authority, decentralization, reconciliation, economic development and structural reforms; and (3) by recalling the donor community to increase aid coordination.

The ISSSS is a mechanism bringing together the same regional objectives, but is active at the local level. As such, the ISSSS represents an additional

tool for the international community to achieve the recently adopted PSC framework benchmarks, ultimately transforming conflict dynamics in the East and bringing about long-lasting peace.

The revised ISSSS comes with a new monitoring and evaluation framework which will collect data on progresses towards stabilization – improvements in security, increased political participation and development of economic opportunities. The ISSSS becomes a major source of information for the PSCF oversight mechanisms.

Finally, the revised strategy reinforces the PSCF through the involvement of the populations in eastern DRC in search of solutions to the conflict. The ISSSS will provide additional channels to ensure national ownership of peace processes.

ISSSS Contributes to the Implementation of Resolution 2098

Political developments during the year of 2013 have considerably changed the environment in which the ISSSS is being implemented. The reinforcement of diplomatic efforts and measures undertaken at national and regional levels, as well as the strengthening of MONUSCO's mandate, including the FIB, have significant consequences in terms of civilian response and DDR/RRR. The UN system as a whole is adapting in order to respond to these challenges and the ISSSS and SSU as well.

1. Reintegration of demobilized combatants

With the approval of Resolution 2098, in particular the creation of the first UN offensive force – the FIB, it is anticipated that a growing number of combatants will demobilize.

MONUSCO is supporting the GoDRC in developing a DDR/RR strategy, and the ISSSS will serve as a framework for the durable reintegration of ex-combatants.

Lessons learned from previous DDR programmes emphasize the critical nature of the reintegration process and indicate that a solid reintegration strategy has to be rooted in local dimensions, focused on communities rather than just on ex-

combatants, and work on social cohesion as well as recovery. The revised ISSSS strategy, more particularly the Return, Reintegration and Socio-Economic Recovery (RRR) pillar, will ensure that reintegration activities are undertaken within ISSSS community-based approach to socio-economic development and in conjunction with the organization of social dialogues.

In order to secure funding, the SSU – secretariat of PBF in the DRC, with the DDR/RRR unit are in negotiation for the allocation USD 850,000, which will be used to launch DDR activities, such as the operationalization of DDR camps in Goma and Sake.

2. The Islands of Stability: ensuring stabilization of areas freed from armed groups

How to ensure that areas freed from armed groups – as a result of successful military operations, unilateral demobilization or political agreement, are stabilized, preventing a security/state authority vacuum?

The Islands of Stability (IoS) represent one modality of ISSSS operationalization in cases where an area is being freed from armed groups. The IoS foresees immediate measures aimed at supporting the restoration of legitimate state authority in the area, in particular institutions in charge of defense/security, justice and administration; the

reinsertion of a dialogue on root causes of the conflict; and the development of socio-economic activities benefiting the communities including former rebels. The IoS will be implemented in an initial 6-month period, a task force will be implemented in order to coordinate the immediate response and liaise with other stakeholders. Also, the creation of a flexible funding mechanism is currently under study.

Applying the Islands of Stability: 2 pilot cases

South Irumu: *SSU coordinates the development of a roadmap for civilian response to FARDC operations*

The last quarter was marked by the ongoing unilateral FARDC operations against FRPI in South Irumu (Ituri District).

At the time of writing, having recently captured two FRPI strongholds in Walendu Bindi and Aveba, FARDC is in control of the main points on the axis Bogoro-Kagaba-Gety-Aveba. This new episode of clashes between FARDC and FRPI has triggered movement of IDPs and current estimates point to 130,000 persons in urgent need of assistance. While FARDC recent progress in reestablishing their authority in South Irumu are positive, humanitarian access, protection of civilian and beyond that ensuring that the impact of military operation lead to long lasting peace, represent significant challenges.

Taking on these challenges, SSU with MONUSCO substantive sections and military component, in collaboration with UN humanitarian and development agencies, developed a road map for a coordinated civilian response during and after FARDC operations, including humanitarian action, emergency response, and protection of civilian, as well as stabilization and peace consolidation. This latter part is in implementation of the “Islands of Stability” concept.

Bakano and Waloa-Loanda: *a case for Island of Stability?*

On 17 August, notables from the *Waloa Loanda* and *Bakano groupements* in Walikale territory of North-Kivu, led by Abbé Arsène Masumboko, have brokered an agreement between a faction of the the Raia Mutomboki and the Mayi Mayi Kifuafua at the conclusion of *Journées Sociales de Sécurité et Paix* (JSSP) organized in Itebero with support from Caritas.

The two groups, initially allied in their fight against the FDLR, have clashed repeatedly over the control of the main road access and other strategic economic areas. The agreement envisions the DDR of ex-combatants into the FARDC, the PNC, and civilian life, as well as the promotion of an environment conducive to the promotion of humanitarian activities and large-scale public works.

MONUSCO has welcomed the agreement and pledged to support it, examining the opportunity to create an Islands of Stability. SSU, as the unit in charge of stabilization, has conducted a desk research and participated in a joint visit to Itebero.

Assessments reveal the fragility of the agreement partly based on a false premise – the possibility for reintegration into FARDC and PNC which has since been denied by the GoDRC authorities.

SSU has however developed a potential pilot project which would focus on inclusive dialogue centered on communities and include activities to support the durable reintegration of armed groups.

UPDATES FROM THE PROVINCES

SSU helps alleviate conditions in over-crowded South-Kivu prisons

In July 2013, the SSU Team Leader led a delegation to visit empty prisons in Bunyakiri and Fizi. The objective of the assessment mission was to engage the Provincial authorities to open ISSSS/STAREC prisons which had been handed over by UNOPS to the GoDRC nearly two years ago.

The delegation was composed by the newly appointed Provincial Minister of Justice, the cabinet of the Provincial Minister of interior, the PNC, the FARDC, and MONUSCO Corrections Unit.

The SSU and other MONUSCO sections, have actively worked with the provincial authorities to transfer prisoners from the crowded Bukavu Central prison to less crowded prisons such as the one in Kabare. 1450 detainees are currently held in

Bukavu central prison, which has been built for 500, bringing to 2.9 the ratio of prisoner per spot. So far 98 detainees have been transferred.



Source: Stabilization Support Unit ©

SSU leads the first assessment mission in Rutshuru since M23 occupation

On 11 and 12 October 2013, SSU led the very first Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) to the Kiwanja-Ishasha axis in Rutshuru territory since the M23 rebellion outbreak in April 2012. The JAM confirmed that the ISSSS civil administration, PNC and justice Facilities in Rutshuru and Kinyandoni are occupied but suffer from serious logistical and infrastructure deterioration problems.

The current status of the Kiwanja-Ishasha road axis is very poor with some sections inaccessible during rainstorms. Without maintenance for many months, the road is expected to degrade even further this rainy season.

Most of those who interacted with the JAM expressed frustration for being cut-off from the authorities in Goma, and many officials had only rudimentary tools to perform their duties.



Source: Stabilization Support Unit ©

The Joint Monitoring Teams – Enhanced SSU presence in the field will facilitate the roll-out of ISSSS programmes

To reinforce the launch of ISSSS second phase, the Joint Monitoring Teams have been reactivated, thanks to the support of the Norwegian, Swiss and Belgian governments. The JMTs – will be the SSU eyes and ears in the field, and will work in ISSSS beneficiary areas, supporting the roll-out of programmes, monitoring the deployment of state agents and mentoring them, as well as collecting M&E data. So far, two teams have been deployed to Bunyakiri (South-Kivu) and Masisi (North-Kivu), while five teams are expected in total.

The Masisi team produced its first observation report. Key findings include: (1) The authority of the state does not extend outside the main axes road Goma-Masisi, while the rest of the territory is under armed groups' control; (2) APCLS is

recognized by local actors as being well organized, disciplined, and as a “no harm” group policy to the local population. (3) Systemized corruption: magistrates, civil administrators openly admit that they receive ‘fees’ or ‘gifts’ in exchange for services provided and there are clearly established norms about what is a legitimate/fair corruption and what is abusive.



Source: Stabilization Support Unit ©