

Experience paper

Addressing root causes of conflict: A case study of the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy and the Patriotic Resistance Front of Ituri (FRPI) in Ituri Province, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo



Oslo, May 2019

About the Author:

Ingebjørg Finnbakk has been deployed by the Norwegian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights (NORDEM) to the Stabilization Support Unit (SSU) in MONUSCO from August 2016 until February 2019. Together with SSU Headquarters and Congolese partners she has been a key actor in developing and implementing the ISSSS program in Ituri Province, leading to a joint MONUSCO and Government process and strategy aimed at demobilizing a 20-year-old armed group in Ituri, the Patriotic Resistance Front of Ituri (FRPI).

The views expressed in this report are her own, and do not represent those of either the UN or the Norwegian Refugee Council/NORDEM.

About NORDEM:

The Norwegian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights (NORDEM) is NORCAP's civilian capacity provider specializing in human rights and support for democracy. NORDEM has supported the SSU with personnel since 2013, hence contribution significantly with staff through the various preparatory phases as well as during the implementation.

Acknowledgements:

Reaching the point of implementing ISSSS phase two programs has required a lot of analyses, planning and stakeholder engagement. The work presented in this report would not be possible without all the efforts of previous SSU staff under the leadership of Richard de La Falaise. The FRPI process would not have been possible without the support and visions from Francois van Lierde (deployed by NORDEM) and Frances Charles at SSU HQ level. Thanks also to Betu Kajigi (deployed by NORDEM) who in February 2019 took over my work as focal point for the FRPI process in support to MONUSCO leadership and National partners.

MONUSCO leadership have protected and supported the process. A special thanks goes to the Bangladesh Army for having the courage to go out from their comfort zone as military in support to the innovative political process

Political engagement and community mobilization would not be possible without brave and determined actions from the Civil Society and Congolese Government, including the Governmental Stabilization and Reconstruction program (STAREC). Last but not the least – Eric Mongo (ACIAR) and Jean Marc Mazio

(STAREC) have been crucial for this process to happen and are fighting every day to see peace and development in Ituri.

Table of Contents

I. Introduction	10
1.1. The International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (ISSSS)	10
1.2. Why are lessons learned from the ISSSS relevant?.....	11
1.3. Aim and scope of the Experience Paper	13
1.4. Methodology and outline	13
PART I: CONCEPTS AND BACKGROUND	15
II. Introduction	15
2.1. Stabilization and the ISSSS	15
2.1.1. Revised ISSSS post 2012	15
2.1.2. ISSSS 2008–2012 and the understanding of Stabilization	17
2.2. ISSSS and MONUSCO	19
III. From theory to practice.....	20
3.1. Introduction.....	20
3.2. Key steps towards an ISSSS program.....	20
3.3. Coordinating the implementation of the ISSSS	22
3.4. Conclusion	22
PART II: CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION: THE CASE OF ITURI PROVINCE	24
IV. Introduction.....	24
4.1. Ituri Province	24
V. Outlining the Democratic Dialogue and Conflict Transformation Process.....	26
5.1. Pre-launching phase: January 2017 – August 2017.....	26
5.1.1. Introduction.....	26
5.1.2. Conflict Analysis.....	27
5.1.3. ISSSS program guided by conflict dynamics	28
5.1.4. Activating the <i>state</i> and <i>society</i>	30
5.1.5. Actor Mapping and Political Engagement Strategy.....	32
5.1.6. Towards MONUSCO Civilian - Military Comprehensive Approach to Neutralize the FRPI ...	32
5.1.7. Summing up.....	34
5.2. Program launch and first political milestones: August – December 2017	34
5.2.1. Bottom up: <i>Barza communautaire</i> and first round of Democratic Dialogue.	34
5.2.2. Bringing <i>bottom-up</i> and the political engagement strategy together: Cohesive Leadership Session 35	
5.2.3. Establishing contacts with the FRPI and access updated “demands”	37
5.2.4. First high-level meeting in Kinshasa chaired by the Vice Prime Minister.	38
5.2.5. MONUSCO: Political Engagement and Comprehensive Approach.....	38
5.3. From risk of spillover of neighboring conflict to validation of National Action Plan: January – July 2018.....	39
5.3.1. Humanitarian crisis, the risk of spillover and reduced engagement.....	40
5.3.2. Elaboration of the National Action Plan	41

5.3.3. Validation of the National Action Plan	43
5.4. First meeting between Go DRC and the FRPI and political milestones: July – December 2018	45
5.4.1. First step of the National Action Plan: Exploratory Mission.....	45
5.4.2. High-level meeting and elaboration of peace agreement.....	47
5.4.3. Trust Fund opportunities as <i>carrot</i> to maintain political momentum	48
5.4.4. Improved Army and FRPI relations: checks and balances stop possible break in process....	49
5.4.5. Electoral periode and Current Status	50
5.5. Conclusion	52
PART III: ANALYSIS.....	55
VI. Area Based conflict sensitivity and Democratic Dialogue.....	55
6.1. Targeted: The identification of context specific drivers and actors	55
6.2. <i>Inclusive</i> – who should take part and how to include them?	56
6.2.1. Civil Society and community level	57
6.2.2. Including women in the peace process.	58
6.2.3. Including the FRPI and the State Army.....	59
6.2.4. Political engagement – the role of STAREC and MONUSCO	60
6.2.5. Transparency and communication as means to checks, balances and accountability	61
6.2.6. Summing up: Democratic Dialogue’s <i>checks-and balances</i>	62
VII. Political solutions to conflicts and what it requires	62
7.1. Building support to follow the <i>political approach</i>	62
7.2. <i>Real will versus good enough</i> commitment by stakeholders	64
7.3. Summing up.....	64
VIII. Beyond the FRPI case.....	65
8.1. Apply the FRPI pilot on armed groups in the DRC?.....	66
8.2. Lessons learned to other Peacekeeping Missions	66
SUMMING UP KEY LESSONS LEARNT	68
RECOMMENDATIONS	71
IX. To Donors	71
X. To MONUSCO:.....	72

Table of Figures

Figure 1 Simplified model of the four common negative conflict dynamics from ISSSS.	16
Figure 2 Map of South Irumu territory, Ituri province.	26
Figure 3 Illustration of the democratic dialogue framework.	29
Figure 4 Community consultations September 2017.	35
Figure 5 Cohesive leadership session October 2017.	36
Figure 6 Cohesive leadership session October 2017. Group photo.	37
Figure 7 Monitoring committee. Validation of National Action Plan, Kinshasa June 2018.	43
Figure 8 Exploratory mission, August 2018.	46
Figure 9 Exploratory mission, August 2018. Armed man.	46
Figure 10 High level meeting chaired by the Prime Minister, Kinshasa September 2018.	48
Figure 11 Meeting between FRPI leadership and the Coordinator of the monitoring mechanism of the Addis Abeba peace agreement, May 2019.	52
Figure 12 Symbol act by FRPI leadership of handing over a weapon to the State Army, May 2019.	52

Table of Tables

Table 1 Overview of ISSSS South Irumu program finances through the Stabilization Coherence Trust fund.	30
---	----

List of abbreviations

SSU: Stabilization Support Unit

ISSSS: International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy

TS: Technical Secretariat for the Stabilization Coherence Trust Fund

SCF: Stabilization Coherence Trust Fund

DDR/R: Disarmament, Demobilization, Reinsertion, Reintegration

STAREC: Congolese Government's Stabilization and Reconstruction Program

ACIAR: Help for Intercultural Communication and Rural Self-help (Local Non-Governmental Organization)

MONSCO: United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Executive summary

The International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (ISSSS) is the main planning and coordination framework between the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the Congolese government for stabilization interventions in the DRC.

After rounds of planning and consultations, ISSSS phase 2 programs were launched in three provinces of the Eastern DRC (South Kivu, North Kivu, and Ituri) in 2017, financed through a multi-donor Stabilization Coherence Trust Fund. This report outlines the general ISSSS content and principles. More specifically, it demonstrate how these were implemented in the Ituri Province to build a Democratic dialogue process leading to a political conflict transformation process aimed at signing a peace agreement between the Congolese Government and of the oldest armed groups remaining in the eastern DRC, namely the Patriotic Resistance Front of Ituri (FRPI). In line with the strategy, community and political stakeholders were brought together to identify the main priority for conflict transformation (FRPI) and to develop solutions to the problem. In support, MONUSCO piloted a Comprehensive civilian-military approach towards the neutralization of the FRPI. At the time of writing, despite constant challenges, the process has reached a level where a National Action Plan is validated, an official peace agreement is drafted and presented to all the main parties, and a conditional funding is made available for the implementation of the agreement by the National Government and International community. Importantly, the momentum and strong accountability mechanism within the inclusive dialogue is very much present, including a renewed engagement from the newly elected President.

The ISSSS was developed in 2008 to support the implementation of the DRC government's Stabilization and Reconstruction program (STAREC). Despite noted results within various sectors, the UN Security Council in 2012 requested^[1] a strategic review of the ISSSS questioning the strategies' impact on the root causes of the conflicts hampering stability. Additionally, during the review period, key recommendations promoted by the United Nations emphasized the need for peacekeeping missions to be more targeted, conflict-sensitive and context specific, inclusive and people-centered, seeking political solutions to modern conflicts. Based on these developments, the revised ISSSS adopts a more integrated, targeted, and holistic approach towards conflict transformation by addressing the root causes of the various and highly context-specific conflict dynamics in Eastern DRC. Key for the new approach is an inclusive *Democratic Dialogue* process where communities and authorities at both local and national level participates in a process of dialogue to identify and develop solutions to the specific conflict dynamics,

supported by extensive conflict analysis. In addition, five other multisectoral pillars and programmatic principles are guiding the implementation of the ISSSS programs.

The case from Ituri Province and the ISSSS Democratic Dialogue process demonstrates how in-depth conflict analysis in combination with stakeholder mapping, including community consultations and political engagement, through an inclusive and transparent process from local to national have provided *checks and balances* that has been more and more observed during the process. If institutional or individual actors within the process – be it the government, community, military, or the FRPI – does not deliver or do act in a controversial way, another part of the dialogue seeks to put pressure, accountability and correction towards the other part. The inclusivity and transparency of the process has – with time – made it less vulnerable for internal and external shocks, including those working actively to spoil the process. Additionally, the methodology and approach has proven useful in building trust and commitment crucial for the process to move forward and reach concrete results. Finally, the case underlines how much efforts and strategic actions that is required to translate the strategy, collaboration and principles into practice.

It is important to avoid using this experience and model as yet a fixed template for other cases within and beyond the DRC. However, based on this experience, as well as research and policy recommendations building on larger reviews and contexts, I argue that lessons learnt from this case will serve as useful for applied methodological and context specific approaches in other cases aimed at addressing root causes of conflict.

I. Introduction

This Experience Paper outlines the general content and principles of the International Communities' stabilization framework in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (ISSSS). More specifically, it demonstrates how the strategy was implemented in the Ituri Province to build a Democratic dialogue process leading to a political conflict transformation process aimed at signing a peace agreement between the Congolese Government and of the oldest armed groups remaining in the eastern DRC, namely the Patriotic Resistance Front of Ituri (FRPI). At the time of writing, despite constant challenges, the process has reached a level where a National Action Plan is validated, an official peace agreement is drafted and presented to all the main parties, and a conditional funding is made available for the implementation of the agreement by the National Government and International community. Importantly, the momentum and strong accountability mechanism within the inclusive dialogue is very much present, including a renewed engagement from the newly elected President.

The case from Ituri Province and the ISSSS Democratic Dialogue process demonstrates how in-depth conflict analysis in combination with stakeholder mapping, including community consultations and political engagement through an inclusive and transparent process from local to national have provided *checks and balances*, accountability and trust. The inclusivity and transparency of the process has – with time – made it less vulnerable for internal and external shocks, including those working actively to spoil the process. Additionally, the methodology and approach has proved useful in building trust and commitment crucial for the process to move forward and reach concrete results. Finally, the case underlines how much efforts and strategic actions that are required to translate the strategy, collaboration and principles into practice.

1.1. **The International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (ISSSS)**

The International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (ISSSS) is the main planning and coordination framework between the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) and the Congolese government for stabilization interventions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The ISSSS was developed in 2008 to support the implementation of the DRC government's Stabilization and Reconstruction program (STAREC). Both the ISSSS and STAREC were developed to deliver tangible

peace dividends and reinforce political process following the signature of the 2008 accords and the 2009 Peace Agreement¹.

The first phase of ISSSS (2008-2012) saw several results in terms of infrastructure and socio-economic initiatives but an overall focus on technical and *top-down* interventions did not seem to tackle the more complex root causes of conflict in the Eastern DRC (Solhjell and Rosland 2017; de Vries 2015)². In 2012, the UN Security Council requested^[1]_{SEP} a strategic review of the implementation of the ISSSS, led by the Stabilization Support Unit (MONUSCO) with the support and input from the Congolese government and international donors. The revision concluded that the first phase of ISSSS had had limited impact on the complex political problems and conflicts hampering stability. The revised ISSSS therefore adopts a more integrated, targeted, and holistic approach towards conflict transformation, by addressing the root causes of the various and highly context-specific conflict dynamics in Eastern DRC. Key to the new approach is an inclusive *Democratic Dialogue* process where communities and authorities at local and national level, participates in a process of dialogue to identify and develop solutions to the specific conflict dynamics, supported by extensive conflict analysis. In additions, five other multisectoral pillars and programmatic principles are guiding the implementation of the ISSSS. After rounds of planning and consultations, ISSSS phase 2 programs were launched in three provinces of the Eastern DRC (South Kivu, North Kivu, and Ituri) in 2017, financed through a multi-donor Stabilization Coherence Trust Fund (SCF)³.

1.2. Why are lessons learned from the ISSSS relevant?

First, recent recommendations from United Nations Head Quarters (UNHQ) and researchers are reflected in the ISSSS. In recent years, several new policy approaches have been promoted by the UNHQ related to the women, peace and security agenda, peacebuilding architecture and UN peace operation through the

¹ During the peace and transition period, following the Second Congolese War (1998-2003) and the first ever Democratic Presidential election in 2006, a series of peace agreements and reforms were initiated. The Goma accords (2008) refer to an agreement between various local armed groups and the Congolese Government. The 2009 peace agreement reforms to an agreement between the Congolese Government, Rwanda and the CNDP rebel movement.

² Solhjell, R and Rosland, M. (2017). "Stabilisation in the Congo: Opportunities and Challenges". *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*, 6(1): 2, pp. 1–13. Solhjell and Rosland were seconded by NORDEM as Stabilization Officer and Researcher in 2015. Hugo de Vries. (2015). 'Going Around in Circles: The Challenges of Peacekeeping and Stabilization in the Democratic Republic of Congo', Conflict Research Unit (CRU) Report, Clingendael Institute. <h p://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/les/going_around_in_circles.pdf>. [Accessed February 2019]. de Vries worked for SSU between 2010 – 2014.

³ Per May 2019, the following donors contributes to the SCF: Germany, Norway, Sweden, UK, The Netherlands, United Nations Peacebuilding Fund.

High-level Independent Panel of Peace Operations (HIPPO) report and the Action for Peace Agenda⁴. Key recommendations are reflected in the ISSSS such as the need for peace operations to focus on politics and seek *political solutions to conflicts* instead of technical and military approaches. Furthermore, the approach should invest more in *people* and *partnerships*. The ISSSS is a political strategy that also adopts a *bottom up* and *people centered approach* that invests heavily in community engagement to identify and implement solutions. Strategic partnerships at all levels are critical for the operationalization of the ISSSS, with a solid (or *good enough*) engagement of the Congolese Government⁵, the international community, the different parts of the UN system, civil society partners and the academia. Furthermore, the HIPPO report concludes that a *holistic* and *comprehensive* approach to peace is needed, where multisectoral and cross cutting issues are addressed and where women and youth's engagement and voice are critical. Furthermore, there is a call for *conflict sensitive* and *context specific* responses (HIPPO 2015; Autesserre 2017; Karlsrud 2015)⁶ The ISSSS draws on detailed analyses of conflict drivers which allows to adopt and target planning and programming – a contrast to a criticized common peacekeeping practice applying standardized and top down designed interventions.

Second, there is an ongoing debate on what Stabilization is and should be. Since 2000, Stabilization has become more frequently used by the UN Security Council and Member States (Curran, D and Holtom, P 2015)⁷. However, there are various understandings on what “stabilization” is as well as the implications of the various given understandings. Furthermore, there are various opinions on what the content and consequences of these developments are. The HIPPO report highlights the need to “clarify the definition of stabilization.” As will be seen, the ISSSS adopts an innovative understanding of *stabilization* also as a

⁴ UN General Assembly Security Council, ‘United Our Strengths for Peace – Politics, Partnership and People: Report of the High- Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations’ (2015) http://www.un.org/sg/pdf/HIPPO_Report_1_June_2015.pdf [Accessed 18 May 2019]; “Action for Peacekeeping” (<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/action-for-peacekeeping-a4p>) [Accessed 18 May 2019]; These are also reflected in research e.g., Karlsrud, John. (2015). “How can the UN move towards a more people centered peace operations?” *Global Peace Operations Review Annual Compliation* and De Coning, C., & Peter, M. (2019). *United Nations Peace Operations in a Changing Global Order*. Palgrave Macmillan.

⁵ De Vries (2015, 22) argues that the collaboration with the Congolese government should not be considered “black or white” but a “good enough willingness” in particular cases may make changes possible despite an overall difficult system. As seen later in the paper, this is also reflected in the FRPI process.

⁶ Autesserre, S. (2017). International peacebuilding and local success: Assumptions and effectiveness. *International Studies Review*, 19(1), 114-132.

⁷ Curran, D and Holtom, P. (2015). “Resonating, Rejecting, Reinterpreting: Mapping the Stabilization Discourse in the United Nations Security Council, 2000–14”. *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*, 4(1): 50, 1–18,

response to criticism to the first phase of the ISSSS in the DRC – a phase very much in line with a common understanding of stabilization by UN and its Member State as well as researchers.

1.3. Aim and scope of the Experience Paper

In this paper, I aim to provide insights to the debate on what stabilization *could* be and, based on ISSSS, how and what it takes to put it in to practice. It is important to note that this paper is not an exhaustive analysis of what stabilization *should* be, the implications for future peacekeeping mandates and doctrines. Rather, it is positioned as a contribution and lessons learned from ISSSS and argue that there are elements from these experiences that resonate with recommendations from researchers and practitioners, which are relevant for future global debates on peace efforts and conflict transformation, Mission mandate, and doctrines. To answer *the could be*, the paper will outline the main principles and approaches of ISSSS. To answer the *how to*, experiences from Ituri Province will be presented in detail.

By asking the right questions, such as why people are fighting, and approaching stabilization both in a holistically and targeted manner to address core drivers of conflict, it is possible to begin the process of breaking the cycle of violence” (Solhjell and Rosland 2017, 2).

The case from Ituri Province demonstrates how, through this approach, a conflict transformation process has *begun* in a more coherent and transparent manner than seen before. As will be demonstrated, the inclusive and participatory dialogue process has created *checks and balances* allowing the process to move forward. Following the spirit of Autesserre's (2017, 119), claiming the necessity to demonstrate *what works* with regards to peacebuilding initiatives, the Ituri case will be used to demonstrate how asking the right questions and drawing on the ISSSS principles of methodology, important lessons can be applied to other contexts with similar dynamics – not by copying the content and solution of the approach but the methodology on how to get there.

1.4. Methodology and outline

This report is based on my own experiences and reflection, in consultations with SSU colleagues and key partners. It should be noted that it is not a scientific work or method. Hence, the process and result described does not seek to compare to other processes or how other – also possibly good processes – could have been. It seeks on the other hand to establish what worked and what can be learned from this process.

The report will proceed as follow. I start part one with providing a short background of the current International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy, also linking the strategy broadly to ongoing debates and recommendations related to Stabilization. Thereafter, key planning principles and concepts for the implementation are outlined.

In part two, I apply the ISSSS concepts more concretely on the case of Ituri Province, and more specifically, the planning and implementation of the conflict transformation process, targeting the armed group FRPI in the area of intervention, is described in detail.

Finally, in part three I seek to reflect on the key lessons learned and perspectives important to reach the current momentum of an inclusive and participatory conflict transformation process from local to national level. This part includes key reflections on how to put policies in to practice as well as reflections on how it can be capitalized on for MONUSCO and other peacekeeping operations.

I conclude by arguing that the ISSSS provides useful concepts in line with lessons learned from previous stabilization efforts in the Congo and mor global reviews by academics and practitioners. However, for these concepts to be implemented successfully, it is necessary to understand how much detailed efforts that are required. I argue that lessons learnt are relevant for other cases but one needs to be careful in not replicating the process *activities* but rather the methodology of work.

PART I: CONCEPTS AND BACKGROUND

II. Introduction

Stabilization is a wide concept and approach that lack a common definition both by researchers and practitioners (Aoi in de Coning et al (ed) 2017, 4)⁸. In the first part of this section I will outline the definition of stabilization according to the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (ISSSS), post 2012. This definition is what has been understood as stabilization in the case elaborated in part 2 of the paper. Further, I give a brief explanation of how things were prior to 2012, including why the ISSSS strategy was revised. This is important to position the case of the revised ISSSS within ongoing debates on stabilization. As will be seen, the ISSSS represents a relative innovative understanding of stabilization, and resonates with several key recommendations from UNHQ, such as the HIPPO report and researches– in response and criticism to previous stabilization approaches.

2.1. Stabilization and the ISSSS

2.1.1. Revised ISSSS post 2012

The revised ISSSS connects the concept of stabilization and its related planning phases to the specific root causes and drivers of conflicts in the DRC⁹. Stabilization is defined as:

An integrated, holistic, but targeted process of enabling state and society to build mutual accountability and capacity to address and mitigate drivers of conflict creating the conditions for improved governance and longer term development (ISSSS 2013, 19)¹⁰.

⁸ Aoi, C and de Coning, C “Conclusion: Towards an United Nations Stabilization Doctrine – Stabilization as an Emerging Practice” in de Coning et al (ed). 2017. *UN Peacekeeping Doctrine in a New Era*. Global institutions. New York: Routledge. Page 288-311.

⁹ A key point of importance is the ISSSS aim and design acknowledging the necessity to understand the very context specific conflict dynamics in the various areas of interventions. This responds to criticisms of UN failing to grasp the local dynamics of conflict in the eastern DRC. See Autesserre, Severine. 2010. *The Trouble with the Congo. Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding*. New York: Cambridge University Press; Autesserre, Severine. (2012) “Dangerous Tales: Dominant Narratives on the Congo and Their Unintended Consequences.” *African Affairs* 95(3): 1-21.

¹⁰ International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy. 2013.
<https://monusco.unmissions.org/en/stabilization-strategy-issss> [Accessed April 2019]

At the root of the conflict are structural factors which keep the state weak and fragmented and which cause tensions between the state and its citizens, thereby creating conditions of conflict. Examples are patrimonialism ¹¹, fragmented identities, poverty, socio-demographic pressure and access to land. Combined with *conflict multipliers* (availability of small arms, light weapons, impunity, and activities of conflict entrepreneurs) these causes often lead to violence. A simplified model of four common negative conflict dynamics are presented below. It is important to note that each area of an ISSSS intervention requires its own context specific analysis of these dynamics, referring to the *targeted* aspect of the definition.

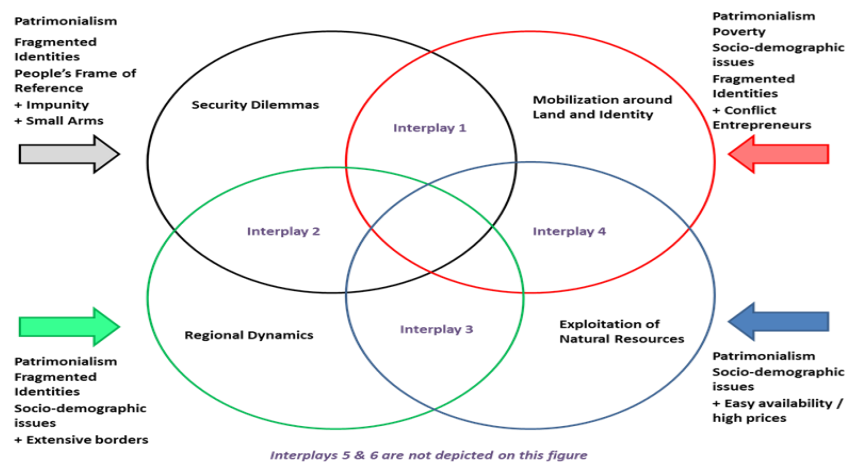


Figure 1 Simplified model of the four common negative conflict dynamics from ISSSS.

ISSSS argues that the only sustainable way to address the political and structural root causes and drivers of conflicts is through a *top down approach* - enabling the state to deliver - and *bottom up* - empowering the society to hold the state accountable. Hence, the definition engages communities and authorities at local and national level in inclusive and transparent democratic dialogues to identify causes and drivers of violence, and develop solutions to it through a transparent system. This refers to the *integrated* aspect of the definition - all stakeholders working together towards a common goal strengthening the emphasizes on the community affirms the vital role of communities - and not only the state – in improving the situation in the eastern DRC. The dialogues must to be complemented by the high-level engagement and commitment of both the Congolese Government and international partners for stabilization interventions to succeed and be sustainable

¹¹ According to the ISSSS (2013, 0) “patrimonialism” is when the Congolese state and its citizens are caught up in a system in which everyone is part of a reciprocal network: to get ahead in life, they need to use their jobs or weapons to “feed” the network that keep them in position.

A *holistic* ISSSS approach puts the conflict transformation through Democratic Dialogues at center in addition to four other supportive pillars covering broad thematic areas addressing multi-sectorial and multidimensional challenges. The pillars are Security, Restoration of State Authority, Reintegration, Return and Socioeconomic Recovery, and Sexual and Gender Based Violence.¹² One way of understanding how to link the pillars to conflict transformation is to shape the interventions based on expressed needs through the Democratic Dialogues. Another way is to target the response in line with the specific conflict dynamics such as technical and mediation support to land conflicts, building trust and accountability between state services and population for security dilemma, or decrease tension and competition over resources in line under the objectives of building resilience and socio-economic recovery. As will be seen, such an integrated and holistic approach is important to gather support to the stabilization process and has a great potential in supporting the conflict transformation process.

Building on Resolution 1325 and related framework,¹³ and in line with recommendations from the HIPPO report (2015, 69), ISSSS gender guidelines and the operational manual for the Trust Fund exhorts gender sensitive analysis throughout the analysis, planning, budgeting, implementation, review, and evaluation of project. This includes a requirement of minimum 30% participation of women at all activities at least 15% of the total budget is devoted to meeting the specific needs of women, promoting gender equality and/or empowering women.

2.1.2. ISSSS 2008–2012 and the understanding of Stabilization

The revised ISSSS is a response to the criticism of the first phase of ISSSS in the DRC. In view of an *upswing* of peace initiatives and agreements in 2008–2009, there was a strong sense of international urgency to roll out activities under an integrated framework to support transition towards peace and bring the state back. MONUSCO brought the full weight of its military and civilian sections behind the design and roll-out of what would become the ISSSS, and in 2009, Kinshasa drafted its own stabilization and reconstruction program (STAREC) for which ISSSS formally became the support strategy (de Vries, 2015, 43).

¹² For more information on the pillars, see page from page 28 in the ISSSS (2013). The pillars have been operationalized through more detailed concept notes in 2016 and 2018. The newest update name the Gender pillar is Women Peace and Security.

¹³ *Operational Manuel Stabilization Coherence Trust Fund*. 2016; United Nations Security Council (UNSC) (2000) S/RES/1325, 31 October; Secretary General's 7-Point Action Plan for Women's Participation in Peacebuilding (2010), Paragraph 36:<www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2010/466> [Accessed May 2019]

During this first phase, the understanding of Stabilization was based on the principles of counterinsurgency operations, of *clearing, holding, and building* – clearing the insecurity and armed groups, hold the security and restore the state and build its capacities to manage conflict (de Vries, 2015, 43). The goal of this phase was to rehabilitate infrastructure, police, administration and justice, and support military operations to clear out any remaining armed resistance. In parallel, *peace dividends* and economic alternatives to at-risk groups for mobilization were set up. Furthermore, this was in line with what the Congolese Government requested international partners to support and what the Security Council found as an efficient way to solve post conflict issues – roll out the presence of the state and provide jobs for the ones that would otherwise join an armed group (de Vries 2015, 4).

The first phase of the ISSSS and the international urge to respond with stabilization initiatives resonates with an increase in stabilization mandates from the UN Security Council (Curran and Holtman 2015).¹⁴ However, since then, no formally adopted definition or doctrine covering stabilization by the UN exists and both the HIPPO report and researchers call for the need to clarify (Aoi C, C. de Coning and J.Karlsrud in de Coning et al (ed) 2017, 4;¹⁵ HIPPO 2015, 30). The first phase of ISSSS share characteristics of stabilization approaches applied by NATO and UN missions since 2000. In short, various degree of civilian or military oriented approaches are applied to further focus on re-establishing state authority in *failed states* through the provision of legitimate state authority, institution building, and delivery of key state services. It is supported by counterinsurgency, and predominantly aimed against non-state actors who challenge a state's monopoly of violence. Building especially on experiences from Iraq and Afghanistan leaning towards a *hot* approach of stabilization with an emphasis on force enforcement and counterinsurgency. In the DRC, to complement (or replace) ongoing ISSSS initiatives, *quick impact* and *Islands of Stability* approach was turned in to the main concept in addition to the Force Intervention Brigade– with an enforcement mandate set to proactively tackle the armed groups (Curran and Holtman 2015, 4; De Vries 2015, 38).¹⁶

¹⁴ Curran, D and Holtom, P (2015) demonstrates how a significant decrease in “stabilization” and “stabilization Mission mandates” were formulated in the UN security council from 2000 – 2014. Examples are Missions in DRC (MONUSCO), Haiti (MINUSTAH), Central African Republic (MINUSCA), and Mali (MINUSMA). For reflections on common characteristics, see Aoi and Coning in de Coning et al (ed) 2017; Karlsrud, J. (2017). Towards UN counter-terrorism operations?. *Third World Quarterly*, 38(6), 1215-1231

¹⁵ Aoi C, C. de Coning and J.Karlsrud “Introduction: Addressing the Emerging Gap between concepts, doctrines, and practice in UN peacekeeping Operations” in Cedric de Coning (ed) 2017. “UN peacekeeping doctrine in a new era.” Series Global Institutions. New York: Routledge. Page 1-31.

¹⁶ Resolution 2098 (2013) authorized a robust Force mandate through the Force Intervention Brigade (Curran and Holtom, 2015, 5). The exact meaning of ‘Islands of Stability’ seems to have shifted over time: from an end state

2.1.2.1. Revision of the ISSSS

The review of the first ISSSS was motivated by questioning the medium to long-term sustainability of the investments (ISSSS 2013, 1). Despite all the technical results, such as tens of thousands demobilized soldiers, increase in infrastructural capacity and state agents trained, and socio-economic support close to half a million people, the actual impact of the strategy in terms of peace consolidation and addressing drivers of conflicts in the eastern DRC was quite limited (de Vries 2015, 44). The limits of these projects to increase stability corresponds well with relevant external evaluations and research findings. These reports have found that conflicts in eastern DRC are political, requiring socio- economic and political solutions rather than technical ones (Solhjell and Rosland 2017, 4).

2.2. ISSSS and MONUSCO

In short, the ISSSS is situated within the MONUSCO mandate. However, experiences by SSU staff demonstrates that it has been a constant challenge to identify and implement comparative advantages within the Mission to fully use ISSSS as a tool for the whole Mission (de Vries 2015, 55). ISSSS is often seen as something that belongs to SSU and it seems that the *old* understanding of Stabilization, either as *clear, hold, build* or *island of stability* still remains dominating in following a mindset of “everything that makes people more happy and life better creates stability”, lacking long term and sustainable solutions. As will be argued later, the FRPI case served as a test for the Mission to fully embrace the potential of the ISSSS, as well as for ISSSS to align itself better with other initiatives within the Mission. This was especially demonstrated through the first ever MONUSCO Civilian-Military Comprehensive strategy specifically focusing on the FRPI issue.

The elements highlighted above such as *military* and *clear, hold build* share similarities with the dominating perception of stabilization and the first phase of the ISSSS (2008–2012). With the exception of some developments, especially in 2018, this is still the dominating view within the MONUSCO. As will be demonstrated, the revised version of the ISSSS responds to these shortcomings and demonstrate that a new approach and rethinking was needed. It demonstrated that stabilization, as defined by ISSSS, does not necessarily mean use of force but rather dialogue and political solutions to conflict, working not only with *one side* (Government), but position itself as a methodology *between* the state and the community

(when a territory is liberated from an armed group, it becomes an Island of Stability), to a methodology, deploying staff for short-term support of the deployment of police, administration and justice, and rehabilitation of buildings (deVries 2015, 146)

to enable them to mitigate drivers of conflict. The ISSSS do not offer fixed solutions but offers the methodology on how to identify them.

III. From theory to practice

3.1. Introduction

In July 2012, the UNSCR mandated a strategic review of the ISSSS, which was finalized and approved in April 2014. In short, the programs should now start by identifying the specific dynamics of the specific, local conflicts, through a so-called *Conflict Analysis and Needs Assessments* (CANAs). From this analysis, the programs should be designed as more holistic and targeted to the context specific dynamics. A key way the programs should achieve this was to have an integrated response where all relevant actors were involved in building solutions. In parallel, strategic and programmatic priorities were identified through inclusive consultative processes.

Below are some of the key steps in the design and planning of an ISSSS program.

3.2. Key steps towards an ISSSS program

3.2.1.1. Priority zones – area-based approach.

Prior to the *Conflict Analysis and Needs Assessments*, priority zones in the Eastern DRC were identified and prioritized. Once the revision of the ISSSS were completed, 23 potential zones were identified, based on criteria such as presence and scale of conflict driver and the possibility to have an impact. Out of these, 13 were prioritized, all within five provinces in Eastern Congo, namely North-Kivu, South-Kivu, Ituri, Haut-Uele and Bas-Uele. In line with the aim to hold inclusive processes, SSU, STAREC, UN Country Team, International and National NGOs, Government and Civil Society representatives were involved in identifying these zones, and they all formally recognized them in July 2014. As will be seen later, these steps are important in building a momentum for an ISSSS process as the sensitive issues -although constantly challenging - at least build on a participatory, transparent, inclusive, and consensual approach.

3.2.1.2. Provincial Stabilization Strategies and Priority Action Plans (SPAPS).

Following the identification of priority zones and conflict analysis, 2015 saw a series of inclusive and consultative sessions aimed at elaborating the *Provincial Stabilization Strategies and Priority Action Plans* (North Kivu, Sud Kivu, and Province Orientale), approved by provincial and national authorities in April 2015. The plans aimed at articulating a common vision of the Congolese Government and International

Community on stabilization issues, such as strategic priorities, engagement and action plans. Furthermore, it put an emphasis on conflict transformation through the Democratic Dialogue pillar, conflict drivers and analysis as well as possible solutions. As with the priority zones, this process was an important first step to seek support, political engagement as a precondition for the impact of stabilization.

3.2.1.3. Conflict Analysis and Needs Assessments conducted in Priority Zones

With support from the European Union and GIZ, for each Priority Zone, a *Conflict Analysis and Needs Assessment* (CANA) was conducted in 2014. To further inform the programming, the three selected zones (Kitchanga in North Kivu, Ruzizi in South Kivu and South Irumu in Ituri) were updated in 2016. In line with the definition of stabilization outlined above these analyses are crucial to have a context specific understanding of the drivers and causes in each specific targeted area of intervention. The CANAs, provincial strategies and action plans guided the development of the programmatic framework for the Priority Zones. Significant efforts were made by the ISSSS Technical Secretariat to facilitate ownership of the programs by local stakeholders. In this regard, restitutions were organized in the active Priority Zones to sensitize traditional leadership, civil society actors, and local government officials on the objectives of the programs and the need for local ownership.

3.2.1.4. Financing the implementation through the Stabilization Coherence Trust Fund.

The implementation of the ISSSS is mainly financed through a Multi-Trust Fund or bilateral funds.¹⁷ The program referred to in this paper is financed through the Stabilization Coherence Trust Fund (SCF) as part of the ISSSS phase 2 program roll out in South Kivu, North Kivu and Ituri during 2017.

The SCF was officially launched during the first meeting of the National Funding Board, held on April 6, 2016 in Kinshasa, and became fully operational after the approval of the Operational Manual by the co-presidents of the NFB (Ministry of Plan and the DSRSG/RC/HC) on August 6, 2016. This Fund was created by the Congolese Government and Member States, in order to create a “critical mass” of financial support that could guarantee for a minimum implementation of the ISSSS and facilitate the coordination of the different programs. Ideally, the SCF should be an addition to the bilateral programs. However, in practice, it has been the other way around where the large comprehensive Trust Fund programs has oriented the priorities of the Aligned projects.

¹⁷ The bilateral funding is called “Alignment”. Through established criteria, Donors can bilaterally finance programs which are aligned to the ISSSS. As per March 2019, the portfolio is at 220MUSD. NORDEM has seconded an Alignment Officer since July 2016.

The SCF is governed at the national and the provincial level by funding boards, which are comprised of the Congolese Government, MONUSCO, and contributing donors. The national board is responsible for the allocation of the overall funding strategy for each province, based on the recommendations of the ISSSS Secretariat, while the provincial boards are responsible for deciding on the distribution of funds of their respective envelopes to the different geographic Priority Zones as well as the five thematic pillars of the ISSSS. The governance structures are also designed to link the Government's strategic planning mechanisms for Stabilization, including the Steering Committee (Comite de Pilotage) presided by the Prime Minister and the Monitoring Committee (Comite de Suivi) by the Minister of Plan.

Following several steps outlined in the Operational Manual and a programming phase based on the steps outlined above, a call for proposal was launched and the UN agencies, International and National NGOs was selected to launch holistic and conflict specific targeted ISSSS projects during the year of 2017.¹⁸ As part of the Gender Strategy, a minimum of 15% of all SCF financing to gender responsive outcomes.

3.3. Coordinating the implementation of the ISSSS

To coordinate the implementation of the ISSSS, a Technical Secretariat (TS) is co-led by the SSU and STAREC. The Secretariat provides coordination, at all levels, between the Government of the DRC, international partners, including MONUSCO and UN agencies, and local partners such as local NGOs and civil society members. A major part of this coordination relates directly to the management task of the Multi-donor Stabilization Coherence Trust Fund in addition to the coordination of bilaterally funded programs aligned to the ISSSS. Furthermore, the TS provides policy advice and conflict analysis, monitor and develop ISSSS programs, and conduct good offices and political engagement targeting all stakeholders participating in ISSSS program and conflict transformation processes.

3.4. Conclusion

As seen, the operationalization of ISSSS requires a lot of technical and consultative steps. On the one hand, all provinces reports experiences demonstrating that these steps have helped to legitimize the conflict transformation process as well on the elaboration of targeted and context specific programs. On the other hand, Donors, at times Congolese stakeholders, and MONUSCO have often questioned the long process without tangible *quick fix* results. Thus, it has been a demanding process to carry out. There is a balance to strike between the two and a future review on the ISSSS phase II might include such questions.

¹⁸ Programs launched in three priority zones of North Kivu, South Kivu, and Ituri during the autumn of 2017. A program in Beni priority zone was launched in February 2019.

However, based on experiences, there are reasons to argue that these steps have been important to establish targeted and legitimate approach, and should not be underestimated or cut in order to find solution to complex context specific political problems as a *quick fix*.

PART II: CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION: THE CASE OF ITURI PROVINCE

iv. Introduction

I was deployed to Ituri province, first as the lead of the Technical Secretariat, together with STAREC, and thereafter as focal point to the Head of Office on the FRPI strategy. In this part, I will describe the process – from initial analysis and the planning of the holistic ISSSS program to the Democratic dialogue process and MONUSCO Civilian-Military Comprehensive strategy specifically focusing on the FRPI issue¹⁹. As will be seen, the Democratic Dialogue methodology²⁰, and especially the principles of transparency, participation, *good enough* consensus and inclusivity²¹, was a crucial tool to create momentum and move forward the political conflict transformation process.

4.1. Ituri Province

Ituri is a newly established Province²² located in the northeastern corner of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The province is sub divided into five territories Aru, Mahagi Djugu, Mambasa and South Irumu. Each territory is again sub divided into chiefdoms or sectors, groupments, and localities/villages.

South Irumu is bordering to Djugu in north, Beni and North Kivu Province in south, and Uganda in East, separated by Lake Albert. Due to its recent establishment, limited institutional, administrative and

¹⁹ The other pillars were mostly implemented from end 2017. During this period, my position was changed from being the coordinator of the ISSSS to more specifically on the political and democratic dialogue process. For global updates on the ISSSS progress, see "ISSSS monitoring reports" and "annual report" on <https://monusco.unmissions.org/en/stabilization-resources> [Accessed June 2019] and Gateway MPTFO.

²⁰ It should be noted that the ISSSS Democratic Dialogue also has proven results on land issues in North and South Kivu as well as for the relation between the management of the Okapi Wildlife reserve and the local population in Ituri Province. Hence, the methodology may apply to conflict other than armed groups.

²¹ I choose to explicitly distinguish between these words as their different content has been very important to reflect upon and include in the process. To us, "participatory" was important to ensure that the stakeholders were active and not only observers of the process. "Transparency" reminded about the importance of decreasing suspicion, secure the process and build trust. "Consensus" needed to be at least "good enough" to continue with backing from several of the segments in the Democratic Dialogue – thereby also activating the accountability level. "Inclusivity" was important to reflect upon to create a representative, respected, and legitimate process

²² On 9 January 2015 the National Assembly passed a law on the new administrative divisions of the country, according to which new provinces should be installed in period of 12 months.

financial capacity is a constant challenge – something that also had implication for the implementation of the ISSSS in the province.

Ituri is mostly known as the scene of one of the most violent conflicts within the larger Second Congo war (1998-2003). In 1999, with the Ituri district under Ugandan occupation, land disputes between Hema landowners and Lendu farmers turned into deadly conflicts, leading to the creation of self-defense groups on both sides. Although these two communities only represented an estimated 40 per cent of the roughly 3.5 million people living in Ituri at the time, they were the main protagonists in the fighting that left at least 55,000 people dead and several hundreds thousands displaced in its first four years. In short, during this period, various and mostly distinct Hema and Lendu based networks allied with Rwandan, Ugandan, and National Government, creating shifting alliances under the logic of “my enemies’ enemy is my friend”. In addition to Regional dynamics and National politics, the violence during these years and today’s conflict pattern must be understood in light of the periods of colonial rule and independence as different events and approaches have had an impact on the perceived identity and status of the two tribes as well as the administrative borders and land.

One of the groups established during this war, the Patriotic Resistance Front of Ituri (FRPI), is the last remaining group from the Ituri war. The reason for its existence and its modes of operation are similar to a number of armed groups on eastern Congo. Its authority is drawn from historical grievances of the Ngiti (Lendu) community, which it claims to protect against neighboring communities and the government. However, at the same time it is also deeply involved in acts of extortion and abuse and contributes to the creation of insecurity. In other words, it is an armed group, which gradually evolved from a community protection force to a source of insecurity (Hoffmann et al 2018, 8)²³. The interlinked connections with the Lendu community in South Irumu are both complex and important to understand, and points to various relations which may span from relatives, protector and protectees, supporters, and victims. The recent

²³ On the Ituri wars, see: Integrated Regional Information Network. (2002) “In-Depth: Ituri in Eastern DRC” <<http://pictures.irinnews.org/indepthmain.aspx?InDepthId=33&ReportId=70762>> [Accessed May 2019]; Human Rights Watch. (2003). ‘Ituri: “Covered in Blood: Ethnically Targeted Violence in Northeastern DR Congo”’ <<https://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/ituri0703/> [Accessed May 2019]; Vlassenroot, K and Raeymakers, T. (2004). “The Politics of Rebellion, and Intervention in Ituri: The Emergence of a New Political Complex?” *African Affairs*, 103 (412): 385-412. For more analysis on FRPI see, Tamm, H. (2013). “FNI and FRPI: Local Resistance and Regional Alliances in North Eastern Congo”. Rift Valley Institute, London – Nairobi; Hoffman, K.et.al.(2018). “Competition, Patronage and Fragmentation: The limits of Bottom-Up Approaches to Security Governance in Ituri”. *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*. 7 (1): 14: 1-17.

meetings with the FRPI suggest a highly disciplined, hierarchical, and equipped group, estimated to around 1500 combatants. This include an uncertain number of women and children.

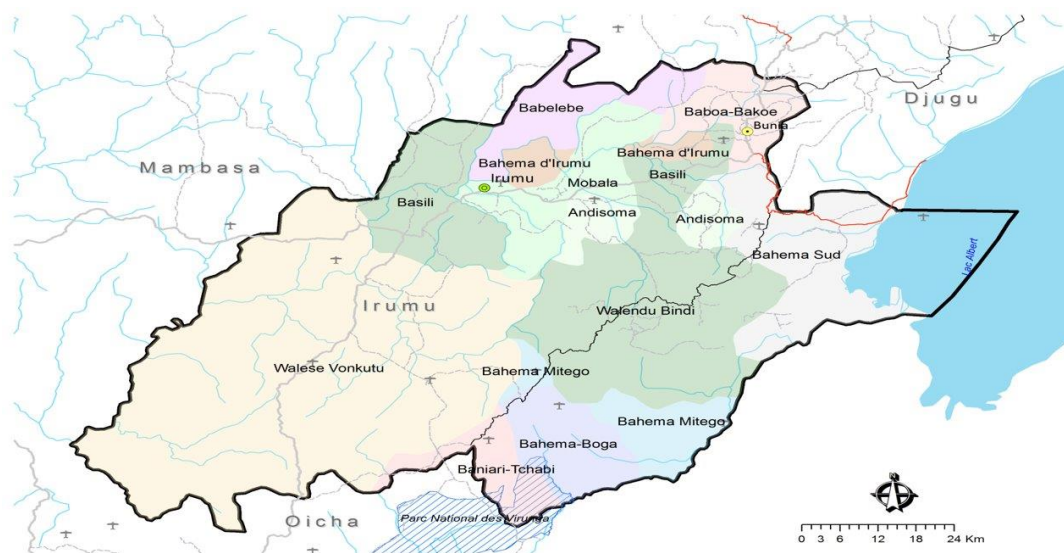


Figure 2 Map of South Irumu territory, Ituri province.

v. Outlining the Democratic Dialogue and Conflict Transformation Process

5.1. Pre-launching phase: January 2017 – August 2017

5.1.1. Introduction

To prepare for an ISSSS process, both technical steps and stakeholder engagement is required. In addition to provincial plans and strategies, an area-based conflict analysis is needed as well as identified priority zone. Additionally, consultations and involvement of the different actors is crucial for participation and ownership to engage with the conflict transformation process. In short, to operationalize the ISSSS' aim of putting *state and society together*, several formal and informal strategies are required to ensure that the right actors are activated and implicated in the process.

From end 2016, a call of proposal process was initiated through the Stabilization Coherence Trust Fund. Drawing on the Provincial Strategy and Action and identification of ISSSS priority zones in Eastern DRC²⁴, South Irumu was selected as first priority for programs due to the severity and analysis of the conflict drivers and root causes of conflict. On 7 September 2016, the National Funding Board allocated 6.5 million

²⁴ From 15-17 July 2014 a participatory and inclusive workshop was organized in Goma, North Kivu where priority zones were defined for South Kivu, North Kivu and Oriental (including Ituri Province).

USD and a call for proposal was launched within the framework of the Fund, the identified program priorities, and the Provincial Stabilization Strategy and Action Plan. Through a transparent process, guided by the Operational Manual for the Trust Fund, five consortiums – consisting of UN agencies, International and Local NGOs - were reviewed by a joint MONUSCO and Government committee. On 12 December 2016, the Provincial Funding Board approved the selection of three consortiums to move to the next stage of the call for proposals process. A second round was conducted in January and February and on 2 March 2017, the Provincial Funding Board validated the Technical Secretariat's recommendations and selected the final consortium to further finalize and fine-tune the program. In parallel, several formal and informal activities were conducted to establish a first contact with stakeholders. Additionally, a restricted political engagement-working group were established as well as a monthly provincial technical stabilization working group.²⁵ Furthermore, initial ideas of an innovative MONUSCO Comprehensive Approach to neutralize the FRPI also started. In short, the technical preparations for the program went hand in hand with initial contacts and planning for network building, communication and coordination efforts.

5.1.2. Conflict Analysis

An in-depth conflict analysis to identify root causes of conflict, supported by the European Union, was conducted end 2016²⁶. In short, the analysis found that the various inter-communal conflicts in South Kivu are complex, entangled and strongly interconnected, rooted in the long-term history of the region and involves a multitude of actors. More specifically, the three major conflict dynamics identified, and prioritized, were i) the persistence of the armed group FRPI, ii) conflict over land and limits, coupled with inter-ethnic conflicts between the Lendu and Hema tribe²⁷ and iii) the migration of Rwandophone migrants from South and North Kivu.

According to the analysis, the persistence of the FRPI militia - causing security concerns for the population - and the land conflict mobilized around ethnicity between the Lendu Bindi and Hema South, are very closely linked. The FRPI has enabled the Lendu Bindi community to strengthen its hold over disputed

²⁵ The Stabilization Working Group was a new initiative aimed at informing and coordinating stabilization efforts - at a technical level - between government, international and national partners, including development and humanitarian partners, within the Province and is led by the Technical Secretariat (SSU and STAREC) on a monthly basis.

²⁷ The *Lendus* are living in Walendu Bindi Chiefdom. The *Hemas* are living in the Bahema Sud Sector and the Chiefdoms of Bahema Mitego and Bahema Boga.

territories and the Hema, as do the State Army (FARDC), accuse the FRPI of being a community army used by the Lendu Bindi to strengthen their position in local power relations and territorial disputes with the Hema. Furthermore, the FRPI reinforces the inter-community tensions between Hema and Lendu by committing mass looting of Hema cattle and threatening the Hema breeders.

Root causes of land conflict also include the presence of Rwandaphone migrants from South and North Kivu who have settled in the southern part of South Irumu since 2008-2009 and have resulted in a heavily strained cohabitation between indigenous and migrant communities. Their presence has also exacerbated tensions around the boundaries and competition over resources of Lendu and Hema communities in South Irumu. The presence of natural resources including oil, gold and wood in the area and competition over its exploitation remains potentially strong factor for destabilization of the zone but was given less priority based on the findings in the analysis.

5.1.3. ISSSS program guided by conflict dynamics

The Democratic Dialogue process was designed to address the three prioritized conflict dynamics. This means that the methodology would in theory have the capacity to respond to at least one of these dynamics at the same time as the design was flexible enough for authorities and community to identify which conflict dynamic and solutions that should be given priority. Hence, for the Democratic Dialogue process to succeed it is not the content and conclusions that are important in itself but how - through transparency, inclusivity, and participation - they are identified and solved. Below is an illustration explaining the Democratic Dialogue set up, adapted and developed by the Local Civil Society Partner, ACIAR.

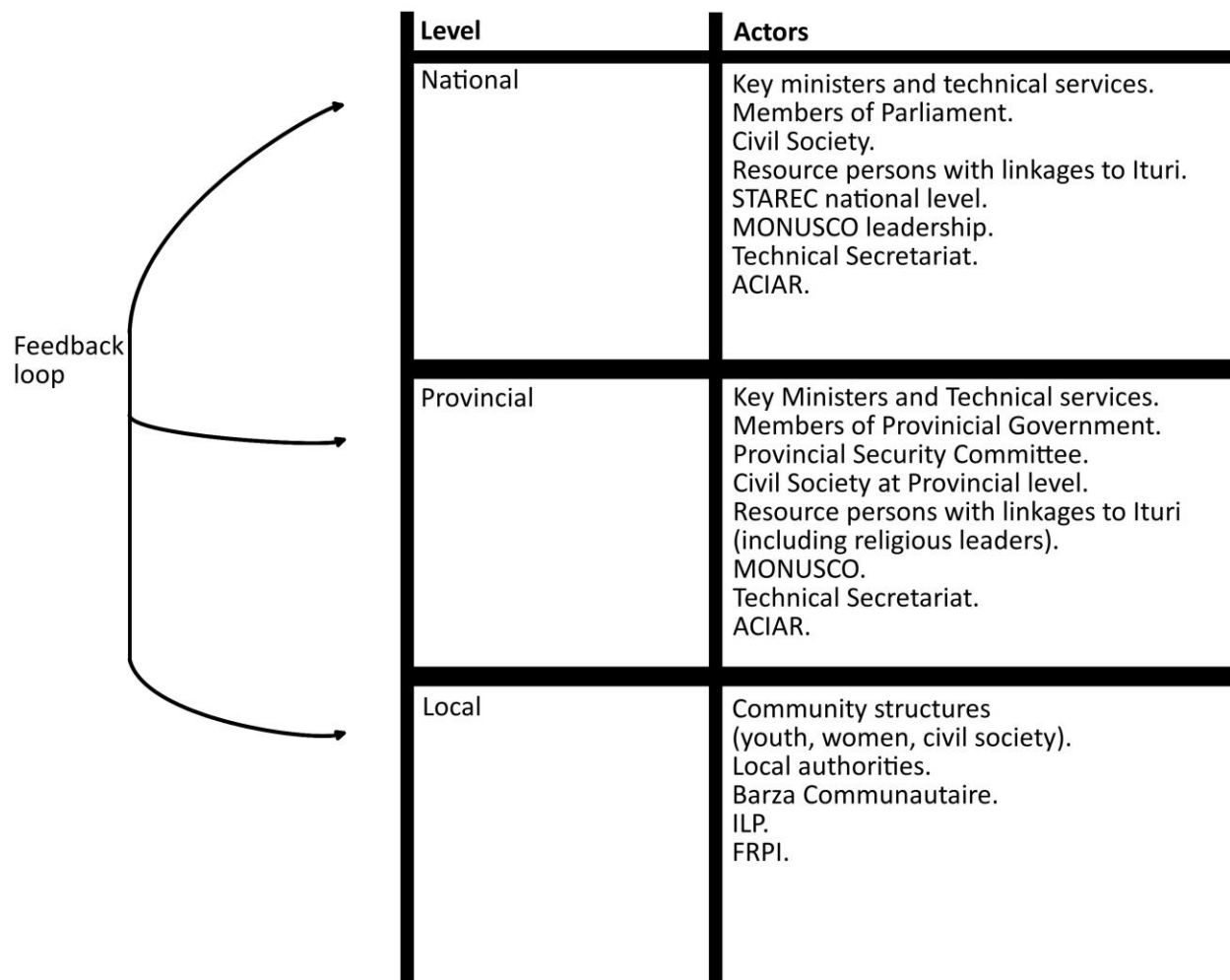


Figure 3 Illustration of levels and actors in the democratic dialogue. Information flows in a feedback loop between the levels.

The prime pillar for the South Irumu program was the Democratic Dialogue. However, in support, three additional ISSSS pillars were also included. For example, the interventions under Return, Reintegration and Recovery pillar seek to decrease the conflict and competition over resources between Lendus (agriculturalists) and the Hemas (cattle breeder) through reinforcing their productive capacity. Land governance aims at decreasing tensions over land through mediation and technical regulations of land etc.

Table 1 Overview of ISSSS South Irumu program finances through the Stabilization Coherence Trust fund

Democratic Dialogue	Restoration of State Authority	Return Reintegration and Socio-Economic Recovery (RRR)	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
Top down (political engagement and good offices) and bottom up (community) engagement through formal and informal channels, analysis, inclusive, transparent, and participatory, consultations with strong connections to constantly updated conflict and stakeholder analysis.	Land governance: reinforce technical capacity of state services, mediation Local governance Reinforce capacity and accountability between local chief and - administration and citizens through capacity building, budget and planning; Improve transparency and capacity in management of mining sites; Local security governance: Reinforce capacity of security services and trust building between security services and the population through joint diagnosis and planning, construction and equipment of a police station	Socio-economic reintegration of youth “at risk”, ex combatants, women, “educated” youth as well as farmers (Lendus), fishers and cattle breeders (Hemas) through income generating activities, MUSO, and reinforcing the capacity and chain value.	Transversal approach in line with ISSSS Gender guidelines and consortium wide gender strategy. Targeted approach through specific activities on prevention, and holistic support to victims through the transformation of norms favoring SGBV as well as improving the access to multisectorial assistance for victims of sexual violence
Implementing partners			
Local NGO	UN agencies, International and local NGO	International and National NGO	All + International NGO

5.1.4. Activating the state and society

The theoretical framework of ISSSS would not facilitate a conflict transformation process without a real or at least *good enough* engagement by the stakeholders. Reflecting on how to do this, we developed a conceptual process consisting of three steps: *Comprehension, appropriation, and role*. To play a *role*, the state and community first needed to *comprehend* what the ISSSS can offer, followed by them *appropriating* the process by providing feedback and recommendations. These concepts were constantly

repeated throughout the process. We decided to explicitly move from using the words of *beneficiaries* and *observers* to *actors* and *responsible*. Building on this, we saw in the later phases that the different actors, civilians and military, communities and authorities, more and more played the necessary role for the momentum of the conflict transformation process.

5.1.4.1. Community as actors – not beneficiaries.

To prepare for the launch of the program, several important steps were taken.

In June 2017, the Technical Secretariat conducted a field mission to 11 sites within the South Irumu priority zone. At each site, the participants represented the common structures within the chiefdom such as the Chief, local administration and security actors, civil society structure, including separate youth and women structures, traditional and religious leaders and sectorial structures. During the visits, the ISSSS strategy and the program objectives were explained, and implementing partners, distribution of funds, and monitoring mechanisms were presented.

An essential part was to build trust between the communities and the Technical Secretariat. The communities had seen partners and programs coming and going without bringing peace and development. Several of the participants asked how long it will take for the program to bring peace. It took a lot of efforts to discuss the fact that it is up to them – as actors – to participate and decide the result. Our message was that “if you play your role as community, we will also play our role mobilizing other stakeholders and institutions, we do not have the fixed solutions, but the methodology”. After years of being considered as *beneficiaries* this was a new mindset to the community. Within the same logic, closer to the launch, representatives from the same structures were again gathered to discuss with the implementing partners. Building on these steps, during the program monitoring missions and workshops, the communities could easily comment on the program results and short-comings. This way of building understanding and participation contributed to trust and ownership in the process.

5.1.4.2. Concretizing the Provincial Government engagement

The same concepts were applied towards the Government, both in bilateral meetings and through the Provincial Stabilization Coordination Mechanism where all members of the provincial assembly, parliament and security committee (military, police, migration and intelligence service), civil society and implementing partners participates to discuss stabilization matters. In July 2017, the ISSSS strategy and program was presented. In addition, a *Compact strategy*, indicating political engagement related to each of the stabilization interventions, were presented during the meeting. The compact is considered as the

formal, institutional and governance-oriented part of the ISSSS political engagement strategy. It targets institutions, based on their mandate and responsibilities, and aims at strengthening their technical and political support to the ISSSS programs. For example, it clearly states that the authorities, under the lead of the Governor, will secure and support the Democratic Dialogue process, including allowing the partners to meet with the armed group (FRPI) if necessary.

5.1.5. Actor Mapping and Political Engagement Strategy

The three prioritized conflict dynamics as per the CANA - FRPI, land and identity, and migration from North Kivu - guided a targeted political mapping and analysis. In this regard, a restricted political working group was established in May 2017. Ituri Technical Secretariat and the Democratic Dialogue Expert from SSU HQ, worked together towards key individuals at Provincial and National level in order to establish a roadmap for the steps that were necessary to take before the next meeting in September 2017. 60 *enablers* and *spoilers*, their role and level of influence, at local, provincial, and national level were identified.²⁸ In the upcoming months, different members of the working group were tasked to establish a first contact with all the identified individuals. This included work within MONUSCO to mobilize political and good offices²⁹ support. In July 2017, a first meeting between the working group and key actors in Kinshasa took place. At different bars in the various quarters in Kinshasa the same message on the ISSSS strategy and the importance of their implication and role was delivered to previous warlords and politicians. These contacts were maintained and further developed during the political process until the time of writing.³⁰

5.1.6. Towards MONUSCO Civilian - Military Comprehensive Approach to Neutralize the FRPI

In parallel, informal ideas and discussions took place at Force and SSU HQ level on how to create a joint strategy aligning Force and ISSSS priorities. First steps were taken towards a political approach, a policy

²⁸ This work built on work initiated by Political Affairs Ituri mapping "spoilers and enablers" related to the FRPI issue.

²⁹ Good offices here understood as targeted political advocacy in support to the ISSSS and political process. Despite its frequent use, Day (2019, 69-71) demonstrates how this term does not have a clear meaning and may vary. For more reading, see Day, Adam in Coning C., Peter M (ed). 2019. *Politics in the Driving Seat: Good Offices, UN Peace Operations, and Modern Conflict*. Palgrave Macmillan,

³⁰ Several of these contacts at National level remain the same at the time of writing. However, with changes post-election 31 December 2018, new contacts are also identified, and the same methodology is applied to reach out to them.

shift after years of joint operations between MONUSCO troops and the Congolese army against the FRPI in Ituri Province.

During this period, more and more actors, both from the community and the Congolese Government started declaring the limits of a purely military approach on the FRPI issue.³¹ Keeping the aim of an endorsement of the approach by the Mission Leadership Team in mind, we started preparing the community, government and MONUSCO on a potential policy shift. Internally, it was important to work closely with the Force at Field level. Since January 2017, my relationship with the MONUSCO Force was established and we tried to elaborate - at a very operational level - the implications of the ISSSS approach for their Area of Operation. During this period, the Brigade continued to launch Joint Operations together with the Congolese Army. Keeping in mind the vision of a political approach, I started to initiate discussions on the possibility of stopping the military approach, with known limited results³², and give space for trust building. Understandably, it was not comfortable for an Army to stop with operations, as this was perceived as one of their main tasks for the protection of civilians. Additionally, the political and stabilization approach was still at conceptual level, and came across as rather vague for a Military Contingent in terms of actions. We did spend a lot of time to understand each other's perspectives. The last joint operation towards the FRPI was conducted in June 2017. In parallel, discussions on choosing military or political approach continued daily. In the following year, a new collaborative work pattern and relation was established and supported both technically and politically by the MONUSCO contingent.

³¹ During a Mission to Ituri, July 2017, the Vice Prime Minister informally acknowledged that a purely military approach to FRPI had seen its limits. These statements – although political – was very useful to build the momentum for a political solution. Reference to the visit,: Radio Okapi (2017) <https://www.radiookapi.net/2017/07/02/actualite/securite/emmanuel-shadari-bunia-pour-une-mission-ditinerance> > [Accessed May 2019]

³² There are several reasons for the limited results, often resulting in reprisals and higher rates of Human Rights Violations, such as linkages between the FRPI and the community, difficult mountainous terrain, lack of capacity by the State Army etc. Observing the strength and structure of the FRPI in August 30 August 2018 also demonstrated how both MONUSCO and the Government Army would face severe difficulties in fighting the FRPI. Furthermore, rumors are circulating claiming that certain officers in the Congolese Army do not want a solution as operations against the FRPI increase their budget and hence income and hence are actively spoiling the operations. See also Hoffmann, Kasper, Koen Vlassenroot, and Karen Büscher. (2018). "Competition, Patronage and Fragmentation : the Limits of Bottom-up Approaches to Security Governance in Ituri." *Stability-international Journal of Security and Development* 7 (1): 1–17.

5.1.7. Summing up

As seen, to start an ISSSS conflict transformation process, several preparatory steps were needed even before the program itself had been launched. As will be seen later, these were important for further support and engagement from the necessary actors. When the various stakeholders understood the process, its aim and principles, it became possible for them to play their role in the process.

5.2. Program launch and first political milestones: August – December 2017

On 2 August 2017 the ISSSS program for South Irumu was launched. Several hundreds were present, and results from the initial preparations were reflected: the launch was led by the Governor and the Provincial Authorities, MONUSCO were present with all civilian and military sections, and the local leaders and community were represented per structure and site. As part of the program's "communication strategy" and "communication" principle, targeted meetings with journalists started and resulted in continued communication throughout the process.

5.2.1. Bottom up: *Barza communautaire* and first round of Democratic Dialogue.

The "bottom up" work of the Democratic Dialogue is structured around Local Peace Initiatives structures³³, which aims at mobilizing communities to participate in the dialogues, identify conflicts and solutions. The first round of consultations was conducted in September 2017, visiting 16 different sites, representing views of 2300 people, including 30% women. Drawing on the CANA and putting conflict transformation at center, these sessions were open-ended consultations asking the community about their views on conflict dynamics and needs in the priority zone. The patterns from the CANA were reflected in the views of the community. 40% of the main issues were related to the FRPI, and the community asked for the FRPI issue to be a main priority and emphasized the need for the Government to play their role for a sustainable solution. This was the first concrete involvement of the community in

³³ As a response to the Ituri wars in beginning of 2000, a number of NGO's and church-based peace groups from both catholic and protestant origin came together and set up a network of local civil peace groups with support of IKV-PAX Christi Netherlands. In so called Barza's -village wide meetings in which all inhabitants can participate- long in-depth discussions were held and people were elected to form so called Local Peace Initiatives, in French *Initiaves Locales de Paix* (ILPs). These structures were trained by the *Réseau Haki na Amani* (RHA) to take up different tasks in reaching and enhancing peace at local level by awareness raising, conflict mediation and security monitoring. The ISSSS Civil Society implementing partner, ACIAR, was previously a central actor within the RHA.

the conflict transformation process and should later prove to be of greater importance than we initially understood.



Figure 4 Community consultations September 2017.

5.2.2. Bringing *bottom-up* and the political engagement strategy together: Cohesive Leadership Session

Building on the initial political engagement and community consultations, a *Cohesive Leadership Workshop*, based on Michel Kassa's methodology, was organized in Bunia in October 2017. The workshop brought together around 130 key actors, including national and provincial members of parliament, provincial authorities, security actors, local leaders and representatives of local communities (including youth and women). Over the course of five days, several aspects related to the conflict dynamics in South Irumu were presented and discussed.

Prior to the workshop, the Technical Secretariat and the Democratic Dialogue implementing partner (ACIAR) conducted a series of informal bilateral meetings targeting key stakeholders at all levels presenting the Terms of References and requesting their implication. Throughout the week, informal meetings and briefs took place before and after the plenary sessions.

In parallel, ACIAR initiated first informal contacts with the armed group through community actors. As a result, their latest demands to demobilize, signed in 2015, were presented in the workshop in the presence of two unidentified representatives of the armed group.

As anticipated, the frictions between the Congolese Army, the armed group, and the community were easy to note during the sessions. The community blamed the military for not having achieved any results for several years and the lack of sufficient protection. The military, on the other hand, blamed the community of supporting the militia. Furthermore, it was claimed that individuals within the Army did not favor DDR attempts due to economic interests in continued means for operations and exploitation of resources. Previous DDR processes were also heavily criticized. Reports came from the field indicating increased tensions between the Army and the FRPI during the discussions. According to the participants, this has been a normal pattern every time a peace initiative advances. The Generals, Members of Parliament and community representatives discussed for five days, and a first accountability system, with checks and balances and hearings was, in an informal way, put in place.

The workshop resulted in a road map for conflict transformation in South Irumu, with a unanimous emphasis of the need to specifically address the FRPI issue, prioritized over the other interlinked conflict dynamics. An inclusive *consultative committee*, based on the participants during the workshop, was established by decree and these key actors have been continuously consulted throughout the process. The workshop marked an important step in ensuring an inclusive and transparent platform in the further process where key actors from local and national level are informed and provided the opportunity to play their role in the process.



Figure 5 Cohesive leadership session October 2017.



Figure 6 Cohesive leadership session October 2017. Group photo.

5.2.3. Establishing contacts with the FRPI and access updated “demands”

Following the recommendations from the Cohesive Leadership workshop, two key milestones were achieved. First, ACIAR met with several representatives of the FRPI leadership, including the leader Colonel Mbadu Adirodhu, on the 22nd of November 2017. During this meeting, the group’s demands were updated. This was the first known meeting with the armed group leadership. To secure this meeting, the TS met with the Provincial Governor and reminded the Governor about his role in the *Compact strategy* and as president of the Stabilization Coherence Trust Fund. The Governor allowed ACIAR to meet with the armed group and also initiated a meeting with the Government Army for their approval. The Army were initially highly skeptical, as the trust towards FRPI was still very low and the interest in engaging with them varied. After a day of discussions in the field, the delegation was allowed to proceed to the armed group's headquarter.

In line with key principles of the Democratic Dialogue approach, such as transparency, inclusivity, and participation, the meeting with the armed group followed a certain methodology which has been used in future similar missions. First, the aim of the mission and process were presented to the community, including youth and women, and local authorities in the center of the stronghold of the armed group (the city of Gety). Thereafter, local chiefs, civil society, youth, and women, delegated, in a transparent manner, key actors to join the meeting. This is a key principle in order to build trust and transparency. To prevent frictions between the armed group and the military, no armed personnel were present, and the military granted a free space for the visitors to walk up the hills to the headquarter of the armed group. As result, the demands were updated and signed by four of eight key leaders, including the main Leader (Chef Etat

Major). This was an important milestone and, as will be shown, the demands have later been re-confirmed and is reflected in the Government's Action Plan and drafted peace agreement.

5.2.4. First high-level meeting in Kinshasa chaired by the Vice Prime Minister.

A second milestone was a Governor led advocacy mission to Kinshasa on 4 December 2017. This mission put the FRPI issue at the table in a meeting chaired by the Vice Prime Minister. Among the participants were the Ministers of Defense and of Plan, 10 national Members of Parliament, State Army top-level officers, Head of Political Affairs Division MONUSCO, and the Head of MONUSCO Bunia Field Office. The main recommendation of this meeting was to set-up an inter-ministerial working group to collaborate with MONUSCO in developing a joint action plan for the neutralization of the FRPI. The presence of these key stakeholders at National level was the result of the political engagement targeting MPs and key stakeholders, including MONUSCO, as well as STAREC lobby at National level, especially through the Minister of Plan. The demonstrated capacity to mobilize the actors, several statements made during the meeting, and clear recommendations on the next steps, spurred a hope in the process and created momentum to continue despite the continued existence of spoilers.

5.2.5. MONUSCO: Political Engagement and Comprehensive Approach

After months of seeking enough momentum within the Mission, in September 2017, the Mission Leadership Team signed off an innovative comprehensive strategy to support Government efforts to neutralize the FRPI. This strategy was built around a negotiated disarmament and reintegration process and marked a shift in policy. It was also an implicit recognition of the limited success of the military approach by the Government of Democratic Republic of Congo (GoDRC) and MONUSCO. In September, civilian and military Headquarter and Field office staff developed a an operational plan to be led and implemented by the Bunia Field Office, under the guidance of the Joint Operational Planning Team, chaired by DSRSO Ops/RoL, and with support from the Stabilization Support Unit (SSU).

5.2.5.1. The difficulties in translating the strategy to actions

Despite a validated strategy, it took a lot of efforts to maintain the momentum of this strategic document. Despite the great potential in creating synergies between MONUSCO Section's mandate and the strategy it became difficult to strategically and coherently plan in one direction. There was also a general lack of belief within MONUSCO, which was occupied with the delayed national elections and protection of civilians. Field Office staff felt tired of new attempts of negotiating with the FRPI, which they had seen failing several times before.

In this period, technical support and coordination with all sections would have been beneficial. For instance, UN Police could reinforce the police in the zone close to the FRPI preparing for a potential security vacuum, DDR could strategically communicate and target the implementation of the Community Violence Reduction programs in support to the process, analyses and reporting by Join Human Rights Office and Political Affairs could also be more targeted and nuanced. Despite lack of useful support at technical and partly political level, key Mission political and military leadership supported the process sufficiently to move forward. Given the difficulties in gathering internal support, a main focus was maintained on the military as their actions would have greater direct consequence for the process. Although the Force Commander approved a political approach, the Brigade was still not comfortable with translating it into action – or perceived inaction from their side. One of the main challenges was to agree on timelines, understanding of outcomes of meetings and take enough protection measures without harming the trust and political dynamics. For the Brigade, a more comfortable step would be to conduct concrete military operation that could be measured and counted in a more concrete way than waiting for *civilian meetings* where the achievement often was that the meeting took place, which from a military perspective did not have any concrete outcome. We all had difficulties in understanding what could be done more actively than *doing no harm* to the process. Based on this, the military took a supportive *do no harm to the trust* approach at the same time as the stick (threat of military operations) could be activated if the situation required it.

5.3. From risk of spillover of neighboring conflict to validation of National Action Plan: January – July 2018.

The year 2018 started with optimism after the successful December high-level meeting with concrete recommendations and political statements to build on. Again, in line with the principles of transparency, communication, and participation, key stakeholders at local and provincial level were gathered through the *Consultative Committee* for an update on the process. A full day session concluded with a *green light* for working towards the elaboration of a National Action plan. However, a surprising upsurge in violence and humanitarian crisis significantly escalated in beginning of February, shaking the whole province and stole focus away from the FRPI process.

5.3.1. Humanitarian crisis, the risk of spillover and reduced engagement.

From mid-December 2017, a series of *small-scale* violent clashes broke out in Djugu territory involving members of the Hema and Lendu communities. Tensions subsequently abated for a time, following intervention by the provincial authorities and community leaders, supported by MONUSCO. However, by beginning of February more and more reports came about killings of Hemas and burning of villages. The first weekend of February marked the first wave of refugees arriving in Bunia and across the border into Uganda³⁴ Violence continued, and the peak came with a massacre on 1 March. During this period, there was a high level of confusion in and around Bunia. Why and how did the violence start? What were the causes and who were responsible? Both civilians and military in MONUSCO tried to focus on the protection of civilian mandate through Military presence and alerts, and, in parallel, engage with communities and the provincial government to probe and support their interventions. The Government deployed military and police at the same time as they were criticized both for being responsible for the violence as well as for not doing enough to stop it. Several high-level visits from the National Government were conducted to the province during March and April.

Within this context, we faced several challenges. First, there was a risk of spillover effects from the violence in Djugu to Irumu territory. Both the Hema and Lendu tribes are present in both territories. While there are certain differences in their dynamics and characteristics in the two neighboring territories, formal and informal networks have existed in recent past. Second, there was a confusion over who were responsible of the violence in Djugu – was it *only* an inter-ethnic clash or was there other conflict entrepreneurs using these old tensions to fuel violence? A common speculation was that the Government orchestrated the violence. Such an assumption risked leading to mistrust towards the Government, and STAREC, within the political process. Third, several important political actors at Provincial and National level, including MONUSCO leadership, focused mainly on the Djugu crisis, while their attention was also needed on the FRPI issue.

5.3.1.1. *Re-affirming good enough commitment and trust to continue*

To face these challenges, we decided to take one step back before continuing with the political engagement towards a National Action Plan. The matrix of *spoilers* and *enablers* were revisited. The

³⁴Doctor Without Borders. (2018). “Violence in Ituri province forces tens of thousands from their home”. < <https://www.msf.org/drcuganda-violence-ituri-province-forces-tens-thousands-their-homes>> [Accessed April 2019]

working group started contacting the different stakeholders to hear their opinions about the crisis as well as their reflection on the possible impact for the FRPI process. The local NGO partner went to the communities to hear their reflections about the possible impact, especially on the inter-ethnic dynamics and the trust towards the Government and STAREC. After several rounds, it was concluded that the risk of spillover effect was less than feared and the community distinguished between the Stabilization process and STAREC on the one side and the rumors of Government engagement in the Djugu on the other. Several reports also indicated that it was more difficult to create conflict in Irumu territory as the Democratic Dialogue, with its transparency, made it more difficult to manipulate actors. Discussions with the FRPI were also initiated who, on their side, repeatedly rejected their involvement or interest in supporting the violence. With enough commitment from the community and the FRPI to continue the process, we started to prepare for the more strategic level. These events from December through February demonstrates how the process and set up of the Democratic Dialogue was of help even when external *shocks* came.

5.3.1.2. Technical work to support and motivate political work

To motivate activity on the National Action Plan at the National level and engagement from MONUSCO, Terms of References, drafts, and content were prepared. Targeted advocacy towards Ministers were done during High-level visit for the crisis in Djugu as well as at National level through the political engagement group. The next step was an inter-ministerial workshop, and when the crisis calmed down and attention from Government and MONUSCO started coming back, we were already ready with the necessary documents and plans for this to take place. The Ministers thus started designating focal points from the Ministries to participate in the workshop.

5.3.2. Elaboration of the National Action Plan

The inter-ministerial committee, consisting of delegated focal points from key ministries, including the Minister of Defense, Interior, and Justice, as well as the Presidency, developed and validated a *strategy and action plan towards the demobilization of the FRPI and the pacification of Ituri* between the 18th of April and the 3rd of May, 2018. MONUSCO, represented by DDR and O/DSRSG RoL, participated during the workshop, which took place in the Vice Prime Minister building from 18-19 of April as *observers* and the Technical Secretariat (STAREC-SSU) facilitated the work.

5.3.2.1. The Democratic Dialogue approach and a good enough compromise to continue

The elaboration of the Action Plan was an extremely challenging process as the first conflicts between National and Local level, Government and Community, and Government and FRPI appeared. The Democratic Dialogue methodology was new to the personalities in Kinshasa. A key principle for us, and what we believed would be key for success this time compared to previous attempts, was the inclusion of local level and civil society. Additionally, the inclusivity principle opened for the views of the FRPI. Hence, community and FRPI perspectives were brought to the workshop and the first rounds of negotiations on stakes between National versus local level started to crystalize. The demands from the FRPI, gathered in November 2017, were again presented. Especially difficult were debates around the DDR approach, amnesty and integration to the army. Additionally, there were clearly different views about FRPI at the National and local level. At the national level, FRPI was considered as merely lawbreakers and murderers. While this is a legitimate claim, it did not take in to consideration the context specific conflict dynamics and the complex relations between the community and the armed group. In practice, these linkages makes it necessary not to treat the FRPI as something isolated from the community but rather build on views also from the community, which often were more similar to those of the FRPI than those of Kinshasa.

In brief, the action plan reflects an intersection between Go DRC's established policies and practices and the FRPI *demands* and outlines several actions to be taken. Due to the intersection mentioned above, and heavy disagreement between FRPI and the community on one side (supporting community-based DDR) and the Government on the other (supporting National program and policies) three different options for the full DDR of the FRPI were suggested before a community based reintegration process. Furthermore, the plan recognizes that political issues on the critical questions of amnesty, DDR eligibility conditions for the DDR process, and the practicalities of civilian vs. military reinsertion and reintegration will be part of the negotiation of the process with the FRPI. There was criticism, especially from MONUSCO sections, on vague formulations and lack of concrete steps in the Action plan. However, to us, taking part of the whole process, observing all the stakes, a victory was to finalize an action plan which was inclusive in character: All key ministries and technical services were present, the plan took into account both FRPI and community perspectives – something which opened for further discussions and a possible peace in the future. Furthermore, as stated in the action plan, all further delegations and missions allowed for involvement of local communities and civil society and provincial government thereby ensuring a people centered and bottom up approach. This was very new to previous negotiations attempts, which were purely military or at least limited to individuals at the National level. In line with the Democratic Dialogue

methodology, we now secured a transparent action plan with an inclusive character from local to national level, something that should prove important for future steps in the process.

5.3.3. Validation of the National Action Plan

On 6. June 2018, the inter-ministerial action plan was presented by the Iturian Governor during a Stabilization Coordination Mechanism, the *Monitoring Committee* (STAREC), co-chaired by the Minister of Plan and DSRSG Ops-RoL. Among the participants during the meeting were the Minister of Defense, the Vice Prime Minister, Representatives from the Presidency and Stabilization Donors. As a result of the meeting, the Action Plan was politically validated, and a key next recommendation was for the Minister of Plan and Defense to convene a restricted meeting at the highest level as soon as possible to discuss the Go DRC position on the *critical questions* outlined in the action plan.



Figure 7 Monitoring committee. Validation of National Action Plan, Kinshasa June 2018.

5.3.3.1. *Each time an important step is taken towards peace, spoilers starts mobilizing.*

For the second time, the local population could watch National television where their demands had reached the National level in meetings and workshops at the building of the Minister of Interior. Continuously, communication on the process (not all sensitive issues) was conducted at local and provincial level, both as information had a value in itself but also to increase the accountability towards

FRPI and the Government and make it more difficult for spoilers not to stick to the known process and steps.

As the process moved forward, spoilers started to become more visible. Through various channels and networks, rumors and claims from both FRPI and FARDC against each other started. A constant challenge in this process so far had been to give space for trust and political dialogue, and simultaneously ensure the protection of civilians. So far, joint operations between MONUSCO military and the State Army did not have an impact and lowered the trend of violations, hence, it did not seem that no operations had any negative impact on the protection issue. MONUSCO Force had for several months stopped with targeted operations and direct confrontations with the FRPI and did not support the Army with operations. The same day we informed MONUSCO Force that there were rumors about planned operations by the Army, a FragO was submitted to MONUSCO Force as information and a possible political statement. The Army launched operations, without MONUSCO, against the FRPI.

5.3.3.2. Democratic Dialogue and the system of “checks and balances”

The launch of a military operation was a shock in the process as it decreased the trust both from the FRPI and from the community towards the process, and especially towards the Government. Thanks to the foundation and communication about the upcoming validation of the action plan, high-level engagement by MONUSCO and STAREC could reach the Minister of Defense, which was heavily represented in the inter-ministerial workshop. In parallel, the community started complaining through the radio. The community knew about the activities at the National level and blamed the army for spoiling it. The military operation was stopped after 2 days, on orders from Kinshasa. At the time of writing, this is the last military operation conducted against the FRPI.

May 2017 showed us the first real fruits of the Democratic Dialogue process. Transparency, participation, and inclusivity stopped a military operation and allowed the trust to regain and the process to continue. Engagement at National level, and enough results to motivate MONUSCO, led to an action at National level. Community, as actors, being informed and feeling ownership to the process, went to the media and shamed the Military for not behaving - the same military that had been part of several dialogue rounds with the community. The media had continuously been briefed and knew the subjects and were therefore capable of identifying the issues and bring the community perspective. Checks and balances within the process were observed for the first time.

5.4. First meeting between Go DRC and the FRPI and political milestones: July – December 2018

5.4.1. First step of the National Action Plan: Exploratory Mission

After rounds of targeted political engagement, supported by reference to the National Action plan, from the 27. August to 3. September 2018, a Government delegation, led by the National Coordinator of STAREC, conducted an *Exploratory mission* to Ituri. The delegation met with local authorities, civil society actors and the FRPI leadership to learn their positions and perceptions towards a possible demobilization process. FRPI leadership presented their demands for the negotiation process, in the presence of six out of eight³⁵ key leaders, including their main leader.

To ensure inclusivity, transparency, and participation, the same approach was followed: pre- dialogues took place at the community center providing updates on the process, including a detailed presentation of the Action Plan, and seeking consensus for the upcoming steps. Community representatives and leaders joined a mission repeating the same message to the FRPI. Based on this, both the FRPI and the community were well prepared with recommendations for the Exploratory Mission, illustrated by FRPI's spokesperson using the exact words and phases of the Action Plan when presenting the views of the group.

A key aim for the Mission was for Kinshasa to assess the level of commitment by the FRPI and the community. The mission was the first of its kind where the Government and the FRPI met through civilian and military delegated personnel from National and Provincial level. In addition, MONUSCO, community leaders and members participated. As a result, the process and FRPI demands were communicated to everyone. Furthermore, the community requested both FRPI and the Government to respect the steps of the National Action Plan.

³⁵ The two remaining leaders were represented during the meeting



Figure 8 Exploratory mission, August 2018.



Figure 9 Exploratory mission, August 2018. Armed man.

5.4.1.1. *The fragile trust – dialogue and the crucial community role*

The meeting demonstrated that a sufficient level of confidence necessary for the process to continue existed. However, rounds of last minutes negotiations reminded everyone about how fragile the trust was. Previous missions were non-official and the delegations were not protected by any armed personnel but by the *sufficient enough* trust between the FRPI leadership and key community leaders. This time, representatives from the National Government, including from the Ministry of Defense, probed discussions about physical security of the delegation. Due to previous attacks, FRPI had limited trust in armed personnel both from the Government and MONUSCO. The National representatives did not trust the FRPI and requested protection from the National Army and/ or MONUSCO Forces. Between these

positions, spoilers used the opportunity to fuel the feeling of insecurity from both parties. After hours of inclusive and transparent discussions at the community center, the community and leaders put pressure on both the National delegation and the FRPI. As a compromise, MONUSCO Force created a security parameter for the meetings to take place and the FRPI agreed to disarm their bodyguards outside the church where the meeting took place. The Army accepted to give room for the FRPI leaders and their troops to move from various parts of the territory to the meeting and no incidents took place. However, FRPI clearly marked their strength by showing up with at least 300 elements and at least 250 weapons.

Discussions in a calm and friendly atmosphere between the FRPI leadership, community, and the Government marked an important momentum and *good enough* commitment and trust from all parties to continue with the process. The crucial role of the community as *actors* was demonstrated as they ensured the required trust for the meeting to take place as well as reminded both parties about their responsibility to ensure peace in the community. The dialogue added yet a layer to the transparency and accountability (checks-and balances) on commitment from both parties.

5.4.2. High-level meeting and elaboration of peace agreement

Findings from the Exploratory Mission motivated a high-level meeting convened by the Prime Minister on the 27 September. The Central Government reaffirmed its commitment to peace in Ituri and approved all the suggested points on the agenda.³⁶ Most importantly, the Government suggested to task an inter-ministerial committee to draft a peace agreement to be submitted to the Prime Minister within a short delay, an Amnesty law for acts of insurgency³⁷ to be presented to the next National Assembly session excluding International Crimes, and an agreement in principle on DDR in situ requested by Ituri communities and FRPI elements. Furthermore, the Government confirmed Funds should be allocated by the Government to lead the process, especially the first phase of Pre-DDR. All these decisions demonstrated a *good enough* engagement from the Government and allowed for concrete actions to take place. By October, both an amnesty law and a peace agreement were submitted to the Prime Minister.

An inter-ministerial committee³⁸ drafted a Peace Agreement under the facilitation of STAREC and guidance by MONUSCO. The drafted agreement outlined an immediate ceasefire followed by a pre-

³⁶ See article Radio Okapi (2018) < <https://www.radiookapi.net/2018/09/28/actualite/politique/rdc-le-gouvernement-encourage-la-poursuite-des-negociations-avec-la> > [Accessed April 2019]

³⁷ During the Exploratory Mission, the FRPI spokespersons requested for Amnesty “acts of insurgency”

³⁸ Participants: Minister of Defense, Justice, Plan, Human Rights, Iturian MPs, Presidency, STAREC, DDR

regrouping of the FRPI elements, and finally a DDR to be implemented in Ituri province.³⁹ Allowing the DDR to be implemented in Ituri, a demand by FRPI and community, which the DRC Government was strictly opposed to, would be impossible to imagine some rounds of discussions earlier. The different voices in the Democratic Dialogue - a strong community, provincial government and FRPI –pressured the National Government to consider a shift for the process to move forward. In addition, the agreement suggested important steps towards a sustainable peace such as return of IDPs, mechanisms for reconciliation, reconstruction, and restoration of state authority, a suggested timeline, and monitoring mechanisms.



Figure 10 High level meeting chaired by the Prime Minister, Kinshasa September 2018.

5.4.3. Trust Fund opportunities as *carrot* to maintain political momentum

To maintain the political momentum, we started to include technical planning in our political engagement. Neither the Government nor MONUSCO were comfortable in moving forward with the political process if there were no funds to implement a peace agreement. At the same time, neither MONUSCO nor the Government could finance the Action Plan alone, hence, Donor funding was required. We saw that none

³⁹ The current National DDR Program, “DDR III” (official launched in 2015) is a model where the ex-combatants are being taken out of their community for the demobilization phase. The program has been controversial with limited results, expressed by beneficiaries, Donors, and communities. As part of the ISSSS process, the Minister of Defense for the first time, publicly admitted that a new approach to DDR is needed. Hence, the FRPI process may serve as an important pilot for a community-based approach – something both recent research and actors at local level requests.

of the parties wanted to allocate money first as the progress and perceived political will were still uncertain. The Stabilization Coherence Fund – co-chaired by the Government and MONUSCO and where Donors are voting members - provided an opportunity for a coordinated planning and mutual responsibility sharing. Hence, it was a forum where each actor could agree to contribute simultaneously and created a system of mutual accountability and reduced risk. The ISSSS pillar, Reintegration, Return and Socio-Economic Recovery pillar, and partly Democratic Dialogue were set as framework for the Reintegration phase.⁴⁰

In November, the National Funding Board for the Stabilization Coherence Trust Fund conditionally approved 3.7 MUS\$ for the FRPI process. This was important for the momentum of the political process. To obtain this, it was important to suggest conditions for the transfer in order to minimize the many associated risks. First, the Government needed to make available funds for the first steps of the Action Plan to be implemented. Secondly the Agreement, including the Amnesty strictly respecting International Law, needs to be signed by both parties by May 2019. Finally, the Reintegration project needs to be approved by the Provincial Funding Board as per Operational Fund Manual.

The Government announced the release of money to implement the first steps of the National Action Plan, and MONUSCO accelerated with technical and financial planning. From 20 to 27 November, a one-week joint Government - MONUSCO mission was conducted. In line with the approach, local actors and civil society took part of the delegation, and the community was consulted in the community center, and participated in the meeting with the FRPI. The objective of the mission was to identify potential regrouping sites for ex-FRPI combatants and undertake consultations on the possible design of a DDR program, in view of eventual negotiations between the Government and the FRPI.

5.4.4. Improved Army and FRPI relations: checks and balances stop possible break in process

Increased momentum at all levels, community pressure, a concluded Exploratory Mission, and awareness at National level, started to strengthen the collaboration between STAREC and the National Army, through the Provincial Government. A combination of orders from above, pressure from the community and a new

⁴⁰ As part of creating the trust and responsibility sharing, the Government were to finance the first rounds of negotiations and pre-regrouping, MONUSCO the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reinsertion part, and the Trust Fund final Reintegration part, as outlined steps in the National Action plan. The Reintegration is set to be a community-based reintegration program of 18 months focusing on the social and economic reintegration of ex-combatants, dependents and community members. The program will include a reconciliation component, which will be piloted for the first time in the DRC.

understanding of FRPI's capacity seemed to increase the Army's interest in supporting the political process and reduce tensions with the FRPI. An important step in this regard, was discussions taking place between the Army at local and provincial level and the FRPI during the meetings in late November. Fewer and fewer incidents were registered and the cohabitation in the villages was improved. In practice a cessation of hostilities was observed. The improved communication and trust and contributed significantly to stop a series of sudden direct confrontations in late October. Both parties blamed the other for triggering the tension, and these confrontations could easily have been the end of the process. But thanks to the current momentum, solutions were found to regain the process. Additionally, the community, provincial government, and MONUSCO targeted the various leaders, reminding them of the process. To demonstrate commitment, the leader of the FRPI sent a handwritten letter to the government stating that it was only self-protection. The Army, despite loss of five soldiers, did not launch retaliation attacks. No matter who started the fighting, the pressure and transparency from other actors in the process provided checks and balances for the parties to end the conflict and stick to the National Action plan. After this event, there has in practice been a ceasefire between the two parties, although the agreement is not yet signed at the time of writing.

5.4.5. Electoral periode and Current Status

As the presidential election⁴¹, with all its uncertainty, came closer, it was important to secure some of the results of the process. Although doubts regarding to what extent it was possible to do anything during the pre-electoral period, we continued to target the stakeholders. Advocacy by STAREC led to a high-level meeting chaired by the Prime Minister on 12 December concluding with the agreement to sign the peace agreement on the 20 March 2019. The outcome was presented to the community and the FRPI the 22 December, the day before the elections were supposed to take place. During this meeting, practical dispositions of the pre-regrouping, with the objective to reduce human rights violations perpetrated by FRPI, were agreed upon as important steps towards the planned signing of the agreement. The modalities were signed by the FRPI with the community, provincial government delegation and MONUSCO as witnesses. Since that day, a significant decrease in Human Rights Violations have been noted until the time of writing. The community also voted peacefully the 30 December 2019.

⁴¹ As per constitution, the Election was scheduled to take place in December 2016 but was for various reasons delayed until December 2018.

A month later, on 22. January, a Government delegation from National and Provincial level met with the FRPI leadership, armed elements, and the community in the community center⁴². This was the first public appearance of all the actors in the FRPI process. The meeting set an official date for the start of the pre-regrouping. The community leaders noted a significant decrease in the number of FRPI actions and a feeling of peace returning to their collectivity given the good relationship and confidence between FARDC, FRPI elements and local population.

During the first months of 2019, optimism was observed in South Irumu. The human rights violations were close to zero, cessation of hostilities was in practice in place, and the FRPI entered, as planned, the pre-regrouping sites. However, with delay in forming a new Government post the December election, the FRPI withdrew from the sites and went back to the forest⁴³. STAREC and ACIAR, with support of MONUSCO, applied the same methodology of mapping key stakeholders and managed to reach new key stakeholders in Kinshasa during an advocacy mission. In May 2019, a key milestone was achieved when the Coordinator of the Monitoring Mechanism for the Addis Ababa Peace Agreement was designated by the new President as focal point to the process. During several days in May, the Coordinator met with the community, the FRPI, and the various key stakeholders at local level – following the same methodology of transparent, participatory, and inclusive meetings as outlined above. The mission marked an important point of renewed engagement from the new Government which pronounced that the process will be continued within their framework of demobilizing armed groups in the eastern DRC. The meetings also marked an important level of trust between all the parties where armed officers from the Congolese Army, Peacekeeping Forces, and FRPI, together with civilians from various institutions and communities discussed peace and solutions side by side. This was also marked by the symbolic act of FRPI handing over an arm to the Congolese Army⁴⁴.

⁴² For information on the meeting 22 January, see, article on Radio Okapi (2019). <https://www.radiookapi.net/2019/01/23/actualite/securite/ituri-le-gouvernement-apprete-trois-sites-pour-accueillir-les>. [Accessed May 2019] The FRPI main leader was not present due to reported illness. MONUSCO civilian and military personnel and leadership were present as observers.

⁴³ "Irumu: disparition de 450 combattants FRPI au site de pré-cantonement de Bukiringi." <https://buniaactualite.com/irumu-disparition-de-450-combattants-frpi-au-site-de-pre-cantonement-de-bukiringi/> [Accessed May 2019]

⁴⁴ Bunia Actualite. "Ituri: les leaders de la FRPI réitèrent leur engagement à poursuivre le processus de démobilisation" <https://www.radiookapi.net/2019/05/16/actualite/securite/ituri-les-leaders-de-la-frpi-reiterent-leur-engagement-poursuivre-le> [Accessed May 2019]



Figure 11 Meeting between FRPI leadership and the Coordinator of the monitoring mechanism of the Addis Abeba peace agreement, May 2019.



Figure 12 Symbol act by FRPI leadership of handing over a weapon to the State Army, May 2019.

5.5. Conclusion

Despite challenges - such as ensuring a commitment from the new government, hampering actions and manipulation by spoilers, risk of spill-over from conflict in neighboring areas, and final decision around the most critical questions and DDR approach- a momentum for a peace process and agreement between the Congolese Government and the FRPI is still existing and has been present for a period of time now. Furthermore, new Mission Mandate and Donor Funding contributes to hold MONUSCO accountable in support to the process. As expressed by the community, this would be the main contribution for conflict transformation, and hence, a key result of the ISSSS.

As seen, key to the current momentum has been the strong engagement of the Governmental

Stabilization Program (STAREC), along with the implementation of the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (ISSSS) in the targeted area. Local partner, especially ACIAR, have been crucial in building trust and understanding within the community, ensuring a bottom-up and people centered approach.

The community of Walendu Bindi (South Irumu, Ituri) has played a key role since the beginning of September 2017. There are strong linkages between the FRPI and the community, as they are from the same tribe and located within the same geographical area; and the initial function of FRPI as an auto-defense group should not be underestimated. The importance of the community was again demonstrated during the *Exploratory mission* as they played a key role in facilitating the meeting with the FRPI as well as to put pressure on the FRPI and the Government to respect the Action Plan. For the success of the plan, it is crucial that the communities continue to support the plan and putting pressures on the different stakeholders. Additionally, it is important not to isolate the FRPI and the community interests from each other in seeking consensual actions.

The Democratic Dialogue as a constant methodology – especially emphasizing inclusivity, participation and transparency - has been a tool for the whole process – both technical planning and stakeholder engagement. The Trust Fund has created opportunities for the Government and MONUSCO to jointly engage and align technical partners and contribute with political involvement, creating and maintain the momentum for a political process.

The work will take time and not all conflicts will be amenable to the same approach, but there is now an opportunity to bring about positive results. ISSSS cannot decide on the final decisions and *will* but the Democratic Dialogue has stimulated actors and created an approach and system where checks and balances and accountability has brought the process forward. It is very important to note all the work, detailed observation and respect of the methodology required to activate and maintain the various actors – the good and the bad - and build on the *good enough* signs of will. At this point, it has reached a level where a National Action Plan is validated and a peace agreement is drafted, the population can report a feeling of peace and voted peacefully in the December elections, daily reports from MONUSCO Field Office almost do not mention FRPI violations anymore and figures show a clear decrease in human rights

violations within the community. ⁴⁵Finally, there is a clear line of contact and accountability towards the FRPI – both from Government and MONUSCO , something that did not exist prior to this process.

⁴⁵ For figures on Human Rights Violations by FRPI see https://monusco.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/unjhro_-_analysis_of_the_human_rights_situation_in_drc_feb_19_fr_final_0.pdf and https://monusco.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/unjhro_-_analysis_of_the_human_rights_situation_in_drc_may_19_fr.pdf

PART III: ANALYSIS

This part will highlight the main concepts, principles and strategies that have been demonstrated as important for the momentum of the conflict transformation process and bringing the *state* and *society* together to mitigate drivers of conflict. The ISSSS defines Stabilization as a *process*, holistic, targeted, and integrated, where all stakeholders work together towards a common goal. It aims to enable state and society to build mutual accountability in order to address and mitigate drivers of conflict. I argue that the ISSSS is a good theoretical framework for conflict transformation, but for this framework to facilitate *actual* conflict transformation, it is necessary to understand and invest in what it takes to implement the processes and engagement outlined in the ISSSS. More specifically, extremely context specific understanding of dynamics and actors, transparency, and communication is key. Furthermore, key is the democratic dialogue creating checks and balances, leading to trust, accountability and the dynamics allowing for an inclusive political approach. The analysis will further reflect on these efforts.

VI. Area Based conflict sensitivity and Democratic Dialogue.

6.1. Targeted: The identification of context specific drivers and actors

6.1.1.1. Interlinked dynamics

The *Conflict Analysis and Needs Assessment* (CANA) has been crucial for the focus of the process. In addition to specify and prioritize among the different conflicts – which can be difficult in complex contexts such as the eastern DRC- the analysis also served as a constant reminder on why and how the conflict dynamics are interlinked. For instance, in October 2018 we received reports on killings of Lendus by alleged Hemas in a contested territorial area. Due to our understanding of the interlinked dynamics, we immediately started discussions with FRPI on the one side and the local administration on the other to facilitate a non-violent response to the incidents. The FRPI admitted that it was provoked by the incident and it was difficult for them to watch Hemas killing Lendus without responding. The Chief of the FRPI wrote a message that we transmitted to the Governor calling for a governmental investigation. We also called for meetings with the local chiefs in the area. This incident could easily be an example on how one interlinked dynamic (land and identify) contributed to another one (FRPI) but because of the awareness it was possible to quickly identify the dynamics and act on it. Information revealed that it was exactly this

dynamics spoilers tried to use to hamper the FRPI process. During the process, similar events triggering the interlinked conflicts of land or migration has been critical to solve not to spoil the process.

6.1.1.2. Context specific actors and drivers

Another importance of the CANA is to understand how extremely context specific the various conflicts are. As described in part II, in the beginning of 2018, there was a fear of spillover effects from one area in the province to the other. Moving by car or motorbike from these two conflict centers would take you around two hours. At a conceptual ISSSS level, the conflict dynamics seem similar – there are issues around land and identity, regional dynamics, resources, and security. However, the drivers at a more local level are different, and most of the key actors – or at least their interest- are different from one conflict to another. For instance, the interest of government figures might vary depending on National party politics, roots of origin, and electoral calculations. It is important to note that some of these figures might even play a positive role in one conflict and negative in another one. Hence, to transform a conflict only two hours away, a whole new set of actors and interests would need to be identified and implicated. Equally for their role in supporting peace initiatives and mitigate spillover effects. While this seems logical, it is surprising how little this is acknowledged in discussions on planning and expected results of stabilization and peace processes.

6.1.1.3. Conflict sensitive planning

Another lesson learned is how treating sensitive conflicts has a better starting point when the analysis and understanding makes sense to the involved actors. It also guides a conflict sensitive planning of interventions such as ensuring equal processes and resources spent across limits, staff representation equal to conflicting tribes etc. The ISSSS programming phases – from programming, analysis, and prioritization – are done in consultation with key actors at community and government level. We have seen that this strengthens the trust in the ISSSS partners and processes. Systems and analyses need to be put in place – and used – to ensure that they are constantly reflected in all actions. ISSSS provides such a system – through analysis, design and partnership - and can also easily be capitalized on for other structures within the Government and MONUSCO.

6.2. Inclusive – who should take part and how to include them?

The ISSSS defines stabilization to be *integrated* - all stakeholders working together towards a common goal. HIPPO reports and researchers calls for the need for *people centered* inclusive processes (HIPPO,

2015, 9 and 15; Mahmoud in de Coning (ed) 2019)⁴⁶, where the “people need to feel consulted, not only informed (Karlsrud 2015, 110), because “for peace to be sustainable it has to come from local processes and be people oriented (de Coning in de Coning (ed) 2019, 309). ISSSS refers to a bottom up approach putting people directly affected by the conflict at the center for seeking sustainable solutions. But, who are *the people* whose involvement should be respected and who can contribute to a sustainable peace process and how to identify them?

6.2.1. Civil Society and community level

6.2.1.1. *Selection of civil society partner and community linkages*

The setup of the ISSSS facilitates the search for the right people as it does focus heavily on partnership and support to local actors and existing structures. Furthermore, the transparency of the selection of partners, in line with the Trust Fund Operational Manual, also facilitates to find partners based on qualifications and not on contacts or interests in fueling conflict. At conceptual level and Trust Fund planning, civil society organizations involvement is prioritized. This is key to reach out to the community. Experience shows, however, that not all civil society organizations have the same capacity to reach out or to identify the right community actors. A common challenge in people centric approaches is to identify the right information and the genuine actors. In the case of Ituri, it has been crucial that we have had a very strong civil society partner, ACIAR. The organization has a long experience in conflict resolution and already demonstrated strong results during the Democratic Dialogue process as part of the ISSSS pilot project from 2014 – 2016. Based on this it was possible to identify community structures and initiatives, which could be built upon for conflict resolution and involvement. Again, logical but often forgotten – the role of the civil society is different and needs to be given space *from* the state. A key added value of the civil society partner was to remind about this space and by the status, also having another credibility within the community than the UN and Government. Transparency and objective criteria in the selection of this partners was also important as other local civil society actors throughout the process have tried to position themselves to work on the dialogues – organizations with close linkages to political figures identified as *spoilers*.

Also, at community level, conflict sensitivity is crucial in identifying the various roles of the ones included in the process. First, it is important to identify to what extent the representatives are biased, and if so, to ensure an equilibrium in biased representatives. Furthermore, at staff level, it is important that the staff

⁴⁶ Mahmoud, Youssef “People-Centred Approaches to Peace: At Cross Roads Between Geopolitics, Norms, and Practice” in Coning C. (ed) . 2019. Palgrave Macmillan. Page 91-108.

working on conflict resolution are accepted by the community and not considered biased. Following this logic, the ISSSS local implementing partners had three dialogue facilitators at each of the 16 sites: One *neutral*, one from Lendu tribe, and one from Hema tribe. Lastly, knowledge about structures are important as the inclusion of wrong structures might do harm to the conflict. For instance, in one of the areas, due to conflict over power, there were two parallel civil society structures. Ignorance about local structures caused an incident December 2017 – at the very beginning of the program implementation - where the community threw stones at an ISSSS implementing partner who included the *wrong* individuals and structures. Hence, partners who can *live* within the community, speak the language, understand the culture, and spend a lot of time are crucial for the conflict transformation process.

6.2.2. Including women in the peace process.

In line with the ISSSS gender guidelines and the aim to ensure an inclusive integrated approach, at least 30% of the participants at each activity should be women. Despite a genuine interest and motivation to include women by the civil society partner, STAREC and SSU, it is clear that including women in peace processes requires a lot of detailed attention.

In the Congolese society, women's participation in meetings and workshops is not automatic. With the exception of the meetings planning for International women's day, men are the majority and often the only sex represented in the meetings. Women are so rarely present that it is easy to be satisfied with the presence of 1-2 women, although this is far from the minimum goal of 30%. Concrete efforts need to be taken just to get the women to be present in the meeting. Examples of such efforts are to specify numbers of each gender in the terms of reference and invitations, follow up with calls and at times publicly *shame* delegations or communities for not bringing any women to the meetings. In our case, the Governor or other authorities have often done this. Additionally, an analysis on the timing, methodology and place for the meeting is necessary. Keeping the role of the woman in the community in mind, is it possible for her to be present or will she be busy with taking care of the household? Another issue is that official positions are often occupied by men, hence, especially at the National level, it has been difficult to include women. Long-term efforts also need to target the inclusion of women in political structures – and not just as the Minister of Gender and relates structures, as is often the case. Second, even if the presence is ensured, presence and participation is not the same. Prior to the event, it might be necessary to encourage women to speak and during the event it is needed to check that the women are also given the microphone in the same way as men, and that they are represented in the formal speeches. Third, when both presence and participation is ensured, it is also important to keep in mind who are participating. Who are the

women? Often, the female representatives are close to the authorities or from the states' technical gender service, thereby representing the state and not the *women in the street* and civil society actors. During this process, the female active participation has, thanks to all these measures, been crucial and strong at local level. Some key women have also played an important role during the various phases at provincial and national level, but, due to the formal structures often occupied by men, it has been even more difficult to ensure at least 30% participation at these levels.

6.2.3. Including the FRPI and the State Army

The most contested and controversial parties to include in the process has been the State Army and the FRPI. Hence, the *inclusivity* concept met reluctance when it came to the inclusion of these parties. Furthermore, their real commitment has constantly been questioned. However, we were convinced that these parties also needed to be included, feel respected, and heard. Towards both structures, it was essential to establish a mutual trust and confidence.

In order to reach out to the FRPI, we relied on local actors, including women, that we trusted, but which also knew the area and people. I believe this was essential. It is hard to overestimate the importance of local relations, and I am not sure we could ever have established trust with FRPI without the help of these partners. From September 2017 until the time of writing, almost daily, confidence building between local partner, STAREC and the FRPI have been ongoing. Signs of increased trust between the parties and towards the process were apparent during the *Exploratory Mission* when all main FRPI leaders were present, something that has never been experienced before. Several reports have indicated that the FRPI leadership has established *military police* to search and punish rogue elements conducting looting during the negotiation phase⁴⁷. During the humanitarian crisis in Djugu beginning of 2018, the leader of the FRPI wrote condolences to the Hema people in North. With signs like this, a *good enough* commitment has made us continue despite doubts and constant assessments of *real* engagement.

The Army was, and still is, partly seen as a spoiler. However, positive developments have been registered with them as well. I believe there are two things we did that helped establish a mutual understanding. First, through the democratic dialogue, the military were held accountable by the community and higher

⁴⁷ In 2018, MONUSCO field office more and more often received reports from the Force and community members about FRPI leadership establishing internal military police to improve discipline and sanction actions harming the trust in the process. One example is referred to in this local news paper. Bunia Actualite (2018). <https://buniaactualite.com/irumu-la-milice-frpi-remet-un-criminel-recherche-aux-autorites/>. [Accessed May 2019]

offices and were forced to face that the military approach had had limited success. It started with their presence during the Leadership Cohesive, where they could explain themselves in front of the community and leaders, especially regarding limited results of military operations. Support also came from higher levels, after targeted political engagement at National level, and helped to *tame* those who wanted to continue with operations, such as the case in May 2018. During high-level meetings of FARDC Generals, STAREC has been called to discuss the process.

The second important thing we did, was to make sure that the military saw a realistic alternative in the political process, an issue I elaborate on below (6.2.1). Their dilemma is real: If civilians are hurt, there will be questions for why the military could not protect them. Since our process was slower and had few concrete results in the early stages, it was essential that the army could trust that we as individuals were committed to this process. This is done through socializing - we have played billiard and had beers – and by treating the military with respect. The military have been present in all dialogues and informed prior to all missions. When one Colonel has been replaced, we have printed all documents, and explained the process for the next one. It is my belief that the often expressed mistrust towards the military can be detrimental to the process, and that arguments for excluding them are misguided solutions to a military conflict.

In the end, our approach towards these two structures has ensured a *good enough* commitment and accountability where the community have held both the FRPI and the Army accountable for their actions. Hence, an external accountability mechanism within the Dialogue process is present. Between the two structures, work has also been done throughout the process. The presence of non-armed State Army Colonels during the DDR mission in November 2018, and a late evening meeting with the FRPI in February 2019 in the presence of an armed soldier from the State Army – illustrates the increased trust between the two parties at field level. A final symbol of this is the photo illustrating that the FRPI handed over an arm to the State Army in May 2019. The inclusion of FRPI and FARDC did not only, as criticism would fear, give them a positive voice and a right they should not have – it also made them visible as participants in the process, and thereby also held accountable for their actions.

6.2.4. Political engagement – the role of STAREC and MONUSCO

As already discussed, the Conflict Analysis was important in identifying whom to target for political engagement. Furthermore, it was key for the process to have a STAREC, which was strong in working with political actors – both at local and national level, also taking in to consideration the challenging political

landscape. A combination with knowledge and perspectives also from the community, and the FRPI, through the civil society partner (ACIAR), helped to update and inform the political engagement strategy. The more we had concrete issues that needed political attention, key civilian and military leaders in MONUSCO contributed with supported advocacy in political meetings at local and national level, targeting specific actors with specific messages based on the updates and needs of the process. For this to be possible, it was crucial to build trust within MONUSCO Leadership towards STAREC and ACIAR. The more MONUSCO leaders observed the competence of the local partners, the more they easily facilitated and supported with necessary political engagement.

6.2.5. Transparency and communication as means to checks, balances and accountability

As seen several times in part II, transparency and communication has been crucial to create momentum, trust, and accountability in the process. Indented or unintended miscommunication has created negative shocks in the process several times, and then it has been important for us to communicate information. Furthermore, we have invested a lot of time in journalists sensitizing them on conflict sensitive journalism and inform them of the process so they had correct information. This has been very important both to spread public knowledge and also decrease the potential miscommunication. Several examples have been noted where *spoilers* of the process have used media actively to harm the process. Communication has also been important in the sense of informing the community, stakeholders etc. This has made the process transparent, and it has increased the accountability towards all the actors. Some actors have been afraid that sharing information will spoil the process. However, the experience is that in a small place in Congo, information will spread anyway and most of the time, it is better to be part of it than silent and let others speak wrongly about your process. While many feared to share too much potentially sensitive information, it is my belief that transparency, on average and in the long run, has served accountability. When the community knows that the Government or FRPI has promised something, they can hold them accountable for their counterproductive actions. Furthermore, it gives hope to continue the process. When FRPI hear that the Government is drafting a peace agreement, or is planning a High-Level meeting, it decreases incidents. It has been an observed trend in from 2017 - 2019 that the more positive and active information about the process, the less incidents by the FRPI – it gives the leadership more reason to control rogue elements from looting.

6.2.6. Summing up: Democratic Dialogue's *checks-and balances*

As seen, in-depth conflict analysis, stakeholder mapping, and an inclusive and transparent process from local to national through the ISSSS Democratic Dialogue, have provided *democratic checks and balances* that has been more and more observed during the process. If one part – be it the government, community, military of FRPI - does not deliver or do act in a controversial way, another part of the dialogue seeks to push pressure, accountability and correction towards the other part. The inclusivity and transparency of the process has – with time – made it less vulnerable for internal and external shocks. Although *real* engagement has been questioned, the Democratic Dialogue system has made actors and institutions respect and follow the process because, suddenly, the process was *stronger* and more transparent than the interest and opportunities of the individual or institution. The ISSSS suggests that one of the main root causes of conflict in the DRC, *patrimonialism* which has been much observed during the FRPI process thrive less when there is a *check and balance* system to confuse the system. As such, the Democratic Dialogue process has been an interesting tool to try to break some of these old patterns of *patrimonialism*

vii. *Political solutions* to conflicts and what it requires

The ISSSS, researchers and HIPPO report call for *political solutions* rather than military and technical solutions and prevention to modern conflict (HIPPO 2015, A.Day 2019, 83). The ISSSS is a political strategy, and MONUSCO and the Government took a policy shift in the FRPI question focusing away from military solutions to political solutions. This might seem logical and easy on paper but to conceptualize and make the concepts into practice required strategic thinking, trust and relation building for actors to go out from comfort zone and have enough patient to believe in slow processes without observable *quick fixes* - which more easily give the feeling of concrete and *real* results.

7.1. Building support to follow the *political approach*

On paper, a *political strategy* – first by MONUSCO and later by the Government - was chosen, but it took time to build momentum. The regular approach both to the Government and MONUSCO was military operations. A few isolated negotiations attempts with a short time frame had been tried earlier.⁴⁸ These

⁴⁸ See Hoffmann et al, (2018, 8) for previous demobilization attempts. Based on our consultations, a non transparent, often military led process with short time frame was considered by most actors to not be sufficient and tackling the root causes of the problem. The latest talks in 2015, resulting in the arrest of the current FRPI

limited results with a military approach created, in itself, a timing and opportunity for use of narrative helpful for first establishment of a political solution. However, to MONUSCO troops, it was uncomfortable to *wait* for political milestones and commitment. For the State Army, different interests such as the mandate to protect civilians and economic interest related to operations and exploitation of resources, made it difficult to stop. Both armies found themselves between the rock and a hard place where on the one side, community criticized them and other actors for no results with the military approach and requested to support the political approach. On the other, they were criticized for stopping operations, not doing something observable and concrete to actively protect civilians. It required a lot of efforts and trust building, referral to documents and democratic dialogue to get the military on board. In parallel, we needed to support the dialogue between the Armies and the community, demonstrating the active role of the army despite lack of concrete and visible operations. A similar work was needed inside MONUSCO. The MONUSCO troops were uncomfortable in waiting for political results and civilian colleagues presented the same duality as the community – they did not believe in targeted operations at the same time as they were criticizing the Troops for not doing enough to protect civilians, referring to the need for military operations. The more the political milestones became visible, the easier it became for the Armies to defend their support – both to themselves and to the communities and MONUSCO staff.

A political approach was often perceived as *kinder* than a military approach. It was difficult, especially for actors in Kinshasa with no contextual knowledge about limited results of military approach and FRPI-community dynamics, to understand why we should allow *rebels* a political voice and process. The different segments and dialogues helped convincing and keeping the momentum. Especially, the role of the community was crucial to understand the importance of acknowledging FRPI as a party in the dialogue. Bringing the different voices into the democratic dialogue facilitated a *good enough* understanding for Kinshasa to move forward.

Finally, a *political solution* requires a lot of efforts as there is a constant need to map stakeholders, include, update, and spend time with them. The process is vulnerable to shifting political priorities (see humanitarian crisis) and key political and military actors. Hence, a motivation and drive is needed also when key actors are changing and needs to be included and informed about the process. Each time new actors come, formal and informal meetings are initiated, supported with documentations of the process. Furthermore, the inclusive Democratic Dialogue Approach – including community and the FRPI – which

leader, and previous experiences with Government not following up on promises, or FRPI increasing their demands in the last minutes constituted a difficulty in trust both towards the FRPI and the Government in the ISSSS process.

are not necessarily used to politics, political procedures and administration – is also vulnerable to frustration by actors less used to these procedures and protocols. The slow progress could cause suspicion of lack of engagement from the Government. The Democratic dialogue rounds at community level, more formalized workshops through the Consultative Committee, and radio communication was a way to *buy* time and facilitate understanding and strengthen accountability between the different segments in the Dialogue.

7.2. Real will versus good enough commitment by stakeholders

A final challenge with a political process is the constant questioning to what extent there is a *real* commitment and will. With valid reasons, based on previous experiences of failed will and corruption, both the community and MONUSCO questioned the level of *will* from the Government and FRPI. While being a valid question, it was also extremely counterproductive. Questioning became reasons for not acting, despite known and calculated risks.

There are also nuances on commitment and will. In response to the skeptics, STAREC started stating that “even a fake will is useful for us to move forward”. In the words of Cru de Vries (2015, 22) one need to look for a *good enough political willingness*. First, our experience demonstrates that the government is not *black* or *white*; there have been individuals within the government supporting the process, and others who have tried to block it. Positions might also differ from one localized conflict to another. In the case of the FRPI, a *critical mass* of political actors demonstrated a *good enough* will to move the process from nothing, to a validated action plan, drafted peace agreement, and allocation of Government Funds. Due to the concrete efforts in the process, the Government valued STAREC efforts enough to allocate a Government building, marking a more integrated character and role within the government. The FRPI demonstrated *good enough* will to take the risk of meeting with Government and MONUSCO, despite previous arrest and attacks during such meetings. Human rights violations undeniably started to drop, despite certain elements' attempts of proving otherwise.

7.3. Summing up

While spoilers still exist and might even succeed in blocking the peace in search of short-term gains, we have also observed that the Democratic Dialogue have made it more difficult for them. During the exploratory mission in August 2018, spoilers were both part of the Government delegation and tried to install themselves in the zone where the meetings took place. The transparency and documentation made it difficult for them to operate. In January 2019, a political conflict within the chiefdom of the FRPI was

provoked, causing severe confusion in the process. Again, the common expectations of where the process was heading, with pressure towards and from the community, helped contain the damage, and facilitated a *good enough* solution to move forward. Consequently, the FRPI elements went into the pre-regrouping. Despite risks and the continuous questioning of whether is a real engagement, a mix of *real* and *good enough* engagement – in combination with Democratic Dialogue checks and balances – has brought a conflict process from the community to the National level where the National Government can take its responsibility to act for a peaceful future.

VIII. Beyond the FRPI case

It is relevant to reflect on whether there is a value for MONUSCO to apply lessons learned from FRPI both elsewhere in the DRC and in other Peacekeeping Missions in other countries. I will briefly outline some reflections in this regard.

8.1. Apply the FRPI pilot on armed groups in the DRC?

According to Human Rights Watch, there are at least 140 armed groups operating in North and South Kivu alone, and multiple more in all of DRC.⁴⁹ Naturally, these armed groups can be grouped into several broad categories requiring different approaches—from the purely military to the purely political. Still, it is reasonable to believe that several of these other armed groups share characteristics with the FRPI, such as armed activities and attempts of counter-operations by State Army and MONUSCO in mountainous terrain, limited capacity by the State Army in the area where the militia is operating, strong connections between the armed group and the local community, strong connection to political actors at local and national level, relatively clear and known leadership, and demands that are not too controversial politically, but which still challenges the legitimacy of the current Government. In such cases, it would be fruitful to seek similar strategies of a detailed, inclusive, and transparent approach, combining strong community consultations and targeted political engagement with supportive military and technical efforts through the MONUSCO Force and substantive sections. However, It is important to not replicate the *activities* and results of the process but the *methodology*. This means that one should not seek to replicate the process *activities* and result of the FRPI process but the questions and methodology on how we got there, applying it to the specific analysis of context, armed groups, community engagement, and stakeholder analysis.

8.2. Lessons learned to other Peacekeeping Missions

As for MONUSCO⁵⁰, peacekeeping Missions in general have often been criticized for being *template driven* offering *top-down* and *technical solutions* to complex and context specific problems. Based on this, a central point in this experience paper is not to create yet another *technical template* for conflict resolution – a standardized *quick fix* model to be applied in various contexts. However, I have highlighted important questions to ask, and underlined the importance of a context specific, integrated and targeted approach, building trust and accountability in a transparent, participatory and inclusive manner. Such an approach

⁴⁹ Human Rights Watch (2019) “Democratic Republic of Congo: Events of 2018” <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/democratic-republic-congo> [Accessed May 2019]

⁵⁰ For more reflections from MONUSCO staff on the opportunities with the FRPI strategy, see page 17-18 in the Report “DATA DRIVEN PROTECTION: Linking Threat Analysis to Planning in UN Peacekeeping Operations” Center for Civilians in Conflict . November 2018. <https://civiliansinconflict.org/publications/research/data-driven-protection/> [Accessed May 2019]

is both time consuming and resource demanding, which will often be criticized by both Donors and MONUSCO eager to see quick results. Therefore, it has been absolutely necessary for the support and engagement of the various actors crucial for the different programs in the provinces of Ituri, and North and South Kivu in eastern DRC.

I argue that several of the concepts applied in the ISSSS will be relevant in other contexts. As argued, ISSSS is in line with several recommendations from academics, UNHQ and the HIPPO report – which reviewed not only MONUSCO but all the current UN peace operations, including both peacekeeping operations and special political missions. Several of these concepts also remain relevant in the ongoing initiatives of *Action for peacekeeping*. To clarify this point, some of the main factors will again be highlighted below.

In peacekeeping, context specific planning and understanding, including context specific analysis, has often been considered insufficient and is recommended to be improved for more tailored and efficient approaches (Karlsrud, 2015, 110; HIPPO 2015). Often, UN operations has privileged technical expertise over local knowledge and hence responded to complex issues with supply driven and technical response (Autesserre 2010; Mahmoud in de Coning (ed) 2019). Stabilization, more specifically, is often understood as a complement to - or a concept including - peace enforcement with an offensive military mandate. In these cases of combined military counterinsurgency and wide development and peacebuilding programs – stabilization is criticized for not addressing root causes of conflict (Karlsrud 2017, 16; De Vries 2015). In comparison, the definition of Stabilization under ISSSS puts root causes at center, and outlines models for context specific planning, contextual analysis and conflict dynamics.

Researchers and HIPPO report criticize the UN for too often relying on top down designed approaches. Responses to this criticism has also led to a *bottom up* approach. However, as Hoffmann et.al (2018) argues, a purely bottom up initiative may not be sufficient in breaking the cycles of structural issues and political issues. ISSSS is combining both *top down* and *bottom up* to engage with society and the state. Karlsrud (2015) argues that “for peacebuilding and peacekeeping efforts to succeed, it is absolutely necessary to build more inclusive and participatory states that are responsible and accountable to their people”. The ISSSS Democratic Dialogue is a methodology that creates check and balances, and an accountability system. In addition to political engagement, this would also not be possible without the role of the communities and so-called *bottom up* initiatives. As emphasized in the HIPPO report, for peace to be self-sustainable, it has to emerge from local social processes, and it has to build on the social resilience that is already present in societies and communities. To sustain peace, UN peace operations

thus have to develop new tools and capacities to engage not only with the state, but also with societies, communities and individual people (de Coning in de Coning (ed) 2019, 310; Autesserre 2014). Missions should involve representatives of the societies they are working with when undertaking assessments, analysis, planning, programming, and evaluation. Missions should identify people that are generally perceived to be credible voices for their communities, such as traditional, civil society, religious and academic leaders, and involve them in the mission's engagement with its host society in a variety of ways. The ISSSS does this in planning design and implementing approach. Lastly, *political solution* to modern conflicts are called for (Day 2019; HIPPO 2015). ISSSS, also offer a methodology, as seen, to build a political process, and has a potential of seeking military and technical support to these processes.

SUMMING UP KEY LESSONS LEARNT

1. The ISSSS preparatory planning phase, developing strategies, conflict analysis, programs, and prioritization of priority zones follows a targeted, participatory and inclusive approach, bringing the Congolese Government, International Community and the Civil Society together. This planning phase builds a useful foundation to start an ISSSS program and a conflict transformation process, which from its start is dependent on a certain momentum and endorsement to succeed.
2. The setup of the Stabilization Coherence Trust Fund – co-chaired politically and technically by the Government and MONUSCO – facilitates the coordination and engagement from both the Government and the International Community. Furthermore, the Fund and Operational Manual

facilitates the use of multiple partners with their comparative advantages, capitalizing on their expertise in various domains. Finally, the Fund provides flexibility and more long-term planning than budget cycles and short impact projects, which do not necessarily follow the dynamics of a political process. It also offers the possibility of one comprehensive package in one specific area, providing the opportunity for efforts within peacekeeping, stabilization, development and humanitarian sector to be better coordinated and hence more efficient

3. The ISSSS *Democratic Dialogue* is a methodology combining key principles for conflict transformation, such as inclusivity, transparency, flexibility, time, and analyses. This creates a platform for key actors at all levels to be heard, play their role, and find common solutions. The methodology should be considered for other conflict transformation processes as well, noting that it is the methodology, not the *dialogue activities* that should be considered replicated.
4. Building an inclusive top-down and bottom-up process, targeting root causes of conflict through a political process, requires detailed and continuously updated context and stakeholder analysis as well as formal and informal engagement with all stakeholders in a transparent and participatory manner. To succeed in this, strong local partnership is imperative.
5. Ensuring *inclusivity* requires detailed context knowledge on whom to include, and to motivate all actors to include also the ones considered controversial or not important. It is important that both so-called spoilers and enablers - the constructive and the less constructive - are included.
6. In-depth conflict analysis, stakeholder mapping, and an inclusive and transparent process from local to national through the ISSSS Democratic Dialogue, have provided *democratic checks and balances* that has been more and more observed during the process. If one institution or individual does not deliver or do act in a controversial way, another part of the dialogue seeks to push pressure, accountability and correction towards the other part. The inclusivity and transparency of the process has – with time – made it less vulnerable for internal and external shocks. Although *real* engagement has been questioned, the Democratic Dialogue system has made actors and institutions respect and follow the process because, suddenly, the process was *stronger* and more transparent than the interest and opportunities of the individual or institution.
7. To coordinate and build momentum in support of a *political process* requires specific exploratory engagement by civilians with Armed actors to mutually understand each other's role and views towards the process. Furthermore, extensive efforts are necessary to motivate all actors to understand the *politics* of the process. This includes the necessity to consider political engagement not as *black and white* but as more nuanced where a *good enough* commitment might be enough to take the process further and strengthen accountability towards the political actors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

IX. To Donors

- Invest in context specific analysis and ensure that there is an accountability mechanism ensuring that program designers and implementing partners are using the analysis. Additionally, a mechanics for continuous update of the analysis must be in place. The analysis could be done by conflict analysts, preferably a Country expert, and/or through an analytical and information gathering structure within the peacekeeping mission.
- For conflict transformation processes to succeed, it is necessary to invest in medium to long term programs (minimum 2 years) with flexible funding mechanisms allowing to adapt the approached in line with the process developments.
- Consider deploying external (non UN) staff as they might bring programming expertise, country expertise, new approaches and energy to the Mission.
- Consider how the ISSSS Democratic Dialogue approach of bringing actors together to solve context specific issues might be useful for conflicts beyond the DRC and other types of conflicts such as land, natural resources, or health emergencies.
- Advocate for ISSSS to be an approach and lessons learnt for future Mandates for Peace Keeping Operations and Political Missions.
- Explore how, in practice, and more concretely, Stabilization interventions between- and in parallel- with humanitarian and development actions can provide a more efficient response to multiple challenges within the same context.
- Hold partners, including UN organizations, accountable for a *real* implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda and Gender Guidelines, including elaborating and reporting on concrete tools on how to ensure that women are participating in the stabilization process.

x. To MONUSCO:

- Review and document the process of FRPI as the pilot for MONUSCO Civilian – Military Comprehensive Approach to neutralize and armed group. Build on key lessons learnt for future set up of analytical cells, partnership, civilian-military collaboration, and coordination.
- Seek to use ISSSS programs and funding as an opportunity to strategic orient and align other efforts by the Force and Substantial sections in one area. With coordinated and coherent efforts, the possibility to reach high level of impact will most likely increase.
- Invest in Civilian-Military collaboration to explore and understand each other's added value, also beyond the obvious difference of arms and kinetic operations vs. substantial sections without arms.
- Explore what real *inclusivity* will mean to the Missions' engagement and activities with both Government and the Civil Society, including women and youth, local, provincial, and national level.
- Ensure that all field offices have an analytical cell with good local informants outside the Mission, selected in a transparent (all though confidential) manner based on defined and known criteria. This cell could also establish a standardized template for Field Missions where selection of informants, areas, and questions asked are documented in a systematic and transparent manner. This might improve the coherency and credibility of Field Office reports and information.
- Plan and implement activities in a conflict sensitive way in terms of Mission staff, interventions areas and partners.
- Collaborate with Headquarters when Field Office work plans are elaborated so that efforts within the field offices are not elaborated in silos and field sections are more accountable to headquarters than the head of the field office. This would help on coordinated and efficient efforts within the field office.

