

**Minutes from meeting in the Council for Development Policy**  
**on 15 March 2023**

- Members: Professor Anne Mette Kjær, University of Aarhus (Chair) (Online)  
Deputy CEO and International Director Jarl Krausing, CONCITO (Deputy Chair)  
Director for Global Development and Sustainability Marie Gad Hansen, Confederation of Danish Industries (DI)  
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 Programme Manager of DAPP Lucas Højbjerg, The Danish Chamber of Commerce  
Senior Researcher Adam Moe Fejerskov, Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS)  
Secretary General Charlotte Slente, Danish Refugee Council (DFC)  
Director Charlotte Flindt Pedersen, Danish Foreign Policy Society  
International Director Marie Engberg Helmstedt, The Danish Youth Council  
Chief Advisor Mattias Söderberg, DanChurchAid
- MFA: State Secretary for Development Policy Lotte Machon (agenda items 1-5)  
Deputy Head of Department Katrine From Høyer, Department for Africa, Policy and Development, APD (agenda items 3 and 5)  
Head of Department Tove Degnbol, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, ELK  
Deputy Head of Department, Henrik Larsen, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, ELK  
Chief Advisor Camilla Valeur Nygaard, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, ELK  
Head of Section Josephine Mittag, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, ELK
- Agenda item 2: Head of Department Henrik Winther, Department for European Neighbourhood, EUN  
Team Leader Anne Kahl, Department for European Neighbourhood, EUN  
Chief Advisor Mogens Blom, Department for European Neighbourhood, EUN  
Ambassador Ole Egberg Mikkelsen, Embassy in Kyiv (Online)  
Minister Counsellor / Head of Cooperation Henrik Vistisen, Embassy in Kyiv (Online)  
Chief Advisor Anne-Catherine Legendre, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, ELK (Online)
- Agenda item 3: Ambassador Rolf Holmboe, Embassy in Bamako (Online)  
Deputy Head of Mission Vibeke Gram Mortensen, Embassy in Bamako (Online)

Chief Financial Officer Jonas Palmstrøm, Embassy in Bamako (Online)  
Special Advisor Maike Hebogård Schäfer, Embassy in Bamako (Online)  
Chief Advisor Anne-Catherine Legendre, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, ELK (Online)  
Chief Advisor Kimiko Pedersen, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, ELK (Online)

Agenda item 4: Head of Department Karin Poulsen, Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, GDK  
Team Leader Mads Stærk, Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, GDK (Online)  
Chief Advisor Emilie Wieben, Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, GDK  
Special Advisor Katrine Nørlyng, Ministry of Environment

Agenda item 5: Ambassador Signe Winding Albjerg, Embassy in Kampala (Online)  
Chief Advisor Henrik Jespersen, Embassy in Kampala (Online)  
Team Leader Ole Dahl Rasmussen, Embassy in Kampala (Online)  
Special Advisor Anne Sofie Oxlund, Embassy in Kampala (Online)  
Deputy Head of Department Adam Sparre Spliid, Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, GDK (Online)  
Chief Advisor Marina Buch Kristensen, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, ELK  
Team Leader Dorte Chortsen, Department for Africa, Policy and Development, APD  
Head of Section Ida-Marie Ulbæk, Department for Africa, Policy and Development, APD

Agenda items 6-8: Ambassador Erik Brøgger Rasmussen, the Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva (Online)  
Special Advisor Lea Rasmussen, the Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva (Online)  
Head of Department Marianne Kress, Department for Migration, Stabilization and Fragility, MNS  
Head of Section Peter Morling, Department for Migration, Stabilization and Fragility, MNS  
Special Advisor Merve Yalcin, Department for Migration, Stabilization and Fragility, MNS  
Chief Advisor Anne-Catherine Legendre, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, ELK (Online)

Agenda item 9: Head of Department Marianne Kress, Department for Migration, Stabilization and Fragility, MNS  
Chief Advisor Lene Aggernæs, Department for Migration, Stabilization and Fragility, MNS  
Chief Advisor Susanne Wendt, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, ELK (Online)

Agenda item 10: Acting Head of Department Fenja Yamaguchi-Fasting, Department for Humanitarian Action, Civil Society and Engagement, HCE  
Team Leader Tue Kristoffer Westhoff, Department for Humanitarian Action, Civil Society and Engagement, HCE  
Head of Section Rasmus Gustav Dorph, Department for Humanitarian Action, Civil Society and Engagement, HCE  
Chief Advisor Kimiko Pedersen, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, ELK (Online)

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

The State Secretary for Development Policy opened the meeting by welcoming the new members of the Council for Development Policy. She expressed high expectations regarding the cooperation with the Council, and said that the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy was looking forward to meeting the Council in its meeting on 1 June.

The State Secretary for Development Policy informed about the unusual situation during the last months of 2022, when the election process had made it impossible to present new grants to the Council. A list of grants covering 2022, approved shortly before the end of the year, was distributed to the members of the Council during the meeting. Remaining grants (for 2023 and the following years) related to the same programmes and projects would be presented to the Council either in this or in subsequent meetings, hence the Council would be invited to give its assessment.

The Finance Act for 2023 would be presented during the coming week and it was hoped that it would be approved by 1 May.

*With reference to the Rules of Procedure for the Council for Development Policy regarding conflicts of interests, two Members of the Council announced that they had conflict of interests related to some of the agenda items: Charlotte Slente would not participate in the discussion of Item 8, and Jarl Krausing would not participate in the discussion of Item 10.*

*Since the Chair of the Council, Anne Mette Kjær was participating online from Kampala, Jarl Krausing was chairing the meeting except for Item 10, when Anne Mette Kjær would be chairing.*

### **Agenda Item No. 2: Orientation - Danish Support to Ukraine**

*For information and discussion*

Department for European Neighbourhood (EUN) and Embassy in Kyiv

The Head of the Department for European Neighbourhood (EUN) presented an overview of the Danish early recovery support to Ukraine since the Russian invasion in February 2022. As a short-term response, Denmark had granted DKK 100 million to ensure acute access to drinking water and heating. In addition, DKK 265 million had been granted to activities focusing on longer-term rebuilding of infrastructure. Support was especially given to the municipality of Mykolaiv where Danish efforts were concentrated. The overview was based on a paper that had been shared with the Council prior to the meeting.

The Danish Ambassador to Ukraine shared his experience of cooperating with Ukraine under difficult circumstance and highlighted the Ukrainian appreciation of the Danish support. Especially the Danish-Ukrainian partnership regarding Mykolaiv was acknowledged for being responsive to local priorities.

The Council expressed its appreciation of the establishment of the Ukraine Fund and its integrated approach to reconstruction efforts across sectors. Members of the Council noted that EUN and the Embassy had been able to adapt to the changing context and had delivered much-needed results on the ground in what appeared to be a fast and efficient manner.

While agreeing to the support to Ukraine, Members of the Council raised concern about consequences for other countries, notably countries in Africa, of the significant amounts of development funds provided to Ukraine. This could affect the ability to support development problems and other crises elsewhere, especially as the need for humanitarian support to Ukraine was expected to increase over time. Members of the Council asked for information about the source of funds allocated to Ukraine.

Members of the Council highlighted the need to supplement development funds to Ukraine with private investments as part of the reconstruction efforts. In reconstruction efforts, it was considered important to procure from local sources and to focus on sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility. The perspective should be to build back better and greener, including with a view to not only build from scratch but reuse existing material and buildings. Members of the Council also stressed the importance of further developing the skills of the local work force and providing psychosocial support to the work force. Finally, mine action and mine clearance were emphasised as key elements of reconstructions efforts.

Members of the Council reminded about the challenges related to the reform process in Ukraine, included the persistent issues of corruption and lack of transparency. Upholding human rights in a war context was not easy, and it was considered important not to paint an overly rosy picture of the situation in the country. It was recommended to consider supporting ‘accompanying research’ related to the reconstruction efforts with a view to enhancing knowledge and learning among the many actors involved in support to Ukraine and the Eastern neighbourhood countries.

Finally, Members of the Council asked whether the ‘Friends of Ukraine’ group still existed and whether other countries had engaged in partnerships with specific municipalities in Ukraine as Denmark had. They also asked whether there were ongoing talks concerning possible ‘friendship cities’ cooperation between Ukrainian and Danish municipalities.

The Head of EUN thanked the Council for the comments and questions. The focus in Danish reconstruction efforts was to build back better and greener, especially with a view to supporting energy infrastructure. As part of this strategy, coal power plants should be replaced by renewable energy, and a cooperation with Sweden on waste disposal had been initiated. The latter also including building materials.

Another focus was continuing support to EU integration and reforms, in particular through ongoing support to anti-corruption efforts through the EU Anti-Corruption Initiative (EUACI). A staff member from EUACI was now working in Mykolaiv. The Danish approach to reform

efforts was ‘tough love’: being a persistent and loyal cooperation partner but insisting that Ukraine continued to improve with a view to meet EU’s requirements. ‘Friends of Ukraine’ still existed but the organisation had changed its name. The reform agenda had changed since it was now a key element in Ukraine’s application process to become an EU Member State.

The Head of EUN went on to explain that mine action was also part of the Danish support. Concerning support to Ukrainian companies, this was included in the Ukraine Fund. Research and continuous learning from the reconstruction efforts would be essential and was an integrated part of the reconstruction efforts.

Other countries had also agreed to focus reconstruction efforts on particular cities, but the cooperation was not yet as advanced as the one between Denmark and Mykolaiv. Regarding friendship cities, dialogue was ongoing with several Danish municipalities, including Aalborg.

The Ambassador to Ukraine confirmed that the Danish approach to the cooperation with Mykolaiv was highly appreciated by the authorities.

The State Secretary for Development Policy gave a brief overview of how the early recovery efforts mainly were covered by humanitarian financing and reallocations from other programmes, including within the Eastern European Neighbourhood Programme, postponement of planned instalments (e.g. to the Global Environment Facility), and funds which could not be used in Mali due to the situation in the country. The State Secretary reassured the Council that no global commitments had been cancelled or withdrawn with a view to boost the Ukraine portfolio. In a forward-looking perspective, the prioritisation of development funds to Ukraine as part of the Ukraine Fund was a political decision.

The Deputy Chair of the Council thanked for a good discussion and emphasised the importance of localisation, building back better and greener, and the importance of EU integration and anti-corruption as key elements in the reconstruction efforts. The Chair concluded that the Council wished to receive updates on the implementation of the Danish support to Ukraine and an overview of the financing of the Ukraine Fund vis-à-vis other development engagements.

### **Agenda Item No. 3: Extension of the Country Programme for Mali 2023-April 2024**

*For discussion and recommendation to the Minister*

DKK 100 million

Embassy in Bamako

#### *Summary:*

*The Concept Note on the Extension of the Country Programme for Mali 2023 – April 2024 describes and proposes the extension of selected activities under the current Country Programme for Mali (2017-2022) until April 2024 corresponding with the end of the ongoing transition process. Projects with and support to the central government were suspended following the latest military coup in 2021.*

<p><i>The Council for Development Policy recommended the Extension of the Country Programme for Mali 2023-April 2024 for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy.</i></p>
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The Council thanked the Embassy in Bamako for a well-written concept note and welcomed the overall priorities indicated herein. The Council furthermore expressed support for the choice of the selected extension activities and was well aware of the increasingly difficult circumstances under which implementation took place. The Council underlined the importance of the extension being used as guidance for the future Danish engagement in the country and also requested more analysis in this regard. In addition, the Council inquired about the prospect for drafting a new country strategic framework, now that the constitutional referendum in Mali had been postponed. What were the prospects for holding elections in 2024?

Members of the Council emphasised the importance of continued support to both civil society and the private sector in Mali. Concerning civil society, Members of the Council wanted to know what was possible for organisations to do in Mali? Which themes were not considered sensitive, if any? And what was the role of the Danish organisations with Strategic Partnership Agreements (SPA)? Members of the Council specifically asked about the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) and its scope for manoeuvring considering the political situation in the country, bearing in mind that this was an A status National Human Rights Institute (NHRI). In addition Members of the Council was interested in learning about why the cooperation with the CNDH went through FAMOC<sup>1</sup> and not e.g. the SPA-partner Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) given the experience and solidarity that another A-level NHRI could provide based on the shared mandate and tasks.

The combination of addressing job creation (FACEJ<sup>2</sup>) and civil society action (FAMOC) was found to be well founded in the context. In this regard the importance of creating alternatives to the radicalisation of youth was highlighted. Inquiry was also made about the method for selecting beneficiaries and whether this had involved the Embassy's Youth Sounding Board.

Members of the Council saw FACEJ's aim of creating 5,000 new and durable jobs as ambitious and at the same time asked about possibilities for scalability as the number of unemployed grew at a much quicker pace. Questions were raised about whether businesses, as the basis for job creation, would survive in the long run and, therefore, whether the jobs created were sustainable. The question of whether local finance institutions would be willing to take risks and thereby create access to finance was raised. It was suggested that access to credit might be a killer assumption for successful results of FACEJ's activities.

Members of the Council also expressed some concern regarding the focus on green job creation as green jobs required more support than traditional jobs, hence total job creation could be limited. It was suggested to consider the large number of internally displaced people when planning job creation activities.

Furthermore, the importance of the population's access to social services was emphasised as this was how citizens came to understand the peace dividend ideally resulting from local peace agreements. When social services were not supported by Denmark, was this because other donors were active in this field?

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<sup>1</sup> *Fonds d'Appui des Moteurs de Changement* (Fund to Support Change Agents in Civil Society).

<sup>2</sup> *Fonds d'Appui à la Création d'Entreprises par les Jeunes* (Fund to Support Young Entrepreneurs).

Members of the Council noted the relatively modest focus on climate. Considering that many conflicts in Mali had their roots in the consequences of climate change, the low priority given to climate was seen as an issue of concern.

In relation to media support and disinformation, Members of the Council nuanced the picture by underlining that media disinformation could emanate both from the usual sources (including Russia) and from the west ('French trolls').

Members of the Council expressed concern regarding the increasingly difficult prospects for field monitoring and asked about the use of alternative methods, such as third party monitoring, use of GPS data, video monitoring, etc. In terms of managing risks, Members of the Council underlined that this should not be a burden that was just transferred to local partners, but the MFA should be responsible for risks and how to mitigate them.

The Ambassador thanked the Council for the many useful comments that would be of great use to the Embassy during formulation and implementation. The point of the extension was to continue crucial support to specific activities, while following developments in the ongoing transition and on this basis decide on a possible new strategic framework. It was the assessment that the planned election schedule would be respected and that elections would take place during the coming year, but it was impossible to foresee the outcome.

With regard to climate, it was explained that while this did not feature significantly in the five proposed projects for extension, there were currently other ongoing Danish-funded projects in Mali that addressed climate aspects. A future programme would have a significant climate focus.

The Ambassador clarified that grantee selection under FAMOC and FACEJ had been done with the help of professional consultants rather than for instance the Youth Sounding Board and civil society partners, since the latter were often applicants for the grants.

The Ambassador confirmed that there was a shrinking civil space in Mali and that critique of the regime was not possible. It was, however, still possible to support other types of civil society activities and also to support media to counter fake news. There were nine SPA-partners present in Mali, and the Embassy's activities were planned to complement and not overlap with SPA activities. The Ambassador explained that the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) was highly regarded by the Human Rights Council in Geneva and was good at facilitating relations between the Government of Mali and civil society.

Concerning the question of peace dividend after the local peace agreements, the Ambassador explained that it was not easy to achieve. The key partners were the UN Development Programme's Liptako-Gourma facility that supported basic social infrastructure and social services in the conflict areas. A good example was the area of San, where the primarily sedentary *dogon* and the pastoral *peul* had entered into a peace agreement and had made a joint and successful decision to deny the terrorist groups access to the area.

The Ambassador informed that the Embassy had developed a monitoring regime adapted to the high-risk context. It was based on a wide variety of different third-party monitoring options combined with dialogue with partners in Bamako. Alliance Sahel's various instruments were used,

and geo-location apps, video monitoring, the use of mobile phone and video conferences were being explored. Sometimes, activities were moved from one area to another as part of the risk mitigation strategy.

The Deputy Chair of the Council for Development Policy concluded that the Council recommended the Extension of the Country Programme for Mali 2023-April 2024 for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy. The Chair added that the Council was looking forward to hearing about implementation of the activities and about the considerations regarding a future Danish engagement in Mali.

**Agenda Item No. 4: Organisation Strategy for the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) 2022-2026**

*For discussion and recommendation to the Minister*

DKK 1.17 billion

Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, GDK

*Summary:*

*The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is the largest multilateral fund dedicated to addressing environmental threats and pressures to the planet. Established at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, the GEF serves as the financial mechanism for several Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). With a mandate to preserve global environmental benefits, the GEF's mission is to safeguard the global environment by supporting developing countries in meeting their commitments to the MEAs and by creating and enhancing partnerships at national, regional and global scales. The GEF administers several trust funds, including the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), which are the GEF's dedicated funds for supporting urgent, medium and long-term adaptation needs under a joint strategy. The LDCF addresses the special needs of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) that are especially vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change, whereas the SCCF as a new feature provides targeted support to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) that are not LDCs. The total Danish pledge to the 8<sup>th</sup> GEF replenishment is DKK 800 million for the period 2022-2026. Denmark supports the LDCF with a multi-year contribution of DKK 300 million for 2022-2023 along with support to the SCCF of DKK 75 million for 2022-2024. The Danish commitments will be provided as core funding. The Danish organisation strategy for the GEF, LDCF and SCCF provides the foundation for Denmark's strategic engagement with the GEF, LDCF and SCCF and outlines Danish priorities for the GEF-8 period.*

*The Council for Development Policy recommended the Organisation Strategy for the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) 2022-2026 for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy.*

The Council acknowledged that Denmark's continued support and increased contributions to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) along with new support to the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) was of high importance. The Council noted that climate, environment and development were intrinsically linked and the GEF, LDCF, and SCCF, through their mandate and experience, were well placed to respond to environmental, climate and development challenges in an integrated manner. Hence, it was of strategic importance for Denmark to continue as a significant and active partner to the GEF, including LDCF and SCCF.



Members of the Council found it difficult to see the type of activities supported by the organisations and requested a clearer section on lessons learned. It was noted that a lot of information was provided about applications, while not much was said about the results produced. Members of the Council also wanted to know whether other like-minded donors were similarly increasing their contribution to GEF, LCDF and SCCF.

The Council requested an overview of the entire Danish support to climate and environment, which could help them understand the added value of each of the initiatives. This would particularly help to assess the justification for a very substantial amount to the GEF and to assess the comparative advantage of LCDF and SCCF: what was the justification for selecting these? Members of the Council wanted to know whether synergies existed between the work of GEF and the World Bank, and whether Danish bilateral activities at country level such as strategic sector cooperation were sometimes linked to activities of GEF.

Members of the Council underscored the importance of civil society and asked for clarification on how the GEF was engaging with civil society organisations in its operations. Moreover, it was suggested that strategic attention to minority groups could be strengthened.

Members of the Council noted that the assessment of the GEF by the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN), published after the previous Danish organisation strategy (OS), gave GEF a low score with regard to human rights and governance. This could indicate that GEF did not monitor these important issues closely. Members of the Council appreciated the strong focus on private sector engagement in GEF programming and found that this was well reflected in the Danish priority areas for the GEF-8 period. However, the challenges for increasing private sector involvement in adaptation investments, particularly in low-income countries, was noted, and Members of the Council were interested in understanding which instruments would be used for this purpose.

Members of the Council suggested that the water sector would be a key area for private sector engagement, also without development funds involved. It was recommended that sustainable purchases and sustainability in all its aspects should have a more prominent place in the organisation strategy.

The Head of the Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate (GDK) noted all comments from the Council and informed that the GEF's increased focus on integration mirrored Danish priorities for a holistic approach to climate, environment and development challenges. The Head of GDK explained that the increased support to GEF was an opportunity to influence GEF and ensure synergy with Danish priorities. This also reflected the selection of food systems and food security as a Danish priority area for GEF-8 given the central role of food in the climate-environment-development nexus.

The Chief Advisor from the Ministry of Environment ensured that pollution, including plastic pollution, was still a priority for Denmark in GEF-8. The Chief Advisor from GDK added that civil society, including community-based groups, indigenous peoples and other marginalised groups were key partners in GEF. She explained that GEF had a 'Small Grants Programme' for civil society, and that civil society were represented in various aspects of GEF programming as

implementers, recipients, beneficiaries, etc. Regarding collaboration with the World Bank, she explained that the World Bank was a trustee for GEF and an engaged partner but sometimes there were also competition. Thus, there had been examples where the World Bank would not give co-financing unless they could also be an implementing partner.

The Head of GDK acknowledged the issues raised in the MOPAN assessment and said that there was a tendency for GEF to push questions about human rights and governance to implementing partners. Through its seat in the GEF Council, Denmark was working for a strengthening of GEF policies on human rights and governance. Denmark had requested a report on the next Council meeting, and as an example of progress it was mentioned that GEF had stopped approving projects in Myanmar.

The Head of GDK appreciated the recommendations on private sector engagement and would continue to monitor this priority area, including through identification of areas where the involvement of Danish companies could be pursued or where there were potential synergies with bilateral initiatives or Strategic Sector Cooperation. The Chief Advisor from GDK added that the focus would also be on the local private sector, including farmers, to improve their living conditions in the face of increased climate changes. There had been dialogue about involving the Danish food sectors but this had turned out to be difficult in Least Developed Countries.

The Head of GDK explained how coordination was undertaken among the non-recipient donor countries, particularly the Nordic countries, and mentioned GEF's role in supporting countries to formulate policies, plans and strategies as required under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Chief Advisor from GDK explained that GEF demanded that implementing agencies coordinate their work with other funds and that projects were not approved unless an analysis of complementary efforts had been made. She highlighted that GEF was the only fund with an established approach to Least Developed Countries.

Finally, the Head of GDK assured that the MFA would prepare a comprehensive overview of Danish support to various instruments and initiatives under the climate and environmental architecture. She also offered to share an Annual Stocktaking Report of the Danish Support to the GEF, LDCF and SCCC.

The Deputy Chair of the Council for Development Policy concluded that the Council recommended the Organisation Strategy for the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) 2022-2026 for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy.

### **Agenda Item No. 5: Uganda Strategic Framework 2023-2027**

*For discussion and recommendation to the Minister*

DKK 650 million

Embassy in Kampala

*Summary:*

*The new Uganda Strategic Framework (2023-2027) forms the basis for the Danish partnership with Uganda. The vision is to strengthen regional and national stability and prosperity by supporting Uganda in achieving an*

*inclusive, pro-poor and green economic transformation, respecting human rights while continuing to host refugees from neighbouring countries. Denmark will promote this vision through three strategic objectives: (1) promoting sustainable and durable solutions for refugees and support Uganda's stabilising role in the region, (2) promoting a sustainable, inclusive and green economic transformation to adapt to the global climate crisis and (3) strengthening democratic values, protection of human rights and civic space.*

*The Council for Development Policy recommended the Uganda Strategic Framework 2023-2027 for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy.*

The Council commended the Uganda Strategic Framework and its extensive focus on support to Uganda's refugee policy, climate adaptation, human rights as well as the inclusion of youth and gender. The Council acknowledged that Uganda's "open-door" policy was increasingly under pressure by renewed regional instability, shrinking donor aid and climate change. The Council found that the Framework was a well-written strategic document with a strong analysis of the current political context of Uganda, evidenced by the two potential scenarios that reflected the challenges that Uganda faced and the strategies needed to adequately address them.

Members of the Council suggested that the framework should be more explicit about the trade-off between Uganda's stability and the corruption and regional instability that had facilitated it. In that vein, Members of the Council expressed concern over the roles of the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Agriculture in the strategic framework, given their influence on refugees issues and agriculture and their reputations as institutions characterised by inefficiency and limited results. It was found that the framework could better address the issue of the President's succession and the insecurity that could follow. Members of the Council emphasised the importance of political dialogue and especially the need to continue to pursue cases of infringements of human rights such as torture.

While some Members congratulated the Embassy on the scenario approach applied, others found that the scenarios could have been better linked to strategic objectives and outcomes. Members of the Council asked how the framework was aligned with Uganda's National Adaptation Plan and strategy.

Recognising the large need for jobs in Uganda, Members of the Council appreciated the focus on job creation. It was recommended that there should be a stronger focus on skills development as lack of qualified employees was a principal barrier for job creation and economic growth. It was also proposed to consider how refugees and migrants, who had qualifications and skills, could be part of job creation activities. Members of the Council commended the emphasis on refugees in the strategic framework and the continued focus on assisting Uganda in its regional role as a host country. Members of the Council stressed the importance of accelerating efforts to integrate refugees into the national systems and labour market, thereby underpinning prospects for integration. Members of the Council also suggested that the strategic framework could contain more information on how Denmark was addressing the refugee influx, and how the issue affected the other challenges that Uganda was facing.

Members of the Council suggested a stronger focus on the importance of youth and meaningful engagement of youth, e.g. in relation to skills training and job creation, and it was suggested that the Youth Sounding Board could be included in project monitoring.

Concerning the role of the private sector, Members of the Council stressed the importance of collaborating with the local private sector on creating sustainable solutions that addressed both climate change and unemployment. An example could be the food production sector, which might be seen as an agent of change. Regarding trade, Members of the Council suggested an increased focus on supporting trade between the EU and Uganda, underlining the importance of supporting Uganda in overcoming the upcoming challenges posed by new EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence-directive.

Members of the Council added that they would also like to see a more specific description of how civil society could be better involved in the implementation of the strategy. Related to this, it was asked what kind of support to civil society it was expected to provide after the closing of the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF).

Commenting on the results framework, Members of the Council noted that the overall strategic goals were not fully reflected in the outcomes and that the analysis of risks and the scenarios were not adequately integrated into the overall strategic framework. Also considerations related to monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) could have been better presented in the strategic framework.

The Ambassador thanked the Council for their comments and went on to briefly explain the concept of a strategic country framework where only overall strategic considerations were presented, while specific projects were subsequently formulated, appraised and approved. This approach explained why the framework did not contain detailed information on the activities to be supported.

She continued by addressing questions raised in relation to the scenario planning and described how these outlined completely different paths for the Danish support to pursue. Details on the scenarios as well as analyses, evolving risks, and potential responses to the development of the different scenarios would be elaborated in the programming, which followed the approval of the overall strategic framework.

In response to the questions regarding alignment to Uganda's National Development Plan and concerns over the cooperation with Ugandan ministries, the Ambassador stated that a key principle of the framework was to provide on-plan but off-budget support. Furthermore, the Ambassador highlighted the framework's focus on the priorities of the Nationally Determined Contribution, namely climate financing, adaptation and climate-smart agriculture.

There was a good dialogue with the government on a range of issues, the Ambassador explained, but it was important to have exchanges on controversial matters off the media's radar. Activities related to refugees, climate, and the Northern part of the country were not coordinated closely with the government. It was expected that activities supporting governance would be part of bilateral programmes based on agreements with single civil society organisations and there would not be a new multi-donor facility such as the former Democratic Governance Facility.

The Ambassador addressed issues relating to the Danish engagement in Uganda's refugee response by emphasising the Embassy's commitment to supporting the implementation of the

Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). Through its seat in the CRRF Steering Group, the Embassy was working with Uganda in the lead-up to their co-convenorship at the Global Refugee Forum. The Ambassador explained that that of the Danish support to refugees, 70% were for host communities and 30% for refugees. This was considerably more than the general request from the Government of Uganda of delivering 50-50% to these two areas.

The Ambassador acknowledged that youth could play a stronger role in the strategic framework but said that the youth was a clear target group in activities related to livelihood and job creation and that it was an ambition to work with youth-led organisations as part of the governance support.

On skills development, the Ambassador explained that this was part of the activities to be supported in agriculture. She mentioned that skills development of youth featured strongly in e.g. the Danish-supported 'Beyond the Grid' project.

Finally, the Ambassador underlined that the Embassy was looking at barriers to regional and international trade and was considering options for supporting Uganda in this respect.

The Deputy Chair of the Council for Development Policy concluded that the Council recommended the Uganda Strategic Framework 2023-2027 for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy.

### **Agenda Item No. 6: Organisation Strategy for the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) 2023-2026**

*For discussion and recommendation to the Minister*

DKK 375 million

The Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva and the Department for Migration, Stabilization and Fragility, MNS

#### *Summary:*

*The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) is the leading intergovernmental organisation in the field of migration and has a convening role in fostering international cooperation. IOM works to ensure humane and orderly management of migration through the provision of capacity building, service and policy advice to governments as well as advice and humanitarian assistance to migrants. The Danish organisation strategy outlines Denmark's core and softly earmarked support as well as strategic approach towards the cooperation with IOM in the period 2023-2026. It focuses on IOM's development activities and strengthening of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus approaches towards migration issues. Specifically, the Danish focus will be on: (1) strengthening the strategic and organisational effectiveness of IOM, (2) fostering partnerships on migration within and beyond the UN-system, (3) strengthening governments' capacity building for migration management, in particular in Africa, and (4) addressing the links between climate change migration and displacement. The Danish support is firmly grounded in a Human Rights-Based Approach and will have a cross cutting focus on gender responsiveness.*

*The Council for Development Policy recommended Organisation Strategy for the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) 2023-2026 for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy.*

The Council expressed its appreciation for a comprehensive, well-written strategy and expressed support to the chosen priority areas for the Danish engagement with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

The Council underlined that the focus on organisational development and capacity building was much needed as IOM had capacity challenges and operated based on a project approach instead of a partnership approach. Transparency and accountability to beneficiaries and donors should be improved. It was important that Denmark followed IOM's development closely and focused on ensuring that a Human Rights-Based Approach and the protection of migrants was at the centre of all of IOM's operations. The results of the assessment by the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) were highlighted as important in this respect.

Members of the Council acknowledged the need for core funding to IOM in order to support a transition away from the heavily project-based funding model with the aim to enable IOM to deliver better on its strategic priorities and stay true to its mission and mandate. In this respect, it was asked if IOM could absorb the increased amount of Danish core funding and also why Denmark was still earmarking a large share of its support. Furthermore, Members of the Council wanted to know why it remained difficult for IOM to attract core funding from donors and requested information about other donors' approach to cooperating with IOM.

Members of the Council reflected on IOM's funding model, the associated risks and the implications for IOM's ability to uphold its mandate. Examples of negative experiences with IOM's work in the field were given, including migrants' experience of being let down by the organisation.

As a means to influence IOM's further development, Members of the Council suggested that secondment of Danish staff should be considered.

The organisation strategy's clear articulation of the Doing Development Differently approach was acknowledged. However, Members of the Council asked about the strategic connection between the various Danish funding streams to IOM, including the support given by the Ministry of Immigration and Integration.

Members of the Council asked whether IOM's activities could be classified as poverty reduction or if they were more of a humanitarian character. Members of the Council also stressed the need to push IOM towards delivering on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus approaches.

Members of the Council stressed the value of fostering a cross-cutting focus on migration within the UN system. Cooperation with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was highlighted as critical.

Members of the Council also pointed out that IOM transferred few resources to civil society partners and stressed that migration management was not only a task undertaken by authorities but that civil society had an important role to play in ensuring that the rights of migrants were upheld.

The focus on the interlinkages between climate and migration in the strategy was welcomed by Members of the Council. It was also noted that combatting human trafficking was part of migration management, and Members of the Council asked whether IOM also focused on human trafficking.

Finally, Members of the Council highlighted the importance of focussing on youth as they made up the vast majority of migrants, and they acknowledged the focus on mainstreaming gender responsiveness and capacity building within this field.

The Ambassador acknowledged that IOM was on a journey towards fulfilling its role within the UN System and developing a more sustainable funding model that allowed the organisation to follow strategic priorities within its mandate. With IOM's entry into the UN system and its large organisational growth over the past decade, it had become clear that a better balance between core and project funding was needed. The current Director General of IOM, António Vitorino, had been aware of this since the beginning of his term and had initiated several reform processes. The direction of these were clear, although some of the reform processes had to be taken a step further. Cultural and organisational change took time, particularly in a highly decentralised organisation such as IOM. Danish core funding to IOM should indeed be seen as an investment in supporting IOM's journey and the needed reform processes. Currently, Denmark had one secondment that would support Danish priorities, and it was considered if more were needed.

The Ambassador further highlighted the recent budget reform, which resulted in an increase of assessed contributions. Denmark had advocated for an even further increase to meet the needs identified by IOM. Regarding the level of core funding, the Ambassador noted that Denmark was the 4<sup>th</sup> largest of the core funding donors.

The Ambassador pointed out that in the absence of an international convention on migration, IOM did not - like other UN organisations - have a clear normative mandate. He highlighted that IOM was bound by the general principles and conventions of the UN and was committed to a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA). Denmark would continue to closely monitor and follow up with IOM on HRBA and its focus on protection.

The Head of Department for Migration, Stabilization and Fragility (MNS) noted that migration could contribute to sustainable development and that investments in better migration management was an enabler in this regard. The Ambassador highlighted that IOM worked through a HDP-nexus approach and that Denmark would continue to focus on this.

Both the Ambassador and the Head of MNS acknowledged that the Danish support to IOM was a bit patchy due to the different funding streams. The Ambassador pointed out that the increased core contribution and the inclusion of softly earmarked funds under the organisation strategy was a first step towards making Danish funding more coherent. Further, the internal MFA Contact Group was an important tool to ensure coherence in the Danish approach towards IOM. The Head of MNS further informed about an upcoming review of the Danish migration portfolio, which would be used to inform a more strategic approach in the future.

The Deputy Chair of the Council for Development Policy concluded that the Council could recommend the Organisation Strategy for the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) 2023-2026 for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy. The Council would like to receive an orientation about the results of the upcoming review of the Danish support to migration issues.

### **Agenda Item No. 7: Support to the UN Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund 2023-2025**

*For discussion and recommendation to the Minister*

DKK 30 million

Department for Migration, Stabilization and Fragility, MNS

#### *Summary:*

*Support to the UN Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MMPTF) 2023-2025 is in line with Denmark's commitment to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and its priorities for a global approach to manage migration management. Being a pooled funding mechanism, the Danish contribution to MMPTF will be catalysed across Joint Programmes that are addressing the drivers of irregular migration globally.*

*The Council for Development Policy recommended the Support to the UN Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund 2023-2025 for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy.*

The Council asked for an elaboration of the justification for supporting the UN Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MMPTF). Arguments were requested for the wish to become the second largest donor to the trust fund, and more information was wanted about the specific value-added of the organisation compared to other actors and mechanisms implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) (2018).

Members of the Council noted that the project document gave detailed descriptions of the shortcomings of the MMPTF in terms of low fundraising, lack of communication and knowledge management as well as human resource capacities and asked why Denmark would support the MMPTF with this in mind. Furthermore, Members of the Council found it difficult from the documentation to detect the types of projects to be supported by the trust fund. This would be useful for better understanding the reach and impact of the MMPTF.

Given that the MMPTF had 23 objectives in line with the GCM, Members of the Council asked for information about the prioritisation among these and the role of collaborative partnerships, including the role and inclusion of civil society.

Members of the Council noted that the documents appeared very focused on numbers of applicants, while there was limited information about whether countries of origin requested the type of support offered by MMPTF.

Lastly, more information was requested on the synergies with EU-initiatives on migration management and implementation of the GCM.

The Head of Department for Migration, Stabilisation and Fragility (MNS) noted that the MMPTF was unique in its organisational setup for implementing the GCM, and that the fund had an



inclusive model with Steering Committee members from both countries of origin, transit and destination in addition to UN organisations and other stakeholders. This allowed multiple viewpoints to be taken into consideration when deciding on new joint programmes and ensured alignment with the priorities of the countries supported. The joint programmes of the MMPTF focused on migration management, data collection and analysis, and transnational crime such as migrant smuggling and human trafficking.

In terms of the shortcomings of the MMPTF, it was emphasised that the trust fund had only been established in 2019 and therefore was still in the process of maturing.

In terms of synergies, there were clear complementarities between initiatives under EU's Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) and the MMPTF's joint programmes.

The Ambassador of the Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva supplemented by mentioning how the Danish support to MMPTF was complementary to the support to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

The Deputy Chair of the Council for Development Policy referred to the How-to-Note on Migration<sup>3</sup> for an overview of Danish support in this area and also looked forward to the upcoming review of this support. The Deputy Chair concluded that the Council recommended the Support to the UN Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund 2023-2025 for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy.

### **Agenda Item No. 8: Support to the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) 2023-2025**

*For discussion and recommendation to the Minister*

DKK 30 million

Department for Migration, Stabilization and Fragility, MNS

*One Member of the Council, Secretary General Charlotte Slente, Danish Refugee Council, left the meeting during this agenda item with reference to the Rules of Procedure for the Council for Development Policy regarding conflicts of interest.*

*Summary:*

*Support to the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) enables evidence-based data and analysis of the motives of mixed migration, which is an area that is not sufficiently illuminated at the moment and a prerequisite to develop policy or programme measures that can help preventing irregular migration. The Danish support will ensure that MMC can continue to provide open access information for the benefit of multiple partners of Denmark who have an interest in mixed migration trends and data.*

*The Council for Development Policy recommended the Support to the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) 2023-2025 for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy.*

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<sup>3</sup> [How to notes for implementation of the Danish Strategy for Development Cooperation \(um.dk\)](#)

The Council noted that evidence-based knowledge production was of utmost importance when dealing with a highly politicised topic such as migration. Members of the Council found that the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) was unique in the knowledge it produced and the way it gathered data through perspectives from migrants, which supported the validity and quality of information. The evidence-based information on migration flows was a very valuable contribution.

Members of the Council wanted to know if other institutions similar to MMC existed.

Some Members of the Council asked how research uptake could be strengthened and how MMC could receive more visibility and be better able to disseminate key messages. Other Members of the Council questioned this approach and asked whether it would not be better to concentrate on being a knowledge bank and to collect new data and evidence.

It was further asked why the formative review of the MMC had not been finalised prior to supporting a new phase.

The appraisal's recommendation of asking Danish Refugee Council to issue a guarantee to cover the cost of the MMC if donors withdrew support had not been followed. Members of the Council found it to be an unusual request that had not been seen before and, therefore, wanted to know more about the reasoning behind it.

Lastly, Members of the Council enquired about the relationship between MMC and asked if a separation of governance structures had been considered.

The Head of Department for Migration, Stabilization and Fragility (MNS) informed the Council that the proposed support to MMC was necessary to ensure the continued flow of evidence-based information to inform policy and programmes. The MFA believed that the MMC was providing valuable open access information to the global community.

It was acknowledged that the timing of the support ahead of the formative review was not ideal, but the proposed grant was necessary to ensure core operations of the MMC. When the formative review was finalised, it was expected to support and shape the continued cooperation.

In terms of receiving a guarantee from the Danish Refugee Council, the MFA grant only represented 20% of the MMC's global budget. MMC was well aware of the risks and accepted the consequence of potentially having to reprioritise tasks, if it became necessary.

The Head of MNS noted that the governance structure of MMC would be looked at as part of the formative review that would take place during 2023.

The Ambassador of the Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva added that data was also gathered by organisations based in Geneva such as the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the UN High-Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Particularly the UNHCR-Joint Data Centre was a good source for information on human mobility.

The Deputy Chair of the Council for Development Policy concluded that the Council recommended the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) 2023-2025 for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy.

### **Agenda Item No. 9: Support to MSI Reproductive Choices 2023-2026**

*For discussion and recommendation to the Minister*

DKK 100 million

Department for Migration, Stabilization and Fragility, MNS

#### *Summary:*

*MSI Reproductive Choices (MSI) is a leading sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) organisation, being one of the world's largest providers of high-quality contraception, safe abortion and other sexual and reproductive health services (SRH). MSI's added value is its large outreach through diverse service delivery channels and capacity building of public health systems, ensuring access to SRH services for the poorest and marginalised, including in fragile and climate-affected countries. MSI is also well positioned to do local and global advocacy for SRHR. Denmark has supported MSI since 2010. The proposed contribution of DKK 25 million annually (2023-2026) centres on increasing access to quality SRH services, including modern methods of contraception and access to safe abortion for women and girls, as well as removal of legal and policy restrictions to increase access to comprehensive SRHR.*

*The Council for Development Policy recommended the Support to MSI Reproductive Choices 2023-2026 for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy.*

The Council expressed its appreciation for a well-written programme document and emphasised that Danish support to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) was of high importance. There was a large unmet need for sexual and reproductive health services and in humanitarian situations, this was even more pronounced. The Council observed that the programme document had thoroughly incorporated recommendations from the Programme Committee and the appraisal.

Members of the Council noted the global pressure on the rights of women and girls and asked how it affected MSI's work, including how MSI worked on addressing social norms and cultural practices. They also wanted to know whether MSI was working with faith-based actors.

Given that MSI is one of several SRHR partners, Members of the Council asked how MSI complemented other available instruments. Members of the Council found it positive to see the link between the civil society component and private sector component of MSI but with reference to fluctuations in donor support, it was asked if the role of the private sector should not be further emphasised.

Members of the Council noted with appreciation that MSI had outreach, including in hard-to-access areas affected by conflict, and asked how MSI could extend its reach and cooperation with humanitarian actors.

Lastly, the Council enquired about the concern expressed in the programme document regarding high salary levels and wanted clarification regarding MSI's lack of reporting on previously agreed indicators.

The Head of Department for Migration, Stabilization and Fragility (MNS) explained that MSI complemented the work of Denmark's other SRHR-partners. While the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) was the world's biggest purchaser of contraceptives, MSI was one of UNFPA's partners doing the actual provision of contraceptives in hard to access areas. MSI's added value was its reach, its high technical standards and strong focus on safe abortion and contraception. MSI mostly did advocacy "behind the scenes", while one of Denmark's other SRHR-partners, International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), was more known for its loud advocacy.

Regarding the private sector component, the Head of MNS informed that MSI had income-generating activities from clinics in Western countries and for clients able to pay in developing countries. The revenue surplus generated by these activities went to development programmes and services for those who were not able to pay for the services. This was part of MSI's sustainability strategy as they were less challenged by fluctuation in donor revenue. To avoid providing development support to the areas funded by income-generating activities, the modality for the Danish support to MSI had now changed from core funding to an earmarked contribution focused on MSI's development work.

The Senior Advisor from MNS added that part of the new earmarked funds focused on advocacy and norm change in cooperation with local partners, which could also include faith-based actors. The global pressure on SRHR was a challenge for MSI, as it led to a risk of decreased funding not least due to the organisation's strong stance on abortion rights. Consequently, MSI often worked below the radar on pushing for abortion rights.

It was a priority for MSI to strengthen the cooperation with humanitarian actors, for instance by acting as referral for women and girls with complications after unsafe abortions.

As for the high salary level, the Head of MNS underlined that the concern was mainly regarding the top management, and that no Danish funds went to the salaries of high-level staff. Denmark was in dialogue with MSI about the concern, and Denmark had initiated a donor coordination group to discuss the matter.

Lastly, the Senior Advisor from MNS explained that the lack of reporting on agreed indicators resulted from the development of MSI's strategy for 2021-2030 which had caused an extended period where new indicators had to be defined and some had deviated from the previously agreed indicators. The issue had been handled in the programme document by using fixed indicators covering the forthcoming support period.

The Deputy Chair of the Council for Development Policy concluded that the Council recommended the Support to MSI Reproductive Choices 2023-2026 for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation and Climate Policy.

### **Agenda Item No. 10: Digital Democracy Initiative (DDI) 2023-2026**

*For discussion and recommendation to the Minister*

DKK 300 million

Department for Humanitarian Action, Civil Society and Engagement, HCE

One Member of the Council, COO and International Director Jarl Krausing (CONCITO), left the meeting during this agenda item with reference to the Rules of Procedure for the Council for Development Policy regarding conflicts of interest.

*Summary:*

*The Digital Democracy Initiative (DDI) is a new democracy programme envisaged to become a global flagship-programme for countering negative effects of digital technology and strengthening the capacity of local civil society to utilise digital technologies to promote and protect local inclusive democracy, both online and offline. The programme works towards its objective through two mutually reinforcing outcome areas: (1) enabling and amplifying local civil society in utilising digital technologies to promote inclusive democracy, and (2) defending and protecting local civil society from antidemocratic misuse of digital technologies. The programme will prioritise assistance and support to local civil society organisations with a focus on including organisations representing women, youth, and marginalised groups as well as informal actors and social movements that often face challenges in accessing funding and other resources.*

*The Council for Development Policy recommended the Digital Democracy Initiative (DDI) 2023-2026 for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy. The Council looked forward to receiving an orientation on the programming of the unallocated funds after the inception phase.*

The Chair of the Council invited the Head of Department for Humanitarian Action, Civil Society and Engagement (HCE) to give an introductory statement regarding the significant amount of unallocated funds in the programme.

The Head of HCE explained that an additional DKK 100 million was allocated to the programme due to adjustments in the new proposal for the Finance Act for 2023. The decision was taken after the appraisal had been undertaken, hence were not reflected in the appraisal, and new appraisals would be carried out of activities funded by the additional DKK 100 million. The unallocated funds would be programmed in the period 2023-2024 based on feedback from the first appraisal, comments from the Council today, and expected lessons learned in the programme's inception phase. The unallocated funding was planned to be awarded to additional implementing partners through calls for proposals. Activities funded by unallocated funds would, subsequently, be presented to the Council for Development Policy for information and discussion.

The Council expressed its appreciation for a well written and ambitious programme. The programme addressed a highly relevant and increasingly important agenda. The Council noted how the distinction between online and offline was particularly blurred in the Global South. Hence, digital oppressive measures from autocratic actors could lead to physical violence and vice versa.

Members of the Council commended the approach to localisation, reflected in the support to civil society through a sub-granting mechanism. With reference to the recent Evaluation of Danish Support to Civil Society (2022), Members of the Council stressed the importance of ensuring that local actors had a real influence on programme activities and were not just participating in activities planned by MFA. Members of the Council also commended the programme's focus on youth and noted that the inclusion of youth should be meaningful to avoid "youth-washing". Members of the Council suggested that the mid-term review should include an

assessment of whether the programme successfully had reached the youth and other target groups.

Members of the Council suggested integrating a dialogue with the private sector, noting the important role of the private sector in developing new digital technologies and in fostering inclusivity and accountability. Members of the Council also highlighted the need for dialogue and cooperation with governments and national institutions to ensure a whole of society approach. Members of the Council further asked if the role of independent media was considered to be part of the programme.

Members of the Council found that it was difficult to see which specific activities were foreseen and asked for examples. They also enquired about the geographical reach of the programme and asked if countries such as China and Russia were included. Members of the Council found that it was a limitation of the programme if it would operate only in countries with other Danish bilateral development programmes.

Members of the Council highlighted the importance of incorporating the needed flexibility in the sub-granting mechanism as part of the support to CIVICUS (the Global Civil Society Alliance) in order to ensure localisation. Moreover, it was underlined that the MFA should consider how its administrative guidelines could enable the necessary flexibility. Referring to the appraisal and considering the substantial funds to CIVICUS, Members of the Council expressed concern about the absorption capacity of this organisation and the limited experience of CIVICUS with sub-granting of funds.

Members of the Council reflected upon the future role of the Danish-led multi-stakeholder initiative, 'Tech for Democracy', which the Digital Democracy Initiative had stemmed from. Some had found that Tech for Democracy had been a closed club and expressed the hope that the approach in the new initiative would be more inclusive. Members of the Council noted the work of Tech for Democracy's 10 action coalitions and asked how this work would be complemented and/or continue through the Digital Democracy Initiative. Members of the Council further enquired about the possibility of allocating unused funds for the political platform through the programme. It was also asked how the additional DKK 100 million was expected to be used.

Further enquiring about donor interest and dialogue regarding the Digital Democracy Initiative, Members of the Council asked how the programme complemented existing initiatives from other donors.

The Head of HCE thanked the Council for the constructive comments. The Head of HCE noted that the development of the programme was based on a scoping study commissioned by the MFA which provided an outline of existing programmes and initiatives supporting democracy in the digital age. The scoping study had identified digital impact on civic space as the most critical concern of civil society stakeholders and it had placed a strong emphasis on the need to support smaller and informal actors that often faced challenges in accessing development funding.

On the role of the private sector and governmental institutions, the Head of HCE acknowledged the need to further explore how the programme could incorporate innovative solutions from the

private sector. She also highlighted synergies between the programme and existing Danish bilateral cooperation with national institutions. The Head of HCE further explained that advocacy efforts towards national institutions was already an integral part of the programme. This was done through the implementing partner, Access Now. Moreover, the programme was intended to complement the EU's Global Gateway Initiative support to digital infrastructure.

The Head of HCE agreed with the comments on meaningful inclusion of youth, and she welcomed the suggestion of including the media as a possible part of the programme which would be considered in the programming of the unallocated funds.

On the geographical coverage of the programme, the Head of HCE informed that China and Russia would not be included. To the suggestion that also countries without other Danish bilateral activities should be part of the programme, she referred to programmes such as EU's Global Gateways Initiative which had activities in these countries.

Regarding CIVICUS's absorption capacity, the Head of HCE noted that the MFA had been in close dialogue with CIVICUS to carefully assess the organisation's capacity to manage the sub-granting mechanism. CIVICUS already had a proven track-record of sub-granting as they had commissioned 135 sub-grants to partners in 64 countries globally from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022. The additional funds (presently unallocated) would be used for CIVICUS and other both existing and new partners. The Head of HCE acknowledged the need for flexibility to ensure localisation while respecting the Danish guidelines for development cooperation.

The Head of HCE explained that the Digital Democracy Initiative was part of Tech for Democracy and a central Danish deliverable to U.S. President Joe Biden's 'Summit for Democracy'. Furthermore, the Programme was informed by the lessons learned from Tech for Democracy and intended to complement other Danish efforts. The suggestion to incorporate the work of the Tech for Democracy action coalitions would be considered. However, the Head of HCE also noted that the Programme could not entail and carry on work-streams under Tech for Democracy, which was not directly related to the objective of the programme.

The Head of HCE highlighted ongoing dialogues with other donors, including the EU, the United States and like-minded European donors, which had expressed interest in the programme. These donors had found the Digital Democracy Initiative to be an innovative programme which was special by being locally-driven and by addressing important needs, not covered by existing initiatives. The Head of HCE further highlighted that the EU had reserved EUR 11 million for the programme through a delegated partnership with Denmark.

The Chair of the Council for Development Policy concluded that the Council recommended the Digital Democracy Initiative (DDI) 2023-2026 for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy. The Council looked forward to the orientation on the programming of the unallocated funds after the inception phase.

#### **Agenda Item No. 11: Any Other Business**

No issues were raised under this agenda item.