

Minutes from meeting in the Council for Development Policy
on 1 June 2023

- Members: Professor Anne Mette Kjær, University of Aarhus (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 Project Officer of DAPP Lucas Højbjerg, The Danish Chamber of Commerce
Secretary General Charlotte Slente, Danish Refugee Council (DFC)
Director Charlotte Flindt Pedersen, Danish Foreign Policy Society
Chief Adviser Mattias Söderberg, DanChurchAid
Deputy CEO and International Director Jarl Krausing, CONCITO (Deputy Chair), had shared written comments but did not take part in the meeting
- MFA: Under-Secretary for Development Policy Stephan Schönemann
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
Head of Section Josephine Mittag, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, ELK
- Agenda item 2: Head of Department Elsebeth Søndergaard, Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, GDK
Head of Section Lone B. Jensen, Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, GDK
Head of Department Asser Berling, Danish Ministry of Climate, Energy and Utilities
Head of Section Anna Katrine Lynenskjold, Danish Ministry of Climate, Energy and Utilities
Head of Department Ole Emmik Sørensen, the Danish Energy Agency
Head of Section Casper Due Petersen, the Danish Energy Agency
Department Director Frej Dichmann, the Danish Meteorological Institute
Head of Section Christian Johansen, The Danish Meteorological Institute
Chief Adviser Eva Brandt Broegaard, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, ELK (Online)
- Agenda item 3: Head of Department Karin Poulsen, Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, GDK
Team Leader Tobias von Platen-Hallermund, Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, GDK

- Agenda item 4: Head of Department Tove Degnbol, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, ELK
 Chief Adviser Hanne Carus, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, ELK
 Chief Adviser Cecilia Theresa Trischler Gregersen, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, ELK
- Agenda item 5: Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy Dan Jørgensen
 State Secretary for Development Policy Lotte Machon
 Deputy Head of Department Casper Stenger Jensen, Department for Africa, Policy and Development, APD
- Agenda item 6: Ambassador Kristian Kirkegaard Edinger, Embassy in Ouagadougou (Online)
 Deputy Head of Mission Albert Bruun Birnbaum, Embassy in Ouagadougou (Online)
 Team Leader Uma Mia Lund, Embassy in Ouagadougou (Online)
 Special Adviser Kristoffer Uldahl, Embassy in Ouagadougou
 Head of Section Mathias Christensen, Department for Africa, Policy and Development, APD
 Chief Adviser Anne-Catherine Legendre, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, ELK (Online)
- Agenda item 7: 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 Adviser Eva Brandt Broegaard, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, ELK
- Agenda item 8: Head of Department Marianne Kress, Department for Migration, Stabilisation and Fragility, MNS
 Deputy Head of Department Karen Grønlund Rogne, Department for Migration, Stabilisation and Fragility, MNS
 Chief Adviser Nille Gry Olesen, Department for Migration, Stabilisation and Fragility, MNS
 Chief Adviser Troels Gauslå Engell, Department for Migration, Stabilisation and Fragility, MNS
 Head of Section Helene Krogh, Danish Ministry of Defence
 Chief Adviser Eva Brandt Broegaard, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, ELK

Agenda Item No. 1: Announcements

The Under-Secretary for Development Policy informed the Council that the new Danish Foreign and Security Policy, launched on 16 May 2023, would inform the coming Africa Plan and the Strategy for Development Cooperation. Africa was a key element of the Foreign and Security Policy, which also reflected the return of geopolitics in bilateral and multilateral relations after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. He also emphasised that the Council would be heard as they would get the opportunity to provide comments for the coming plan and strategy.

The Council asked if the Africa Plan would focus on both development policy and foreign and security policy?

The Under-Secretary explained that the Africa Plan would cover all aspects of the cooperation in Africa. It would provide the framework for concerted planning and action of new and current engagements. The Africa Plan would unfold the thematic focus on Africa in the new Foreign and Security Policy and inform the drafting of the coming Strategy for Development Cooperation.

The Under-Secretary briefed the Council about the recent visit to Niger by HRH the Crown Prince of Denmark and the Danish Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy. The security situation in the region had deteriorated further, and Denmark was deeply worried about the situation in Burkina Faso. Meanwhile, the prospect of a strengthened bilateral cooperation with Niger could, potentially, contribute to stability in the region. He informed the Council that the Danish and Nigerien government found it necessary to invest more in education. Therefore, a new education programme (DKK 120 million) had been announced during the visit. Also the Danish development programme in Niger (DKK 800 million), which the Council had discussed in its meeting on 30 June 2022¹, was launched during the visit.

Questions were raised regarding the new education programme in Niger, and how it would be financed (e.g. a reallocation of funds from Mali)? The Council also wanted to know if the new education programme had been formally approved or if it was a pledge, which would be followed by the drafting of a programme document, and if the draft would be presented to the Council? Members of the Council further inquired if the support to education would focus broader on vocational training, especially considering the growing number of young Africans that entered a labour market with too few jobs. Members of the Council also asked if education could be used to build human capital? For instance, it had been mutually beneficial in other countries where some of the people that received educational support came to play a positive political role in the country. Members of the Council also observed the fact that there was no country office in Niger, although there had been previously, and suggested that this could be considered.

Concerning the education programme in Niger, the Under-Secretary informed that the education programme would be financed by a reserve. It was a political decision and drafting the programme document would be the next step. Therefore, it was too early to say whether the education support would focus on e.g. vocational training. He assured the Council that the draft programme would be presented for their discussion and recommendation to the Minister. The Under-Secretary also saw educational support as an opportunity to invest in human capital. For

¹ [Meeting in the Council for Development Policy on 30 June 2022 \(um.dk\)](#)

instance, the courses offered by Danida Fellowship Centre had fostered relationships with attendees that went on to play a positive political role.

The Chair of the Council thanked the Under-Secretary for the information.

With reference to the Rules of Procedure for the Council for Development Policy regarding conflict of interests, Lone Illum Christiansen flagged a possible conflict of interest in relation to item 7 concerning an evaluation that had been finalised. As the discussion of the Evaluation Programme 2023-2024 was of a general nature with no impact on the funding for the evaluations, the Council assessed that there was no conflict of interest in this case.

Agenda Item No. 2: Framework Programme on the Strategic Sector Cooperation with the Ministry for Climate, Energy and Utilities 2023-2027

For discussion and recommendation to the Minister

DKK 118.46 million

Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, GDK

Summary:

The Framework Programme with the Ministry of Climate, Energy, and Utilities (MCEU) adheres to the concept of the Strategic Sector Cooperation 2.0., which has the purpose of: (i) building capacity to develop, implement, and enforce conducive framework conditions for the green transition, and based on the capacity development efforts, (ii) increasing climate ambitions through bilateral relations and green diplomacy, and (iii) enhancing engagement of the Danish private sector in identifying sustainable and green development solutions. The MCEU, the Danish Energy Agency (DEA) and the Danish Meteorological Institute (DMI) will implement a portfolio of 10 projects in Brazil, China, Colombia, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Turkey and in three countries that have not yet been identified. Each project will have an annual budget of approximately DKK 3.3 million for capacity building activities.

The Council for Development Policy recommended the Framework Programme on Strategic Sector Cooperation with the Ministry of Climate, Energy and Utilities 2023-2027 for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy. However, the recommendation was provided on the condition that changes would be made to the result framework so this reflects the broader development purpose of the programme in the form of indicators on poverty-orientation and specific development results. The Council wanted to see the programme again within the coming 6 months.

The Council found that the programme was relevant as an intervention to address the global climate challenge – both in terms of climate mitigation and adaptation. However, as the programme was to be financed by the budget for development cooperation (and not additional funds for climate change mitigation), it was considered crucial that it also addressed development challenges, including poverty reduction and human rights. While the Council acknowledged the efforts by the Danish Ministry of Climate, Energy, and Utilities (MCEU) and its agencies to describe development purposes, poverty, and human rights, it was considered a problem that this was not reflected in the results framework and in the Theory of Change.

The Council acknowledged the improved description in the programme document of the relationship between the three outcomes (capacity development, diplomatic relations, and support to Danish companies) as compared to the text in previous framework programmes for Strategic Sector Cooperation (SSC) discussed in the meeting of the Council held in September

2022². It was appreciated that capacity development was now clearly presented as the main purpose, but Members of the Council stressed that this was not reflected in the results framework. While some Members were concerned about the risk that development funds might be used for activities supporting Danish companies, other Members found it positive that commercial actors were clearly mentioned as key partners in the programme.

The Council emphasised the importance of analysing socio-economic consequences of e.g. the green transition in the energy sector and to incorporate it into implementation of all three outcomes at project level. In this regard, it was asked if the Danish Energy Agency (DEA) possessed the necessary competences in this field and if SSC advisers at country level knew enough about development challenges. Members of the Council recommended that more staff with socio-economic competences should be recruited to DEA, potentially to be paired with the strategic advisors at sector level. This would also provide essential knowledge of local capacities and local context.

Members of the Council noted that poverty-related outputs were not reflected in the Theory of Change and wanted to know how the programme was supporting national authorities' efforts to address poverty and asked for a clarification on how the projects' partner institutions were involved in prioritising and planning and how national policies and strategies were taken into account. Furthermore, Members of the Council requested information on the effect of the programme on the labour market and asked about possible efforts by the programme to address the need for retraining of e.g. coal miners to electricians. Members of the Council asked if the Cradle-to-Cradle approach applied by the Danish Energy Agency (DEA) addressed only cost of electricity generation or also job creation.

The Council found it interesting that the Danish Meteorological Institute (DMI) would be a partner in the programme with a view to strengthening weather forecast capacities, analysis of local climate changes, and early warning systems. These were critical in planning for poor countries' adaptation to climate change. Members of the Council remarked that DMI activities were not reflected in the outcomes, and questions were asked about the synergy between the activities undertaken by DEA and DMI. Members of the Council also advised DMI to consider recommendations from the recent Evaluation of Danish Support for Climate Change Adaptation in Developing Countries. Members of the Council looked forward to following the development of DMI's activities.

Concerning the criteria for selecting countries, Members of the Council questioned if the development purpose and poverty orientation were sufficiently reflected in the countries included in the programme. It was pointed out that the cooperation with energy authorities in Turkey and China, especially on district heating, would need further explanation. In relation to China, also security concerns and concerns related to the absence of a level playing field for international companies were mentioned. While acknowledging that China was an important partner from an emissions point of view, Members of the Council questioned if cooperation with the country could be poverty-oriented. It was also noted that in a foreseeable future, China would no longer be eligible for Official Development Assistance (ODA) as it would graduate from the list of

² The discussion of the three Framework Programmes for Strategic Sector Cooperation for Food and Agriculture, Environment, and Urban Water Resilience, respectively, can be found on the MFA's website: [Meeting in the Council for Development Policy on 22 September 2022 \(um.dk\)](#)

developing countries by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC).

The Head of the Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate (GDK) thanked the Council for the comments and stated that the impact of DEA's activities on poverty reduction was mainly indirect as its main purpose of reducing global greenhouse gas emissions and reducing the effects of climate change would benefit the poorest people living in the countries most exposed climate change (i.e. extreme weather, droughts, and flooding). The DMI engagement had a more direct impact on poverty and vulnerability. Concerning synergy at country level between DEA and DMI activities, she acknowledged that this – at least initially – would be difficult to document.

The Head of Department explained that the new version of SSC – framework programmes with three outcomes – was the result of the SSC evaluation published in 2020.

On the selection of countries, she clarified that the main criterion was a match between, on the one hand, demand and needs of the countries and, on the other hand, Danish political priorities and key competences. The relevance of a future cooperation was evaluated against national development policies, policies of the energy sector, and positions at the COPs (i.e. Conferences of the Parties to the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs would make a long list of candidate countries based on Danish development policy priorities, priorities of the Trade Council (e.g. interest of Danish companies), and political considerations. Based on the long list, MCEU would evaluate climate indicators (e.g. prospects for contributing to global CO₂ reduction and other indicators).

When addressing the question about the role of national partners, the Head of Department described how specific needs and expressed interest of national partners would be identified in the one-year inception phase. During implementation, a Steering Committee was co-chaired by the Danish Ambassador and often a Minister or Vice-Minister from the partner country, with the third party being a representative from DEA senior management. In the case of district heating interventions as an energy efficiency measure, this was the result of demands and needs from partners in Turkey and China. District heating was also a strong Danish competence and contributed substantially to reducing CO₂ emissions. As the cooperation developed, opportunities for targeting e.g. social housing in Turkey had appeared.

The Head of Department underlined that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had staff with competences in the broader field of development as well as specialists on climate change. There was a close cooperation with key international organisations such as the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and the International Energy Agency (IEA) on the preparation of socio-economic analyses in partner countries. While embassies in growth countries would usually not have staff with socio-economic competences, they would have the competence to undertake political-economy analyses.

The Head of Department from DEA followed up by explaining that mutual trust was the key factor in building a cooperation with partners in the selected countries. It was critical for DEA to be allowed access to technical data and information required for analysis and advice - also on e.g. progressive price structure for energy consumption. Some of these analyses were provided by IRENA. DEA was drawing on experience from the larger government-to-government

programmes (Danish Energy Partnership Programme - DEPP) and from IRENA and IEA when incorporating socio-economic consequences (e.g. job creation) in the modelling of scenarios for developing the energy sector. The Head of Department from DEA informed that the vast majority of the agency's staff were technical specialists (an estimated 90 percent), while the agency also had some staff with experience from just transition.

Finally, he explained that mitigating measures to security issues related to e.g. transfer of technology were an integrated part of DEA's internal compliance system and were also considered by the Trade Council at relevant embassies.

The Head of Department from MCEU added that the point of departure for the cooperation was always taken in partner countries' national plans. With regard to supporting access to Danish green solutions and technology in the markets in partner countries, the strategy was to improve the framework conditions in the energy sector. For instance, targeting regulations of public tenders of renewable energy could contribute to a level playing field for national and foreign companies and result in better prices for the partner country. He acknowledged, though, that international companies would often consider national rules a market barrier and that there might be a dilemma between best price and national job creation.

Finally, the Department Director from DMI informed the Council that especially the climate atlas and observation networks offered by DMI were in demand among partner countries as these were supporting adaptation efforts by providing access for farmers to information about weather conditions.

The Chair of the Council for Development Policy concluded that the Council recommended the Framework Programme for the Strategic Sector Cooperation with the Ministry of Climate, Energy and Utilities 2023-2027 for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy. However, the recommendation was given on the condition that changes would be made to the result framework so this reflects the broader development purpose of the programme in the form of indicators on poverty-orientation and specific development results. The Council wanted to see the programme again within the coming 6 months.

Agenda Item No. 3: UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility (LoCAL) 2022-2026

For discussion and recommendation to the Minister

DKK 100 million

Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, GDK

Summary:

The programme document presents a 4-year contribution of DKK 100 million to the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility (LoCAL). LoCAL is a country-owned initiative aimed to promote green and climate-resilient communities and local economies by establishing a standard, internationally recognised country-based mechanism. LoCAL combines performance-based climate resilience grants with technical and capacity-building support of local authorities and communities. The Danish support will contribute to supporting countries in establishing their LoCAL mechanisms with a focus on key climate sensitive sectors such as agriculture and water, integrated with nature-based solutions. It will further focus on partnership countries like Somalia and Uganda, while offering support to a larger group of African countries.

The Council for Development Policy recommended the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility (LoCAL) 2022-2026 for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy.

The Council found the programme document well written and recognised the relevance and importance of supporting local governments in selected African countries to increase their capacity to manage climate finance and to strengthen climate resilience of communities. The Council asked how the amount of the grant had been determined, and whether increasing the support had been considered. The Council acknowledged the need to increase support to climate change adaptation, especially to the local level, and to support the process of decentralisation in African countries. However, the Council also underlined the importance of understanding whether countries chosen for support were in fact in a position to benefit from them, as a central condition for success would be that local governments had the capacity and autonomy to implement them. The process of decentralisation in many countries was known to have stagnated and is now known to be more characterised by re-centralisation. Questions were also raised about the challenges of limited human resources and capacity of local governments, and whether the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) itself had sufficient capacity to assess relationships between local and central governments, as this would be a strong prerequisite for the success of the programme. In line with this, Members of the Council asked about the criteria for selecting the partnership countries.

Members of the Council underlined that support to decentralisation had previously been part of bilateral programmes and asked why this support was given through a multilateral organisation such as UNCDF? What was the added value of this approach compared to including it in bilateral development programmes? The need to link this support to Denmark's bilateral activities was strongly emphasised.

Furthermore, Members of the Council asked how impacts from the programme would be sustained. Members of the Council also asked whether the strong focus on climate aspects of the programme activities and the use of performance-based grants would constitute a risk to the programme, both in terms of not prioritising infrastructure projects most needed by the communities and in terms of the programme not being able to reach the most vulnerable communities. Questions were raised concerning the results of the recent global evaluation of LoCAL. Finally, Members of the Council underlined the need to share lessons learned from this programme among Danish and other relevant actors.

The Head of the Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate (GDK) thanked the Council for questions and comments and explained that the support to UNCDF LoCAL was a Danish flagship programme for locally-led adaptation. It was an approach to reach the poorest and most vulnerable communities. The use of multilateral support was to ensure a broad and flexible regional support to Africa with an earmarked contribution to Danish priority countries in the Horn of Africa and with a strong alignment to Danish bilateral engagements focusing on climate change adaptation. In terms of country selection, the programme's use of a phased approach aimed to ensure that it was tested, as part of the design phase, whether conditions for support were met by two to four local governments in the respective countries. The Chief Adviser from GDK added that country selection was based on demand from local authorities.

Concerning the amount of the grant, the Chief Adviser from GDK explained that the programme was a pilot and LoCAL may not be able to absorb a larger grant at the moment. There was a high demand, especially in Africa, and the Danish support could be increased later. He further explained that sustainability was accommodated by preparing local entities to access funds from the Green Climate Fund. This was, however, considered a risky strategy since this access to funds had not yet materialised in any of the cases. Therefore, other potential funding sources should also be considered. Lastly, it was mentioned that the recent global evaluation of LoCAL had generally been very positive, not least concerning the performance-based approach which had been found to provide a strong incentive for local governments to deliver results.

The Chair of the Council concluded that the Council recommended the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility (LoCAL) 2022-2026 for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy.

Agenda Item No. 4: Danish Organisation Strategy for the CGIAR Partnership 2023-2025

For discussion and recommendation to the Minister

DKK 90 million

Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, ELK

Summary:

The Danish Organisation Strategy for the CGIAR Partnership 2023-2025 supports the global CGIAR partnership's research in food and agriculture, nutrition and health, fisheries, water, land, and natural ecosystems, targeting the Global South. Enhancing research through the CGIAR partnership is of considerable importance for generating new knowledge and seeking innovative solutions for sustainable food systems transformation. Danish funding will prioritise a number of impact areas from the CGIAR 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy. The MFA will participate in the decision-making process guiding One CGIAR reforms and selection of research priorities in close collaboration with other donors through the System Council. The 2023-2025 multi-year contribution entitles Denmark to a voting seat on the Council.

The Council for Development Policy recommended the Danish Organisation Strategy for the CGIAR Partnership 2023-2025 for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy.

The Council welcomed CGIAR's adjusted mission with a wider focus on sustainable food systems, including innovative solutions for climate change adaptation. The funding level that gave Denmark a seat on the System Council was positively noted. The Council requested further information on the goals of Denmark's participation in the System Council, what Denmark's voice would be focused on (e.g. the localisation agenda), and how this would be coordinated.

Concerning the One CGIAR reform process, the Council asked for elaboration of the challenges related to leadership and the process of bringing together many individual centres.

Members of the Council appreciated the focus on small-scale farming and engaging with the private sector, and enquired about how much of the estimated return on investments in research was directed at developing countries. Questions were raised regarding how Denmark could ensure linkages and exchange of experience with other actors working in global food systems processes such as the UN Food Systems Summit, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), and the Danish support to the World Bank "Food Systems 2030" initiative.

The Council suggested that it could be beneficial to also consider how CGIAR's work could be disseminated among Danish stakeholders beyond the research community. Furthermore, it was suggested that the MFA could consider arranging a yearly event that would bring together stakeholders in Denmark across the growing portfolio of funding that related to sustainable food systems.

The Head of the Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality (ELK) responded and noted that since 2020, the funding to CGIAR had come from a part of the Finance Act that was tagged to environment and resilience to climate change and not from the research funds. She further noted that the CGIAR reform process had taken place over a 10-year period, and that it had finally culminated with an agreement that supported the integration across CGIAR centres towards achieving the CGIAR 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy.

The Chief Adviser from ELK explained that CGIAR's 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy took a holistic approach to sustainable food systems in a situation of changing climate and there was considerable convergence with Denmark's development priorities. It was explained that Denmark's voice in the System Council was still small in comparison to other donors. Therefore, it was considered that Denmark's voice would be enhanced through coordination in the European Initiative for Agricultural Research for Development (EIARD) which joined European donors. Denmark and EIARD's common positions spanned across gender, climate change, and localisation agendas. The Chief Adviser went on to explain that the World Bank acted as trustee of the CGIAR Trust and Chair of the System Council and, therefore, there was close collaboration on other relevant global processes. Furthermore, she noted that the newly appointed Chair of the System Board had received praise in her efforts to address the fragmentation that occurred during the reform process, including efforts to reengage the centres that were not currently signatories to the integration agreement.

Finally, the Chief Adviser from ELK explained that CGIAR's mandate was focused on the Global South. Therefore, the multiplier effect of investments in CGIAR were entirely directed towards developing countries. Furthermore, while CGIAR must engage with national agencies regarding cutting-edge knowledge and solutions for small holders, there should be caution in not pushing CGIAR towards implementation. The interest in exploring further synergies between CGIAR's work and Danish stakeholders was acknowledged and it could be explored through for example the Strategic Sector Cooperation. However, it should also be acknowledged that the funding was 100 percent Official Development Assistance (ODA).

The Chair of the Council concluded that the Council recommended the Danish Organisation Strategy for the CGIAR Partnership 2023-2025 for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy.

Agenda Item No. 5: Discussion on the new Strategy for Development Cooperation with the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate

The Chair of the Council for Development Policy welcomed the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy to the meeting and briefly noted that the Council would

be particularly interested in the Minister's views on equal partnerships and the development cooperation focussed on climate change.

The Minister opened his introduction by expressing appreciation for the Council's important role in advising, guiding and assuring quality. He stressed that Denmark was a small country that in many ways punched beyond its weight, enjoying considerable good will as one of the few countries providing 0.7 percent of Gross National Income (GNI) in development assistance.

Although Denmark had a new government, there would not be major changes to the development policy. The Strategy for Development Cooperation, "The World We Share", continued to have broad support in Parliament. It was a new situation, though, that he was responsible for both development cooperation and global climate policy. Denmark should focus more on uniting development and climate action as these issues and solutions were closely connected. For instance, Niger and Burkina Faso faced drought and desertification resulting from climate change. This risked undermining development gains as children were taken out of school to fetch water, provide an income, etc. All development issues (gender, armed conflict, education, migration, etc.) were impacted by climate change. Fortunately, the Danish engagements were flexible and many projects were already working with climate adaptation. The Minister stated that it was important that the green transition was supported both by climate specialists and by specialists with a thorough knowledge about development. He underlined that Denmark should not use development funds for activities which were commercially viable, hence could be financed by other means.

The Minister emphasised that equal partnerships were a prerequisite for effective and efficient development cooperation. It was about listening more – also to the partner countries that had views different from ours.

The Chair of the Council thanked the Minister for the introductory remarks. While the Council agreed that there was a climate aspect of all development engagements, there was not always a development effect of climate-related projects. For instance, the Council had expressed reservations about the Framework Programme for Strategic Sector Cooperation with the Ministry for Climate, Energy and Utilities 2023-2027, discussed earlier in the meeting, as the programme did not have indicators related to development outcomes.

The Council welcomed the focus on Africa and the coming Africa Plan. Members of the Council emphasised that African partnership countries sometimes wanted to focus more on job creation than on climate adaptation and mitigation. Indeed, the green transition could lead to the loss of jobs when e.g. coalmines were replaced by green energy sources. Currently, millions of young Africans already entered a labour market with too few jobs. One way to create decent work was through vocational training. How was this considered in the bilateral dialogue, programming, and drafting of the coming Africa Plan?

The importance of listening more to partners in the Global South was stressed. The value of long-term partnerships, including with other development actors than the government (civil society, private sector, etc.), were also highlighted. Would the partners in the Global South be involved in the strategy process? Members of the Council also asked whether the right balance had been struck between partnerships in fragile countries and in stable developing countries? It

was suggested to maintain longer-term cooperation in stable developing countries to learn from e.g. climate adaptation initiatives.

Members of the Council stressed that many partners in the Global South found the global decision-making architecture unfair. There was also a concern that the new EU regulations on corporate due diligence and deforestation would become a trade barrier for small-scale farmers and Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Africa due to e.g. the requirement of providing GPS-coordinates. They could remain in the value chains if they received the right support. Therefore, it would be important for the Africa Plan to also consider trade policy.

Noting that many of the fragile states were in Africa, even without the implications of climate change, Members of the Council asked if Denmark could play a larger role in peace processes in Africa? In line with the recommendations from the Peer Review of Denmark in 2021 by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)'s Development Assistance Committee (DAC), it was recommended to focus more on peace in the coming Africa Plan and the Strategy for Development Cooperation.

Members of the Council also asked whether Denmark could seek further synergies with the EU's development engagements. For instance, the close cooperation in Ukraine under the EU and Danish-funded EU Anti-Corruption Initiative (EUACI) meant that Denmark had more political weight.

Finally, Members of the Council enquired about the use of gas for clean cooking projects to prevent premature deaths due to smoke inhalation from cooking.

In response to the points made, the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy assured the Council that partners in the Global South would be consulted in the drafting of the Africa Plan as it would be an inclusive process.

The Minister emphasised that it would be deeply unfair if the poorest, who are most affected by climate change, would also be adversely impacted by the green transition. Mitigation and energy efficiency initiatives could be challenging in countries where the green transition might be socially imbalanced. The way green transition was supported, therefore, was crucial. Just Energy Transition Partnerships, which took the social aspects into account, was an important approach but could take a long time to implement. He stressed that when Denmark is supporting energy projects (mitigation), the development impact would always be important.

Concerning adaptation, the dilemma between climate change and development focus was less apparent, as e.g. projects to support access to water would relate to both objectives. It was important to draw on experience such as the World Bank project in Ethiopia, which combined social safety nets with climate adaptation.

The balance between partnerships in fragile and stable developing countries was a central dilemma that should be analysed and must inform the Africa Plan. Development cooperation in fragile states was expensive, but terminating the cooperation would have huge consequences for the people in need of assistance.

The Strategic Sector Cooperation (SSC) was a very important tool as the mitigation impact of SSC programmes were significant, for example in China. Denmark was among international leaders on energy transition and SSC programmes made good use of these competences. As the programmes were based on cooperation between authorities, SSC was in less direct dialogue with citizens in partner countries than e.g. the support given through civil society organisations or bilateral programmes.

In relation to the EU regulation, it was necessary to make value chains more sustainable and, at the same time, focus on education and vocational training. The Minister found that it should be a central point of analysis in the Africa Plan.

The Minister noted that Denmark was cooperating closely with the EU, including through secondments to e.g. Niger. Recognising the high administrative costs of the multilateral cooperation, the Minister stressed that all projects should have an impact on the ground.

Addressing the suggestion that Denmark could do more to support peace building and stabilisation, the Minister stressed the importance for such support to make a tangible difference. Peace processes could be challenging, and support could also be given in other ways such as to the African Union, which played a key role in peace processes. Danish support to stabilisation and peace building also included humanitarian assistance and migration (e.g. decent conditions in refugee camps, psychosocial support, etc.).

Although he acknowledged that the use of gas for clean cooking was a dilemma, the Minister stressed that he would be hesitant to use development assistance for fossil fuels.

Finally, the Minister confirmed the intention of attending a Council meeting in the autumn and invited the Council to the Conference on Integrating Sustainable Development and Climate on 19 June 2023, co-organised by the Minister and CONCITO.

The Chair of the Council thanked the Minister for the discussion and the invitation. She encouraged him to make further use of the Council's competences as their role was to provide advice to the Minister on development cooperation.

Agenda Item No. 6: Stocktaking of the Development Cooperation in Burkina Faso (2022)

For information and discussion

Embassy in Ouagadougou

Summary:

Since the formulation of the Strategic Framework for Burkina Faso 2021-2025, the situation in the country has deteriorated drastically. The framework includes two scenarios for how the situation in Burkina Faso could evolve - a 'negative but realistic scenario' and a 'worst-case scenario'. Following two military coups in 2022, Burkina Faso faces the risk of continued political instability, exacerbated by aggravating security and humanitarian crises. The situation is closest to the 'worst-case scenario', as the state has lost control of the majority of its territory. The political instability and the rapid deterioration of the security situation have caused significant challenges and delays in the implementation of the bilateral programme in Burkina Faso in 2022. While the Embassy and the Danish development partners have been able to continue the implementation of a majority of the programmes and projects, the increasingly difficult political conditions and the deteriorating security situation have required significant

adjustments of the bilateral development program. In response to the military coup in January 2022, the cooperation with the Ministry of Security and sector budget support to the Ministry of Water were suspended. As of May 2023, the cooperation with the Ministry of Justice was terminated, while the water sector budget support would be reoriented to other partners in the sector, e.g. the national water utility company.

The Council expressed its appreciation of the Annual Stocktaking Report and the opportunity to discuss the developments in Burkina Faso and the challenges facing Danish development cooperation in the country. The Council took note of the extremely worrying developments in the country and expressed its support for finding feasible ways for continued Danish support while implementing a number of mitigating measures.

Recognising the difficult conditions for the partnership with Burkina Faso following two military coups in 2022, the Council found it impressive that only a relatively modest portion of the bilateral programme was being re-programmed and asked how it was possible to still implement the main elements of the programme. Members of the Council also enquired about the reasons why the cooperation with the Ministry of Justice could not be continued. In light of the difficult political conditions at the national level, Members of the Council asked if it would be possible to collaborate more closely with local authorities. Furthermore, the Council enquired about the possibility of expanding cooperation with the partners under the Strategic Partnership Agreements (SPA).

With reference to the Strategic Framework for Burkina Faso, Members of the Council noted that the current crises were included in the scenarios foreseen at the time of formulation in 2020. While this was positive for the relevance of the strategic framework, the fact that the situation in Burkina Faso already reflected the worst-case scenario led Members of the Council to encourage a reflection on how lessons learned from this development could be applied more broadly.

Members of the Council asked how knowledge of the context was gathered. Members of the Council also highlighted the importance of using information not only from the Intelligence Services, but also from local actors and partners. In this regard, the Embassy was encouraged to make use of the knowledge of Danish civil society organisations and their local partners operating in the communities.

Finally, Members of the Council enquired about the scenarios for the country in the coming years.

The Ambassador thanked the Council for its comments and underlined that despite the adjustments to the bilateral programme, Denmark would continue its engagement. The bilateral funding for Burkina Faso would remain at the same level. The Ambassador explained that the funds allocated to the water sector budget support would be reoriented to the national water utility company, which was a move towards closer and more extensive collaboration with local actors and authorities. Funds allocated to cooperation with the Ministry of Justice (approximately DKK 25.6 million) and the Ministry of Security (approximately DKK 30.3 million) were to be reallocated to other priorities in the bilateral programme, such as human rights, resilience/agriculture, and water/climate adaption. The exact allocations were not yet in place. Furthermore, the Ambassador underlined that it was a political decision to terminate the cooperation with the Ministry of Justice. The decision was based on weighing the reputational

risks against the expected outcome of the cooperation in the current context. Following the military coups in 2022, rule of law was under great pressure, which – in combination with the political and institutional instability – had made it increasingly difficult to achieve results. Concerning future scenarios, the Ambassador pointed to the speed with which the state had lost control of territory. Last year's Stocktaking Report had assessed that the state had lost control of approximately 20 percent of the territory. Today, this figure was approximately 60 percent. Despite the current regime's efforts to fight the jihadist insurgency and regain control of the territory, the deterioration of the situation continued. Burkina Faso was at risk of a complete security collapse and of becoming a safe haven for terrorist groups, allowing the establishment of caliphates within its territory. This would have grave consequences for the wider West African region as the West African coastal states were already under great pressure from the spread of the jihadist groups.

The Chair of the Council concluded that it had been a timely and useful, although quite discouraging, discussion of the Danish development cooperation in Burkina Faso. The Council expressed its interest in following the continued implementation of the bilateral programme.

Agenda Item No. 7: Evaluation Programme 2023-2024

For information and discussion

Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, ELK

Summary:

The evaluation programme 2023-2024 presents a two-year overview of recently concluded, ongoing, and planned evaluations and studies. Evaluations are undertaken by contracting independent evaluators through an EU-tender process. The criteria guiding the evaluation programme is stipulated in the Policy for Evaluation of Development Cooperation and includes a mix of modalities, large development programmes, countries, trends, and themes as well as a focus on Denmark's strategy for development cooperation, "The World We Share". A number of evaluations are ongoing, including of Danida Multi-Bilateral Interventions, Framework Conditions for Private Sector Development, Support to Gender Equality, and bilateral development cooperation between Denmark and Tanzania (under tendering). Evaluations under preparation include an evaluation of Denmark's management of development cooperation 20 years after decentralisation. A number of studies have also been finalised, and more are ongoing or under preparation.

The Council welcomed the annual briefing on the evaluation programme and appreciated the overview that it gave of the numerous ongoing and planned evaluations and studies. Ongoing and planned evaluations were considered interesting and relevant, and the Council noted that it would also appreciate more thematic discussions regarding specific evaluations.

The Council highlighted the importance of communicating conclusions and recommendations from the evaluations. It was recommended to prioritise launching events, as this would enhance awareness and potential use of lessons and evidence from the evaluations. Further, the potential of exploring narrative approaches and selected case stories as a way to convey complex issues in an engaging manner was stressed. Similarly, the need to ensure that communication was as straightforward as possible was emphasised, including consideration of end-user perspectives as one tool in support of this. The potential of digitalisation for search functions and artificial intelligence to make evidence available and facilitate use and learning was also highlighted.

Members of the Council asked about how the evaluations of modalities (e.g. multi-bilateral interventions, the country programme in Tanzania) were used to assess the effects of Danish development cooperation.

Furthermore, Members of the Council asked specifically about the MFA's administration of evaluations, including whether the Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality (ELK) had sufficient independence after the previously separate evaluation department, EVAL, had been integrated into a more general quality assurance department, ELK. Members of the Council also asked whether there were sufficient resources for undertaking planned evaluations of a sufficient quality.

Finally, the Council gave a number of suggestions for the pipeline of evaluations and studies, including:

- An evaluation of the Strategic Sector Cooperation (SSC) with emphasis on development outcomes such as poverty, gender, and other key outcomes;
- An evaluation of the current Strategy for Development Cooperation, "The World We Share", with inclusion of partners with Strategic Partnership Agreements (SPA);
- An evaluation of experience from the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus.

The Head of Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality (ELK) emphasised that the comments on communication, including the need for a more straightforward communication, were well received. Communication continued to be a focus area and evaluations and studies were often part of public debate and events. Launch events had been planned in collaboration with for example the Danish Society of Engineers (IDA) and Global Focus. The Chief Adviser from ELK added that a launch event was also planned for the upcoming gender evaluation. The Deputy Head of ELK explained that other more innovative approaches to communication had also been used over time, such as the production of small films which had been used in different settings, including in international fora, but this was a very costly approach that would have to be reserved for particular evaluations.

In relation to the modality-focused evaluations, the Chief Adviser from ELK explained that part of the intent was to investigate effectiveness and efficiency, e.g. in relation to flow of funds and overheads for the Trust Fund modality. There were, however, limitations to how much these evaluations could assess relative and comparative effectiveness. For example, the evaluation of the use of Danida Multi-Bilateral Interventions would assess how effective the support had been in different contexts, but it would not be possible to assess whether support by using a different modality would have been more effective.

Regarding the implications of the integration of the evaluation function, the Head of ELK found that independence had not been put under pressure. ELK had full authority to decide on evaluations, and the selection of independent evaluation teams following an EU tender process, with strict requirements and rules regarding conflict of interest further underpinned this. Challenges were rather linked to a *de facto* reduction in human resources working with evaluations versus the more acute daily quality assurance tasks such as appraisals and reviews.

The specific suggestions for evaluations were highly appreciated. Members of the Council were invited to provide ideas for future evaluations or studies as the Council for Development Policy

was well placed to point to relevant needs and issues for evaluations. The programme for 2023-2024 to some degree reflected earlier suggestions from the Council. Finally, the Head of ELK welcomed the specific suggestion to evaluate the SSC with emphasis on development outcomes, as this would allow for a more comprehensive assessment of longer-term results than had been possible in the former SSC evaluation from 2020. However, it was deemed best to wait until the new Framework Programmes had been in place for some time so this new approach could be included in the evaluation.

The Chair of the Council thanked the Council and the MFA for the annual discussion of the Evaluation Programme.

Agenda Item No. 8: Evaluation of the Peace and Stabilisation Fund

For information and discussion

Department for Migration, Stabilisation and Fragility, MNS

Summary:

Among the key recommendations by the Evaluation of the Peace and Stability Fund (PSF) published in early 2023 were the following: (i) Strengthen the integration both at the strategic level and at implementation level of efforts by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Justice, and the Prime Minister's Office, (ii) improve complementarity with bilateral programmes, (iii) conduct independent, in-depth context and stakeholder analyses that precede programming, (iv) develop realistic Theory of Change and enhance the focus on outcome level monitoring and evaluation together with partners, (v) ensure that Women, Peace and Security is mainstreamed across PSF, (vi) increase knowledge sharing among programmes and between field and Denmark, and (vii) restructure the role of the Steering Committee to allow it to be more strategic. The evaluation has been used to rethink the PSF programme and prepare new guidelines. It is available at the webpage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.³

The Council welcomed the opportunity to discuss a specific evaluation as a part of the recurring institution in the Council to take up a specific theme important to development policy and discuss it in depth. This was also an opportunity to learn about how the evaluation was followed up.

Members of the Council asked how a more strategic approach of the Peace and Stabilisation Fund (PSF) would materialise and how to ensure the integration of activities of the participating three Danish ministries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence, and Ministry of Justice).

It was found that a number of issues could have been better reflected in the evaluation and the Management Response prepared by the four ministries, including job creation and income-generating activities, climate as a driver of conflicts, and the approach applied by the PSF to the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus.

Members of the Council expressed concern about the willingness of the PSF to take risks and asked if the general guidelines for development cooperation activities (Aid Management Guidelines) applied to PSF.

³ [Evaluation of the Peace and Stabilisation Fund \(um.dk\)](https://um.dk)

Finally, it was noted that allocations from the Official Development Assistance (ODA) to PSF had been increased significantly, while only a limited share of the funds were non-ODA funds.

The Head of the Department for Migration, Stabilisation and Fragility (MNS) opened by saying that the evaluation had been very useful for rethinking the PSF and preparing new guidelines. In addition to the evaluation, the rethinking process had included consultations with stakeholders in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Justice, international think tanks, civil society, etc. The researchers responsible for the PSF evaluation had also provided useful input.

On the strengthening of the strategic approach, she informed the Council that the Steering Committee had changed its mode of operation so it now decided on whether or not to support an activity based on a preliminary outline. After this, detailed documents were prepared and eventually assessed and approved by the Steering Committee. Decisions on posting of PSF staff were based on strategic discussions in the Steering Committee, and the strategic approach had also been strengthened by allocating 20 percent of the budget to a Strategic Response Facility.

The Head of Department further acknowledged that agendas of the three participating ministries might differ but she stressed that joint efforts to improve integration were ongoing. These included joint preparation of thematic papers and annual seminars with the participation of all ministries involved.

The PSF had to be complementary to other modalities and it was a criterion for funding of an activity that it could not be funded as part of a bilateral country programme. This was the reason for not including activities such as job creation and livelihood-oriented activities, as these typically could be part of other programmes.

Since the PSF was working only with the 'Peace' aspect of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus, it would not be working with nexus as such. The coordination of the various contributions to the nexus would rather be undertaken by the embassies.

The Head of Department recognised that climate was often a key driver of conflicts and told the Council that analytical work on climate, peace and security was ongoing.

Concerning the observations on risk taking, the Head of Department stressed the importance of preparing better risk analyses before actions were initiated. If activities were assessed to be high-risk undertakings, Parliament had to be informed. Formats from Aid Management Guidelines applied to all PSF activities, but there could be exceptions for activities carried out by the Ministry of Defence. Dialogue and training on risk analyses and Theory of Change was ongoing between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence.

Agenda Item No. 9: Any Other Business

No issues were raised under this agenda item.