

Minutes from meeting in the Council for Development Policy 3 December 2019

Present:

Members: Professor Emeritus Georg Sørensen, University of Aarhus (Chair)
International Director Gunvor Bjerglund Thomsen, The Danish Youth Council (Vice Chair)
Director Thomas Bustrup, Confederation of Danish Industries
Head of Projects Tine Bork, SMEdenmark
Director Jan Laustsen, The Danish Agriculture & Food Council
General Secretary Birgitte Qvist-Sørensen, DanChurchAid
General Secretary Rasmus Stuhr Jakobsen, CARE Denmark
Director Mads Bugge Madsen, The LO/FTF Council
Partner Marina Buch Kristensen, Nordic Consulting Group
Associate Professor Michael Wendelboe Hansen, Copenhagen Business School
Senior Researcher Lars Engberg-Pedersen, Danish Institute for International Studies

MFA: State Secretary for Development Policy Trine Rask Thygesen
Head of Department Mikael Hemniti Winther, Technical Quality Support
Head of Department Lotte Machon, Department for Africa, Policy and Development
Adviser Mette Brink Madsen, Department for Technical Quality Support

Agenda item 2: Ambassador Mette Knudsen, Deputy Head of Mission Henrik Larsen and Special Adviser Adam Sparre Spliid, Embassy Nairobi
Deputy Head of Department Signe Skovbakke Winding Albjerg, Chief Adviser Dorte Chortsen and head of Section Lasse Egendal Leipziger, Department Africa, Policy and Development

Agenda item 3: Head of Department Mette Thygesen, Head of Section Josephine Mark Jacobsen and Head of Section Louise Kronborg Sørensen, Department for

Agenda item 4: Deputy Head of Mission Anders Bitsch Karlsen, Programme Koordinator Niels Bossen and Special Adviser Lars Olaf Søvndahl Petersen, Embassy Bamako

Agenda item 5: Head of Department Lotte Machon and Head of Section Thomas Rudebeck Eilertzen, Department Africa, Policy and Development
Chief Adviser Henrik Silkjær Nielsen and Chief Adviser Dorthea Damkjær, Department for Multilateral Cooperation and Climate Change

Agenda item no. 1. Announcements

The State-Secretary for Development Policy briefly mentioned that the Finance Act for 2020 had been passed. Minor adjustments to the proposal had been made, among others had DKK 1 billion been allocated to guarantees for investments in green transition and climate action and DKK 150 million had been allocated to climate and a strengthened 'green' diplomacy. The State-Secretary also underlined that additional DKK 65 million had been allocated to administration and control with development funds.

Agenda item no. 2. Denmark – Kenya: Strategic Framework 2021-2025

For discussion and recommendation to the Minister

DKK 910.0 million

(Embassy Nairobi & Department for Africa, Development and Policy, APD)

Summary:

The Strategic Framework for Kenya, 2021-2025, is a new format combining the overall strategic approach to Denmark's entire engagements in Kenya together with the next 5-year phase of the Denmark-Kenya bilateral programme with an allocation of DKK 910 million, including DKK 60 million from the Climate Envelope. The Strategic Framework builds on the SDGs and draws on all relevant instruments, including political dialogue, security, development cooperation as well as trade and commercial relations. It contributes to three strategic objectives: 1) Green, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth, 2) Democratic Governance, Human Rights and Equitable Access to Services, and 3) Resilience, Peace and Stability. These strategic objectives set the direction for a more holistic approach of future Danish supported instruments and programmes in Kenya. The Strategic Framework and the next 5-year bilateral programme put particular emphasis on implementing the promises of the Kenyan Constitution to ensure human rights of the Kenyan people, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, devolved social services, decent jobs, gender equality, accountable governance free from corruption, as well as peaceful and sustainable use of natural resources. Denmark and Kenya continue to share a range of strategic interests in terms of addressing irregular migration and managing refugee flows, countering violent extremism and terrorism, cultivating commercial opportunities and a global commitment to sustainable development.

<p>The Council for Development Policy recommended the Strategic Framework for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation.</p>

The State-Secretary for Development Policy informed the Council that as part of the work on 'Doing Development Differently', the Strategic Framework for Kenya represented the first attempt to present a more holistic country strategy, which included all Danish engagements and instruments in a priority country as well as an earlier, strategic involvement of the Council for Development Policy. This took place in parallel with efforts to strengthen the Ministry's focus on implementation and learning through the establishment of a new department for evaluation, learning and quality and the introduction of annual stocktaking dialogues on progress in implementation.

The Embassy in Nairobi gave an overview of the political situation in Kenya. The political tensions, which followed the heated 2017 elections decreased after the ‘handshake’ between President Kenyatta and opposition leader Raila Odinga. A report from the so-called Building Bridges Initiative, which was launched after the handshake, was another positive step as it presented recommendations on how to bridge the divide between ethnic groups, address corruption and promote devolution. Devolution was considered the best vehicle for economic and political change in Kenya. This would also ensure that resources reached the most marginalised areas. Kenya had achieved much progress over the past decades, but many challenges remained, such as poverty, inequality, corruption, and youth unemployment. With the Strategic Framework, this entire spectrum of challenges, opportunities as well as the coherent Danish engagement with Kenya was presented within one consistent document.

The Council commended the document for being well crafted, providing a strong contextual overview and striking the right balance between being strategic and precise. In this respect, the change in format had succeeded in presenting a more strategic and coherent frame. The priorities outlined were considered relevant in particular regarding the focus on decent job creation, resilience, and not least devolution. The coherent outline of Danish supported instruments and programmes was considered useful, although the description of Kenyan priorities as well as of coordination with other development partners had been pushed somewhat in the background. The Council found that more details on potential synergies between multilateral and bilateral engagements would have been beneficial.

The Council noted that it was a very ambitious framework, involving many different actors, and the Council underlined that allocation of the necessary resources was required. The importance of building on previous lessons and experiences was emphasised and it was noted that these could have come out more clearly in the document. After many decades of Danish involvement in Kenya, an exit strategy could also be relevant, not least in light of the number of active donors and the fact that development cooperation only constituted a relatively small part of the Kenyan national budget.

The Council appreciated how the SDGs formed the basis of the Strategic Framework, while also underlining that it was important to be realistic about the ambition concerning how Danish assistance would support the achievement of the SDGs. A clearer link to the SDGs in the overall monitoring framework was proposed. The overall monitoring framework was generally appreciated, although the precise connection between the general indicators and the results of the bilateral engagements could be difficult to illustrate.

The Council recommended an enhanced focus on education and training, on the need for improving the business climate, on corruption across strategic objectives and within individual sectors. The Council also called for information regarding possible cooperation with Kenya on the global arena, e.g. on the agenda of climate change. It was further noted that Danish interests, especially in a regional context, could also have come out more strongly. Finally, the Council asked about the process of creating the Strategic Framework.

The Embassy informed the Council that the document had been prepared in a thorough and highly inclusive process between the Embassy and the relevant departments of the Ministry anchored in a task force with broad participation across the Ministry. The suggestions regarding additional areas, which could have been described more in depth in the document, not least experiences and lessons learned, were noted. However, it was also a question about the length of the document, which set a natural limit for the detail level. It was also mentioned that both length and detail level had been considered as the document should also be readable for Members of Parliament and the general public. Lessons learned had, however, very clearly advised the choices of priorities of the strategy.

Regarding Denmark's strategic interests, it was clear that Kenya played a crucial role in regional stability and security, both as a host of refugees and as a driver for regional economic growth. Even if bilateral trade was currently relatively low, Danish commercial engagements were increasing and more companies established themselves in Kenya. The framework was indeed ambitious, but also equipped with concrete objectives, which would guide all future Danish engagements.

Regarding additional focus areas, it was important also to consider what other development partners were doing. A number of development partners, e.g. Germany, were active in technical and vocational education and training and Denmark could therefore focus on other aspects of development. The issue of corruption was a priority across all bilateral engagements and would be addressed by support to strengthening systems at County level and by reinforcing social accountability by enabling citizens to perform oversight functions.

The Embassy found it important to find shared agendas between Denmark and Kenya on the global arena. Issues pertaining to climate change as well as sexual and reproductive health and rights were examples of such shared agendas. Furthermore, it was important to identify the agendas in Kenya, which could be most efficiently pursued through the EU, such as matters around the business climate for instance, where EU engagement had proven more efficient than bilateral engagements. Finally, it was underlined that the question whether Denmark should maintain its development cooperation with Kenya was a political decision. However, there was no doubt that Denmark made a difference in Kenya, not least in terms of addressing the needs of some of the 18 million Kenyans living in extreme poverty and by bringing democracy and services closer to the people living under extremely difficult situations in remote and marginalised areas of the country.

Summing up, the Chair noted that the Council could fully support the new format for strategic framework. While recognising that the proposed format and its length sat some limitations regarding the details of the framework, issues related to lessons learned, relations to other actors, exit strategy, monitoring and relations to the SDGs could have been addressed more clearly. The Council could however fully support the proposed strategic framework for Kenya and could therefore recommend it for the Minister for final approval.

Agenda item no. 3. Information regarding CISU programme grants (to the Danish NCD Alliance, the Danish Outdoor Council, Forests of the World, Ghana Friends, Organic Denmark, SOS Children's Villages Denmark, and Sustainable Energy)

For information

(Department for Humanitarian Action, Migration and Civil Society, HMC)

In its introductory remarks, the HMC department briefly outlined the overall support to civil society development, including through Strategic Partnerships, pooled funds and networks. Through Civil Society in Development (CISU), small and medium-sized NGOs had access to a variety of different support facilities and the seven programme grants submitted to the Council for information all related to the programme support modality.

The Council appreciated being briefed on the full picture of Danish support to civil society and found that the existence of a programme support facility under CISU made up an important component of Danish development assistance. Comments from the Council touched upon the broad nature of the activities, some of which cut across many different countries. The Council appreciated the popular engagement of the smaller NGOs and asked about their communication activities in Denmark. The Council further sought clarification about the competition between applicants and the composition of CISU's grant committee. In addition, the Council requested information about the development in the overall support to civil society. Finally, the Council raised the issue of the approval procedure within the MFA, which some members found too excessive given the already extensive quality assurance carried out by CISU.

HMC explained that the grantees had the opportunity to spend up to two percent of the grant on information activities in Denmark with the purpose of engaging Danish citizens in development cooperation. HMC further described how the competition between applicants meant that the approved grants could be up to 20 percent higher or lower than originally applied for. The members of CISU's grant committee were also listed. HMC took note of the Council's comments regarding the approval procedure and highlighted the lean assessment process in the MFA. Finally, HMC informed the Council that the financial support to civil society development would increase slightly in 2020.

The Chairman concluded that the Council had been thoroughly briefed on the Danish support to civil society. Furthermore, the Chair noted that the incoming Council could possibly call for a separate briefing on popular engagement.

Agenda item no. 4. Support to resilience-building in fragile regions of Northern and Central Mali

For discussion and recommendation to the Minister

DKK 50.0 million

(Embassy Bamako)

Summary:

Support to resilience-building in fragile regions of Northern and Central Mali through the World Food Programme (WFP) will encompass all 4 of WFP's resilience-building oriented strategic outcomes outlined in its Country Strategic Plan 2020-2024: 1) School feeding, 2) prevention of malnutrition, 3) food assistance for assets and smallholder agriculture market support, and 4) capacity strengthening of national entities. These complementary action areas promote resilience from different angles, at community, household and individual levels. The engagement will be integrated into the thematic programme for peaceful coexistence under Denmark's country programme for Mali 2017-2022 with the objective of supporting resilience in a fragile and climate change affected context and complementary to other programme activities on infrastructure, mediation, women's empowerment and support to civil society. Strengthening resilience in Central and Northern Mali will over time not only contribute to reducing Mali's protracted and chronic need for humanitarian assistance, but also to the broader on-going peace and reconciliation efforts.

The Council for Development Policy recommended the suggested support for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation.

The Embassy in Bamako introduced the context of the project, emphasising the complex and degrading security situation in Mali and the weak presence of the state structures in Central and Northern Mali. The project aimed at easing the root causes of the conflict by strengthening resilience towards climate changes and demographic pressure on natural resources – a traditional vector of conflict in the Sahel. At the same time, the project would respond with nutritional support activities in the absence of the state and work on getting the state actors back in play. WFP was identified as the ideal partner with a good track record in Mali. The project would be integrated into the existing Danish country programme for Mali, 2017-2022, and its thematic programme on peaceful coexistence. Finally, the Embassy suggested that the project was a suitable addition to Denmark's ongoing and coherent efforts for Mali across development, humanitarian and military activities.

The Council was generally supportive of the project and its objective, as well as of the choice of WFP as a strong and suitable partner. The Council commended the project's focus on resilience in addition to ongoing support to peacebuilding activities.

The Council commended the project's focus on education, however, the issue of lack of teachers as a considerable risk for the quality of education was raised. In this regard, it was underlined that bringing in national and local authorities was required in order to secure that a sufficient number of teachers was available as they were responsible for salaries etc. The Council recommended focusing not only on basic education but also on vocational training. The Council further recommended an enhanced focus on youth inclusion, which was not described clearly in the project document.

The Council found it very positive if food provision could have a stabilising effect in the region. The Council recommended awareness regarding impact on local food production and underlined the importance of sourcing locally to the greatest extent possible in order to support local markets. The Council referred to the fact Denmark did not support private sector engagements in the area and asked whether it would be possible to move in that direction as a means to ensure development in a longer-term perspective.

The Council questioned the project's link to climate action and its relevance regarding climate change. Further, questions were asked to the linkages to the overall country programme and the thematic programme indicator on reduced fear of conflict. In that regard, the Council questioned whether it would be realistic to achieve reduced fear through the proposed interventions.

The Embassy agreed that it was important to continue to monitor risks in the education sector and the work with national authorities. The climate change aspects of the project were mainly related to the strategic outcome on food assistance for assets and smallholder agriculture market support, in which activities would include small-scale infrastructure, anti-erosion mechanisms, irrigation systems and the introduction of improved and more resistant types of seed. The Embassy underlined the importance of the integrated community approach of the project in which improved access to education, food and nutrition security and income-generation would shore up communities' ability to withstand natural resource pressures exploited by armed, extremist groups in order to recruit members or improve their standing.

Summing up, the Chair found that the Council fully supported the project. While having asked questions in relation to climate action, short-term vs. longer-term engagements and linkages to the country programme, the Council found that WFP was the right partner and the project could be recommended to the Minister for final approval.

Agenda item no. 5. Thematic discussion: The Sustainable Development Goals

For discussion

(Department for Africa, Policy and Development, APD)

The Department for Africa, Policy and Development (APD) welcomed the opportunity to involve the Council in an overall discussion on how to integrate the SDGs in Denmark's development policy. The discussion was an opportunity to discuss inherent conflicts between individual goals, notably between the goals focusing on the need to promote economic growth in order to reduce poverty and eradicate hunger, on the one hand and, on the other hand, the goals focusing on improving environmental conditions and climate action. In this discussion it was important not only to focus on the SDGs where significant progress had been made but also on areas where work on fulfilling the SDGs had not been sufficiently successful. Regarding climate action, it was necessary to recognise that it was no longer business as usual since expectations were that the global community as a whole needed to be much more ambitious on climate than earlier. At the same time, it would not be sufficient to consider the SDGs as individual boxes. Rather, the ques-

tion was how to deal with for instance inequality and economic growth all the while being ambitious on climate action. Denmark's overall focus on five specific SDGs – SDG 5, 7, 13, 16 and 17 - was presented as well as the approach whereby the specific SDGs in focus vary with different country contexts, as described in “The World 2030”. It was recognised that Denmark could not cover all SDGs in its development engagements.

The Council commended the intervention and found that the discussion could be useful as part of the work with the next strategy for development cooperation. While recognising that the SDGs represented a good opportunity to articulate, visualise and communicate development efforts, some called for further information regarding the MFA's actual use of the SDGs and how they informed Danish interventions.

Recognising that the SDGs represented a good framework for future work and were highly useful for mobilising large segments of the population – at political, civic and business levels - it was necessary to communicate clearly about the challenges related to working with the SDGs, their sub-targets and indicators as well as the challenges in relation to data and statistics.

In addition, it was necessary to integrate the position and priorities of recipient countries into the discussion on the SDGs. In this regard, one challenge was that citizens in recipient countries had limited information about the SDGs and why they were important. Therefore, efficient communication about the SDGs would be key. Such information efforts could only be implemented by involving the local partners. Another challenge was the fact that climate action was probably not a priority in many developing countries.

While inequality, broadly, was an issue, gender inequality was also a specific concern, not least due to the fact that not many of the sub-targets referred to gender (only 54 of the sub-targets were gender specific). Attention was also drawn to the fact overpopulation needed to be considered, albeit acknowledging that this was not an easy discussion to have.

While it seemed that Denmark had been successful in operationalising SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) as a means to achieving other goals, there was still some way to go in relation to SDG 16 (Peace Justice and Strong Institutions). In that regard, it was recommended including SDG 16 and its sub-targets in all development interventions. Some members further recommended including SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) in more interventions, rather than limiting the focus on SDG 8 to engagements in growth and transition economies.

Regarding climate, it was recommended to look at previous Danish experiences with mainstreaming and cross-cutting issues, e.g. on environmental issues. It was further recommended to revisit previous work on policy-coherence in order to ensure synergies between different instruments and interventions in development cooperation and foreign policy engagements alike.

While a recent report on climate change stated that we have reached the final call if climate change was to be reversed, the Council drew attention to the risk that an increased focus on climate change would hijack the discussion on sustainable development and underlined the importance of ensuring continued focus on other issues related to sustainability. There was a risk that focus

would be on emerging economies because the biggest climate gains could be harvested there. In order to fulfil the ambitions on poverty reduction and inequality, there was a need to consider how the ambitions on climate action could be achieved. New and innovative instruments were required. Among the inherent dilemmas of the SDGs was that there seemed to be a trade-off between, on the one hand, promoting economic growth and poverty reduction and, on the other hand, reducing CO2 emissions.

It was acknowledged that many of the climate challenges were caused by unsustainable means of production and consumption in the Western world. Therefore, the Council discussed the establishment of some sort of ‘realisation project’, in which western consumers were faced with these problems and the fact that the sustainable development goals were pertaining to everyone – not just developing countries.

Although it was not realistic that Denmark would reach the ambitious 2030-objectives, Denmark could play an important role by promoting its innovative, inclusive, cooperative and partnership-based approach focusing on democracy and gender equality. It was further underlined that there was a need for increased willingness to take risks among investors and DFIs.

Looking ahead, the Council recommended considering whether Denmark could play a role in the setting of future development agendas beyond the SDGs. Finally, it was recognised that both climate and ‘leaving no one behind’ would be key objectives in the years to come.

APD found the discussion very useful, informing future work on the SDGs and potentially a new strategy for development cooperation. The discussion had shown that the more the SDGs were discussed, the more dilemmas appeared. Consequently, a future narrative on the SDGs should include both core development policy and a more broad-based approach. At the same time the establishment of local partnerships would be important.

Agenda item no. 6. AOB.

As this was the last Council meeting for a number of Council member, some of the members used the opportunity to thank both the Council members and the MFA for many interesting and educational discussions as well as visits in partner countries. On behalf of the MFA and the Minister for Development Cooperation, the State Secretary thanked the Council members for their commitment and engagement in the discussions.