Contextualizing the recovery and transitional justice needs of post war Northern Uganda

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BRAINSTORMING THE SUCCESSSOR PROGRAMME TO PEACE RECOVERY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (PRDP 2) FOR POST CONFLICT NORTHERN UGANDA

POLICY BRIEF NO 1, FEBRUARY 2015

ADVISORY CONSORTIUM ON CONFLICT SENSITIVITY (ACCS)

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Introduction
The Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP)’s second phase is running its final lap and is set to wind down in June 2015. Conversation is now raging at different levels on whether or not to have a further phase of PRDP and if yes, what it would look like, and what its funding mechanism would be. The key questions that persist are; has northern Uganda region got a fair share of PRDP? Has PRDP as a post-conflict recovery strategy worked? What issues still need attention? How and where do we go from here? The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), which plays the monitoring and oversight role in all PRDP programmes on behalf of the government of Uganda, have cited; inadequate staffing and the resultant inappropriate capacities of local governments, low absorption of funds by local governments, discordant accountability and reporting, procurement bottlenecks, and non-functionality of investments as key challenges of PRDP 2 implementation.\(^1\) It should be emphasized here that it was not a question of mere ‘discordancy in accountability and reporting’, but that key officers in the OPM and other sectors were involved in massive corruption scandals of PRDP fund between 2012 and 2013, leading several donors to withhold funds for the PRDP programme. Over the last six months, ACCS has been engaging different PRDP stakeholders in the eight sub-regions of Acholi, Lango, Bunyoro, Teso, Lango, Elgon, Bukedi and more recently West Nile to discuss their perspectives on a potential PRDP successor program.

Notwithstanding the challenges acknowledged by the OPM, there have been significant achievements under PRDP 2 in rebuilding physical security, health and education facilities, water and public works sectors.\(^2\) Since 2010, the Advisory Consortium on Conflict Sensitivity (ACCS) has been analyzing and supporting the implementation of PRDP through: monitoring the extent to which interventions under the PRDP, particularly those funded under Department for International Development’s (DFID) Post-Conflict Development Programme (PCDP), succeed or fail in achieving peacebuilding aims (headed by International Alert); Contextual analysis of the overall recovery process (conflict drivers, risks factors, issues and dynamics) to provide early warning when necessary (headed by Refugee Law Project); and Evidence-based advocacy, targeted recommendations, and technical support to improve the recovery and peacebuilding impact of OPM and other PRDP stakeholders (headed by Saferworld). The interventions by ACCS made a significant contribution by identifying conflict hot spots, risks factors and mitigating emerging conflict, documenting progress in PRDP implementation, building capacity of key PRDP stakeholders, and promoting conflict sensitive post-conflict recovery programming in northern region.

In 2012, ACCS documented experiences and data collected over the first two years was utilized to develop a comprehensive Peace & Conflict Analysis of northern Uganda. In this

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\(^1\) OPM Commissioner for PRDP, Presentation at the Joint Acholi Sub-Regional Leaders Forum PRDP II/NUSAF II Review Meeting held in Kitgum on May 23rd 2014.

\(^2\) See “We Saw What was Done but Our Will was not Done” ACCS PRDP II Baseline Survey in Acholi, Lango, West Nile and Teso Sub-regions, June 2013.
document titled “Northern Uganda Conflict Analysis, 2013” four major conflict drivers stood out as obstacles to sustainable post-conflict recovery in northern Uganda. These included; growing conflicts related to land and other natural resources (Oil, Minerals and Forests); youth disenfranchisement and unemployment; social changes and conflicting gender relations; lack of appropriate transitional justice mechanisms.3 Furthermore, the findings of the peace and conflict analysis also showed that interventions under PRDP focused more on the ‘hardware’ of infrastructure and consolidation of state authority than on issues of peace building and reconciliation.4 The local stakeholders and target beneficiary communities consulted by ACCS decried pervasive corruption and the lack of resonance with their local priorities of most PRDP interventions. In their own words, PRDP funds were simply “stolen along the way” and whereas some few projects were implemented ostensibly under the PRDP, the local population’s will was not done.5 The mismatch of expectations, centralized funding mechanisms under OPM, lack of community ownership and participation, corruption and a focus on hardware therefore denied PRDP the impact it was intended to achieve, namely to make northern Uganda attain parity with other parts of the country. The case can thus be made for a successor programme that is more comprehensive, locally implemented and spans beyond the 3 years project –like lifespan accorded to PRDP I and PRDP II.6 Throughout the 8 sub-regions, it was observed that the conflicts lasted more than 20 years, and recovery will take much longer to be sustainable.

On the 18 July 2014, OPM convened a policy monitoring committee (PMC) meeting, in which it was emphasized that northern Uganda is still not at par with the rest of the country in terms of development; and that an ongoing special recovery programme is a necessity. In his opening remarks, the former Prime Minister, and chair of the PMC indicated that a successor programme to PRDP 2 and NUSAF 2 was necessary and that a drafting process was underway.

On 23 July 2014, a PRDP 2 Technical Working Group (TWG) meeting was convened to discuss the process of developing priorities for a further phase of PRDP. A subcommittee staffs from OPM have already drafted term of references (ToRs) for a consultant to guide the process of a review of the current PRDP phase with a view of generating key areas to focus on in the next phase along the four strategic objectives. During this meeting, the TWG took over responsibility from OPM citing its impartiality and volunteered to spearhead the process of contracting a consultant to review the PRDP.

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4 Ibid.
6 Resolutions of the Joint Acholi Sub-Regional Leaders Forum reached at the PRDP 2/NUSAFII Review Meeting held in Kitgum from May 22nd –May 2014 recommended a successor programme to last 5 years.
1.0 Justification for the proposed successor program (PRDP-III or Any other name?)

On the basis of our engagement to support PRDP interventions to date, the members of ACCS believe that Northern Uganda still needs sustained attention in order to recover from the decades of civil war. We therefore recommend as follows;

• PRDP I&II focus has primarily been on infrastructural development with little regard to their functionality and inter-communal relations. The focus of PRDP III or a successor program should be more on the software component (addressing the needs of the victims of war and establishing a strong social fabric) while at the same time consolidating the gains of PRDP II through making the investment in infrastructure functional.\(^7\) This can be achieved through special modalities like providing incentives to health and educational workers in rural areas, social benefits scheme and targeted assistance to extremely vulnerable groups, livelihood supports, increasing agricultural productivity and marketing as well as social healing and reconciliation.

• The focus of PRDP III or successor program should also be on strengthening the weak financial and technical capacity of local governments thus making it more effective and efficient in managing emerging peace and conflict issues. ACCS monitoring report noted that local government capacity to deliver services to the community in the 21 sample districts of PRDP implementation was rated at 43.8% far below the average thus the need for special programme to strengthen their capacity.\(^8\) This could be through addressing human resource gaps\(^9\) in key departments to ease achievement of results; making police units and justice institutions more functional thus enhancing public confidence in government institutions in the administration of justice (one area of need for example, is stronger response to sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) cases so that they are not addressed through informal means such as clan or family units).

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\(^7\) According to the Secure Livelihood Research Consortium (SLRC) survey findings many immediate needs related to both physical and livelihoods recovery are far from being met. Only 16% of households surveyed reported receiving any type of livelihood services, and a scant 4% reported receiving social protection services. The study further found that those services went to some of the best-off households. Access to health care is weak overall, and particularly difficult for those households with a member who suffered serious crimes during the war, indicating that there has been little relief or treatment for many of those most physically and psychologically affected by the conflict. See DyanMazurana, Anastasia Marshak, Jimmy Hilton Opiyo and Rachel Gordon, *Surveying Livelihoods, Service Delivery and Governance: Baseline Evidence from Uganda*, Working Paper 12, May 2014.

\(^8\) See Monitoring the Impact of the PRDP on Peace and Conflicts Northern Uganda, ACCS Monitoring Report, June 2014.

\(^9\) ACCS Meeting with leaders from Acholi, Lango, Bunyoro and Teso sub-regions in May and June 2014 ahead of the PMC meetings in July 2014 noted that there are inadequate human resources capacity in key staffing positions in local governments in the regions relating to PRDP/NUSAFAF areas that needs to be filled to ensure effective administration.
• Poverty status in the north remains adversely high despite enormous resources that have been sunk into the region. There is need to analyse this situation to establish whether the challenges in these programmes are at the policy level or at the implementation level. The existing evidence suggests that a large percentage of recovery funds did not reach the intended beneficiaries. PRDP III or successor program should target local expenditures and overcome or bypass deeply entrenched institutional corruption at the center (as orchestrated by OPM and Ministry of Finance officials).

• Refugee influxes (due to the conflicts in South Sudan and DRC) have had adverse effects on social services provision in the north, and these have impacted on health care, physical and food security risks, educational needs as well as driving social tensions during the implementation of PRDP II. PRDP III or successor program should have a strong focus on addressing the impact of refugee influxes within host communities and enhancing border security and access to justice for forced migrants in its framework.

• Northern Uganda is endowed with enormous human, agricultural and natural resource potential, which remains largely untapped. With the right mix of recovery intervention, the regions potential can be unlocked to become the food basket of the country and a conduit for economic development within the East African Community. The discovery of oil and large tourism potential in the region, adds to the need for sustained investments to rehabilitate and ensure the region catches up with other parts of the country both emotionally and infrastructurally.

2.0 What form should PRDP successor program take? (Should it be the same as PRDP-II or should take a different form).

It should take a different form:

• Rekindle the spirit of the Juba Peace Agreements: The Juba peace Agreements provided the basis for post-conflict recovery and rehabilitation framework in northern Uganda but its implementation was abandoned. PRDP III should rekindle this spirit by implementing key components of the Agreement No. II and III on Comprehensive Solutions to the Conflict and Accountability and Reconciliation. This will resonate with local people’s sense of recovery, ensure local ownership, and identify local priorities and participation in the implementation process. To start with, a Northern Uganda Stakeholders Conference should be organised as mandated under the Comprehensive Solutions Agreement to discuss its development agenda, priorities and implementation modalities.

• OPM and sector heads at different Line Ministry level should remain with the oversight function; planning and implementation should be a preserve of the local

10 Poverty status in Northern and Eastern Uganda stood at 40%-50%, while Karamoja was at 60% as opposed to the countrywide level at 24.5%, (UNHS, 2012).

11 See South Sudan Crisis and its Implications on Post-Conflict Northern Uganda, RLP Rapid Assessment Briefing Paper, January 2014.
governments in partnership with CSOs and the Private Sectors to address the capacity gaps that have dogged local government work; the three would use the limited resources maximally to the benefit of the community, do joint monitoring and reporting and community participation would be enhanced through monitoring and reporting thus contributing to sustainability of the numerous interventions thus consolidating the peace dividends.

- The coverage of PRDP should be confined to the LRA worst affected areas of (West Nile, Acholi, Lango and Teso) to maximise the resources for meaningful impact aware that PRDP framework was borne from the inconclusive Juba Peace Process. Alternative government programmes should be developed for sub-regions that suffered the spillover effects.

- Strong focus to address key conflict drivers: transitional justice gaps, resource based conflicts, youth disenfranchisement and unemployment and gender conflicts and sexual and gender based violence. These should be mainstreamed in all PRDP implementation as basis for conflict sensitivity. There is need for robust and sustained interventions by ACCS and other PRDP III partners to address and mitigate the impact of these conflict drivers impacting on sustainable peacebuilding within the region.

- PRDP III or successor program should invest in revamping the education standards and quality in secondary and tertiary education within northern Uganda through direct financial and human resources assistance (eg enhancing teacher’s salaries, equipment and scholarships) in strategic and highly competitive courses like sciences, medicines, law, engineering, oil and gas etc.

- PRDP III should integrate strong transitional justice focus by facilitating documentation, preservation and commemoration of past conflict experiences as integral to the pursuit of justice, accountability and reconciliation. Evidence suggests that a large number of households in Acholi and Lango sub-region experienced serious crimes during the war and are suffering the aftermath of such experiences with little or no targeted intervention to address the impacts. The experiences of these crimes long reverberate through the lives of individual victims and their households, not only in physical manifestations such as ongoing injuries and other health problems, but also in household livelihoods. Subsequent recovery efforts needs to address both direct and indirect impact of the conflicts, foster acknowledgement, support pursuit of justice, preserve conflict memories and promote healing and reconciliation at the local, sub-regional and national level for sustainable peace, development and nation-building in Uganda.

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12 See SLRC ibid.
13 According to SLRC, experiences of serious crimes is significantly correlated with having less wealth and assets, and more dissatisfaction with government, and experiencing any serious crime is significantly correlated to worse food security, worse access to water and health care, and more dissatisfaction with education. Ibid.
3.0 The stakeholders to be or not be involved in PRDP III or successor program

- All the current stakeholders in PRDP-II should be maintained with more direct role given to sub-regional local government associations and forum like the Joint Acholi Sub-regional Leaders Forum (JASRLF)
- There should be a strong involvement and participation of the Private Sector to help pull resources to address emerging issues besides corporate social responsibility function.
- Civil society presence and support to provide on-going conflict assessment, early warnings and capacity building be strengthened and tagged to PRDP successor programme.
- Direct interventions and rehabilitative support be channeled to direct victims and conflict survivors support groups and projects.

4.0 What should be the implementation framework?

- The implementation of the successor recovery program should be community driven.
- There should be regional specific frameworks of implementation given the history, legacies and impact of the various conflicts within the respective regions in Northern Uganda.
- Programme implementation should be done through local governments in partnership with CSOs and the Private sector with Central government providing supervisory oversight.
- Alternative programmes and funding considerations should be accorded to districts and sub-regions with spill over effect under the National Development Plan.
- Create separate PRDP accounts in each district for district to develop priorities and provide accountability separately.

5.0 Resources, Origin and Management of PRDP funds.

- Resources would come from Government and Development partners.
- Management- Central government manages its own resources; the development partners should channel their resources to the implementing partners in respective regions. This would to improve coordination, monitoring, reporting, and accountability and provide value for money.
- Government should establish a separate Reparation Fund to which it channels its additionality component.
- The members of the Greater North Parliamentary Forum (GNPF) and Joint Acholi Sub-Regional Leaders Forum (JASRLF) have proposed a Northern Uganda Trust Fund as an alternative funding mechanism to PRDP. An independent board could
govern the trust fund, which is representative of all the key stakeholders. This would ensure accountability as well as check corrupt tendencies in the disbursement of funds.

- Increased budget allocation to strategic objective 4 of the PRDP on Peacebuilding and Reconciliation to 15% to address the following peacebuilding and reconciliation challenges; -Implement key components of Juba Peace Agreements, support key TJ initiatives-investigation of war crimes (past and still ongoing in Central African Republic and parts of Democratic Republic of Congo), documentation, treatment, psycho-social support services, reconciliation, etc., addressing situation of particularly vulnerable population-displaced, elders, youth and ex-combatants, ongoing conflict analysis, early warnings and strengthening mitigation response, address key conflict drivers impeding recovery and sustainable peace-building, promoting individual and social healing and reconciliation at local, sub-regional and national levels.

- Socio-cultural reintegration - need to reinvigorate social/cultural base and institutions, including their role in promoting local productivity and abating violence; Cultural institutions should be empowered to work closely with local governments to address youth attitudes. These can be promoted by rebuilding in young people self confidence in their heritage.

6.0 Theory of Change-Tracking Outcome.

- A sustained, peaceful and prosperous northern Uganda.
- State presence; its legitimacy, effectiveness and efficiency enhanced and crime rates, petty theft, land conflicts etc. reduced.
- Development gaps between the North and South bridged and its development needs ably integrated the National Development Plan.
- Strengthened integration of northern Uganda into the mainstream affairs of Uganda.
- Healed victims and survivors empowered to engage in the pursuit of justice, social reconstruction, rehabilitation and national reconciliation for sustainable peacebuilding.

About Advisory Consortium on Conflict Sensitivity (ACCS)

The Advisory Consortium on Conflict Sensitivity (ACCS) is a three-member consortium that brings together Refugee Law Project, International Alert and Saferworld. The overall aim of ACCS is assisting DFID and partners in strengthening the potential of the Post Conflict Development Programme (PCDP) and recovery process to address the causes of conflict and contribute to sustainable peace and stability. This PRDP briefs was jointly developed by the consortium members to highlight key issues and recommendations for a potential successor programme for the recovery of northern Uganda.
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