



DENMARK – NIGER

COUNTRY POLICY PAPER

2016-2020

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb	NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
AU	African Union	OECD	The Organisation for Economic and Co-operation and Development
CPIA	Country Policy and Institutional Assessment	OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
DB	Doing Business	PDES	Le Plan de Développement Economique et Social
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States	SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative	UN	United Nations
EU	European Union	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
IMF	International Monetary Fund	WB	World Bank
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals	WDR	World Development Report
MUJAO	The Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa		

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DENMARK AND NIGER – INTRODUCTION AND FUTURE VISION

The **overall vision** for Denmark's engagement in Niger is to *support the government and people of Niger in order to maintain peace and stability, re-enforce democratic values and provide the opportunity for the people to embark on a long term effort to improve living conditions. Niger faces tremendous challenges and the country policy is informed by Denmark's commitment to supporting Niger in remaining peaceful and stable and making a constructive contribution to the development of a troubled region.*

Niger faces very serious challenges – a hostile climate, deep poverty and associated social tension aggravated by very high population growth, a large and very sparsely populated landmass, a fragile economy and a very young democracy which is being threatened by incursion of violent extremism from neighbouring countries. To this should be added that Niger is a key transit country for migration flows to Europe. Despite these challenges the government of Niger has managed in recent years to establish a fairly stable society and achieved some degree of economic development partly but not exclusively based on exploitation of mineral resources.

Being the largest and the most populous country of the Sahel region and acting as geopolitical buffer between Sahara and Nigeria, peace and stability in Niger plays a paramount role for the stability in the whole region. A breakdown of the social and political order could have a major destabilising effect on the region. The EU is acknowledging that Niger plays an important role in handling irregular migration, and Niger thus constitutes an essential partner in the EU's cooperation with African partners on migration. Also the government of Niger is acutely aware of its role as a transit country and has – as the first country in the Sahel-region – adopted legislation strengthening prosecution of human traffickers and describing migrants as victims of human rights violations. However, the implementation is hampered by weak capacity both at government and local level as well as socio-economic challenges. Tackling the key challenges of irregular migration through Niger should be based on a comprehensive approach encompassing political dialogue, long-term development assistance, humanitarian assistance and regional stabilisation activities. It is therefore essential for Niger that Denmark supports its efforts to address these key challenges.

Considering the overall vision for Denmark's engagement in Niger the main objectives for Denmark will first and foremost be to *strengthen **stability and peace** in Niger and the region, **enhance access to basic rights** and **reduce extreme poverty** by a specific focus on **resilience**.* Denmark will thereby address key elements for the development of Niger related to stability, migration and poverty reduction.

The Danish cooperation with Niger goes back to 1974. Though limited in financial terms (approximately 50 mio. DKK per year) **Denmark has achieved significant results** and has played an important role in key areas within democracy and human rights, water supply and agriculture. Denmark is seen as a reputable and reliable partner. The long standing development cooperation has resulted in a solid and trustworthy partnership between the two countries. It is seen by Niger as important that Denmark as one of the few bilateral donors in the country continues its engagement to address the causes of poverty and conflicts.

The objective of this policy paper is to establish the strategic framework for Denmark's engagement in Niger over the coming five years (2016–2020). The Danish engagement will build on results obtained so far and focus on areas where Denmark has comparative advantages. The future engagement will also take into consideration that there is no longer a Danish presence in Niger, thus it must be expected that delegated partnerships and cooperation with multilateral organisation will play a key role in implementation of the activities. The political dialogue with Niger will continue mainly through EU cooperation.

Due to the uncertainties associated with the very complicated situation in key areas such as security and democracy that might impact negatively on Niger's development it will be of paramount importance to have a **flexible strategy** that can be adapted to major and possibly unexpected events.



Map No. 4234 UNITED NATIONS
December 2004

Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Cartographic Section

NIGER FACTS	
Area	1,267,000 km ²
Population size	17.83 million
Annual population growth	3.9 %
Population groups	Hausa (53 %) Djerma-Sonraï (21 %) Tuareg (10 %) Fulani (10 %) Others (6 %)
Language	French (official)
Religion	Muslims (95 %)

2 NATIONAL CONTEXT

In this challenging environment one of the most decisive forces of change will include the destabilising influence of radical or criminal movements and general lawlessness in neighbouring countries. Another important force of change will be a volatile political climate where ethnic tensions traditionally have been a major worry which now is being supplemented by increasing risks of radicalisation and the effects of climate change on a very perilous natural resource situation. The way forward will depend on the government's willingness to engage in critical reforms and could build on the economic opportunities available in mineral extraction and increased agricultural production.

A FRAGILE COUNTRY IN AN UNSTABLE REGION

The Sahel region has become increasingly instable over recent decades. Niger has long been considered a fairly stable country in an unstable region. However, the stability is fragile and threatened by the instability in the region, the presence of terrorist groups and domestic political tension.

The region has known several armed conflicts and terrorist organisations have extended their activities over recent years. Many of the historic trade routes across the desert are currently controlled by terrorist and criminal networks. Drugs, weapon and human trafficking have taken unprecedented dimensions involving great

economic interests. The northern area is inaccessible and sparsely populated which makes effective control of national territories extremely difficult.

Instability and armed conflicts in neighbouring countries contribute to severe pressure on Niger: Mali to the west, Libya to the north and Nigeria – a central trading partner – to the south. The presence of the major jihadist groups AQIM, MUJAO/Al-Murabitoon and Boko Haram with increased and still more organised terror-activities poses a serious risk to Niger's security, stability and territorial integrity. Taking into account the magnitude and complexity of these conflicts, it must be expected that Niger will have to cope with the consequences of regional instability for years to come.

BOX 1 NIGER – A CHALLENGING CLIMATE, HIGH POPULATION GROWTH AND MASSIVE POVERTY

- Niger is landlocked. Although the largest country in the Sahel, only 11 pct. of the land is suitable for cultivation, primarily in the south and in the west along the Niger river, where almost the entire population is living in semi-arid conditions. The rest of the territory is made up of the Sahara desert with dispersed oasis and mining communities.
- One of the poorest countries in the world, Niger was ranked last on the Human Development Index in 2014.
- The highest population growth rate (3.9 %) and the youngest population (mean 15.1 years) in the world.

See annex I for further key facts.

The government in Niger is strongly engaged with regional organisations such as e.g. the AU, ECOWAS and the G5 Sahel Group concerning security and development issues in the Sahel. Niger is one of the countries in Sahel most resolutely engaged in the fight against terrorism at the side of Western allies with the EU, France and the US as major security partners. Encouraged by its allies the government has substantially increased its security expenditures. But this focus on security has required a reallocation of resources at the expense of already weak social sectors.

Niger is also faced with a plethora of **local drivers of conflict**. This is underlined by the fact that Niger has experienced several armed rebellions during the period 1990–2009. The **claim by pastoral groups in particular the Tuaregs that they have not been recognised by the state** and have not benefitted from extractive industries (uranium) in the Agadez region is a historical source of tension. Deteriorating living conditions and marginalisation contribute to frustration among pastoral groups creating a recruitment ground for radical groups. Other drivers of these conflicts include the availability of arms in the region and trained fighters among the Nigerien Tuaregs having served under Gaddafi. In order to respond to such challenges, government policies emphasise a better balance between regions, decentralisation reform, dialogue with the social sector on priorities and a range of specific measures for socio-economic development in conflict prone regions.

Conflicts regarding the use of land to agricultural and pastoral purposes remain a source of persistent tension reinforced by increased pressure on resources resulting from land degradation and population pressure. The country has put in place an innovative, participative and broad ranging legislative framework in order to improve land tenure and management of natural resources. However, institutional coherence and implementation lack behind. State authority in preventing and settling local conflicts remains limited.

Niger is also **exposed to the risk of radicalisation and violent extremism**. The influence of terror organisations operating in neighbouring countries is being enhanced by factors such as poverty, inequality, marginalisation, as well as limited employment opportunities for youth. A weak education system further contributes to these risks. Religion plays an important role in Nigerien society where around 95 pct. are Muslims. The religious sphere has become increasingly diversified with the appearance of new associations and religious trends since the 1990s. While representing a minority, more radical strands have gained influence and attracted youth. Close ties among populations across borders and influx of refugees facilitate infiltration. Countering violent extremism through dialogue between religious organisations and the government, as well as preventive actions among youth, remains extremely important.

Migration from Niger is largely directed towards neighbouring countries and often seasonal. Furthermore, the country is one of the most important countries of **transit in West Africa for migration** flows through the desert city of Agadez via Libya to Europe. Very large shares of West-African migrants that arrive in Europe have transited through Agadez. The border between Niger, Libya and Algeria are poorly controlled due to lack of financial and human capacities and the landscape with mountains and desert is hard to control and monitor. Hence, migration has become a major factor for the local economy. Traditionally the Agadez region has always been a region of transit but with deterioration of the security situation, transit of goods and persons appear to be the only viable economic activity in the region making eradication of trafficking and smuggling even more challenging. Movement and migration of all ECOWAS citizens into Niger including the Agadez-region is legal and in line with the free movement principle within ECOWAS impeding the local authorities' ability to identify irregular immigrants and to combat human trafficking. Even though the Nigerien government has shown willingness to take initiatives in this area, latest by adopting a law against irregular migration, the enforcement of the law suffers from the weak government capacity and lack of resources. Also corruption hampers the government's ability to tackle challenges related to irregular migration.

THE POOREST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD

Around 90 pct. of Niger's population live in poverty. Illiteracy among youth and adults is widespread and affects more than 70 pct. of the population, mainly women and girls.

The country has **the highest fertility rate in the world** which creates enormous challenges to provide access to basic services, food, education, infrastructures and employment for all, especially for women and girls. The country has made some progress in attaining the MDGs and targets relating to urban water supply, child mortality and HIV/AIDS are likely to be met by 2015.

The economy of Niger is characterised by fluctuating economic growth heavily influenced by external shocks stemming from terrorist attacks, price fluctuations on key imports and exports and repeated droughts. It is largely based on agriculture and livestock which occupy the majority of the population. **The economy remains fragile** depending heavily on rain-fed subsistence agriculture which is vulnerable to climatic variations. Pastoralism and livestock is adapted to the arid climate and is the second source of exportations after uranium in Niger.

Private sector development is limited by low-level qualifications of the labour force and lack of infrastructure as well as security risks for investors. Providing even basic services to the rapidly growing population is an enormous challenge in a context of limited internal resource mobilisation.

Extractive industries constitute a main potential driver of change for the Niger economy in the medium term. The country has longstanding experience in uranium production and became an oil producer in 2011. Major foreign investments have been realised in extractive industries in recent years. The 2010 constitution details that revenues from extractive industries will be invested in socio-economic development. However, complex challenges remain concerning the distribution of revenues, social tensions related to negotiation of mining contracts and environmental consequences.

Niger remains **highly dependent on external aid** that contributes around 40 pct. of the national budget. Never-the-less aid levels are relatively low due to political instability in the country and it is monitored by OECD as potentially under-aided.

REPEATED FOOD CRISIS, MALNUTRITION AND SCARCE WATER RESOURCES

In 2014, the global acute malnutrition rate in Niger was 14.8 pct., the highest in the Sahel. Even in years with good agricultural harvests between 3 and 4 million people are affected by food insecurity. Following four successive food crisis since 2005 vulnerable households face serious difficulties to recover. Limited resilience is linked to population growth and increased pressure on already limited natural resources. **Climate change will constitute a continuous threat** for the viability of rain fed agriculture as well as for livelihoods of pastoralists that depend on grazing and water resources for their animals

In 2012, the government adopted the 3N initiative, Nigeriens Nourish Nigeriens, which is an essential part of Niger's efforts to cope with climate change and reverse a situation of chronic deficit of food production. The strategy is based on improvements of yields from rain fed agriculture as well as the development of irrigated cultures, livestock and fisheries sectors. Despite unfavourable climatic conditions, Niger has a potential to improve food security. Increased use of irrigation in wetland systems, recognising

mobility as key to livestock production and soil conservation techniques among others have proven successful in reversing environmental degradation.

Regional instability represents an additional challenge to food security in Niger. Seasonal migration used to diversify incomes and secure pastoral production is negatively influenced by instability in neighbouring countries, and the influx of refugees constitutes additional pressure on limited resources. Cross border trade into Nigeria has become exceedingly difficult.

Water resources are scarce in Niger and are further pressured by climate change and population growth. Access to clean drinking water remains limited, in particular in the rural areas. Current prognosis on climate changes in Niger points to the risk of increased temperatures and variations in rainfall with severe human and environmental consequences. Water resources must be managed in a sustainable manner to secure basic services and to prevent conflicts related to scarcity of water.

BOX 2 GREENING THE DESERT – SOME OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF 3N

- Increase in crops by 23 %.
- Increase in irrigated production by 113 %.
- 301 new pastoral water points and 127 new, modern farms.
- Recovery of 82,500 hectares of degraded land.
- Reduction in the prevalence of chronic malnutrition as well as undernourishment.

GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS – FRAGILE DEMOCRACY AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Niger's democracy emerged in 1990 in a particularly difficult context with economic crisis and a majority of illiterate voters. Following a range of severe political crises and two military coups, Niger returned to a democratic phase in 1999 lasting until 2009 when a new political and institutional crisis resulted in the latest military coup in 2010.

The present government has been in power since 2011. Its program to address Niger's development challenges has raised renewed hope among the population. However, political stability has remained fragile and tensions have increased as presidential and parliamentary elections in 2016 are drawing closer. Even though democratisation in Niger has contributed to some progress in terms of improvements in human rights and governance challenges remain significant. The Universal Periodic Review undertaken in the United Nations Human Rights Commission and independent observers point out that discrimination and violence against especially of women and girls and lack of access to justice are widespread problems. Conditions of slavery also persevere among certain

ethnic groups. The large size of the country combined with uneven population distribution patterns adds to costs and distances to achieve universal access to key public services and infrastructure. Major national investments in social sectors supported by international donors in the last decades have contributed to increasing coverage of public services but the quality of these services remains a key challenge.

Corruption is a major challenge. Reflecting a positive trend, Niger occupies a rank of 103 out of 175 countries on the 2014 Transparency International Corruption Perception Index. An institutional set-up for anti-corruption measures is in place, including a hotline for citizen complaints.

The **government has taken a number of reform initiatives** in recent years not least in enhancing the effectiveness of the public sector and Niger is seen by the World Bank as a star performer (a CPIA performance index of score at 3.5). However, huge challenges remain in an overall reform policy in order to modernise the state. Decentralisation reform, which has been implemented since 2004, is a key public sector reform. The reform, however, is only partially implemented and transfer of powers and resources from central to local government is essential.

The **rights of women and girls in Niger** stand out as a critical human rights issue. Women meet discrimination and have limited access to inheritance of property, credit, education and health care. The country has one of the highest prevalence of child marriage in the world as three out of four girls get married before reaching the age of 18. Women's issues are extremely controversial and strong resistance from religious organisations has prevented a family code from being adopted. The country ratified the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women with four major reserves on family issues including equal rights and responsibilities within the household. Since the 2000s, however, enrolment of girls in primary education has increased and a gender quota law, backed by women's organisations, has contributed to increased participation of women in politics. The national policy on gender focuses on improving the socio-cultural environment for changes, completing legislation and integrating gender approaches in sector strategies.

Civil society organisations play important roles in multiple domains including development and humanitarian action, human rights and democratisation. They have gained essential experience and some of them have contributed effectively to implementation of key programmes and initiatives and can be important partners for Denmark in Niger. They need, however, support to play a more significant role in ensuring a pro-active development of the Nigerien society. Furthermore, civil society in Niger tends to be politicised and the organisations often compete over access to funds instead of collaborating.

3

DANISH ENGAGEMENT IN NIGER – A LONGSTANDING PARTNERSHIP

Denmark's cooperation with Niger goes back to 1974. The partnership has evolved with a geographical focus on the Zinder and Diffa (currently more severely affected by Boko Haram) within water supply and sanitation, agriculture, governance, human rights as well as peace and security. Denmark is a major donor in the water sector in Niger and has been a pioneer for alignment with national systems and procedures with significant contribution in building up infrastructure and institutional capacity. In agriculture, focus has been on supporting long term

economic growth through the development of small agricultural enterprises and value chains. In governance and human rights support has been given to elections, women's rights, capacity building of key democratic institutions and actors as well as dialogue mechanisms (ref. annex II for details). Denmark's representation office was closed in 2014 and responsibility for the Danish development cooperation to Niger rests with the Danish embassy in Ouagadougou.

Several Danish organisations (CARE Denmark, CARITAS, Danish Demining Group, the Danish Institute for Human Rights) have development activities in Niger within the area of human rights, peace and stabilisation as well as local development and food security. These activities constitute an important complement to the official Danish development cooperation in Niger.

BOX 3 DENMARK IN NIGER – LOOKING AT RESULTS UNDER THE CURRENT PROGRAMMES CF. ANNEX II

- Increase in the rate of the coverage of access to water in Zinder and Diffa: Diffa 81 %, Zinder 61 %. Country average 52 % (for the period 2012–2017).
- Support to development and implementation of the National Strategy on Pastoral Water (“Strategie Nationale pour l’Hydraulique pastorale”) (for the period 2012–2017).
- Capacity-building of 1450 farmer organisations (including 550 women's associations) (for the period 2014–2019).
- 998 micro projects in Zinder and Diffa benefitting more than 30,000 producers (of which 45 % women) (for the period 2014–2019).
- Support to strengthening the capacity of the National Assembly's administrative systems (HR, IT etc.) (for the period 2014–2017).
- Support to establishment of “husbands' schools”, where men are organised to take responsibility for family health and hereby promote women's reproductive health and their social position in general (for the period 2014–2017).

4 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND KEY AREAS TO BE ADDRESSED

The point of departure for the policy paper is Denmark's commitment to fighting poverty while securing stability and basic human rights particularly in fragile countries giving people the opportunity to pursue better lives. Taking into account the major challenges Niger is facing and Denmark's key comparative advantages the three strategic objectives will be: 1) Stability and Peace, 2) Access to basic rights for ordinary people and 3) reduction of extreme poverty.

The strategic objectives are highly interlinked and will to the extent possible, include a focus on capacity building of government institutions and civil society. Across the entire Danish engagement a cross-cutting human rights-based approach will be adopted. Considering Denmark's comprehensive engagement in the Sahel region, it will be a priority to ensure synergies and coordination with

existing Danish efforts as well as with the EU Sahel Strategy

The selected strategic objectives are in line with Niger's overall government priorities outlined in the national poverty strategy "Le Plan de Développement Economique et Social (PDES 2012–2015)" and relevant sector policies. Efforts based on shared values within different areas such as human rights, democracy, good governance, security and migration will be promoted primarily through the EU political dialogue with the authorities in Niger. In addition, Denmark will seek to maintain contact with key civil society partners.

EU countries present in Niger have designed a joint programming document of development cooperation to enhance complementarity. Denmark will follow this process both in terms of coordination as well as in the policy dialogue with

the government. Denmark will in addition engage actively, both under the EU, UN and AU-auspices and other international fora, in issues and formulation of policies relevant to Niger.

Due to the complexity of the situation in Niger, the following cooperation modalities might be applied depending on the development of the situation:

1) development support through the country programme for Niger; 2) efforts targeted stabilisation and security from the Peace and Stabilisation Fund; 3) funds from Climate envelope, if there should be a possibility to integrate these into the country programme, 4) Danish support to and alliances with Niger in multilateral organisations and fora where relevant; 5) Danish NGOs actively engaged in Niger through framework financing or other sources; (6) placement of Danish resource persons in multilateral organisations in Niger where possible and needed; (7) humanitarian aid may be considered based on an analyses of overall humanitarian needs if more acute crises develop and (8) continued contacts between the Danish and the Nigerien Armed Forces.

BOX 4 THE FUTURE DANISH COOPERATION WITH NIGER WILL BE GUIDED BY THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

- a. A **comprehensive and flexible approach** at the national and regional level, including active diplomacy, political dialogue, social-economic development, security and stabilisation efforts as well as humanitarian assistance.
- b. **Synergy** with other donors favouring a joint and harmonised approach to complex security and development.
- c. Focus on long term **state building objectives** favouring inclusive political and institutional processes considering that state capacity is essential for durable peace.
- d. A **rights-based approach** considering that discrimination and exclusion are root causes of conflicts.

1 A commission is currently working on renewing the poverty strategy for the period from 2016–2019. It is expected that main priorities on security, governance, food security, economic growth and social development will not be fundamentally altered.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1

STRENGTHEN STABILITY AND PEACE

Peace and stability in Niger are closely linked to the evolving situation in the broader Sahel region including armed conflicts. Key challenges at regional level include preventing terrorist organisations from further expanding their activities, countering trafficking of migrants and the spread of violent extremism and strengthening the dialogue and cooperation on anti-terror activities at regional and international level.

The trans-border nature of security threats in the Sahel have been recognised at the international level. Denmark will engage with EU, UN, AU and sub-regional organisations such as ECOWAS and G5 Sahel Group to promote regional security and stabilisation with a special focus on efforts to address the root causes of instability as well as support initiatives targeting migration.

Improved border control and oversight of trans-border movements are essential means of hindering terrorist groups from expanding their activities, fighting against

criminal networks as well as trafficking of humans, goods etc. At the country, regional and local level, these efforts could include strengthening security forces and their presence throughout the territory, countering violent extremism and supporting the Nigerien government's capacity to deal with migration flows. In addition, Denmark will consider supporting efforts to inform migrants transiting through Niger about possible dangers related to their journey to Europe, possibilities for repatriation etc. An example could be support to the pilot multi-purpose-centre in Agadez managed by IOM that the EU Commission is engaged in. The Centre will seek to provide first support and information to migrants (including information on voluntary return), referrals to national protection.

At the national level in Niger, major challenges include countering Boko Haram's infiltration into Niger and hindering the spread of terror attacks from Boko Haram as well as AQIM, Mujao/ Al-Murabitoon and other radicalised groups. Curbing the influence of radical movements among the population and youth in particular, countering violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism is a key long term challenge.

In this regard, access to education and employment, especially for young people, play a crucial role.

Consolidating democratic institutions is a major condition for a viable response to security challenges fostering a pluralist political debate on essential societal issues including security and oversight of government action. The main vehicle for Danish support in this area will be the Danish Regional Sahel Peace and Stabilisation Programme. This may be supplemented by bilateral initiatives to address more limited national issues that impact radicalisation risk, local conflict management and migration. In addition, the coming EU Trust Fund for migration expected to be launched at the Valletta Summit between EU and African countries in November might be important for efforts addressing root causes of migration, including lack of stability and economic growth and violations of human rights.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2

ENHANCE ACCESS TO BASIC RIGHTS FOR ORDINARY PEOPLE

Ensuring access to basic rights is extremely important in a long term perspective in order to fight the main causes of poverty, exclusion and discrimination and eradicate root causes of conflicts. This includes providing basic public services for all, improving equal access to decision-making processes and fighting corruptive practices and discrimination. Denmark has built up important experience and has a comparative advantage in the promotion of women's rights and access to water that will be consolidated during the period 2016–2020 in order to establish a favourable socio-cultural, institutional and legal environment for gender equality. Denmark intends to support the capacity building of civil society organisations working with women and girls' issues and take an active role in international forums to promote human rights and gender equality in Niger.

Denmark will seek to involve civil society organisations in the formulation and implementation of development programmes and seek policy dialogue whenever possible. In this regard, Denmark will also participate in building up the capacities of the civil society organisation *inter alia* through *Amplify-Change*, which helps grassroots organisations i.e. in Africa reform and change policies to improve the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of women, girls and other poor and marginalised individuals.

Access to water in Niger is a key challenge. The use of water for different purposes, in particular human consumption, mining, agriculture and livestock requires integrated strategies to reduce conflicts and protect the resource for future generations. Niger has developed a legal framework for integrated water management to improve knowledge on the water resource, its management and protection. Based on the important results obtained in the water sector Denmark will continue to support the Niger government in providing

water supply to the rural population and to implement policies on integrated water management. Long term Danish support to the water sector has contributed to the reinforcement of government capacities at the national and regional level. Exceptionally in Niger, it has been possible to build up a program approach based on national systems and procedures. Denmark will continue to focus on strengthening government capacities to provide water supply and to manage water resources and whenever possible accompany Niger in implementing decentralisation in the water sector and to build capacities in local governments.

Activities in this area will primarily be funded from the bilateral country programme.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3

REDUCE EXTREME POVERTY WITH FOCUS ON RESILIENCE

Acute malnutrition and repeated food crises reflect an underlying trend of increasing vulnerability. Denmark will address this issue through support to the 3N initiative giving attention to a number of specific challenges.

While the arid climate is a major barrier for improvement of food security in Niger, the country has **potential in irrigated agriculture and livestock sectors**. At the same time, specific actions will be oriented towards securing and diversifying revenues for vulnerable households.

Previous food crises have revealed that women are taking on an increasing share of responsibility to support the household. By developing low-return but relatively prudent opportunities, they are able to make a substantial contribution to household members' survival in terms of crisis. Activities may include supporting income generating activities for women in rural areas, their access to land and means of production.

The concrete engagements in this area will primarily be funded from the country programme. Funds from Climate envelope might be considered if there should be a possibility to integrate these into the country programme. Humanitarian aid will be considered based on an analysis of overall humanitarian needs.

The management of extractive industries will be crucial for the socio-economic development of Niger. Denmark will encourage international organisations such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), the international finance institutions and bilateral partners with greater expertise to support Niger in this matter.

5 RISKS AND SCENARIOS

Due to the fragile situation in Niger, the Danish engagement involves risks that should be taken into account from the outset.

On the 2014 state fragility index², Niger's situation is considered alarming and it is classified among the most fragile as number 19 out of 177 countries. Limited public service delivery combined with high population growth, trans-border threats and pressure from insecurity in the region are critical factors. Set-backs in terms of democracy are a major contextual risk linked to a deteriorating political climate ahead of the elections in 2016. Finally, the humanitarian situation is vulnerable linked to recurrent droughts, threatening levels of food deficiency and limited capacities to accommodate refugees.

The risk of kidnappings limits movement within the country, but so far government offices and Nigerien organisations have been operating relatively freely. Deteriorations in the security situation may, however, further restrict activities in border areas.

Weak capacity of national organisations and corruption are risks that may influence the possibility of achieving program objectives. However, international measurement of government capacities point to some improvements in Niger. In designing the programme,

it should be considered how these improvements can be supported and further strengthened.

Delegated partnership and funding through multilateral organisations and other international partners will be the preferred funding modality for the Danish support. For the new country programme potential delegated partners will be involved in the formulation of new programmes in order to ensure a better coordination with their own programmes. Alignment to national systems, harmonisation and joint financial arrangements will be pursued.

The country policy paper operates with **three major scenarios** as described below. The development in Niger is likely to be amorphous without a clear, specific scenario emerging at any time. The Danish engagement will thus be flexible adapting concurrently to the situation. However, the daily monitoring of the activities will be challenged by the lack of presence in Niger. The aspect of risks and monitoring will therefore play an important role when establishing delegated partnerships.

² The Fragile States Index is an annual ranking of 178 nations based on their levels of stability and the pressures they face. The Index is published by The Fund for Peace (FFP) which is an independent, nonpartisan, non-profit research and educational organization that works to prevent violent conflict and promote sustainable security.

BOX 5

THREE MAJOR SCENARIOS IN THE COUNTRY POLICY PAPER

Scenario 1: Status quo

The political situation remains stable but with a fragmented political scene characterised by strong conflicts, limited progress on legislation and public sector reforms and a highly politicised administration. The national security situation is fragile but remains relatively stable albeit pockets of insecurity and terrorist attacks threaten stability. Insecurity in the region limits private sector development and economic growth remains unstable. With support from external partners, investments in social and economic sectors contribute to modest poverty reduction and attenuation of food crisis.

Policy response: *Cooperation will follow the main thrust of this paper as programmes will be conceived in order to support long term improvements including capacity building in government and civil society organisations.*

Scenario 2: Best case

The political climate improves allowing for successful implementation of reform projects. The regional security situation is improved. Progress accelerates in terms of public service delivery and protection of human rights. An expanding mining sector provides an increase in resources available for government to invest in socio-economic development and foster economic growth. Taking into account the depth of poverty in Niger, it must be expected that Niger remains a low income country throughout the period covered by this policy paper.

Policy response: *With an improved security situation it will be possible to increase interaction with local authorities and marginalised groups. Danish advisers and NGOs can be utilised to a greater extent. In the case of an improvement the business environment in Niger it will become more meaningful to engage with the formal business sector and, instruments for developing business collaboration could possibly be considered in areas such as water and energy efficiency.*

Scenario 3: Worst case

Political tensions result in paralysis of government or a military coup plunging the country into a new economic and social crisis. Terrorist attacks multiply and the state loses control with major parts of its territory. Humanitarian crisis expand.

Policy response: *In the case of set-backs in democracy or government breakdown, emphasis will be given to humanitarian assistance, stabilisation and support to civil society. Geographic focus will be decided on the basis of a close monitoring of the security situation within the country and coordination of donor interventions. It will be difficult to maintain long term capacity building efforts.*

6 MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Within each focus area, specific out-put based indicators will be determined to manage and monitor progress, performance and results. Where possible, indicators will be derived from the government's own systems so that monitoring and evaluation can be aligned to national systems. Denmark will identify potential risks within each area and accordingly develop risk management strategies, partly to minimize the risk and partly to adjust efforts continuously to cope with these risks.

ANNEX 1

KEY DATA NIGER

KEY SOCIAL DATA	UNIT	VALUE	SOURCE
Area (2013)	Km ² million	1.3	WDR
Population (2013)	Million	17.83	WDR
GDP (2013)	USD billion	7.407	WDR
Annual economic growth (2013)	% of GDP	4.1	WDR
GNI per capita (2013)	USD (Atlas method)	400	WDR
Growth in GNI per capita (2013)	%	-1.5	WDR
Ease of doing business (2014)	Rank	168	DB/WB
ECONOMIC SECTORS (SHARE OF GDP)			
a) Agriculture (2013)	% of GDP	37.2	WDR
b) Industry(2013)	% of GDP	19.4	WDR
c) Manufacturing (2013)	% of GDP	6.1	WDR
d) Services (2013)	% of GDP	43.4	WDR
General government expenditure (2013)	% of GDP	28.9	IMF
Tax revenue percentage (2013)	% of GDP	15.2	IMF
Development assistance per capita (2012)	USD	53	WDR
Net official development assistance (2012)	% of GNI	13.8	WDR
Debt service (2011)	% export of goods, service and primary income	2.4	WDR

KEY SOCIAL DATA	UNIT	VALUE	SOURCE
Population growth (2013)	% annual	3.9	WDR
Life expectancy (2013)	Years	58	WDR
Infant mortality (2013)	Deaths per 1,000 births	60	WDR
Access to clean drinking water (2013)	% without access in rural and urban areas	53 (rural) 13 (urban)	Niger government
Access to primary health care facilities	% without access	47	Niger government
Number of doctors (2012)	Per 100,000 inhabitants	2	WDR
People btw. 15-49 years living with hiv (2013)	%	0.4	UN-AIDS
Adult literacy rate (2013)	% (above 15 years)	28.7	HDR
Net primary school enrolment (2013)	%	68.8	WDR
Net primary school enrolment, girls (2013)	%	57.15	WDR
Expenditure on education (2012)	% of public expenditure	18.2	WDR
Military expenditure (2013)	% of GNP	1.05	WDR
DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME			
Richest 10 % of population (2011)	% of national income	26.3	WDR
Poorest 10 % of population (2011)	% of national income	4.0	WDR
KEY ENVIRONMENTAL DATA			
Protected biological diversity area to surface area (2012)	%	16.7	UN statistics division
Carbon dioxide emissions per capita and consumption of ozone depleting CFCs (2010)	Metric tons	0.09	UN statistics division
KEY HUMAN RIGHTS DATA			
Ratification of 9 core HR instruments	Treaties	8*	OHCHR

* The Convention on elimination of all forms of discrimination against women was ratified with reserves

ANNEX 2

DENMARK'S ONGOING COOPERATION WITH NIGER

The Danish cooperation focuses on the water and sanitation sector and agriculture and rural development. A third sector programme promotes women's rights and capacity building of democratic institutions. Denmark also supports stabilisation activities through the regional programme for peace and stabilisation in the Sahel.

The **programme for water, hygiene and sanitation** (PASEA 2) runs from 2012–2017 with a budget of DKK 200 million. The programme is the first in the water sector that builds primarily on existing institutions. Major infrastructure projects are expected due to population growth and improved access to sanitation and drinking water supply. Despite improved coverage more than 50 % of the population in rural areas still lack access to clean drinking water. Activities comprise construction and management of infrastructure for drinking water supply in rural and semi-urban areas, including wells, boreholes with pumps and networked systems in bigger agglomerations. Through PASEA 1 around 126,500 people have gained access to drinking water supplies.

The **programme on promotion of jobs and economic growth in agriculture** (PECEA) runs for 2014–2019 with a budget of DKK 195 million. The focus is on developing local production systems and institutional support of local and national partners. The previous programme (2009–2014) has benefitted around 30,000 producers hereof 45 % women and major results include development of irrigated agriculture, security of land tenure, transformation of local products and related activities in fishery. PECEA builds on the previous achieved results and adds a focus on value chains in order to improve economic growth and job creation in the agriculture and livestock sector. The programme is anchored in the High Commission for the 3N initiative (Nigeriens Nourish Nigeriens), which is a national coordinating entity.

The **governance and human right programme** (PADDH) runs from 2014–2017 with a budget of DKK 50 million. The component on women's rights is conducted through UNFPA's country programme. Main results from previous years are the establishment of an important dialogue between the government, civil society and local

and religious leaders through religious platforms promoting gender equality and women's rights. Denmark supports capacity building of members in the national assembly and parliamentary commissions in the areas of natural resources, management of public finances and human rights. The last component concerns capacity building of the media.

Denmark supports conflict prevention in Niger through the regional programme "**Peace and Stabilisation Programme for the Sahel region**" running from 2013–2017 with an overall amount of DKK 130 million. The programme addresses underlying and regional political and security challenges in the Sahel focusing on enhanced mediation and conflict solution, improved security and activities to counter violent extremism and organised crime.

ANNEX 3

OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS TOWARDS ATTAINING THE MDGS IN NIGER

MDG	BASELINE	CURRENT LEVEL	MDG TARGETS	LIKELIHOOD OF ACHIEVEMENT
GOAL 1: POVERTY				
Halve, between 1990 and 2015:				
– the proportion of people whose income is less than 1\$ a day	63 % (1993)	48 % (2011)	32.5 %	Unlikely
– proportion of people who suffer from hunger (% underweight children under 5)	36 % (1992)	38.5 % (2011)	18 %	Unlikely
GOAL 2: UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION				
Ensure full access to primary school (net enrolment)	18 % (1990)	70.5 % (2013)	100 %	Unlikely
Ensure full completion rate in primary school	15 % (1991)	51 % (2011)	100 %	Unlikely
GOAL 3: GENDER EQUALITY				
Eliminate disparities – Girls/boys ratio primary school	62.5 % (1997)	81 % (2012)	100 %	Unlikely
GOAL 4: CHILD MORTALITY				
Reduce by 2/3 under-5 mortality deaths/1,000 live births)	318 (1992)	127 (2012)	106	Likely
GOAL 5: MATERNAL HEALTH				
Reduce by 3/4 maternal mortality – deaths/ 100,000 births)	652 (1992)	535 (2012)	175	Unlikely
Births attended by skilled health care staff	14.9 % (1992)	29.4 % (2010)	100 %	Unlikely
GOAL 6: HIV/AIDS, MALARIA & OTHER DISEASES				
HIV/AIDS Prevalence rate	0.87 % (2002)	0.7 % (2006)	<0.7 %	Likely
GOAL 7: ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY				
Halve non-access to safe water (improved sources)	22.3 % (1992)	51 % (2008)	45 %	Likely
Halve non-access to improved sanitation facilities	12 % (1992)	12 % (2008)	36 %	Unlikely

Sources:

Niger government, national statistics institute.

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