

Minutes from meeting in the Council for Development Policy 10 June 2020

Present:

- Members: Professor Anne Mette Kjær, University of Aarhus (Chair)
International Director Jarl Krausing, CONCITO (Vice Chair) (agenda item 3-6)
Senior Researcher Lars Engberg-Pedersen, Danish Institute for International Studies
General Secretary Birgitte Qvist-Sørensen, DanChurchAid
General Secretary Rasmus Stuhr Jakobsen, CARE Denmark
Head of International Department Jens Kvorning, SMEdenmark
Head of Department Kenneth Lindhardt Madsen, The Danish Agriculture & Food Council
Director for Global Development and Sustainability Marie Gad, Confederation of Danish Industries
International Director Marie Engberg Helmstedt, The Danish Youth Council
Private Adviser Morten Lisborg, Migration Management Advice
Vice president Bente Sorgenfrey, Danish Trade Union Confederation
- MFA: State Secretary for Development Policy Trine Rask Thygesen
Head of Department Nanna Hvidt, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality
Head of Department Lotte Machon, Department for Africa, Policy and Development
Deputy Head of Department Søren Davidsen, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality
Adviser Mette Brink Madsen, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality
- Agenda item 2: Head of Department Rasmus Abildgaard Kristensen and Chief Adviser Tine Anbæk, Department for Green Diplomacy, GDI
- Agenda item 3: Head of Department Mette Thygesen and Chief Adviser Thomas Nikolaj Hansen, Department for Humanitarian Action, Civil Society and Engagement, HCE
- Agenda item 4: Ambassador Nicolaj Hejberg Petersen and Deputy Head of Mission Henrik Jespersen, Embassy Kampala
- Agenda item 5: Minister for Development Cooperation Rasmus Prehn

Agenda item no. 1. Announcements

There were no announcements.

Agenda item no. 2. Accelerating climate action in large cities in developing countries – strategic support to C40

For discussion and recommendation to the Minister

DKK 67.0 million

(Department for Green Diplomacy, GDI)

Vice chair Jarl Krausing was incompetent for the discussion of support to C40.

Summary:

The strategic objective of strategic support to C40 is to contribute to healthier, safer and more prosperous cities in developing countries through the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, enhanced climate risk resilience and the promotion of green economic recovery from the Covid-19 crisis. The Danish contribution aims at enhancing C40 support to climate action implementation in member cities in least developed and lower middle-income countries in Africa and Asia. Further, the aim will also be to demonstrate through action by cities that addressing climate emergency and engaging in green recovery from the covid-19 crisis is an opportunity to reduce poverty and improve the lives and prospects of citizens. There will be a focus on implementation of climate action delivering tangible results on the ground with a priority on building climate resilience, including the creation of decent, green jobs.

The Council for Development Policy recommended the Strategic Support to C40 for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation.

The Council saw C40 as an important global actor with member cities driving global climate ambition and found the suggested programme interesting and very relevant. Some Council members commended the document for being well crafted reflecting a thorough preparation process. The Council appreciated the consistent integration in the programme of post Covid-19 recovery as an early example of the ‘building back better and greener’ approach and saluted C40’s nine key principles for green economic recovery.

The Council appreciated C40’s ambition to provide assistance to member cities in developing countries in the implementation of climate action and saluted the principles expressed through C40’s Global Green New Deal. The Council found that C40 was known for its strength in networking, however, it was also known to be weaker on the implementation side. While acknowledging C40’s ambition and the programme’s explicit focus on selected cities in developing countries, the Council expressed concern about C40’s capacity to provide the necessary support to implementation in cities with known considerable capacity constraints. The Council asked whether links could be made to the Danida Fellowship Center in order to build capacity at city level.

Stressing the accelerated urbanisation in developing countries and the increasing number of the world’s poor living in cities, the Council underscored the importance of poverty reduction and

asked whether the programme would contribute to reducing poverty in cities in low-income and lower middle-income countries in Africa and Asia. The Council enquired whether it could be possible to include a poverty indicator. In this connection, the Council asked how C40 engaged with local civil society organisations at city level.

The Council acknowledged the thorough preparation process of the programme including the Danish input to the ongoing strategic business planning in C40 for the next four years. Noting the focus on implementation of climate action in selected cities in Africa and Asia, the Council requested further information on what the Danish contribution would fund, including whether the grant would contribute to paying for consultants in Denmark. The Council saluted the systematic ODA-tracking of expenditure and wondered if it would be difficult to gear and attract further ODA funding for C40's 2021-2024 business plan. Related to this, the Council underscored the potential for working closer with companies building on expertise, innovation and resources in the business community in Denmark as well as at local level, citing the Cities and Business Forum at the 2019 Mayors Summit in Copenhagen as an example that could be expanded. The Council also called for more information on the choice of climate action, whether the two cases from South Africa and India were the only activities so far and what the next steps in the process would be. Finally, the Council saluted the focus on adaptation noting the importance of building resilience including with regards to food, water, value chains and production.

The Department for Green Diplomacy (GDI) specified that while originating in large, rich cities, C40 was today recognised as a tone setting organisation of the world's largest cities driving global climate ambition. C40 member cities were spread across the world and continued to expand including a growing number of member cities in Africa. The C40 Chair, Mayor of Los Angeles Eric Garcetti, had initiated the Global Green New Deal within C40 and was genuinely engaged in further enhancing solidarity and North/South as well as South/South intercity exchange and learning. GDI recognised that C40 had limited experience in climate action implementation given that focus so far had been on assisting cities in developing climate action plans. The preparation phase of the programme had contributed to outline efficient approaches to implementation support to cities in developing countries and to identifying needs for C40 capacity enhancement, not least on the ground at regional and city level. This was also the rationale for the secondment of a senior implementation expert in Africa. GDI stressed that it would continue to closely monitor capacity building and constraints throughout the implementation of the programme. This also included continued close collaboration with relevant Danish embassies. GDI would explore potential for linking the programme to Danida Fellowship Center for city level capacity building as suggested by the Council.

GDI strongly acknowledged the importance of poverty reduction as part of contributing to building resilient, low-emission cities. This was underpinned by the choice of focus cities among the poorest C40 member cities. The majority of focus cities were expected to give priority to adaptation in order to enhance resilience. GDI further stressed, that equity assessments would be conducted to ensure that cities implemented actions, which maximised social and economic benefits reducing inequality. In this process, local civil society organisation would be associated along with other key stakeholders at city level. Finally, GDI would explore the possibility to develop a specific poverty indicator with C40.

GDI stressed that the Danish grant was restricted to ODA eligible activities and would not fund consultants in Denmark. The Danish contribution would contribute to C40's support to facilitating climate action implementation in focus cities dismantling barriers such as national legislation and relationship between national government and cities, access to finance, etc. To ensure efficiency, some of this support would be channelled to cities through regional thematic programmes where C40 would rely on external expertise. The enforced systematic ODA-tracking of expenditure had been established by C40 in close dialogue with GDI to ensure that ODA funding was allocated and spend in accordance with OECD/DAC restrictions and principles. C40 was aware that this systematic tracking could facilitate engagement from other bilateral donors. GDI was ready to participate in dialogue with bilateral colleagues if and when relevant to support this effort. GDI noted that C40 would prioritise support to 1-3 climate actions in each member city in developing countries in the Global South. C40 support would depend on demand and engagement from each individual city. The examples from South Africa and India were mentioned to illustrate the type of city climate action that C40 might support in the coming years.

GDI noted that C40 had various types of collaboration with business communities but was of course cautious of maintaining independence and legitimacy of the organisation. C40 had initiated an Advisory Group of close Danish partners to explore how Danish city experience, expertise and innovation could be further shared with member cities. This included experience and lesson with public private partnerships and from the DK2020 programme of climate action planning in Danish municipalities.

Summing up, the Chair concluded that the Council could recommend the project for approval by the Minister. It was emphasised that throughout implementation of the programme, GDI would maintain attention on poverty reduction and capacity constraints in C40 as well as at city level.

Agenda item no. 3. Danish support to civil society

For discussion

(Department for Humanitarian Action, Civil Society and Engagement, HCE)

In its introductory remarks, the HCE department found that civil society is changing towards a more loose way of organising itself. At the same time, civic space was under pressure, which was a trend exacerbated by the Covid-19 crisis. With current NGO strategic partnerships ending in 2021, HCE was now keen on engaging the Council in a discussion on future support.

The Council appreciated the opportunity to be consulted at an early stage and confirmed the relevance of maintaining a strong rights-based civil society element in Danish development cooperation. Civil society was seen as a Danish stronghold reflecting a strong tradition for associational life, social dialogue and cooperatives. Its plurality and importance for democracy were underlined.

While the Council agreed that a new and less structured activism had emerged, it also underlined that traditional NGOs were still instrumental in driving change and that many young people still engaged in such organisations.

The Council recommended that enhanced emphasis was put on describing the role of civil society in delivering humanitarian aid and responding to development needs in crises – a need that had become more apparent during the Covid-19 crisis.

The Council agreed to a broad definition of civil society reflecting the diversity of civil society also regarding organisations representing the private sector. It was pointed out that working with more informal actors presented challenges in terms of assessing their legitimacy and ensuring their financial accountability. A certain measure of risk appetite was needed.

The Council expressed concern that civil society's independence could be jeopardised if civil society organisations were also expected to deliver on official Danish aid priorities. It would be important to unfold how alignment to Danish priorities would look in practice (degree of alignment to priority countries etc.). At the same time, the Council supported strengthening the political dialogue particularly in countries where civic space is under pressure.

On service delivery it was suggested taking a pragmatic approach. In conflict-affected contexts, service delivery would often be the only relevant option as opposed to advocacy that could expose and put activists into danger.

The Council discussed the importance of delivering NGO assistance through partnerships. The Council saw it as legitimate and relevant to support partnerships over longer, consecutive time periods as long as they developed in character and delivered benefits. Several members also endorsed transferring more resources to partners in the global South and thereby supporting the localisation agenda. Regarding partnerships with private companies, it was questioned whether these were important objectives in themselves or rather something that could be organised when they benefit both parties.

The Council agreed that public engagement should be elaborated and feature more prominently. It was important to strengthen people-to-people ties involving multiple stakeholders such as schools, scout movements, faith-based actors etc. The purpose of this should not only be to disseminate knowledge on development issues, but also to describe how processes and events abroad have implications for Denmark.

The Council also discussed the balance between control and trust in selecting and cooperating with NGOs. While nobody questioned the need to document results, it was suggested that future cooperation could perhaps involve less evaluation and more experimentation. There was a trade-off between demands for professionalisation and people's engagement in development.

Finally, it was noted that a number of issues could feature more prominently, for example reference to the Sustainable Development Goals (and associated targets and indicators), gender and women's rights, civil society's role in creating knowledge, youth and the climate movement,

faith-based organisations, the role of labour market institutions in democracy, and a description of the role of the public and private sector.

The HCE department thanked the Council for its comments and support for a continued strong emphasis on civil society support. The coming process would also involve consultation with a broad selection of stakeholders from civil society, including fund managers, and beyond.

Summing up, the Chair noted that Danish NGO support had an important role in contributing to official Danish aid priorities. This was, however, not seen as ruling out the possibility that NGOs also engaged in sectors and geographies not covered by official Danish aid programmes. The Chair also suggested a potential role for NGOs in developing so-called electoral autocracies into more mature democracies. Finally, the Chair agreed that advocacy would sometimes have to take the backseat in repressive regimes where such activities could be dangerous.

Agenda item no. 4. Covid-19's influence on Danish development cooperation

For information

(Embassy Kampala & State Secretary for Development Policy)

The State Secretary informed the Council that DKK 350 million had been allocated to Covid-19 response in developing countries, which among other things focused on SRHR and social safety nets and which included funding to the international vaccine organisation, GAVI. Furthermore, funding to the Global Partnership for Education had been moved forward to 2020 instead of 2021. Finally, additional focus was on human rights, democracy, civil society and civic space, which in many countries had been put under pressure.

The State Secretary had also invited the Embassy in Kampala to share with the Council its experiences on Covid-19 and the pandemic's influence on development cooperation in Uganda. Due to Covid-19, Uganda had shut down in March and efforts had been made by the Government to minimise the spread of Covid-19. This had been largely successful. However, at the moment the number of infected persons was increasing. The socio-economic impact was severe and the World Bank estimated possible negative growth rates.

The Embassy gave a short account of how the Danish country programme for Uganda had been adjusted and adapted to the new circumstances and to counter new challenges in the wake of Covid-19. Adjustments included new and innovative ways of working. The Embassy's agricultural extension employees within the NURI programme had, for example, been trained in order to assist the WFP in food distribution. Also the Danish supported Democratic Governance Facility had played a role regarding human rights and democratic rights, for example by holding the government accountable for increased police violence in the wake of the lockdown. Through support to Trade Mark East Africa, the Embassy was also planning initiatives at the borders, e.g. in terms of information campaigns and other preventive measures aimed at facilitating crucial border trade while assisting in the efforts to curtail spread of the disease from for instance truck drivers.

Besides adjustments within the country programme, funds had been re-allocated to new initiatives and new funds had been added as well, for example to WHO's initiatives on Covid-19 in Uganda as well as to UNFPA's efforts on SRHR. Extra funding to the WFP was also in the pipeline aiming at refugees in urban areas.

The Council asked whether Covid-19 was expected to have any impact on upcoming elections, whether the number of Covid-19 infected persons in Uganda reflected the numbers in Africa in general and whether the risk groups in Africa were the same as elsewhere.

The Embassy explained that elections were planned to take place in the beginning of 2021 and that it could be necessary to amend the constitution if they were to be postponed. The President was keen on having the elections as planned, as his handling of the Covid-19 crisis had enjoyed widespread support. However, it had also been underlined by the President that Covid-19 had to be under control in order to go through with the elections. Regarding the numbers of infections, it was difficult to predict anything, not least due to the fact that only a limited number of persons was tested. Regarding risk groups, there were no clear signals either. In general, the African population was younger but at the same time also more vulnerable.

Agenda item no. 5. Meeting with the Minister for Development Cooperation

The Chair welcomed the Minister for Development Cooperation and the Council members briefly introduced themselves.

The Minister was pleased to meet the new members of the Council and underlined that he found that the Council broadly represented many different competences and interests, which were important in order to achieve the Minister's ambition of improving Danish development cooperation further. The Minister emphasised the Council's important role in relation to quality assurance of strategies, programmes and projects. The Minister further underlined that the Council could play an important role in the Minister's project on increasing the Danish public's engagement within development cooperation.

The Minister also briefly introduced his 4 year plan, which included the Government's political priorities for the coming period. The purpose of the plan was to establish clear goals and criteria for success – and it was no secret that the Government had high ambitions. The main focus in the 4 year plan was to establish development cooperation with solidarity as a significant basic principle. Denmark should use its own experience regarding e.g. the welfare state, climate action and the use of apprentices. Due to the need for prioritisation, development cooperation should be based on 'pioneer' initiatives where Denmark could take the lead and hopefully encourage other countries to do the same. Denmark should have the willingness to take risks and maybe fail sometimes.

The 4 year plan included 7 main priorities, which were 1) Green development policy, which included 'Build Back Better and Greener' as well as clean water and clean energy to Africa, 2) Migration, which included a fair and humane asylum system focused on handling the future's

refugees, 3) inequality, i.e. establishing social security nets and enhance democratic participation, 4) create hope for African youth by focusing on job creation and education through apprentices, 5) girls and women's rights including SRHR and pioneer initiatives on birth control, 6) increased focus on Africa and 7) a new strategy for Danish development cooperation. Finally, the 4 year plan also focused on inclusion of the Danish public and increasing public engagement by involving e.g. trade unions, businesses, civil society, spokespersons in parliament etc.

The 4 year plan was not supposed to cover everything, but was mainly focused on the new, strategic and structural changes, which Denmark aimed at supporting. Implementation was already ongoing, but the Minister underlined the need for cooperation with stakeholders, for which reason it was important for him to inform the Council.

The Council thanked the Minister for taking time to inform the Council on the 4 year plan and its priorities. The Council commended the priorities mentioned, not least regarding climate action and migration. Especially the increased focus on climate action as an element, which should be supported through Danish development cooperation, was appreciated. On migration, the Council referred to a UNDP report which stated that even though job creation was important, it was not sufficient in order to counter migration. Often young people migrated because they were excluded from participating in and influencing the society they lived in, for which reason it was also relevant to create opportunities for young people to be politically active in their respective societies. Regarding a fair and humane asylum system, it was underlined that it was a long-term commitment. It was recommended looking into possible cooperation with the new government agency on repatriation.

Regarding solidarity, the Council asked questions in relation to the balance between solidarity and Denmark's own interests. Danish short-term interests were not necessarily in accordance with poor people's own priorities. On inequality, the Council noted that movements such as Black Lives Matter and its focus on inequality could play a part in relation to development cooperation and its inherent inequalities. Focus on skills training and apprentices was also applauded by the Council. This was also considered an important element in relation to handling youth unemployment, however, the Council called for more information on how youth challenges would be handled in general and not only in relation to job creation.

While the idea of focusing on pioneer initiatives was interesting, the Council underlined the importance of partnership and ensuring ownership in the priority countries. The Council found that the private sector could be further involved in development cooperation. Danida Market Development Partnership was referred to as an instrument, where a number of Danish businesses were involved. However, it was mainly bigger projects which made it difficult to involve some of the smaller business. In that regard, it was recommended to also reach out to SME's which could contribute with more concrete inspiration to private sector development in Africa.

The Council underlined the importance of rights, not least in the wake of Covid-19 where lockdowns had been used to constrain civil society. The Council emphasised Denmark's traditions

on democracy and rights and recommended an increased focus on rights in the coming development strategy. On pioneer initiatives, the localisation agenda was suggested as an area where Denmark could take the lead and demonstrate innovation and willingness to take risks.

As GDP was expected to decrease, the Council asked questions in relation to the development budget in coming years. Furthermore, it was recommended to support a social fund within the UN to counter challenges for social security. The Council questioned the balance between bilateral and multilateral development assistance and whether the current balance was the right one. Finally, the Council noted with appreciation the Minister's ideas of engaging the Danish public regarding development cooperation.

The Minister appreciated the relevant and competent remarks from the Council and looked forward to future discussions in the Council.

The Chair also underlined that many of the issues raised by the Minister and the Council would be themes, which the Council would address further at later stages. Finally, the Chair expressed her wish that the Minister would participate in the Council's seminar in September, where – among other things – a discussion of green jobs, climate adaptation and poverty reduction would be on the agenda.

Agenda item no. 6. AOB

No points were raised.