

**Minutes from meeting in the Council for Development Policy**  
**on 20 June 2024**

- Members: Professor Anne Mette Kjær, University of Aarhus (Chair)  
Deputy CEO and International Director Jarl Krausing, CONCITO (Deputy Chair) (Agenda items 1-6)  
Director for Nutrition Line Damsgaard, The Danish Agriculture & Food Council  
Head of Secretariat Lone Ilum Christiansen, The Danish Trade Union Development Agency (DTDA)  
Political Consultant and Project Officer of DAPP Lucas Højbjerg, The Danish Chamber of Commerce (Online)  
Director Charlotte Flindt Pedersen, Danish Foreign Policy Society  
Secretary General Charlotte Slente, Danish Refugee Council (DRC)  
Political Director Jonas Manthey Olsen, Danish Youth Council (DUF)  
Chief Advisor Mattias Söderberg, DanChurchAid  
*Director for Global Development and Sustainability Marie Gad Hansen, Confederation of Danish Industries (DI) had shared written comments but did not take part in the meeting.*
- MFA: Under-Secretary for Development Policy Ole Thonke  
Head of Department Tove Degnbol, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, LEARNING  
Team leader Marina Buch Kristensen, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, LEARNING  
Head of Section Caroline Busk Ullerup, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, LEARNING
- Agenda item 1: Deputy Head of Department Fenja Yamaguchi-Fasting, Department for Africa, Development Policy and Financing, AFRPOL
- Agenda item 2: Head of Department Christine Pii Hansen, Department for Communications, KOM  
Head of Department Birgitte Nygaard Markussen, Department for Humanitarian Action & Civil Society, HUMCIV  
Team leader Rikke Lind Andersson, Department for Humanitarian Action & Civil Society, HUMCIV
- Agenda item 3: Ambassador Kira Sindbjerg, Embassy of Denmark in Addis Ababa (Online)  
Team leader Tea Marie Schjerbeck, Embassy of Denmark in Addis Ababa (Online)  
Ambassador Sune Krogstrup, Embassy of Denmark in Abuja (Online)  
Deputy Head of Department Casper Stenger Jensen, Department for Africa, Development Policy and Financing, AFRPOL  
Head of Section Andrea Ringvad Friederich, Department for Africa, Development Policy and Financing, AFRPOL

- Agenda item 4    Ambassador Kristian Kirkegaard Edinger, Embassy of Denmark in Ouagadougou (Online)  
Team leader Uma Mia Lund, Embassy of Denmark in Ouagadougou (Online)  
Special Advisor Kristoffer Uldahl, Embassy of Denmark in Ouagadougou (Online)
- Agenda item 5    Migration Ambassador Nicolaj Hejberg Petersen, Department for Migration, Peace and Stabilisation, MIGSTAB  
Ambassador Jens Godtfredsen, Department for Migration, Peace and Stabilisation, MIGSTAB  
Deputy Head of Department Christian Palomäki Arnesen, Department for Migration, Peace and Stabilisation, MIGSTAB  
Team leader Merve Imren Yalcin, Department for Migration, Peace and Stabilisation, MIGSTAB  
Team leader Thea Nielsen, Department for Migration, Peace and Stabilisation, MIGSTAB  
Special Advisor Serena Hebsgaard, Department for Migration, Peace and Stabilisation, MIGSTAB  
Special Advisor Nicolaj Sønderbye, Department for Migration, Peace and Stabilisation, MIGSTAB  
Head of Department for the Interministerial Migration Taskforce Grith Nørgaard, Ministry of Immigration and Integration, UIM  
Head of Department for Returns Christina Fløystруп, Ministry of Immigration and Integration, UIM
- Agenda item 6    Head of Department Karin Poulsen, Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, KLIMA  
Chief advisor Charlotte Just, Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, KLIMA (Online)
- Agenda item 7    Deputy Head of Department Darriann Riber, Department for the Middle East and Northern Africa, MENA  
Chief Advisor Kurt Mørck Jensen, Department for the Middle East and Northern Africa, MENA

### **Agenda Item No. 1: Announcements**

The Under-Secretary for Development Policy briefed the Council about Denmark's recent election for a non-permanent seat on the United Nations (UN) Security Council for the period of 2025-26. After a successful campaign, Denmark had been elected with an overwhelming 184 votes. There were high expectations for Denmark's coming role on the Security Council, but it was important to recognise that Denmark was joining the Council at a particularly difficult time. It was Denmark's ambition to be a bridge-builder in a Council that was fragmented due to current geopolitical conflicts. Furthermore, Denmark had three priority issues: 1) adapting conflict responses and prevention to new realities, 2) addressing the effects of climate change on peace and security, and 3) implementing the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

Members of the Council asked if there was a learning component to ensure that important experience from Denmark's time in the Council would not be lost. Members also enquired as to whether the high number of votes was due to Denmark's focus on representation in the Council, notably representation from African countries.

The Under-Secretary agreed that it would be important to gather learning throughout the period and agreed that Denmark's focus on representation could have been one factor in ensuring the many votes received in the election. However, it was surely also due to the intense campaign run by the MFA.

The Under-Secretary further briefed the Council about a number of other issues. An additional DKK 150 million had been donated to Ukraine via the Danish Emergency Management Agency. The support would be used for firefighting and rescue equipment. Furthermore, the Strategic Sector Cooperation (SSC) with the Ministry of Interior and Health was expanded to include an additional component comprising of DKK 6.5 million to Ukraine.

Finally, the Under-Secretary briefed the Council about the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy's (hereon forth "the Minister") recent travel to Kenya. The trip had focused on energy efficiency in Africa, especially with regard to implementation, the strategic sector cooperation in Kenya, and the new Danish inclusive refugee response programme in Kenya. The Minister, together with the Danish Minister for Taxation, had also taken part in the 59th Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the African Development Bank as the only two ministers from non-African countries. The meeting had focused on the reform of the global financial architecture.

The Deputy Head of Department for Africa, Development Policy and Financing (AFRPOL) further briefed the Council about the Minister's recent travels to Senegal and the Ivory Coast. While Denmark did not have embassies in either country, it was the ambition to strengthen the Danish engagement on the entire African continent as a part of the new Strategy for Denmark's engagement with Africa. Highlights from the trip included a visit to the International Academy for the Fight Against Terrorism (AILCT), which was supported by Denmark, and a meeting at the African Development Bank.

Members of the Council thanked the Under-Secretary and the Deputy Head of Department for the briefings and enquired about whether Denmark also had plans for cooperation with Benin. The Under-Secretary noted that the Minister for Foreign Affairs had recently met with the Foreign Minister of Benin at the Nordic-African Foreign Ministers' Meeting (NAFM) in Copenhagen in May 2024.

Members of the Council shared a brief summary of the Conference on Climate and Development held on 31 May. The conference was co-hosted by the MFA, DanChurch Aid and CONCITO and convened key Danish stakeholders to explore collaborative strategies for integrating climate and development.

*With reference to the Rules of Procedure for the Council for Development Policy, the Chair of the Council asked if members had any conflicts of interest related to the agenda items. Several Members of the Council enquired as to*

*whether they should declare a conflict of interest in relation to agenda item 7 Stocktaking of the Danish-Arab Partnership Programme (DAPP). The Members either potentially had a personal conflict of interest due to involvement in the programme, or they had an organisational conflict of interest because their organisations were involved. As very few members would be left in the room should they declare a conflict of interest, and as the agenda item concerned information (rather than a recommendation of a grant), the Council decided that all Members of the Council should stay and participate in the dialogue. The minutes of agenda item 7 should be read with this in mind.*

## **Agenda Item No. 2: Orientation about development communication**

*For information and discussion*

The Department for Communications, KOM, and the Department for Humanitarian Action & Civil Society, HUMCIV

*Summary:*

*Upon request by the Council for Development Policy, the Department for Communications (KOM) and the Department for Humanitarian Action & Civil Society (HUMCIV) gave a brief orientation about the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (MFA) efforts to communicate about development cooperation. At the end of the discussion, an overview of KOM and HUMCIV's communication activities as well as a printed copy of the educational material from 2023 related to "The Children's Christmas Calendar" (Børnenes Ulandskalender) was distributed to Members of the Council.*

The Head of Department for Humanitarian Action, Civil Society and Engagement (HUMCIV) thanked the Council for the opportunity to elaborate on HUMCIV and the Department for Communication, Press and Public Diplomacy's (KOM) efforts with regard to development communication. She then briefly introduced the "Engagement Team", which was located in HUMCIV and which had as its main objective to reach the part of the population who were not knowledgeable about development cooperation and the Global South. Following the team's previous meeting with the Council in 2021, it had been decided to close Magasinet 360° and Oplysningspuljen and instead create new instruments to reach a wider audience.

The Head of KOM then introduced the overall communication efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), underlining that there were several additional communication entities in the MFA, including the ministers' press teams, the representations, the Danish-Arab Partnership Programme's communication unit, and others. KOM and HUMCIV's activities therefore only represented a part of the MFA's many communication efforts. She then introduced the various tools and platforms used by KOM to inform Danes and audiences abroad about development cooperation, including collaboration with Danish and international media, Social Media campaigns, and podcasts. She also mentioned new efforts targeting disinformation in the Global South, recently introduced press trips to Africa, and the relatively new newsletter of the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy.

Members of the Council appreciated the public engagement strategy and selection of partnerships. They also commended MFA for developing new strategies and use of platforms in accordance with a changing media picture and suggested to target children and youth even more, including through the educational system.

Members of the Council further appreciated the flexibility of information and public engagement funds (IPE) in the strategic partnership agreements (SPA) with civil society organisations (CSOs)

and saw a general improvement in their relations to the MFA. In the Council's experience, however, budgets for communication often did not match the large grants for development projects.

Council Members wondered how to better document the impact of development cooperation, and how to better reach the segment of the population who disagreed with development cooperation. In this regard, Members enquired about the balance between information and engagement in the MFA's communication efforts and encouraged KOM and HUMCIV to regard segments of the population who were favourable towards development cooperation as ambassadors to reach the other segments. Members of the Council also noted, however, that it was important also to address those less favourable towards development cooperation, at the very least to stop them from gaining greater momentum.

Council Members asked about the background for the new pool funds. They noted that OpEn received more applications than what could be awarded and suggested to look into possibilities to increase the size of the pool fund.

Council Members noted that there was a need for information and branding abroad and that the MFA and partners had downplayed the significance of branding, while new international actors had used the void to brand themselves and spread mis- and disinformation. Members of the Council highlighted the importance and potentials of practicing joint and partnership-based communication with partners in the South.

Finally, Members of the Council were concerned that communication efforts could appear fragmented and that there might be a lack of systematic knowledge collection about results from development cooperation over time. Referring to the previous annual reports that had not been produced since 2012, Members requested a similar way of generating yearly overviews and historic memory in MFA.

The Team leader in HUMCIV responded to questions and comments. A recent review of "The Children's Christmas Calendar" (Børnenes Ulandskalender) had showed that 100,000 children and teachers in schools across Denmark engaged with the educational materials every year over long periods of time, and that teachers as well as pupils were more than satisfied with the material. She further explained that the former Information pool (Oplysningspuljen), administered by MFA, had been altered based on the findings of an external review that had positive as well as negative conclusions. The two new pool funds built on those lessons learned, amongst them emphasising partnerships and specific plans to reach the target groups, an arm's length principle and activities for knowledge sharing and inspiration. On the target groups and the strategy, the Team leader elaborated on the choice not to focus on those least favourable toward development cooperation, one important factor being a question about returns on investment. It was a relatively small segment that was very difficult and costly to reach.

The Head of KOM thanked the Council for their comments. She briefly noted that efforts were being made to reach audiences abroad with the representations playing a key part in this effort. Youth was a central target group for KOM who were looking into how to reach them in a competitive media landscape. Finally, the Head of KOM agreed that it was important to ensure a historic memory of development results in MFA. There was a question of how to use limited

resources, but she hoped that the newly introduced press trips would enable MFA to reach wider audiences.

### **Agenda Item No. 3: Africa Partnership for Peace and Sustainability**

*For discussion and recommendation to the Minister*

DKK 400 million

The Embassy of Denmark in Addis Ababa

#### *Summary:*

*The Africa Partnership for Peace and Sustainability (APPS) sets forth the framework for Denmark's partnership with the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as well as a selection of think tanks and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), who play a key role in supporting the continental and regional institution building. The overall objective of APPS is to: Contribute to AU's and ECOWAS's institution building and their ability to deliver solutions to the challenges on the African continent - within peace and security, governance, climate and energy and continental free trade. The APPS consists of three thematic pillars 1) Peace and security, 2) free trade, 3) climate and energy.*

<i>The Council recommended the Africa Partnership for Peace and Sustainability for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy. The Council looked forward to discussing the inception review in 2025.</i>
---

The Council commended the embassy for a comprehensive and thorough programme, well aligned with the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063, and particularly appreciated the strong context analysis. The Council endorsed the programme's objectives, but raised questions in relation to ensuring a bottom-up perspective from member states, engaging non-state actors such as youths, and the justification for broadening the programme to include climate and trade. It was noted that the programme predominantly focused on policy frameworks and structures, and Members of the Council asked if this approach might face challenges in a political climate where support for regional institutions and integration were at risk of declining.

The Council raised concerns about AU's capacity limitations, particularly noting the lack of sufficient staff to ensure coherence in the comprehensive programme and buy-in from members states, considering their very low financial contribution to the institution (10%). Members of the Council also sought clarification on the decision to exclude the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and asked whether this decision was influenced by capacity constraints.

Members of the Council highlighted the programme's new climate and energy pillar and found it to be potentially an important element but they would like to understand if the new element was demand driven, i.e., included on AU's request, and whether it was based on a contextual/political economy analysis. They also questioned the rationale behind support to energy efficiency instead of other focus areas such as renewable energy. Moreover, it was noted that this pillar introduced further complexity. Members of the Council questioned the relatively limited funding allocated to the pillar and asked what outcomes were expected.

Members of the Council emphasised that Denmark was not the sole supporter of the chosen organisations and asked how collaborative efforts could bolster shared commitments, potentially optimising desired outcomes.

Members of the Council enquired about the risks for further destabilisation, particularly in West Africa, lack of political appetite for regional cooperation and the spread of disinformation by Russia. Members of the Council also wondered whether the support to African think tanks was sufficient to counter the spread of misinformation or if other steps could be taken. Concerns were raised about the three Sahel countries who had announced their exit from Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Members of the Council commended the programme's focus on the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). It was observed that relatively few funds had been allocated to the theme (via United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, UNECA), and a clarification on the expenditure, coordination with the AfCFTA Secretariat in Accra, and the expected outcomes of the support was requested, including a justification of the climate mitigation tagging of 50% (since climate mitigation was not a core focus area of UNECA). Members of the Council also encouraged engagements with stakeholders in the labour market, and it was highlighted that regional and continental industrial organisations could be engaged in the programme to ensure a bottom-up approach to the support to the free trade area.

Finally, Members of the Council noted the programme's significant amount of unallocated funds (17%) and while acknowledging the potential benefits of flexibility, they requested an explanation regarding the rationale behind.

The Ambassador to Ethiopia and the African Union appreciated all comments and inputs. In relation to youths, it was a crosscutting theme of the projects, and Denmark coordinated with the AU Youth Ambassadors. The Ambassador also emphasised AU Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) country-level mediation and election observation efforts aimed at local ownership and civil society engagement, in the run up to elections, noting AU's dual role as both a policy-making body and an active participant in these initiatives. The engagement with AU on a policy level was intended to go hand in hand with activities initiated by Denmark in the member states.

The Ambassador to Nigeria added that ECOWAS had an expressed interest in establishing a forum for civil society organisations.

The Ambassador to Ethiopia and AU clarified that the IGAD engagement was moved from APPS to the fourth phase of the Peace- and Stabilisation Programme on the Horn of Africa, as this was well aligned with the geographical focus and type of activities.

The decision to include a climate and energy pillar reflected how climate change impacted peace and security, migration, and job creation in Africa, and hence were an increasingly important focus area of the AU. Admitting that the inclusion of the climate and energy had increased the complexity of APPS, the Ambassador highlighted that AU had specifically requested Denmark's support in these areas given Danish competences.

Acknowledging that AU and ECOWAS's implementation capacity had previously been challenged, and considering that climate and energy were new areas of cooperation, the Ambassador explained that it had been decided to initiate the programmes carefully, and use unallocated funds for possible top-up of the support in case of good results.

The Ambassador agreed with the Council on the importance of donor coordination to reduce the burden on the partner and the management resources of the programme. The embassy was part of a joint framework agreement (JFA) on AU PAPS to ensure close donor coordination and non-earmarked funding. Within the JFA, Denmark was leading a task force on financial management and audit, as the low capacity of financial management in AU could pose a serious risk for compliance. Furthermore, the Ambassador highlighted Denmark's initiative to organise a Group of Friends on Woman, Peace and Security and further noted Denmark's participation in AU steering committees on energy and early warning systems to ensure coordination and synergy. Finally, a new core component in the APPS compared to earlier programmes was direct staff support to the AU and ECOWAS, with African seconded experts to support the implementation of the organisations.

Concerning staff resources at the embassy level (Addis and Abuja) to manage the programme, attention was drawn to the change of responsibility, as the partnership with ECOWAS would be anchored in Abuja. With the inclusion of climate and energy as a thematic area, more staff in Addis would share the project responsibility.

The Ambassador to Nigeria explained that following a turbulent period in ECOWAS, the remaining 12 member states had moved closer together. It was noted that ECOWAS had expressed a wish for a stronger presence and enhanced communication about its work and results to battle further instability and disinformation. ECOWAS would like Denmark's support in relation to this, and discussions were ongoing. The Ambassador to Ethiopia noted that the choice to include the two think tanks would leverage information-based decision making within the organisations and contribute to knowledge production and access of open-source information to combat disinformation.

The Ambassador to Ethiopia clarified that UNECA's absorption capacity was relatively limited. Therefore, the DKK 24 million was seen as a good starting point, with the possibility of additional funding if needed. The embassy in Addis was also considering to use unallocated funds to engage in a project with the EU to support the capacity of the AfCFTA Secretariat. The Ambassador welcomed ideas on engaging closer with labour market organisations and relevant organisations to include a bottom-up perspective.

The Chair of the Council concluded that the Council recommended the APPS for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy and looked forward to discussing the APPS again in 2025 after the finalisation of the suggested inception period.

#### **Agenda Item No. 4: Annual Stocktaking: Burkina Faso Strategic Framework**

*For information and discussion*

The Embassy of Denmark in Ouagadougou

##### *Summary:*

*Since the formulation of the Strategic Framework for Burkina Faso 2021-2025, the situation in the country has deteriorated drastically. Following two military coups in 2022, Burkina Faso is currently facing a protracted and deepened political crisis. The current transition period, which originally foresaw general elections to take place before July 2024, has recently been extended to 2029. The political instability and the rapid deterioration of the security situation have caused significant challenges and delays in the implementation of the bilateral programme in Burkina Faso in 2023. While the Embassy and the Danish development partners have been able to continue implementing*



*the programmes and projects, the increasingly difficult political conditions and the deteriorating security situation have required significant adjustments to the bilateral development programme.*

The Council appreciated the opportunity to discuss the developments in Burkina Faso and the challenges facing Danish development cooperation in the country. Council members took note of the extremely worrying developments in the country and expressed their support for the Embassy's restructuring of the strategic framework and continued Danish engagement in the country.

Nonetheless, Members of the Council noted that diminishing support for long-term development efforts had consequences for development actors in the area – even if the halt was only temporary. What were the Embassy's considerations regarding development actors that were difficult to support in the current context? Members of the Council further noted that it was important to show the population of Burkina Faso that Denmark (and other Western countries) wanted to keep up the engagement in the country.

Members of the Council also enquired about results from Denmark's long-standing engagement in the water sector in Burkina Faso, and how Denmark would remain engaged in securing access to water despite the political situation in the country. In this regard, Members of the Council asked to what extent the Embassy was able to collaborate with local authorities, and to what extent public servants had been replaced due to the change of regime.

In terms of Denmark's engagement with civil society in Burkina Faso, Members of the Council suggested to focus on culture. In line with the upcoming Strategy for Denmark's engagement with Africa, a focus on arts and culture would demonstrate Denmark's recognition of the importance and value of Burkinabè culture, while providing an opportunity to continue engaging with civil society on a less sensitive matter. Members of the Council also encouraged redirecting support to other gender activities after withdrawing from the support for The Common Gender Fund, as it had been considered in the stocktaking report.

Recognising the difficult conditions for the partnership with Burkina Faso, Members of the Council wondered if the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) had gathered best practices for working in fragile countries with non-democratically elected regimes. Situations like the one in Burkina Faso created security issues not only regionally, but also globally, and it would be important to gather lessons for future and potentially similar events elsewhere.

Finally, Members of the Council enquired about the scenarios for the country in the coming years and if it would be possible to spend the rest of the budget. Was the military regime supported by the population in Burkina Faso, and how long was it expected to remain in power? Did it still make sense to remain engaged in Burkina Faso, or would it be more beneficial to redirect Danish support to neighbouring countries with more likeminded political leaders?

The Ambassador thanked Members of Council for their comments and underlined that, despite the adjustments to the bilateral programme, Denmark would remain engaged in Burkina Faso. The situation was extremely challenging. When adjusting the bilateral programme, the search for new appropriate modalities had been crucial. The constant dilemma between cooperation with local authorities, on the one hand, and not legitimising the military regime, on the other hand, was a delicate balance to find. For instance, in the water sector, the direct budget support had

been terminated, but Denmark was still supporting the national water utility company. Thus, there were regular meetings at high level with the Ministry of Water and Sanitation to discuss the operational part of the implementation of the project. It was the Embassy's impression that most technical staff and focal points in the ministries remained the same as before the two military coups.

The Ambassador highlighted that civil society was under pressure. The civil society organisations (CSOs) could to a certain extent continue their work as long as they did not touch upon sensitive topics such as freedom of speech or other human rights. The regime's oppression of the leaders of CSOs meant that the Embassy was extremely aware not to cause harm when meeting with CSOs.

The Ambassador informed the Council that a dialogue between the Embassy and the Department for Evaluation, Learning, and Quality (LEARNING) was already ongoing to harvest lessons learned from the Danish engagement in the Burkinabè water sector.

Politically, the Embassy was in close consultation with other like-minded countries and the other EU member states in Ouagadougou. The tendency was for embassies to close or to reduce their engagement as well as diplomatic staff significantly. Concerning future scenarios, the Ambassador pointed out that initially, a theoretical hope that the regime would honour the transition plan with ECOWAS had existed. With recent events where the transition has been extended with another five years, this hope was no longer there. The regime planned on elaborating a new constitution to replace the current one which they considered a replica of the French constitution. The new constitution must, according to the regime, rely on "endogenous values and traditions". It was likely that the current president, Ibrahim Traoré, would remain in power for years to come.

The latest adjustment to the country framework took place in April 2024, when the budget was reduced from DKK 1,050 million to DKK 939 million. Based on the current rate of progress, the Embassy assessed that it would be difficult to disburse all of the remaining DKK 939 million before the end of the implementation period in 2025. Thus, the Embassy estimated that another DKK 100 million would remain unspent. The rescheduled mid-term review (MTR) later in 2024 would help ensure a robust framework for the last year of implementation of the programme.

The Chair of the Council concluded that it had been an insightful and useful discussion of the Danish development cooperation in Burkina Faso. The Council expressed its interest in following the implementation of the bilateral programme, especially with regard to the upcoming MTR.

### **Agenda Item No. 5: Orientation: Review of Danish Support to Migration Related Engagements**

*For information and discussion*

The Department for Migration, Peace and Stabilisation, MIGSTAB

*Summary:*

*The Council for Development Policy discussed the review of Danish migration related engagements in 2018-2022. The report was finalised in December 2023 and covers 40 projects operating in 2018-2022 with a total budget*

*of DKK 664,290,000 administered by the Department for Migration, Peace and Stabilisation (MIGSTAB) and the Migration Task Force (MTF) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.*

The Council appreciated the open and frank review of Danish support to migration-related engagements. The review raised many points of criticism and it recommended fundamental changes to the programming of migration funds.

Members of the Council highlighted the importance of a development focus when using official development assistance (ODA) funds and stressed that rules and procedures such as Aid Management Guidelines (AMG) should be followed also when operating in a field characterised by considerable political attention. Members of the Council underlined the importance of quality assurance and focus on outcomes, a focus which according to the review had been lacking.

The Council pointed to the need for a stronger focus on protection, human rights, root causes and considerations on displacement in the new Danish migration engagements. The value of learning from other development agencies on migration projects was emphasised. Members of the Council found that the route-based approach appeared to be a promising way of programming in relation to migration. The importance of more diversification in terms of partners and inclusion of civil society was emphasised.

Moreover, Members of the Council noted that partner countries may not have an incentive to strengthen their asylum system capacities since they would not want to be categorised as “safe third countries”. Members of the Council had concerns about the future migration challenges that would be much greater than today and were interested in knowing how the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) would encounter those challenges.

Referring to the critical assessments by the review of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and drawing on their own experience, Members of the Council questioned whether these organisations were appropriate for the role as implementors of the Danish support.

Members of the Council recalled that the OECD-DAC peer review of Denmark in 2021 cautioned against letting domestic policy priorities steer development programming towards short projects that did not live up to good aid management practices. They encouraged attention to this in the new programmes. Members of the Council also noted that the review revealed a significant amount of development assistance to Rwanda, which had not been presented to the Council due to the relatively small size of the engagements. However, given the accumulated size of support, Council Members suggested that development engagements in Rwanda should also be discussed in the Council.

The Migration Ambassador responded that the review requested by the Department for Migration, Peace and Stabilisation (MIGSTAB) in December 2022 would indeed inform the formulation of the three upcoming multiannual migration programmes to be presented to the Council on 31 October 2024. MIGSTAB had fundamentally restructured the migration portfolio, following the recommendations from the review with a strong focus on adherence to AMG, including initiating a process away from many small projects towards fewer larger programmes and broader partnerships, attention to root causes, human rights, partner diversification, strong

inter-ministerial coordination and steering mechanism as well as a strong monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL) architecture.

The Ambassador underlined the close, existing coordination with the EU and other likeminded donors on migration programming and the development of equal partnerships with partner countries. MIGSTAB was working closely with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) in developing their capacities as implementing partners, including their MEAL-capacity and ensuring value for money. There would be focus on Danish strengths on human rights, civil society engagement and capacity developments.

The Under-Secretary for Development Policy added that the Danish cooperation with Rwanda was mainly in the area of climate change. Information to the Council about this cooperation would be given in a future meeting.

The Chair of the Council concluded the discussion, noting that the Council looked forward to reading and discussing the new multiannual migration programmes in October 2024.

#### **Agenda Item No. 6: Danish Organisation Strategy for the Green Climate Fund 2024-2027**

*For discussion and recommendation to the Minister*

DKK 1600 million

The Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, KLIMA

##### *Summary:*

*In 2010, the Green Climate Fund (GCF) was established by 194 Parties to the UNFCCC, as part of the Convention's financial mechanism. The Fund provides support to developing countries to limit or reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to the impacts of climate change, taking into account the needs of those developing countries particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. The GCF Board has so far approved 253 projects with a total value of USD 53 billion, where GCF funds constitute USD 13.9 billion. The approved projects are anticipated to lead to 1 billion people with increased resilience towards climate change and 2.9 billion tonnes of CO2 equivalent avoided. As the largest global fund dedicated to help fight climate change, GCF is strongly positioned in the climate finance architecture and the Fund has a crucial role in serving the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement. This Organisation Strategy provides strategic considerations and priorities for Denmark's engagement with the GCF. The Danish priorities in GCF for the period 2024-2027 consist of the following: i) Enhancing access to GCF resources (including accreditation); ii) Enhanced country ownership and efficiency of GCF support at country level; iii) Private Sector: Promoting innovation and catalysing green financing; and iv) Gender equality and social inclusion. The Danish proposed contribution to GCF is DKK 1.6 billion covering a period of four years and making Denmark the overall 12th largest contributor to the Fund.*

*The Council for Development Policy recommended the Danish Organisation Strategy for the Green Climate Fund 2024-2027 for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy. The Council, however, had reservations concerning whether a doubling of the Danish contribution was justified in a situation with a major project backlog and low disbursements by the Fund.*

The Council recognised the critical role which the Green Climate Fund (GCF) played in the international climate finance landscape, the key role which developing countries had in GCF decision making, and the increased attention to the Fund from the Global South. On this

background, the Council expressed support for Danish engagement with the GCF as described in the Organisation Strategy. Members of the Council agreed with the proposed Danish priorities in particular “access”, to get more relevant Direct Access Entities on-board, and “country ownership”, importance of ensuring a variety of financing instruments and accessible capital to poor countries. Members of the Council found that recommendations from the 2022 midterm review were well reflected and integrated into the strategy and that the strategy had a transparent and honest description of the challenges facing the Fund.

Members of the Council stressed that also localisation should be a Danish priority.

They questioned the justification of a doubling of the Danish contribution, given the low disbursement rate of 32% and suggested that GCF did not need more funds but needed to use the funds already received.

Concern was expressed about the involvement of the private sector, and Council Members recommended to simplify project application procedures.

Furthermore, the importance of striking an appropriate balance between adaptation and mitigation activities was also stressed. Members of the Council encouraged cooperation with the new Loss and Damage Fund and seeking synergies in slow onset crisis, reconstruction and resettlement.

While the Council acknowledged that GCF had matured as an organisation, Members pointed to the long accreditation process and urged MFA to use its influence to speed up the processes. They also emphasised the need for the GCF Board to focus on efficiency, faster programming, and follow-up on disbursements. Members of the Council found that the strategy paid too much attention to input in terms of capital contribution, and they underlined the need to increase the focus on results and learning across countries. The strategy should describe how Denmark would monitor GCF efforts and results, including how the Multilateral Organisations Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) would be used.

Members of the Council also expressed concern about the high staff turn-over and about the use of resources on a new management system. They requested more information on the reform process of the GCF.

Finally, Members of the Council asked what Denmark is doing to ensure influence through the Board Seat shared with two other countries.

The Head of the Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate (KLIMA) thanked the Council for all the questions and comments. She underlined that Danish priorities sought to address several of the concerns raised by the Council, including improved efficiency, disbursements, the need to ensure easier access, and support to adaptation efforts also involving the private sector. She agreed that localisation should be an additional Danish priority and said that this would be added to the strategy.

The Head of KLIMA explained that Denmark had joined the Accreditation Committee to speed up the accreditation processes and said that country ownership and increased monitoring were

main Danish concerns. Together with Switzerland and UK, Denmark was co-lead on the upcoming MOPAN assessment of GCF.

She informed the Council that KLIMA had established an MFA group across the climate/green funds: GCF, Global Environment Facility (GEF), Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), Least Developed Countries Fund (LCDF), Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF), Adaptation Fund (AF), Fund for responding to loss and damage (L&D), and Climate Investment Funds (CIF). The aim was to exchange experience on strategic priorities and administrative issues, including access, country ownership, harmonisation measures, disbursement, COP-related matters etc.

The Head of KLIMA further explained that the GCF reform initiative was both an external fundraising drive with the "50by30" initiative targeting USD 50 billion by 2030, and an internal GCF efficiency drive aimed at restructuring the organisation to ensure: 1) improved access to GCF funds, 2) mobilisation of private sector participation and financing, and 3) stronger country ownership. Regarding the level of the Danish contribution, the Head of KLIMA specified that the GCF served as a critical element of Denmark's ambition to promote climate diplomacy and take a lead on climate action internationally based on equal partnership. Even with a doubling of the Danish contribution, likeminded countries like Sweden and Norway were still substantially ahead of Denmark contributing USD 1,433 billion and USD 995 billion, respectively (against the total Danish contribution of USD 424 billion). In recent years, the majority of grants had gone to national partners as requested by the Board, and these did not necessarily have the same well-oiled machines as for instance United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Bank (WB) and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). The GCF provided a strong platform for advancing dialogue and build trust among Parties to the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement and represented a forum for promoting strategic interests that coincided with the Danish priorities in the UNFCCC negotiations.

The Under-Secretary for Development Policy added that the Council would receive the MOPAN review of GCF when available.

The Chair of the Council summarised the discussion by stressing the support by the Council to the organisation strategy and the Danish priorities. She concluded that the Council recommended the Danish Organisation Strategy for the Green Climate Fund for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation, but added that the Council had reservations concerning whether the doubling of the Danish contribution was justified in a situation with a major project backlog and low disbursements by the Fund.

### **Agenda Item No. 7: Annual Stocktaking: Danish-Arab Partnership Programme (DAPP) 2022-2027**

*For information and discussion*

The Department for the Middle East and Northern Africa, MENA

*Summary:*

*The objective of the Danish-Arab Partnership Programme (2022-2027) is to support civil society and other organisations in Denmark and in the MENA region to reach the programme's objectives of supporting human rights and job creation for youth in line with Danish foreign policy interests. The programme is led by two consortia; the job creation consortia (YEE) led by PlanBørnefonden and the human rights consortia (HRIC) led by Dignity.*

The Council thanked the Department for the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) for the annual status report and took note of the challenges mentioned in the report. Council members enquired about lessons learned on the Danish-Arab Partnership Programme (DAPP) consortium structure and balance of digital management from headquarters in Copenhagen versus physical local management in DAPP countries. Members of the Council were particularly interested in the Human Rights and Inclusion Consortium's (HRIC) quality assurance, financial efficiency and use of budgets, especially unspent funds. Members of the Council further expressed interest in the number of jobs created under the job creation component of the Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship programme (YEE). The Council was looking forward to following the midterm review, which would be carried out during January 2025.

Acknowledging the difficult political circumstances in the countries DAPP operated in, Members of the Council pointed towards Jordan as an example of a worsening context for civil society to manoeuvre. Pointing to the political importance of the Danish Egyptian Dialogue Institute (DEDI), Members of the Council asked MENA to elaborate on the decision to move DEDI out of the DAPP programme. With reference to the discussion on the delay in the Investment Fund for Developing Countries' (IFU) activities at the last Council meeting, Members of the Council asked for a status on IFU's involvement in the programme. Being concerned about the climate-related fragility in the region, Members of the Council expressed interest in risk mitigating measures taken towards climate disaster. With reference to the positive description of the involvement of the Youth Sounding Boards (YSB) in the annual status report, Members of the Council expressed concern that the structure for youth involvement was not yet efficiently formalised.

MENA's Deputy Head of Department and Chief Advisor thanked the Council for constructive comments and informed that the annual status report was handed in before MENA received the annual reports from the two consortia and held the annual meetings. MENA would thus be able to provide additional information to the report at the meeting. The Deputy clarified that the set up with the two consortia was contractually binding and would be evaluated as part of the upcoming midterm review in addition to other relevant themes such as localisation and partnerships. MENA further took note of the Council's interest in the midterm review and would brief the Council at a later point in time. In addition to the midterm review, the DAPP MEAL Unit would conduct so-called "value for money studies" and "special studies" further evaluating relevant themes under DAPP.

The Chief Advisor added that the underspending in 2023 was less than previously expected and approximately DKK 5 million for both Consortia, which was considered acceptable considering the size of the grant. Regarding the use of MENA resources needed for quality assurance, the acceleration of funds had proven especially heavy to administer due to poor quality of the applications. While MENA agreed that the context in the region was challenging for civil society, Morocco stood out as an example of a country where DAPP created good results in supporting dialogue between civil society and state actors for example on the reform of the family law.

DEDI was highlighted as an important political priority for both Egypt and Denmark. The Chief Advisor clarified that DEDI needed to be relocated because DEDI was a decentralised entity, which was no longer compliant with the MFA's aid management guidelines. An alternative solution for the administrative set up for DEDI was therefore being negotiated with Egypt. The

proposal was that DEDI would be administered by UNDP Cairo with Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCCPA) as implementing partner and new 'house' for DEDI. If Egypt agreed to the proposal, Egypt and Denmark would sign an MoU building on the bilateral agreement from 2019.

On job creation, the Chief Advisor informed that the results were below target. He highlighted UNDP and IFU's important roles of accelerating and financing SMEs in the YEE programme. An agreement with IFU would be signed in August 2024 and financial support to SMEs through soft loans would be rolled out thereafter. This was expected to accelerate DAPP's job creation. While some of the jobs would be green (up to 30%), DAPP was not a climate programme and steps had not been taken to climate proof DAPP. Regarding DAPP's YSBs, MENA welcomed further dialogue with the Danish Youth Council, which was funded by DAPP to back up and support the YSBs.

Finally, MENA shared examples of DAPP communication products with the Council.

**Agenda Item No. 8: Any Other Business**

No issues were raised under this agenda item.