

# The Right to a Better Life

## Strategy for Denmark's Development Cooperation



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK

**DANIDA** | INTERNATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

# Poverty, human rights and growth – sustainable development

## Denmark will

- Apply human rights as a core value in our partnerships and use principles of non-discrimination, participation, transparency and accountability in all phases of our development cooperation.
- Work to promote all human rights – economic, social, cultural, civil and political – with a special focus on women’s rights and equal access to decision-making, resources and opportunities.
- Systematically strengthen capacity of public authorities, civil societies and rights holders.
- Work to strengthen the participation of the least developed countries in the development of the international legal order.

Poverty must be fought with human rights and economic growth. This is the strong message from the strategy for Denmark’s development cooperation: The Right to a Better Life.

Universal and fundamental human rights serve as a powerful means of redistribution. By securing all people the right to food, all children the right to go to school and all persons affected by disease the right to essential treatment, prosperity and welfare are distributed much more broadly. By promoting women’s rights and protecting people’s right to express and organise themselves as well as take part in developing their own societies, power and influence are distributed to many more.

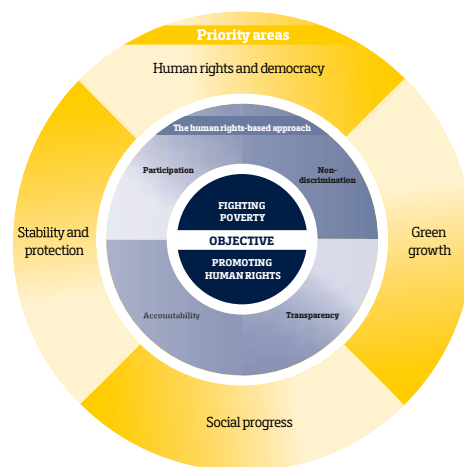
We cannot fight poverty and fulfil fundamental human rights without a solid economic foundation. Fighting poverty requires years of solid economic growth. As natural resources become scarcer and our planet ever more fragile, new forms of sustainable growth are required. Therefore, inclusive and green growth is at the very heart of the new strategy. This will help create jobs for the millions of young people who declare themselves ready to make a contribution every year. They deserve to get their chance.

An active Danish development policy is first and foremost an investment in a more just world. In the right to a better life. But it is also an investment in our own future – in peace and progress and in growth, employment and new opportunities, also in Denmark and in Europe. It is an investment in global influence.

Christian Friis Bach, Minister for Development Cooperation

## A HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

Human rights are a means and an end in our development cooperation. They must be part and parcel of everything we do.



# 1. Human rights and democracy

## Denmark will:

- Support democratic elections, parliaments, political parties, civil societies, and free and critical media.
- Promote good governance and the development of democratic institutions, including the establishment of and access to effective, independent legal systems and complaints mechanisms, increased capacity and decentralisation in the public sector, and the fight against corruption.
- Strengthen international cooperation for human rights, democracy and good governance.
- Work to strengthen gender equality and to ensure the rights of women and girls.
- Strengthen efforts in the fight against tax loopholes, address illicit financial flows and promote a fair taxation of natural resources in the world's poorest countries.
- Promote social dialogue and workers' rights as a lever for poverty reduction.

If we help poor people fight for their rights, then we also fight the main causes of poverty. Human rights and democracy are fundamental values and goals and an important priority area in Danish development policy.

We will support processes of change which creates societies where checks and balances on the executive are exercised by citizens, independent bodies, a strong civil society and a free media, and where people participate actively and take on responsibility for the development of society.

Denmark will support processes and institutions which promote human rights, work for equal access for all to fair legal proceedings and promote access to complaint mechanisms and alternative conflict resolution mechanisms – both nationally and internationally.

A country where women do not have the same opportunities as men is denying itself a valuable resource. Denmark will work to reduce discrimination against women and work for women's equal right to education, health, economic prosperity and influence as

well as women's ability to enjoy their sexual and reproductive rights.

A prerequisite for development is the mobilisation of sufficient domestic revenue to finance reform and public services. We will step up efforts to fight tax loopholes and illicit financial flows and work for greater transparency in payments by multinational corporations for the exploitation of natural resources in developing countries.

A well-functioning labour market is an important prerequisite for economic growth, increased employment and for establishing socially responsible companies. Accordingly, we will support social dialogue between governments, employers and trade unions.



## 2. Green growth

### Denmark will:

- Support developing countries in fighting poverty and creating sustainable development through green growth, increased earnings and more jobs, especially for the youth.
- Support green growth based on sustainable management and use of natural resources.
- Contribute to strengthening international and national framework conditions for green growth and enhance coherence with environmental protection.
- Promote innovative technological and financial solutions in the areas of agriculture, forestry, environment, energy, water and climate.
- Promote resource-efficient food production capable of feeding a growing population sustainably and effectively.
- Contribute to increasing the access of developing countries' to sustainable energy and increase efforts towards more sustainable and resource-efficient management and use of energy and water.
- Promote poor men and women's increased participation and improved access to water, land, knowledge and finance.

Economic growth is necessary for poverty eradication. However, with increased pressure on natural resources and increased demand for food, energy, water and growth means that growth must be come sustainable. Efforts to promote green growth should pave the way for new global and local solutions and opportunities.

National framework conditions for green growth must be strengthened through regional integration, a more business friendly environment, effective environmental legislation and through the use of public-private partnerships. The price must create the right incentives. Exploiting natural resources and harming the environment involves costs, which must be paid. Denmark will also promote the use of global and national sustainability goals.

Agriculture and food production sectors must be drivers of sustainable growth which can bring about lasting poverty reduction. Poor farmers must be linked to processing businesses and have access to new knowledge and technology, sources of finance, training and education.

Access to sustainable energy and water resources is crucial for growth in all sectors in

particular the agricultural sector and essential for the poorest and most vulnerable groups. These resources are also crucial in a world where the poorest are adversely affected by climate change. Climate interventions and the efforts to promote increased climate financing will be a significant and integral element of Danish development cooperation, which contributes to green growth, job creation and the introduction of climate-adapted agricultural methods.

Green growth can only be achieved if there is an open and inclusive dialogue between citizens, civil society, the business community and national authorities.



### 3. Social progress

#### Denmark will:

- Place issues of distribution and human rights in social sectors higher on the agenda in multilateral forums and in the political dialogue with developing countries.
- Support the ability of civil society organisations to hold governments accountable for social goals and commitments.
- Ensure transparency, accountability and citizen involvement in decisions on, and monitoring of, social services.
- Be at the forefront of international efforts to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights, and in the fight against HIV/AIDS.
- Increasingly support social sectors in developing countries through budget support and multilateral interventions.
- Strengthen efforts for social protection, particularly for poor and vulnerable groups.

Many people in developing countries have gained access to social services, such as health, education, water and sanitation. However, in many places there is still much to be done. People with insufficient access to nutritious food, health and education are kept in poverty and exclusion. Social progress is therefore crucial for human development and for enabling people to fight their way out of poverty and marginalisation and to exercise their rights. Furthermore, social progress and economic growth and prosperity are positively interrelated and reinforce development.

Through budget support, engagement with civil society, a limited number of bilateral interventions and not least through stronger multilateral engagement social sectors Denmark will contribute to strengthening the quality of, and equal access to, social services.

The right to sexual and reproductive health is key to women's ability to take charge of their own lives and choose when to have children and how many. The right to sexual and reproductive health is also crucial in the fight against maternal mortality and in efforts to promote gender equality and sustainable population growth.

Social safety nets promote the ability of poor and vulnerable groups to work their way out of poverty and to manage risks and withstand shocks. Furthermore, social safety nets can advance gender equality and economic development. We will work for targeted and effective social safety nets, as well as more integrated national social and welfare policies.

#### THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION

Currently 67 million children are without access to education. The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) is a multilateral partnership between 46 developing countries and more than 30 bilateral, regional, and international development organisations, the private sector and civil society. The GPE is an effective way of supporting efforts of developing countries to achieve national education targets, which aim at increasing the number of girls and boys that complete education at school and at raising the quality of education. Since 2002, GPE has supported the delivery of good results. In the countries that are supported by the partnership, 19 million children now attend school, 300,000 more teachers have been hired and 12 per cent more children have completed primary education.

## 4. Stability and protection

### Denmark will:

- Strengthen our engagement in conflict prevention with an emphasis on reducing tension, strengthening dialogue and mediation, and promoting human rights, rule of law and protection of civilians.
- Place statebuilding and peacebuilding at the centre of interventions in fragile states through the promotion of legitimate governance and greater social cohesion.
- Strengthen interventions for poverty reduction, social development, growth and job creation in fragile states.
- Work towards better coordinated, more effective, tailor-made and locally-owned interventions in fragile states based on the “comprehensive approach”, including the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States and the Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals.
- Alleviate humanitarian needs and contribute to improved protection of those affected by conflict, crises and disasters while respecting the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.
- Strengthen resilience among vulnerable groups as well as efforts for disaster prevention.
- Strengthen cooperation with and among regional and multilateral organisations, in particular the UN, in fragile and conflict-affected states, including operationalising the R2P principles.

1.5 billion people live in fragile states and areas. Fragility and conflict hamper development and poverty reduction, create or aggravate humanitarian crises, and provide breeding ground for instability and migration. Ensuring stability and protection is a major global challenge, which calls for increased international cooperation, a comprehensive approach and willingness to take risks.

Statebuilding must be based on democratic values, transparency, inclusion and local ownership. The objective is a nationally led statebuilding process and the early assumption of responsibility for such efforts by local partners. An important factor in the legitimacy of the state is the population’s perception that its basic need for food, clean drinking water, health, education and employment are being met.

Denmark will strengthen its efforts to promote peaceful conflict resolution, conflict prevention and enhanced resilience of vulnerable groups to manage risks and withstand shocks and promote women’s participation and protection. For each dollar invested in prevention, countries can save four to seven dollars on reconstruction.

Denmark’s humanitarian efforts aim to protect the most vulnerable, not least refugees and internally displaced people. Our humanitarian efforts are not subject to security or foreign policy objectives and are carried out with respect for humanitarian principles.

### THE NEW DEAL

The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States is a new international approach aimed at making interventions in fragile states more effective. The New Deal is based on the five Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals which have been defined by the organisation of fragile states, g7+:

- Legitimate Politics
- Security
- Justice
- Economic Foundations
- Revenues & Services

# Flexible partnerships

Denmark wants to be a strong, trusted, active and engaged partner in international development live up to our commitments to the world's poorest and work actively to ensure that international aid commitments are honoured by other development partners. Denmark's international cooperation is based on mutually committing, equal and effective partnerships with developing countries the public and private sector, civil society, the multilateral system, new development partners and global funds.

Denmark will work actively to strengthen the EU's role in international development cooperation and work for stronger coherence between policies in the many areas that affect developing countries. We will aim to influence EU policies that affect developing countries and to advance Danish views and approaches.

## **STRENGTHENED MULTILATERAL PARTNERSHIPS**

Denmark has a clear interest in orderly international cooperation, an international legal order and a well-functioning multilateral system. Denmark will strengthen its cooperation with the multilateral organisations, increase the use of core funding and revive Denmark's active multilateralism in order to strengthen focus, coherence and results.

## **ACTIVE COOPERATION WITH NEW DEVELOPMENT ACTORS**

Denmark will seek partnerships with emerging development actors, both state and private, where we have common interests and there are opportunities for joint efforts to solve global and cross-border challenges, such as climate change.

## **ENGAGING THE PRIVATE SECTOR**

Partnering with the private sector is an important element in Denmark's development cooperation. Denmark will contribute to creating an enabling environment and opportunities for Danish and international companies to engage in devising effective solutions that create jobs, foster growth and reduce poverty in developing countries

## **ACTIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS**

We will promote a vibrant and diversified civil society in developing countries through partnerships with civil society organisations and international and local organisations and movements, where we require transparency, participation, cooperation and results from our partners. These efforts aim to promote the creation of legitimate and diversified civil societies and enhance popular participation and engagement.

### **Denmark will:**

- Maintain a global development engagement and a bilateral engagement based on cooperation with a limited number of priority countries.
- Initiate the establishment of a network of countries which have reached or are on track to reaching the target of providing 0.7 per cent of GNI in development assistance, in a partnership based on common priorities.
- Work actively to strengthen the EU's role in international development cooperation and to increase coherence between EU policies that affect developing countries.
- Cooperate actively with and exert influence on multilateral organisations to ensure that they as far as possible promote our aims, use their mandates effectively and ensure synergy with our bilateral interventions.
- Seek partnerships with new development actors where we have common interests.
- Engage the private sector in efforts for development and poverty reduction.
- Form strategic partnerships with civil society organisations and focus on the delivery of results.

# Results and efficiency

Through the application of the principles of aid effectiveness Denmark will strive to make its development cooperation more effective and focused in order to improve its ability to deliver results.

## **LOCALLY ANCHORED AND DEMOCRATICALLY OWNED**

Denmark's development cooperation must be anchored locally and build on democratic ownership. This means that Denmark, to the greatest extent possible, will support developing countries' own development strategies and strengthen country systems. This way we support governments in taking charge of their countries' development.

It also entails more systematic efforts to involve parliaments, civil society and the private sector in our cooperation with priority countries in order to contribute to promoting the accountability of governments towards their citizens and strengthen democratic checks and balances.

We will increase the use of budget support as a mutual contract based on good governance with respect for human rights and democracy, transparent and accountable management of public funds, active efforts against corruption, and the will to reduce poverty.

## **OPENNESS IS A CORE VALUE**

Openness is a core value in Denmark's development cooperation. We will ensure greater transparency in development cooperation, both at home and abroad.

Citizens in our priority countries should be able to draw attention to unintended adverse consequences of our development cooperation and be able to file complaints. We will lead by example through transparency about fraud and misuse and publish information about concrete corruption cases and how they are handled.

## **COMMUNICATION ON POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT**

Communication and information to the public on conditions in developing countries and the results of development cooperation must be strengthened and made more targeted. In particular this should be achieved through activities civil society organisations and companies as well as cultural cooperation and public diplomacy.

Denmark's development cooperation is something we can all be proud of.

## **Denmark will:**

- Ensure that our development cooperation is based on the aid effectiveness principles of ownership, harmonisation, alignment, results and mutual accountability.
- Make greater use of budget support to promote ownership and mutual accountability.
- Increase openness and transparency in the administration of Danish development cooperation, both at home and abroad.
- Strengthen documentation, evaluation and effective communication of results in our development cooperation.
- Strengthen our efforts to inform about conditions in developing countries, global challenges and Danish development cooperation.

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