

Minutes from meeting in the Council for Development Policy 11 September 2018

Present:

- Members: Professor Emeritus Georg Sørensen, University of Aarhus (Chair)
Vice Secretary-General Tania Dethlefsen, The Danish Family Planning Association (vice chair)
Partner Marina Buch Kristensen, Nordic Consulting Group
International Director Gunvor Bjerglund Thomsen, The Danish Youth Council
Associate Professor Michael Wendelboe Hansen, Copenhagen Business School
Director Mads Bugge Madsen, The LO/FTF Council
- MFA: Minister for development cooperation Ulla Tørnæs (agenda item 3)
Under-Secretary Trine Rask Thygesen, Centre for Global Development and Cooperation
Head of Department Mikael Hemniti Winther, Technical Quality Support
Head of Department Lotte Machon, Development Policy and Financing (agenda item 1-3)
Deputy Head of Department Signe Skovbakke Winding Albjerg, Development Policy and Financing (agenda item 4-5)
Adviser Mette Brink Madsen, Department for Technical Quality Support
- Agenda item 2: Head of Department Henriette Ellermann-Kingombe and Head of Section Thomas Ostermann, Department for Multilateral Cooperation and Climate Change
- Agenda item 3:
- Agenda item 4: Permanent Representative Ambassador Ib Petersen, First Secretary Casper Stenger Jensen, Senior Policy Advisor Christina Wix Wagner and Policy Advisor Stefanie Engelberg, Permanent Mission to the UN New York

Agenda item no. 1: Announcements

There were no announcements.

Agenda item no. 2: Danish organisation strategy for Global Partnership for Education (GPE) 2018-2020

For discussion and recommendation to the Minister

(Department for Multilateral Cooperation and Climate Change, MKL)

Summary:

An estimated 120 million children of primary and lower secondary school age are out of school today. Sustainable Development Goal 4 voices the promise of getting every child in the world into school and learning by 2030, and the achievement of SDG 4 is considered a prerequisite for the fulfilment of all SDGs. As the world's largest fund dedicated to education delivery in development countries, Global Partnership for Education is strongly positioned to help achieve SDG 4. GPE's core mission is to provide quality education for all. GPE's operational model is centred on development countries' own national education systems in order to get local ownership and sustainability, and it includes education stakeholders from teacher unions to CSOs, private foundations and international organisations such as UNICEF. Denmark's contribution to GPE amounts to DKK 300 million per year in the period 2018-2021 (DKK 1.2 billion in total) and will contribute to the successful implementation of GPE's '2020' strategy. The Danish commitment will be provided as core funding. The Danish organisation strategy for GPE will provide the foundation for Denmark's strategic engagement with GPE and set Danish priorities for the partnership.

The Council for Development Policy recommended the organisation strategy for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation

The Department for Multilateral Cooperation and Climate Change (MKL) introduced the organisation strategy and outlined Denmark's priorities for engagement with the GPE.

The Council found the organisation strategy well written, solid and found that there was a need for education for children in challenged areas. The Council especially commended the focus on quality education. In this regard, the Council asked how GPE would ensure delivery of quality education at country level and ensure that children are actually learning.

The Council referred to an evaluation study from the World Bank and questioned whether the organisation spent too much time on tending to donors rather than implementing education for all. Based on previous Danish bilateral support to education, the Council asked whether and how Danish experience within the education sector could be useful within GPE. The Council further asked to what degree teachers were included in GPE. The Council also inquired about links to the convention on the rights of the child and asked to which extent children and youth were included and involved.

The Council asked about the organisation's operational model and whether it was problematic that GPE had no local presence in the countries involved. In this regard, the Council asked why

the Danish funding for education was not channelled through the EU, which was present at local level.

The Council questioned why Denmark was supporting two similar funds, namely GPE and Education Cannot Wait (ECW) and asked whether there were risks of overlap between the two. The Council further recommended focusing not only on inclusion of girls but also inclusion of other marginalised groups such as children and youth with disabilities. The Council asked questions as to whether GPE was willing to work with sex education programmes and the use of contraceptives as means to ensuring that girls stayed in schools.

The Council asked how Denmark was ensuring mitigation measures in terms of corruption cases and how sustainability in GPE operations was secured. The Council inquired about the results of GPE so far, and on a more technical level why education had been transferred to its paragraph on the Finance Act. Finally, the Council asked about the inclusion of technology in education delivery.

MKL informed that GPE used a number of different tools such as periodical assessments of students to ensure quality education delivery and improved learning outcomes and that specific focus was put on capacity building of teachers and increasing their numbers as a crucial part of increasing the quality. The MFA liaised with a number of education experts from outside the MFA and the MFA was continuously building its network among stakeholders. The choice of GPE as Denmark's largest recipient of support for education was a strategic decision. The EU itself was part of GPE as the largest donor and the EU was also represented at the GPE Board and Committees. MKL further informed that EU's education programmes were indirectly supported via Denmark's core contribution to the EU.

ECW had been established in 2016 due to a gap in delivery of education in fragile and conflict affected states (only approx. 3.5 % of all humanitarian funding was earmarked education). While ECW was focused on the more short-term delivery, GPE focused on the longer-term. Denmark had advocated for complementarity and close cooperation between the two funds. Denmark's seat in GPE's Finance and Risk Committee allowed Denmark to monitor and address any corruption cases as well as apply the Danish zero-tolerance policy if necessary. In case of suspicion of misuse of funds, GPE would cut off funding immediately. GPE's operational model was based on ensuring local ownership and sustainability, which was done by always working through the national education ministries as well as including education stakeholders in local education groups at field level.

MKL underlined that children and youth with disabilities were one of seven focus areas for GPE. MKL further informed the Council that inclusion of technology in education delivery was a new and growing field and that Denmark was working on partnerships in this field as well as advocating in GPE for the use of technological solutions. Finally, MKL would look into strengthening gender aspects and the possibilities of including sex education in GPE's work.

Additionally, the Department for Development Policy and Financing (UPF) informed the Council that the transfer of education to its own paragraph on the Finance Act was an attempt to give education its own, highlighted place and to underline Denmark's prioritisation of education. The Chairman concluded that the Council agreed on the organisation strategy's focus on the quality of education delivery. MKL had answered the Council's questions satisfactorily and the Council could recommend the organisation strategy to approval by the Minister.

Agenda item no. 3: Information regarding the Finance Act proposal for 2019

Information from the Minister for Development Cooperation followed by Q&A

(Department for Development Policy and Financing, UPF)

The Minister for Development Cooperation presented the Government's Priorities for Danish Development Cooperation 2019 as laid out in the finance bill for 2019. The Minister explained that due to the Government's commitment to meeting the 0.7% target, the development assistance framework had increased by DKK 464.1 million to DKK 16.392 billion. Additional DKK 182.8 million would also be allocated as an adjustment of the 2017 development assistance framework. Overall, development cooperation assistance would total DKK 16.575 billion in 2019.

The Minister emphasised that Denmark's development cooperation was rooted in the strategy for development cooperation and humanitarian action, The World 2030, which was supported by a broad political majority. The 2019 finance bill targeted five areas in particular: Firstly, "regions of origin" with record high humanitarian assistance and strengthened efforts in regions affected by conflict. Secondly, increased development assistance to Africa, focusing on fragility, migration and business/free trade. Record high allocation to Danida Business Finance for the engagement of commercial actors. Thirdly, a strong green profile with record high funding for the Danish Climate Envelope, P4G and increased collaboration with public authorities. Fourthly, focus on women's rights, gender equality and education with record high SRHR effort and increased education assistance. And last but not least, strengthened multilateralism with heightened contribution to international peace, security and rule of law.

The Council welcomed the presentation and thanked the Minister for taking the time to inform the Council. The Council found the finance bill to be well in line with the strategy "World 2030". It was clear and positive that the broad political agreement behind the strategy provided strong political backing to the direction, which ensured continuity. At the same time, there were elements of the Minister's personal priorities such as SDG5 on gender equality – a priority, which was broadly supported by the Council. The Council found it positive that emphasis was put on the bilateral country programmes and that the level of funding to these was not reduced. It was also positive that African countries were given special emphasis. The Council found it very important not to forget the core long-term cooperation, which was the foundation of Denmark's development cooperation - a foundation on which newer tendencies such as humanitarian-development nexus should be build. The Council further found that the bilateral country programmes were a bridge to commercial cooperation.

Several Council members found that it was unfortunate that the area of evaluation was not given larger funding priority. There was a risk that the evaluation would be less thorough and that it would be harder to show impact of the efforts, and it would furthermore make it harder to improve interventions going forward. The Council recognised Denmark's engagement on the youth agenda and noted that Denmark had a leading role internationally – the Council had noted that youth had been integrated into more and more programmes. The current work on mainstreaming tools was crucial to deliver actual results on the ground.

The Council also acknowledged Denmark's strong global leadership on women's rights and gender equality and expressed support for the proposed new initiatives on sex education. The Council expressed concern that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had undergone many budget and staff cuts. It was essential to ensure that the necessary capacity to formulate, implement and monitor the development cooperation engagement was present. The Council inquired about Denmark's joint efforts in "regions of origin". This was a large priority and large sums of both development and humanitarian finance were spent on this. The Council asked for more information about how Denmark was addressing the root causes of conflict and crisis. The Council found many complex dilemmas and the causality of interventions was difficult to establish and underlined that further knowledge would be useful.

The Council noted the prioritisation of private sector involvement and inquired about how the various instruments supplemented each other and asked how Denmark would ensure that the private sector actors took responsibility and placed the relevant demands in terms of development effect, human rights, gender equality etc. The Council found that Denmark could take lead in ensuring that private actors followed the UN guiding principles. The initiatives in support of a strong private sector in Africa were also supported by the Council, which inquired about how this was translated into development effect. How would Denmark ensure that it reached the right beneficiaries and had maximum development impact, for instance for women?

The Council supported the increased prioritisation of multilateral engagement. A strong international rule-based system was a core Danish value and in our interest. The Council asked about the relative weight between multilateral and bilateral support and emphasised the need and potential for closer synergies between these instruments. A strong EU was also seen as key for Denmark. But how could Denmark support EU further and how did we ensure that Danish priorities were promoted within EU's development cooperation. Finally, the Council found that awareness regarding development cooperation could be further strengthened.

The Minister agreed with the Council that the long-term bilateral country engagement was important and an area, where Denmark could really set a mark. Development cooperation was generally not a policy area that was suitable for year-to-year prioritisations. There was a need for political prioritisation, but it had to leave room for long-term, stable interventions. The Minister further agreed that the youth agenda had international traction. The Danish youth delegates were a very strong signal and opened many doors for dialogue. It would be important to create a broader platform for young people and to engage the global south and the UN would be a key player in this.

The Minister underlined that the “regions of origin” was a core priority area - donors were able to assist more people when responding within areas affected by conflict and in neighbouring regions in support of refugees, internally displaced and affected local communities. There was no internationally agreed definition of “regions of origin” to build on in terms of comparison of donor efforts across countries, but Denmark would continue to promote the humanitarian-development nexus and encourage more support from also partners like UNFPA and others.

The Minister found private sector involvement crucial for sustainable development and the need for large infrastructure projects in many countries – Denmark should support this, not least from a geopolitical perspective. The Minister explained that a lot was already done in order to integrate human rights and gender quality etc. and to ensure the development effects of the initiatives. One could always improve - especially on the documentation of development impact of investments and communication hereof.

The Minister explained that the Danish contribution to the EU Development Fund and the EU budget was fixed, but there were many other ways to support the EU, including various trust funds. The Minister agreed that the EU should and could do more to promote development and Denmark was actively working to form EU policies on sustainable development, gender equality, migration etc. Trade was also an important element. Regarding communication, the Minister agreed that there was room for more collaboration to ensure that the Danish population knew about the Danish development engagement and the SDG’s.

The Chair concluded that the Council had expressed strong support for the five proposed areas of priority. The Council had pointed at many areas where improvements in the way Denmark provided development assistance had been made over the years. However, it was also evident that challenges remained and not least that new challenges and dilemmas had emerged. Specifically on the support to neighbourhood areas of conflict there was perspective in looking at international best practices and gather experiences - and Denmark was well placed to lead this work.

Agenda item no. 4.a: Strategy for Denmark’s Engagement with The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2018-2022

For discussion and recommendation to the Minister

(UN Mission New York)

Summary:

The focus of the organisation strategy for UNDP is well aligned with identified core comparative advantages of UNDP, as the UN agency will be transitioning to its new role within the UN development system as a result of agreed UN reforms. UNDP should focus on its comparative advantages, such as capacity building in governance structures, anti-corruption and peacebuilding activities, within its comprehensive mandate, and seek to enhance organisational effectiveness while addressing the general decline in regular resources.

The Council for Development Policy recommended the organisation strategy for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation.

The UN Mission in New York gave a short introduction to the four UN Programmes and Funds (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women), which represented the primary New York-based partners for Denmark in its development and humanitarian collaboration. The draft strategies for consideration by the Council were drafted to be aligned with the 2030 Agenda, the Danish Strategy for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Action and the UN reform agenda.

The Council noted that the four draft strategies all had good horizontal policy guidance on issues of crosscutting relevance across the four UN agencies and set clear policy priorities to be pursued, including in terms of efficiency. The Council asked to the budget outlined in the four strategies as reflected in the annex and the aim of the UN reform and its impact across the agencies. The Council inquired on the basis for the balance between the use of core funding and earmarked funding to the agencies. The Council further highlighted the importance of building capacity of local stakeholders through the activities of the Programmes and Funds.

The Mission explained that the aim of the UN reform agenda, among other things, was to make the system more efficient and coherent in its support to the 2030 Agenda and national development priorities. The Mission further explained the correlation between the figures presented in the budget, the draft Finance Act and the UN reform. As to the balance between core funding and earmarked funding, the Mission explained that it followed the policy pursued over a number of years and was aligned to the policy as defined in the Danish Strategy for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Action. The use of soft earmarking was highlighted.

The Council noted that a specific challenge existed in the case of UNDP and its general financial situation. The Council recommended that UNDP should focus its efforts on its comparative advantages where it had an important role to play. The Council highlighted long-term capacity building, anti-corruption and peace-building efforts among the comparative advantages. The Council noted with appreciation the focus on youth as outlined in the draft organisation strategy and enquired as to how this policy focus would be pursued across all four agencies. The Council further asked how Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) would be addressed in the collaboration with the agencies.

In its response, the Mission clarified how local capacity building was being supported through the engagement, and how Denmark utilised its network of Embassies to provide experiences from the field in the New York-based dialogue. In terms of UNDP's financial situation, the Mission highlighted that UNDP previously had been tasked to perform a number of functions by the UN-system. As a result, UNDP had developed a number of core-functions within the UN throughout the years. With the implementation of UN reforms, and the de-link of the Resident Coordinator-function from UNDP, the agency needed to define its new core function and integrator role at country level in the current transition period. The Mission agreed on the comparative advantages of UNDP as mentioned by the Council and as detailed in the draft organisation strategy. Finally, the Mission explained how the issues of crosscutting relevance regarding youth and SEA would be addressed and monitored through the work of the Executive Boards and through system-wide initiatives.

The Chairman concluded that the Council could support the organisation strategy and that the Council's questions had been adequately answered. The Chairman further noted that there had been useful discussions on the institutional set-up, the operational activities and scope of work being pursued as well as the financial situation. Therefore, the Council could recommend the organisation strategy for approval by the Minister.

Agenda item no. 4.b: Strategy for Denmark's Engagement with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) 2018-2022

For discussion and recommendation to the Minister

(UN Mission New York)

Summary:

The organisation strategy describes the sensitive and controversial mandate of UNFPA and outlines three main priorities for Denmark's cooperation with UNFPA. The strategy also explains the different types of contributions that Denmark provides to UNFPA and the reasoning behind the distribution of these contributions. Moreover, the strategy describes the challenges UNFPA is facing due to the resistance against its mandate, including the US' withdrawal of funds in April 2017.

The Council for Development Policy recommended the organisation strategy for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation.

The Council noted with appreciation the Danish political support for UNFPA's work on some of the most controversial areas of its mandate and expressed support for the current distribution of Denmark's contribution to UNFPA, including the soft-earmarking of part of the contribution. However, the Council expressed that it would have preferred to have seen a slightly more elaborated description of the development impact of UNFPA's work and stronger language on human rights, particularly in subsection 2 of the strategy.

The Council noted the relevance of UNFPA's interventions and took note of the significant Danish financial contribution to UNFPA. These observations were followed by questions concerning whether UNFPA was a "Scandinavian club". The Council further asked for the Mission's assessment of the challenges posed for UNFPA due to the resistance against its mandate. Finally, the Council asked about UNFPA's youth work as well as the Mission's impression of the new senior management of UNFPA.

The Mission expressed strong confidence in the development impact of UNFPA's work and mentioned a few concrete examples and made reference to UNFPA's annual report. The Mission agreed to have an extra look at the human rights content in the strategy and to strengthen it further where needed. Regarding Scandinavian influence, the Mission found that UNFPA was more a "Northern European Club" and made reference to the importance of the SheDecides movement that had been established as a reaction to the US' withdrawal of its funding to UNFPA. The Mission highlighted that progressive Latin American countries were also strong supporters of UNFPA's mandate.

The Mission described the difficulties faced by UNFPA, e.g. as regards reaching consensus on an outcome document at the Commission on Population and Development. The Mission, however, noted that not all parts of UNFPA's mandate were equally controversial and mentioned the example of UNFPA's work to prevent maternal deaths. The Mission further noted that different countries/groups of countries found different parts of UNFPA's mandate controversial.

The Mission also noted that next year was an important year for UNFPA's normative work with two milestones ahead, ICPD+25 and UNFPA's 50th anniversary. The Mission was involved in ongoing discussions on how best to deal with these events/meetings as there seemed to be little hope of reaching consensus on a progressive outcome document for ICPD+25 in the current political environment. The Mission added that it was important to make greater use of data in the normative work to show the broad and positive societal implications of UNFPA's work.

Regarding youth, the Mission underlined that youth was part of UNFPA's DNA and that Denmark had used its Presidency of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Board last year to put youth high on the agenda. Finally, the Mission found that it enjoyed a very good cooperation with UNFPA's management.

In conclusion, the Chairman found that the Council could support the organisation strategy as the Council's questions had been well answered. The Council would therefore recommend the organisation strategy for approval by the Minister.

Agenda item no. 4.c: Strategy for Denmark's Engagement with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) 2018-2022

For discussion and recommendation to the Minister
(UN Mission New York)

Summary:

The organisation strategy describes the unique dual development and humanitarian mandate of UNICEF and sets out three priorities for Denmark's engagement with the organisation. It describes UNICEF as a well-functioning organisation with key advantages and strengths such as the dual mandate and success with attracting private funding, but also makes clear where Denmark expects UNICEF to improve itself and work for its continued relevance.

The Council for Development Policy recommended the organisation strategy for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation.

The Council noted that the strategy did not mention child labour and technical education. The Council also commented on the lack of gender perspective in UNICEF's overall work. The Council found that sex education programmes and distribution of contraceptives for older children should be a part of UNICEF's work. The Council noted the importance of sustainability when it came to funding and programming. The Council highlighted that Danish innovation funds should not only be directed to technology, but that it should also be used to explore new ways of conduct such as monitoring programmes. The Council pointed out that UNICEF in

many ways was a success story with impressive records of reducing child mortality, child poverty and beyond. Yet, a long list of important issues remained to be solved, including harassment against girls and child marriage.

In response, the Mission agreed that UNICEF in many ways was extremely well functioning, but highlighted the importance of continuously reminding the organisation of the need to adapt to the changing environments to ensure that they deliver on their mandate and ensure their relevance. The Mission pointed out that one of UNICEF's strengths was to integrate the development and humanitarian responses. The challenge was often to work together with other UN Funds and Programmes. The Mission noted that UNICEF to a certain extent did take into account the gender aspect in their work, and the new Executive Director was very positive when it came to the gender agenda. However, the Mission would This included sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment. The Mission explained that UNICEF for the most part wanted to avoid using the terminology sexual and reproductive health and rights, but ensured that Denmark is pressuring them to do so. The Mission would explore the possibilities of further promoting the gender agenda within UNICEF.

The Chairman concluded that the Council could support the organisation strategy and that the Council's questions had been adequately answered. The Council could therefore recommend the organisation strategy for approval by the Minister.

Agenda item no. 4.d: Strategy for Denmark's Engagement with The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) 2018-2022

For discussion and recommendation to the Minister
(UN Mission New York)

Summary:

The organisation strategy describes the unique mandate of UN Women and outlines three main priorities for Denmark's cooperation with UN Women. The strategy clearly portrays the organisational transformation that the organisation has undergone since its establishment and describes where the organisation is now and what its ambition are, including as regards areas of work, its standing in the UN system and in terms of financial resources.

The Council for Development Policy recommended the organisation strategy for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation.

As UN Women was a relatively new organisation, the Council asked for the Mission's assessment of UN Women as an organisation anno 2018. The Council pointed out that the section on youth was formulated slightly different in the draft strategy for UN Women compared to the other three strategies. The Council enquired as to whether UN Women could be used more strategically to strengthen mainstreaming of gender perspectives in the UN's work, including in fragile situations and made a specific reference to UNSC 1325. Finally, the Council asked about the working relations between UN Women and UNFPA.

The Mission explained that UN Women had made great progress over the last four years, including by establishing a more focused approach to its programmatic work via its 12 Flagship Programme Initiatives. It was also mentioned that UN Women's Executive Director was part of the Secretary-General's Executive Committee, which was the main decision-making body. In terms of financial resources, the organisation still had not reached the target of an annual income of USD 500 million but it was getting closer to the target and in any case as highlighted by the Mission, this income target was politically defined. The Mission also mentioned that in 2017, UN Women had received 80% of the needed funding and had achieved 80% of the results – and that the Mission welcomed this approach to results delivery rather than spreading the funds too thinly.

The Mission explained that the Secretary-General had a great focus on gender equality and that the UNDS reform should be considered as an opportunity for UN Women. UN Women should take advantage of this opportunity, including by strategically considering its country presence and by becoming an important partner for the resident coordinator. The Mission underlined that UN Women should not become a large, operational organisation but rather focus on its analytic capacity and advisory function.

Regarding youth, the Mission assured the Council that the overall messaging in terms of Danish priorities in this regard should be articulated in a coherent manner across all four strategies. The Mission further explained that UN Women was already playing that role. As regards UNSC 1325, the Mission mentioned that UN Women was deeply engaged in the annual discussions on this resolution and functioned as a secretariat. Finally, it was the Mission's impression that the working relations between UNFPA and UN Women were overall good, despite the slight overlap between the work/mandate of the two organisations.

The Chairman concluded that the Council could support the organisation strategy and would recommend the strategy for approval by the Minister.

Agenda item no 5: AOB.

No points were raised.