

## Report recommendations

### Recommendation 1: Donors should position programming based on an assessment of conflict drivers.

If conflict prevention and peace-building programmes are to be the focus of international strategies, it is important to undertake on-going analysis of peace and conflict drivers, such as land conflicts, the social environment, the activities of armed groups and the socio-economic conditions around mines. This would necessitate more resources to undertake situational analyses in the East, but would enable better use of resources over time.

- Example for donors: earmark funds to ensure that projects have conflict-sensitive analysis, and that the root causes are part of the objectives and are clearly justified.
- Example for donors and implementing agencies: ensure that each implementing organisation has a conflict analysis and revises it regularly. This analysis must relate to overall programming undertaken by the implementing organisation in a direct and measurable fashion.

### Recommendation 2: Donors should change the balance of sectors and increase joint interventions.

This strategy represents an opportunity for engaging in dialogue and new forms of cooperation with the State. New actors bringing innovative, creative approaches have been on the periphery of the relationships that link the government to development and stabilisation programmes.

*“Of particular concern is the large number of ethnic Tutsi Congolese who left for Rwanda after 1994 and who are returning to the DRC to re-claim their land, which has serious political and ethnic implications.”*

*“Transparent cross-border trade has the potential to reduce the risks of conflict and to promote regional economic development.”*

- Example for donors: ISSSS should form the basis for all planning in relation to the peace objective and, in view of this, should be reviewed for a new engagement.
- Example for donors, agencies and implementing organisations: sectors such as SGBV prevention and humanitarian aid should be part of additional efforts regarding monitoring and evaluation of the effects of these interventions on the drivers of peace and conflict.

### Recommendation 3: Establish a new relationship with the DRC government, and create true partnerships at the local level

A clearer definition on the part of international organisations of their relationship with central and local government would permit the development of new forms of innovative cooperation. These must be part of a new approach.

- Example for donors: increase the volume of financing to sectors that contribute towards the formalisation of a regulatory framework for the exploitation of natural resources.
- Example for NGOs: decentralise decision-making towards the field (at least to provincial capital level) and minimise expenditure on equipment and salaries, in order to reduce the divisions with local authorities. ■

## CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACE-BUILDING IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

*Without peace, development is impossible. This self-evident fact promotes a fuller understanding of the logic of conflict in order to identify and activate the most effective tools to restore peace and enable those involved in development to establish a presence. Situated at the heart of Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is gradually emerging from a prolonged period of violence and instability. This fragile progress is constantly threatened by frequent eruptions of violence. This evaluation attempts to clarify the impact of peacekeeping and conflict prevention initiatives undertaken in the DRC by the different international actors over the past ten years.*

Conflict prevention and peace-building are core priorities in the DRC. The Congolese wars of 1996–1997 and 1998–2003 together constitute one of the most severe humanitarian disasters since World War II. Up to 5.4 million people have died (directly or as a result of the effects of war) since August 1998, when the second Congo War began, and 1.5 million after the December 2002 peace accord. At the end of 2010, there were still an estimated 2.1 million displaced persons. A new crisis in Equateur province led to the displacement of about 190,000 people in 2010. Beyond the instability focused mainly in eastern DRC, the conflict constitutes the greatest impediment to development.

### The authors of the report

Channel Research, the evaluation team who wrote this report about conflict prevention and peace-building in the DRC, was supported by a Steering Committee set up in early 2009. This Committee brings together evaluation departments in the following countries: Belgium, Canada, Germany, Japan and the United Kingdom. It also includes several UN organisations: the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) attached to the United Nations Organisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

### Peace efforts

The DRC has attracted many peace efforts. It hosts, for example, one of the largest UN peacekeeping forces in the world. The Sun City agreement in 2002 set out the main conditions for peace: democracy, territorial sovereignty, political checks and balances on power, and the control of all armed groups. This international undertaking has contributed to a certain level of political stability and ensured the functioning of several transitional institutions; it also facilitated the preparation of the 2006 national elections and enabled the implementation of a comprehensive Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration and Security Sector Reform programme.

All these efforts have not prevented frequent clashes between armed groups. Since the signing of the peace accord, the conflict conditions in eastern DRC have not improved substantially. ▶

1-International Rescue Committee (2008), though death rates as a result of the DRC conflict have recently been subject to debate. The 2009 Human Security Report argues that the IRC estimate is based on an inappropriately low baseline mortality rate. With a more appropriate baseline rate, the death toll would be one-third of IRC’s estimate (Human Security Report Project (2009) *Human security report 2008/9*, New York: Oxford University Press). The 2007 population of the DRC was estimated at 62 million.

## Does conflict prevention and peace-building have any effect?

The current instability of the country and the problems associated with its development could call into question the idea that conflict prevention and peace-building have had any effect. However, such a judgement would ignore the key questions that justify a detailed evaluation: how significant were the contributions of international actors? Without them, would the situation have been worse? To what extent were these actors effective? Finally, what lessons can be gleaned from their initiatives? These questions constitute the heart of international policies in the DRC. They force the observer to measure the influence of a reduction in violence, as a policy objective, on the conflict.

The evaluation concentrated on three provinces: South Kivu, North Kivu and Orientale, with particular focus in the latter on Ituri District. This was where the thrust of peace efforts was concentrated during the evaluation period, and where the worst violence had occurred since 2002. The conclusions can be generalised across the country, and even other conflict contexts globally.

In order to acquire solid empirical knowledge, the evaluation team worked on a database containing

351 projects at various stages of implementation. It was recommended to select 50 to 60 projects per theme, and to visit 20 to 25 interventions. The synthesis report contains the principal evaluation conclusions.

### Conflict and peace drivers

There is general consensus on the indirect causes of conflict in the DRC: ethnic grievances and clashing identities, the collapse of the State, conflicts over resources and border conflicts.

The report also proposes a broad analysis of the conflict drivers and peace drivers. Drivers serve to distinguish events and trends that are linked with the situation and are recognisable to all observers, and that have a strong degree of influence. Among the main drivers, the report highlights:

- Access and ownership of land,
- Absence of responsible mining sector investment,
- Weak and corrupted public administration,
- A confused process of decentralisation.
- Proliferation of armed groups,
- Absence of transitional justice mechanisms,
- Development of parallel structures for resource exploitation. ■

## Report conclusions

Interventions focusing on peace in eastern DRC were only partially successful and for a variety of reasons, two in particular:

1. **Protracted insecurity:** armed groups continually destabilise regions, consequently increasing operational costs and diminishing direct contacts with agencies in the field.
2. **The profound weakness of the State,** and the inability of international agencies and organisations to imagine a new way of constructively working with the State.

*“Conflict analysis is a critical element necessary to conflict prevention and peace-building efforts. Its use is, however, not particularly evident, having few links to the diplomatic deliberations; analysis is replaced by erroneous hypotheses disconnected from the realities of eastern Congo.”*

Donors and multilateral agencies that sought to focus on peace-building in the DRC were not entrusted with sufficient funds to overcome the immense obstacles and obtain results beyond those achieved. What remains is therefore a range of projects whose design depends on confused and ever-changing donor strategies.

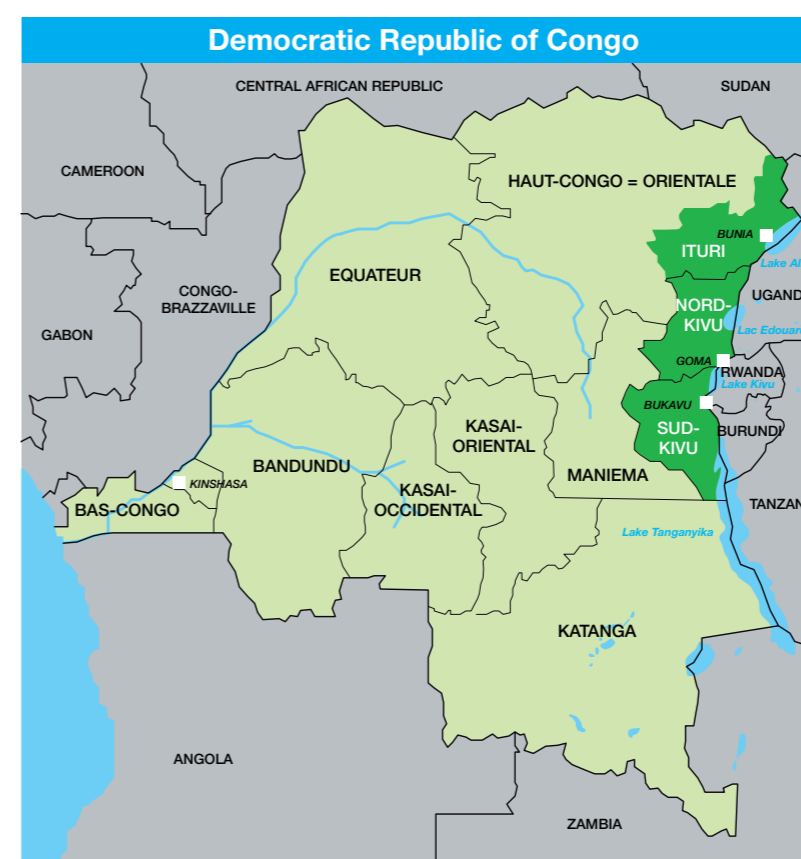
Yet the country’s potential is enormous.

### Three success factors

The synthesis report identifies three main success factors of the conflict prevention initiatives.

1. Interventions need to **address and respond to conflict drivers.** The policy documents, working modalities, committees and procedures all currently governing aid make it virtually impossible to properly analyse and respond to the conflict context. This manifests itself most visibly in the generally weak understanding of the context, and in the financing of projects that do not reflect the country’s articulated priorities.

The projects studied deal, first and foremost, with the consequences not the causes of violence.



*“Families of victims revert to out-of-court settlements with the perpetrators. However, the scale of violations is such that this is no longer a realistic solution, creating a desperate climate that could be the starting ground for future conflicts.”*

*“Weak state capacities and, in some areas, their total absence, is a major obstacle to development of the East. The optimism felt by the population following the elections in 2006 has since waned.”*

2. Performance is influenced by **the degree to which agencies work together.** Yet over the course of this evaluation, the profound ambivalence of donors and implementing agencies towards the State was glaring, and laden with hesitation about how to cooperate with this key Congolese actor. Yet this is a key conflict driver.

3. Third, a project’s success is heavily influenced by its **ability to be grounded in local realities.** Humanitarian assistance receives a large amount of funding, which extends to remote areas of the country, but it relies heavily on multiple sub-contracting arrangements, detailed technical cluster planning, and it raises issues with regard to substitution of the State.

### Opportunities for future interventions

The broadest donor orientations remain favourable towards conflict prevention and peace-building. Furthermore, in the case of joint programmes, the cooperation between donors and agencies, in addition to that between themselves and the government, was evidenced in the lead-up to the 2006 elections. It continued to dominate SGBV initiatives. The regional dimensions of conflict, particularly its effect across borders, are being taken into further consideration.

There are a variety of ways in which rootedness in local contexts can be promoted. As decentralisation takes effect and the importance of capacity building is

evidenced, stabilisation becomes a recognised theme for strategic interventions in the East, a region whose territorial integrity is no longer questioned.

The imminent intensification of private-sector investment in mining and energy also points to new types of relations with the State. Companies have an interest in creating a stable and transparent environment around their investments. The joint ventures and operations that will emerge in the near future for the mining sector will require intensive dialogue.

By identifying drivers of peace and conflict, and developing strategies to address them, supported by effective communications and cooperation with national, regional and local actors, donors and aid agencies can significantly boost the impact of their interventions. This should be accompanied by a deliberate focus on human and institutional resources in areas where they are most needed. ■

*“It is difficult not to conclude that the judicial system is in a lamentable state, and suffers from an overwhelming lack of confidence among the population.”*