

Beyond Juba

Building Consensus on Sustainable Peace in Uganda

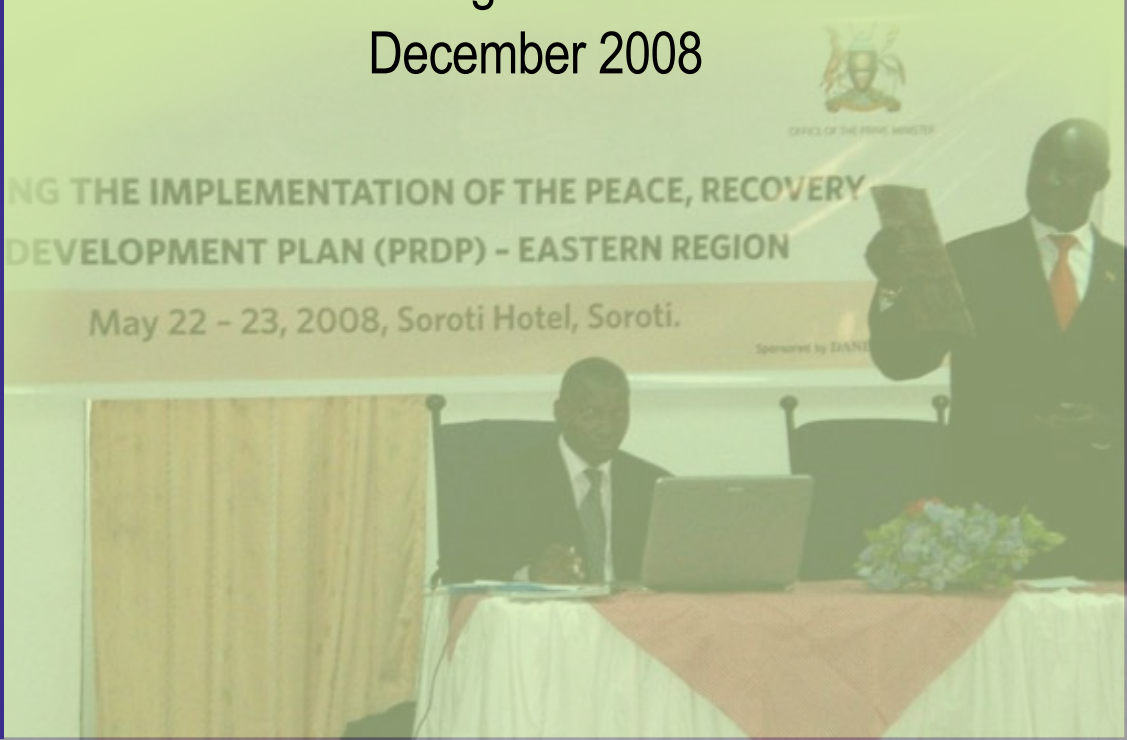
Is The PRDP Politics As Usual?

Update on The Implementation of Uganda's Peace, Recovery and Development Plan

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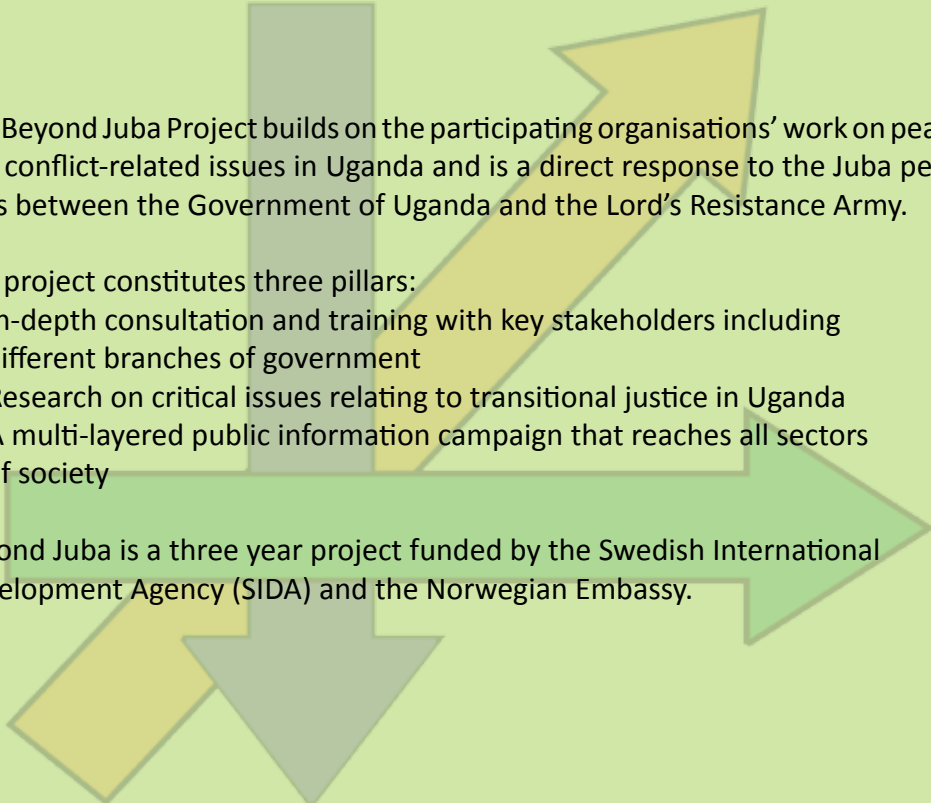
MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PEACE, RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN (PRDP) - EASTERN REGION

May 22 - 23, 2008, Soroti Hotel, Soroti.



Beyond Juba

A transitional justice project of
the Faculty of Law, Makerere University,
the Refugee Law Project and
the Human Rights & Peace Centre



The Beyond Juba Project builds on the participating organisations' work on peace- and conflict-related issues in Uganda and is a direct response to the Juba peace talks between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army.

The project constitutes three pillars:

- In-depth consultation and training with key stakeholders including different branches of government
- Research on critical issues relating to transitional justice in Uganda
- A multi-layered public information campaign that reaches all sectors of society

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INTRODUCTION

On October 15, 2007 the Government of Uganda (GoU) launched the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) to help greater Northern Uganda transition from war to peace.¹ Although the PRDP is a relatively new policy, enough time has now passed to assess key challenges that are emerging. This report assesses PRDP implementation since the official launch over one year ago. It sheds light on the challenges and may help stakeholders avoid the disappointing outcomes of previous recovery plans for Northern Uganda.

The rapidly changing dynamics of Northern Uganda make quick and effective PRDP implementation even more vital.² Two years of relative calm in the region made possible by

the Juba Peace Talks have allowed up to 75% of the 1.8 million internally displaced people (IDP) to leave overcrowded camps where some have lived for up to twenty years.³ However, a lack of basic services in return areas threatens the ability of returnees to fully rebuild their communities.⁴ Also, the Lord's Resistance Army's (LRA) repeated failure to sign a final peace agreement, reports about LRA recruitment incursions in eastern Congo and in the Central African Republic and a recent attack by Ugandan, Congolese and Southern Sudanese forces on LRA camps in Garamba National Park raise concerns that the current peace may not be durable.

This report is based on six months of research conducted between May and October 2008. Thirty-five individual interviews were conducted with international donors, government officials and civil society representatives in Kampala, Gulu and Mbale districts. Additionally, observations were made at PRDP-related workshops, humanitarian agency meetings, internally displaced persons' camps and transit sites.⁵ Finally, government



Residents of Lalogi IDP Camp participate in camp clean-up, May 2008.

¹ Download the PRDP document at www.refugeelawproject.org or www.beyondjuba.org

² Clause 10.1.2 of the "Agreement on Comprehensive Solutions" signed by the government during the Juba Peace Talks mandates government to "ensure that recovery programmes are implemented expeditiously and where necessary 'fast tracked' in order to respond effectively to post-conflict needs in affected areas."

³ UN OCHA Humanitarian Report for September 2008.

⁴ For example, a Daily Monitor article from 5 September 2008 entitled "Police North Project Runs Broke" states that a shortage of funds will leave 24 districts without the capacity to guarantee security for the resettlement of IDPs. Also, at a Consolidated Appeals Process workshop in Gulu on 1 September 2008 UN OCHA Country Director noted that the Lango sub-region, where all IDPs have returned, is sorely lacking in basic services.

⁵ PRDP workshops attended include: Nordic NGOs workshop in Kampala on 10 April 2008; OPM/ACODE workshop in Soroti on 22 May 2008; ICIS WICCE workshop in Kampala on 14 August 2008. Humanitarian agency meetings attended include: UN OCHA CAP Workshop in Gulu on 1 September 2008; UN OCHA Contact Group meetings on 8 April and 19 April 2008; Gulu DDMC meeting on 27 May 2008. Lalogi IDP Camp in Gulu was visited on 5 July 2008. Adek sub-county transit site was visited on 6 June 2008. Researchers also hosted a Roundtable Discussion on PRDP implementation in Gulu on 11 December 2008 where twelve community

documents, media articles and past PRDP research was reviewed.⁶ The findings of this study are based on preliminary analysis and are limited by the small number of respondents relative to the forty districts affected by the PRDP. More research is needed to test whether conclusions presented here accurately reflect circumstances in areas where fieldwork was not conducted.

BACKGROUND TO THE LAUNCH OF THE PRDP

Between 1992 and 2006, the GoU implemented several plans for recovery in Northern Uganda that had limited impact on the people for which they were intended. For example, the Northern Uganda Reconstruction Programme (NURP-1), which began in 1992 and lasted for six years, was implemented in a top-down fashion by central government and did not connect development to peace-building or psycho-social support for war affected communities.⁷ Additionally, the initial NURP-I budget was around USD 600 million, but only USD

93.6 million was actually spent.⁸ In response to some of these shortcomings, NURP-1 was reorganised as NURP-II in 1999 with the stated intention of incorporating a more bottom-up, demand-responsive approach.⁹ The most significant initiative of NURP-II was the World Bank-funded Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF), which provides grants directly to community groups that apply with project ideas of their own design. Eighteen months passed before NUSAF recruited a technical staff and the first project disbursements were not made until 2004.¹⁰ At the time of writing, NUSAF has funded 9,065 of the 69,000 proposals received, translating into a total annual expenditure of about USD 100 million.¹¹ However, reports of corruption call into question how much of this funding is actually reaching project beneficiaries, with at least twenty people having been charged with corruption while implementing NUSAF projects.¹² Furthermore, the World Bank has

representatives shared their viewpoints on key challenges facing the PRDP.

⁶ Existing research on the PRDP has largely focused on the consultation period prior to the launch, or on highlighting various elements that the plan fails to address, rather than the actual process of implementation. Access this research by following footnotes listed in this briefing note.

⁷ NURP II District Profile Study of Gulu & Kitgum, Office of the Prime Minister, July 1999. Pp. 20.

⁸ NURP II District Profile Study, Volume 1, Office of the Prime Minister, July 1999. Pp. 25.

⁹ NURP-I covered the twelve districts of Arua, Moyo, Adjumani, Nebbi, Gulu, Kitgum, Apac, Lira, Soroti, Katakwi, Kumi and Pallisa.

¹⁰ Komakech & Muyomba, "A Critical Analysis of the Relief, Reconstruction and Development Programmes in Northern Uganda," ACODE Policy Research Paper. Pp. 22.

¹¹ Acting NUSAF Executive Director in Soroti on 22 May 2008.

¹² See examples cited in the Daily Monitor on 23 April 2008 and 29 September 2008.



Relief Minister, Hon. Musa Ecweru opens a PRDP workshop in Soroti hosted by ACODE and the Office of the Prime Minister.

reportedly stalled a planned 10-year renewal of NUSAF loans until corruption concerns are dealt with.¹³ The shortcomings of these previous efforts must be recognised in order to help ensure that they are not repeated in the PRDP.

The PRDP drafting process began in June 2005 and was led by an Inter-Ministerial Technical Committee (IMTC).¹⁴ According to its Terms of Reference, the IMTC's responsibility was to "analyse the magnitude of the development gaps and needs in Northern Uganda in comparison with current interventions and prepare a comprehensive post-war recovery plan."¹⁵ The first PRDP draft was produced on 4 August 2006 and a second came on 9 March 2007. The final draft was approved by Cabinet in August 2007.¹⁶ Each draft was reportedly based on district priorities and sent to a wide range of stakeholders for review and feedback.¹⁷ However, the first general planning discussion for the PRDP among all stakeholders was not held until February 2008.¹⁸ According to a report by Civil Society Organisations for Peace in Northern Uganda (CSOPNU), "few, if any, consultations were held with the communities that are supposed to benefit from the programme as consultations stopped at district level."¹⁹

During the drafting period proposed PRDP coverage expanded from the initial eighteen districts to forty, stretching from West Nile across Northern Uganda to Elgon sub-region in southeastern Uganda.²⁰ Some of the increase is a result of districts having been created during the drafting process, which also coincided with the presidential elections of 2006, among other political developments. However, the primary cause of expansion was Cabinet's decision to include nine districts in Elgon sub-region. According to some Mbale district officials in Elgon sub-region, this decision was made because displaced people and cattle rustlers enter the area from neighboring Teso and Karamoja sub-regions and place additional stress on district governments.²¹

In May 2006, the GoU launched the Emergency Humanitarian Action Plan (EHAP) in response to pressure by the United Nations to address the situation in the north more quickly while PRDP drafting continued.²² EHAP was coordinated by a Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) comprised of government officials, donors and civil society representatives. According to an Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) report, the JMC met 13 times and allocated UGX 18.6 billion (approximately USD 11.6 million) for projects intended to support a cessation of hostilities, peace-building and reconciliation, enhanced protection of the civilian population, improved conditions in displacement camps and continued planning for the PRDP.²³ Problems with EHAP have been reported, including the procurement of low-quality farm implements and seeds, and the failure to distribute promised return kits to returning IDPs.²⁴ EHAP officially closed with the launch of the PRDP.

¹³ See Institute for War & Peace Reporting articles: "Northern Ugandan Aid Programme Probed" and "Project funds stalled amid fraud concerns" from 13 August 2008 and 25 September 2008 respectively.

¹⁴ The IMTC was chaired by the Head of Public Services and included members from each of the line ministries.

¹⁵ "Terms of Reference for a Technical Committee on Post War Recovery Plan for Northern Uganda," p. 3.

¹⁶ "Voices of the LRA Affected Areas on the PRDP," CSOPNU, March 2007.

¹⁷ A full listing of consultations completed by the IMTC is included in Appendix 1 of the PRDP document.

¹⁸ As noted in the "Concluding Remarks on Behalf of Local Development Partners," given during the PRDP Workshop at Statistics House, Kampala, 28-29 February 2008.

¹⁹ "Voices from the LRA Affected Areas on the PRDP," CSOPNU, March 2007. Pp. 1. Also, "Perspectives on the PRDP: A Simplified and Annotated Version," CSOPNU. Pp. 3. 2007.

²⁰ The IMTC Terms of Reference for PRDP drafting only includes Kitgum, Pader, Apac, Gulu, Lira, Arua, Moyo, Adjumani, Yumbe, Nebbi, Moroto, Kotido, Nakapiripirit, Soroti, Kabermaido, Kumi, Katakwi and Pallisa.

²¹ Interview with district official, Mbale, 17 September 2008.

²² RLP report "Only Peace Can Restore the Confidence of the Displaced" found that "It is clear that the JMC was created in an ad hoc attempt to diffuse growing international pressure." Pp. VII.

²³ "Report of the Joint Monitoring Committee," Office of the Prime Minister. Some government officials interviewed indicate that the total figure was actually closer to UGX 15 billion. Interview with Government official, Kampala, 16 October 2008.

²⁴ Respondents cited 33,000 iron sheets that were supposed to be distributed to IDPs as part of return packages that have not

KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

FINDING 1: GOU'S FUNDING COMMITMENT TO PRDP IS BELOW WHAT WAS INITIALLY PROMISED

At the time of its launch, the PRDP budget called for UGX 337,476,023,360 to be spent in the Fiscal Year 2008/09, UGX 327,520,420,251 in FY 2009/10 and UGX 426,738,290,558 in FY 2010/11.²⁵ The funding breakdown by strategic objective for the three-year period is as follows:²⁶

Strategic Objective	Total Funding (UGX)	% of Total Budget
Consolidation of state authority	259,805,128,720 (USD 162.4 million)	23.8%
Rebuilding and empowering communities	517,489,619,951 (USD 323.4 million)	47.4%
Revitalization of the economy	253,112,895,260 (USD 158.2 million)	23.2%
Peacebuilding and reconciliation	29,528,991,184 (USD 18.5 million)	2.7%

It is now clear, however, that the GoU's commitment will be significantly less than these initial projections. In his budget speech to Parliament on 12 June 2008, Finance Minister Suruma indicated that government would commit UGX 51.68 billion (approximately USD 32.3 million) for PRDP programmes in 2008/09.²⁷ According to a recent New Vision article, the GoU's 2008/09 PRDP commitment has since increased to UGX 97 billion (approximately USD 60.6 million).²⁸ Several government officials interviewed revise that figure to UGX 82 billion (approximately USD 51.3 million),²⁹ which ironically is the same amount the GoU will spend on a new presidential airplane.³⁰ However, even the highest reported figure of UGX 97 billion still amounts to less than 30% of the initially promised first year budget of UGX 337.5 billion. This suggests that the GoU's plan to have donor funds account for only 14% of total PRDP funding will have to be revised.³¹

A key factor preventing the GoU from meeting its PRDP funding commitments is its reluctance to follow through on a promise to increase overall funding levels authorised under the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). The MTEF limits government spending nationally in the interests of macroeconomic stability. Without an increase in MTEF ceilings, the GoU must move funds from other sectors and districts to the PRDP. Findings suggest that the GoU is reluctant to do this at least in part because the political cost of moving money away from non-PRDP districts and non-PRDP related sectors would be high.³²

been fully distributed. Reports also indicate the sheets were painted yellow and given to NRM supporters.

²⁵ PRDP document, p. 9. The GoU Fiscal Year runs from July through June.

²⁶ Ibid, pp. 113-115. Conversions to USD are only approximations and were determined by dividing UGX totals by 1600 and then rounding to the nearest tenth.

²⁷ Budget Speech for FY 2008/09 delivered by Honorable Suruma to the Parliament of Uganda on 12 June 2008.

²⁸ "More sh97n for north peace plan," New Vision, Sunday, 5 October 2008.

²⁹ Interview with government official, Kampala, 16 October 2008.

³⁰ "Sh82b presidential jet report vanishes," Daily Monitor, 18 October 2008.

³¹ According to an OPM presentation at Soroti Inn during the ACODE workshop on PRDP for Eastern Region, 22 May 22 2008 attended by LC5 Chairman, MPs, cultural leaders and members of the media. Similar figures were given by OPM representatives at workshops for Nordic NGOs in April 2008 and ISIS WICCE in August 2008.

³² Interview with central government official, Kampala, 16 October 2008.

That the funding for the PRDP is insufficient becomes more apparent when comparing budget allocations by PRDP programmes between 2007/08 and 2008/09. As the following table demonstrates, Strategic Objective 4 (SO4) on Peacebuilding and Reconciliation sees a 9% overall *decrease* in funding from 2007/08 to 2008/09, yet this may be the most important cornerstone of the recovery process. Additionally, the SO4 project on Public Information, Education and Communication and Counseling (IECC) does not even have a budget line in the 2008/09 PRDP budget. IECC is the mechanism for informing community members about PRDP activities and promoting local and national dialogue on reconciliation between former combatants, civilians and the government.³³ The Community Development and Livelihoods project within Strategic Objective 2 (SO2), responsible for increasing basic services in areas of IDP return, is reduced by 15% in the 2008/9 budget as compared to the 2007/8 budget.³⁴ Finally, some PRDP districts and municipalities will actually experience *decreases* in their overall government transfers for 2008/09 as compared to 2007/08.³⁵

PRDP Programme	Prog. Code	FY2007/08	FY2008/09	Variance	% Change
1.2 Police Enhancement	1.2	23.864	28.198	4.334	18%
1.3 Judicial Services Enhancement	1.3	15.023	19.335	4.312	29%
1.4 Prisons Enhancement	1.4	6.326	8.749	2.423	38%
1.5 Rationalisation of Auxiliary Forces	1.5	6.337	9.158	2.821	45%
1.6 Local Government Enhancement	1.6	26.246	27.237	0.992	4%
2.1 Humanitarian Assistance	2.1	21.604	26.568	4.964	23%
2.3a Community Development - Basic Education	2.3a	28.186	34.147	5.961	21%
2.3b Community Development - Water and Sanitation	2.3b	40.558	41.897	1.339	3%
2.3c Community Development - Health	2.3c	47.900	85.624	37.724	79%
2.3d Community Development -Livelihoods and Social Protection	2.3d	5.041	4.282	-0.759	-15%
3.1 Production and Marketing Enhancement	3.1	34.809	49.903	15.094	43%
3.2a Infrastructure Rehabilitation - Roads	3.2a	75.554	79.571	4.018	5%
3.2b Infrastructure Rehabilitation - Electricity	3.2b	0.017	0.125	0.108	635%
3.3 Environment and Natural Resource Management	3.3	0.429	0.382	-0.047	-11%
4.2 Demobilisation and Re-integration of Ex-combatants	4.2	3.438	3.132	-0.306	-9%
Total		335.332	418.309	82.977	25%

The bleak PRDP funding picture is also reflected in various sector plans for PRDP implementation. According to one official, for instance, the Ministry of Education is simply planning to use its normal performance review methods to allocate funding to PRDP districts since no new funds seem to be forthcoming for the PRDP specifically. “Since many of the lowest performing districts happen to be in the north, they will get more funding, but not because of any PRDP.”³⁶ Also, the Ministry of Health is reportedly planning to provide an additional 20 million shillings per PRDP district and 5 million per PRDP municipal council for next year, far short of the 39.921 billion UGX called for in Year 1 of the PRDP programme on health.³⁷ One government official said, “No one really knows how much the sectors have actually received.”³⁸

33 For a longer discussion of GoU’s failure to pay adequate attention to SO4. (www.refugeelawproject.org/www.beyondjuba.org), see Refugee Law Project Director Dr. Chris Dolan’s paper “Is the PRDP a Three Legged Table?”

34 Figures are taken from a Ministry of Finance spreadsheet entitled “PRDP Matrix BFP (Revised)” received via email on 13 October 2008.

35 For example, Butaleja District and Moroto Municipality see decreases compared to their 2007/08 funding levels, according to MFPEP documents.

36 Interview with central overnment official, Kampala, 21 August 2008.

37 Interview with central government official, Kampala, 21 August 2008.

38 Interview with central government official, Kampala, 16 October 2008.

FINDING 2: THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER DOES NOT HAVE THE CAPACITY TO PERFORM ITS REQUIRED MONITORING AND OVERSIGHT RESPONSIBILITIES AS OUTLINED IN THE PRDP



An Acholi man in Lalogi IDP Camp demolishes the family hut in preparation for return.

The PRDP hands primary responsibilities for PRDP implementation to a Coordination and Management Unit (CMU) within the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). Due to limited funding, however, the CMU has yet to be created and is not expected to be up and running until FY 2009/10.³⁹ In the absence of a functioning CMU, OPM technical officers have been forced to conduct PRDP activities alongside their existing workloads, slowing down the rate of implementation considerably. The situation in OPM has been further complicated by the GoU's recent decision to appoint two PRDP Commissioners without prior

notification to OPM staff and without an outline of the commissioners' roles and responsibilities.⁴⁰ OPM did recently staff a new office in Gulu to assist with PRDP implementation. However, this office is poorly facilitated and in need of additional capacity.⁴¹ Furthermore, a PRDP Monitoring Committee (PMC) comprised of district leaders and civil society representatives that is supposed to meet once per quarter to review implementation progress has yet to meet, their meeting having been postponed several times.⁴² In his speech formally launching the PMC, President Museveni stated, "In the implementation of the PRDP, the PMC holds the key to the door of success."⁴³ When asked why the PMC has yet to meet, one government official commented, "The reason is, honestly, that there really isn't any activity to monitor at this point."⁴⁴

FINDING 3: PRDP PROJECTS CURRENTLY BEING IMPLEMENTED LACK A COHERENT FOCUS AND MAY BE AFFECTED BY THE PERSONAL INTERESTS OF POLITICAL ELITES

The GoU reports that it has implemented the following pilot projects during the past year: the purchase of tractors and agricultural inputs; Karamoja Integrated Development and Disarmament Programme (KIDDP); procurement of ferry services and electricity extension in Teso; financing the MAYANNK

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ It is expected that the commissioners' title will soon be changed to PRDP Executive Directors, providing further confusion on the extent of their role in the implementation process. Interview with Government official, Kampala, 16 October 2008.

⁴¹ An OPM representative interviewed in Gulu on 2 September 2008 did not even have his own copy of the PRDP document.

⁴² The PMC is modeled after the Joint Monitoring Committee used to oversee implementation of the Emergency Humanitarian Action Plan (EHAP).

⁴³ Speech by Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, H.E. The President of Uganda at the launch of the PRDP Monitoring Committee (PMC) at Hotel Africana. 11 February 2008.

⁴⁴ Interview with central government official, Kampala, 16 October 2008.

workplan for West Nile; procurement of tractors and inputs for Masindi and Acholi sub-regions; electricity extension, hydraform machines and road rehabilitation for Lango sub-region; electricity extension and road rehabilitation for Elgon sub-region and Bukedea district; and provision of food and non-food requirements to facilitate return of displaced people.⁴⁵ Additionally, the GoU recently announced that two additional priority areas on industrialisation and hydro-electric power would be added to the PRDP, though no details of the proposed programmes could be obtained in the course of the research.⁴⁶

To date the GoU has not indicated why these particular projects were selected for pilot, and how the projects align with any larger strategic plan for PRDP implementation. Without any objective criteria, respondents expressed concern that projects were being selected to advance the interests of particular political elites. For example, OPM allocated UGX 621 million over the past two years for construction of a 25km road from Mbale to Bududa using PRDP funding.⁴⁷ At present, the project is 60% complete and is scheduled to be finished in December 2008. While it could not be verified, one district official opined that funding for the project was secured under PRDP in part because the road will serve the home area of a key central government official.⁴⁸ Also, local officials in Gulu district were recently ordered by the central government to create a list of cultural leaders remaining in camps so they could be personally provided with materials for return.⁴⁹ Although the materials are certainly needed and appreciated, some respondents worried that they were given with the expectation that political support would be provided to the ruling party in future elections.⁵⁰

FINDING 4: THE FAILURE TO COORDINATE AND COMMUNICATE PRDP ACTIVITIES AT A NATIONAL LEVEL HAS LEFT DISTRICT LEADERS CONFUSED ABOUT PRDP'S IMPLICATIONS FOR THEM AND THEIR CONSTITUENTS

Key government officials in Gulu and Mbale stressed that the lack of information from the central government jeopardised their ability to incorporate the PRDP into their District Development Plans (DDPs). According to one district official in Gulu, "Nothing has been put in black and white. I'm not yet aware if the district is going to receive funding directly. If so, we should be including this in our planning documents now...this document, which has been highly popularised, may have nothing to show for it if the current budget is maintained."⁵¹ Some district officials in Gulu and Mbale also seem to have contradictory perceptions of the PRDP's scope and purpose. In Mbale officials commonly referred to it as a disaster preparedness plan that should also address natural disasters like flooding. In Gulu it was seen strictly as a plan to provide assistance to communities affected by the LRA conflict. Also, in both Gulu and Mbale several officials seemed to think that PRDP was a replacement for NUSAF, and would be implemented in a similar fashion. In actuality, the two initiatives are quite different. NUSAF is a demand-driven project in which local community groups submit proposals for direct funding, whereas the PRDP is a governmental plan in which funds "will trickle in indirectly through increased grants for local governments and sectors."⁵²

⁴⁵ OPM presentation, "Challenges and Opportunities in the Implementation of the PRDP." Soroti Inn, 22 May 2008.

⁴⁶ These additions were confirmed by government officials at a PRDP Workshop held in February 2008 at Statistics House, Kampala.

⁴⁷ The official project title is PRDP/Roads/07-08/01 Rehab of Mbale-Busano-Bududa Road.

⁴⁸ Interview with district official, Mbale, 17 September 2008.

⁴⁹ "Acholi chiefs get housing materials," Daily Monitor, 17 September 2008.

⁵⁰ Interview with central government official, Gulu, 2 September 2008.

⁵¹ Interview with district official, Gulu, 2 June 2008.

⁵² Interview with central government official, Gulu, 2 September 2008.

FINDING 5: KNOWLEDGE ABOUT PRDP AT THE GRASSROOTS IS LOW AND OFTEN INACCURATE

Confusion about the PRDP is even more apparent at sub-county and parish levels. For example, one woman living in a displacement camp reported that she has not returned home “because PRDP is coming” and she’s afraid she might miss it if she leaves the camp.⁵³ During a community meeting in a transit site, one person out of fifty indicated that she had heard of the PRDP, but only knew that it was “some kind of government help for going home.”⁵⁴ Additionally, one humanitarian aid worker reported that in Pabo Camp not even one of the two hundred camp residents she works with had heard of the PRDP.⁵⁵ Another aid worker reported that no one she spoke with in Langiriyiri Parish, Gulu District, knew about the PRDP.⁵⁶ In Mbale, even the director of a key local civil society group responsible for presenting community concerns to the district government had never heard of the PRDP prior to being interviewed.⁵⁷

One result of local confusion is that existing distrust of the GoU in these areas is beginning to increase. For example, since no meaningful consultations were conducted prior to the addition of industrialisation and hydro-electric power programmes, local communities have expressed fear that the PRDP may be used as a way for government to grab land and co-opt what are interpreted as community assets.⁵⁸ Also, the GoU’s failure to explain why additional sub-regions were added to the PRDP has created the belief, particularly in Acholi sub-region, that the PRDP is a tool to expand NRM support in eastern regions. One respondent in Gulu district said, “This is camouflage. They call it a recovery plan for the north while using donor money to provide political rewards in the east.”⁵⁹ Another respondent suggested that the PRDP’s inclusion of 40 districts “is fine if it’s for politics, but for a technical document to recover the north, it’s not.”⁶⁰ Even a central government official interviewed in Gulu admitted that “eastern regions were smuggled in” mostly because there is little economic enterprise there, not because their experience with conflict warranted a special post-conflict recovery programme.⁶¹ Whether valid or not, this rising distrust limits the PRDP’s ability to contribute to peace and development in the northern region.

CONCLUSION

Launching the PRDP was an important and commendable step by the GoU towards promoting recovery in the war-torn region of Northern Uganda. However, since its launch the PRDP has achieved little because of insufficient funding, incoherent project selection and widespread confusion across sectors, districts and local communities about how implementation is supposed to proceed. As a result, the PRDP has thus far been a continuation of politics as usual rather than the affirmative action for Northern Uganda that was promised. Without a significant shift in commitment and attitudes among all actors, the PRDP will likely follow the path of previous recovery efforts like NURP and NUSAF, which were plagued by delays and corruption and

⁵³ Interview with civil society representative, Gulu, 2 September 2008.

⁵⁴ Community meeting facilitated by AVSI on 6 June 2008 in Adek Sub-Country, Gulu District.

⁵⁵ Interview with civil society representative, Gulu, 30 May 2008.

⁵⁶ Interview with civil society representative, Gulu, 2 September 2008.

⁵⁷ Interview with civil society representative, Mbale, 18 September 2008.

⁵⁸ For example, residents in Amuru are protesting the proposed plan to build a Madhvani sugar plantation there (see Daily Monitor article “Madhvani’s sugar project in balance” from 18 July 2008).

⁵⁹ Interview with district official, Gulu, 27 May 2008.

⁶⁰ Interview with a district official, Gulu, 2 June 2008.

⁶¹ Interview with a central government official, Gulu, 2 September 2008.

ultimately did not fully achieve intended objectives. A failure to implement the PRDP now as the military option is being pursued will leave residents of Northern Uganda vulnerable to a new humanitarian crisis and further convinced that the GoU is not sincerely interested in addressing the political, social and economic divisions between various regions of Uganda that have fueled cyclical conflicts in the country since independence.⁶²

RECOMMENDATIONS

TO THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

- Take necessary action to fulfill PRDP funding commitments, even if it requires raising MTEF ceilings and/or reallocating existing spending within the national budget. However, avoid making cuts to district allocations in non-PRDP districts that could ignite new sources of regional conflict. Instead, find ways to cut or delay non-priority expenditures in other areas of the national budget.
- Give immediate priority to funding SO4 on Peacebuilding and Reconciliation and the stalled SO4 programme on Information, Education, Communication and Counseling (IECC) to address the lack of awareness about PRDP in rural communities.

TO THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER:

- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of actors involved in the implementation process at all levels, including bridging the communication gap between the central government and the local governments. Specifically, clarify the role of newly appointed PRDP Commissioners and complete the Appendix 3 “Results Matrix” in the PRDP.
- Expedite the creation of a Coordination and Monitoring Unit (CMU) within OPM.
- Hold the first meeting of the PRDP Monitoring Committee (PMC) and commit to holding future PMC meetings on a quarterly basis as specified in the PRDP.

TO THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA:

- Increase PRDP oversight activities by requiring an annual report from the Presidential Affairs Committee on PRDP progress and reports from the Public Accounts and Local Government Accounts Committees on PRDP spending.
- Conduct an assessment as to whether officially passing the PRDP would serve to help or hinder the implementation process and act accordingly.⁶³
- Support the drafting of a National Reconciliation Act that elevates SO4 on peacebuilding and reconciliation to the national agenda. Currently, the PRDP only conceives of reconciliation as encompassing community projects to be carried out within the LRA affected areas and does not address the

⁶² RLP report *Only Peace Can Restore the Confidence of the Displaced* states, “Unless the issues of north-south divisions and political and economic marginalisation that lie at the heart of the conflict are addressed, ongoing rebel activity will continue to plague the country’s citizens and stunt its growth and development for many more years to come.” October 2006. Pp. VII.

⁶³ This recommendation uses insights from Honorable Member of Parliament Alice Alaso’s speech in Soroti on 22 May 2008.

national dimension of the conflict.

TO PRDP DISTRICT GOVERNMENTS:

- Demand clear answers from the central government regarding the funding that is actually available for PRDP projects, and the reasons why particular projects are being selected for implementation.

TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY:

- Organise a donor conference immediately to develop a more robust early recovery programming strategy for the PRDP and the broader Northern Uganda transition. Such a strategy should aim at improving responses to early recovery and peacebuilding efforts, and in particular those activities focused on increasing people's trust in the state.
- Support the improvement in leadership and oversight capabilities of government officials in MFPED, OPM, sectors and districts, to ensure that the GoU is strategic in its planning and is completing PRDP projects on time and in a high quality fashion.⁶⁴

TO LOCAL CIVIL SOCIETY AND CULTURAL LEADERS:

- Work locally at LC1 and LC3 levels to conduct community-based monitoring of the PRDP along the model set forth by the CARE/Uganda Joint Christian Council project being piloted in Amuru and Pader Districts in order to hold government officials accountable at district and central levels.
- Conduct a robust assessment of IDP populations scattered across Northern Uganda (and in other areas of the country) with the view to aligning PRDP programming with their future aspirations.

⁶⁴ This recommendation was also recently put forward by Resolve Uganda in a "Memo to Policymakers" (www.resolveuganda.org)



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