

Att. Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Department for Africa, Policy & Development



14 December 2025

Response provided by Danish Red Cross to the Public Consultation by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the 'Sahel Future Generations Programme (SFGP) 2026-2029'

Firstly, Danish Red Cross appreciates the MFA's continued engagement in the Sahel region and the continued commitment to support the populations in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, and is grateful for the opportunity to provide input to the SFGP document in this public consultation. The Programme Document (PD) provides a comprehensive context analysis with a relevant emphasis on civic space, opportunities for young people and resilience.

To further strengthen the comprehensiveness of the SFGP and ensuring it supports the most vulnerable populations across the Sahel region, Danish Red Cross forwards the below feedback for consideration.

Observations and comments

- We find it positive to read that the programme will build on existing Danish engagement, sending an important signal of continued support to vulnerable populations in a fragile context. Acknowledging that the establishment of the Nordic Sahel Facility is in process, and noting the information provided in Annex 3, further clarification on the Nordic Sahel Facility, its role vis-à-vis the MFA/AFRPOL in determining funding modalities and call eligibility, and alignment and complementarity to existing engagements such as the SPA, would be welcome.
- Given the nature of the conflicts affecting all three countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger) we want to highlight the importance for interventions to emphasise **integrated, multisectoral approaches** targeting the most vulnerable populations and communities by strengthening their livelihoods in a sustainable manner, while also considering improved basic and essential services i.e. health services.
- Within the context of the region including the challenges posed to civic space as described in the programme document, we want to emphasise the importance of sustaining support to local actors and CSOs, who maintain critical access to vulnerable populations and operational coordination with authorities on local levels. In line with localisation agendas, we encourage an increased emphasis on **equal partnerships and local leadership** to ensure needs and priorities for vulnerable populations are identified at local level and encompass community-based approaches.

Recommendations and suggestions

- The PD highlights the need for *agile programming and flexible implementation modalities* and within a context with rapidly changing conditions, **we recommend integrating targeted humanitarian assistance** to strengthen a humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach, thereby ensuring continuity of support for communities in highly fragile areas.

In line with the nexus approach highlighted, we would like to encourage and underscore the importance of ensuring that, where possible, interventions should apply **holistic approaches to increase sustainability of actions**. This should include addressing physical needs (e.g. shelter, food, water); protection (i.e. safety, dignity, PGI¹ considerations); health including MHPSS²; and economic well-being, to increase the long-term viability of livelihood initiatives and mitigate the risk of unsustainable actions.

Furthermore, noting the mentioning of human-rights-based approaches under the NSF and considering migration and displacement in the region, we want to emphasise the relevance of needs-based approaches, recognising both that people on the move (incl. internally displaced people as highlighted in the PD) have specific needs and vulnerabilities, and the impact on hosting communities who are already in a vulnerable situation.

- While the SFGP document recognises “Good Health and Wellbeing” as a priority SDG, includes descriptions of collapsed health systems and disruption of basic health services, and notes *profound* psychosocial impacts and trauma in the analytical sections, there is no clear reflection of this in the specific objectives. In line with the above on holistic approaches, we encourage integrating a **cross-cutting focus on health including mental health and psychosocial wellbeing**, in line with the above on holistic approaches. As such, we recommend incorporating **health system strengthening**, including strengthening capacity for local and community-based provision of health and psychosocial support services, to ensure essential service delivery and as part of broader protection efforts for vulnerable populations across the region, contributing to addressing gender inequality and strengthening resilience.

Furthermore, under SO2 we recommend **integrating life-skills and MHPSS interventions into vocational training and job creation**. Psychosocial well-being is foundational to effective participation in skills development and livelihood initiatives. Factors such as (psychosocial) stress, low self-confidence, reduced motivation, and social withdrawal can significantly limit engagement in training, entrepreneurship, and employment, particularly for women and youth affected by displacement or conflict. Life-skills and MHPSS support enhance learning outcomes by improving focus, problem-solving, and adaptive coping, allowing youth to maximise the benefits of vocational and entrepreneurial programs, fostering economic empowerment and creating pathways to social stability and long-term development.

We further encourage considering **strengthening social protection systems** at local level, formal or informal, in support of holistic approaches to improved economic opportunities. Reinforcing municipal or community support systems (e.g. community groups/cooperatives) provides platforms for locally driven economic support and promotes social cohesion, key ways to ensure sustainability and long-term impact.

- The Sahel region is prone to droughts and floods and while the PD appropriately identifies the effects of climate change as *vulnerability multipliers across livelihoods, mobility, and service delivery systems*, we find that the PD omits mentions of early warning and/or anticipatory action systems for increased resilience and community coping capacities.

Under SO2/SO3 we therefore recommend an **integrated approach to climate-smart initiatives and recommend embedding anticipatory action and disaster risk reduction measures** such as early warning and forecast-based support for climatic events (e.g. floods/droughts). This could reduce communities’ vulnerabilities to climatic events, mitigate losses and damages, positively impact farmers’ productivity, strengthen value chains and promote climate resilient- and green job opportunities, thereby creating synergy between SO2 and SO3.

¹ Protection, Gender & Inclusion

² Mental Health and Psychosocial Support