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**OBJECTIVES ON DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS FOR THE WORLD WE SHARE:
DENMARK'S STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION**

OBJECTIVES ON DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS FOR THE WORLD WE SHARE: DENMARK'S STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

This document is developed as a supplement to The World We Share: Denmark's Strategy for Development Cooperation from 2021. Based on a co-creative process with the sector, the document sets out concrete objectives on how to work on democracy and human rights, which is not part of the strategy. It is intended for decision makers and implementers of Danish development cooperation as guiding objectives for their work during the strategy period. As conveners of this process, Global Focus also encourages Danish decision makers to agree to and finance these objectives as well as to be held accountable to these.

BACKGROUND

The World We Share: Denmark's Strategy for Development Cooperation sets out important visions for three main areas: 1. Democracy and Human Rights, 2. Fragility, Conflict and Crises, and 3. Climate, Nature and Environment. The two latter topics each had four clear objectives and around 30 sub objectives listed in the strategy, specifying how Denmark would work to achieve change in the area. However, there were no objectives and sub objectives listed under Democracy and Human Rights, resulting in Danish civil society taking the lead to define these in this document.

AIM

Since Democracy and Human Rights are described as the foundation of the strategy, specifying how to achieve them will better enable all relevant stakeholders to work towards the change envisioned in the strategy. Through a series of workshops, actors from the Danish development sector developed objectives and sub objectives on Democracy and Human Rights underlining the importance of **independent ambitions** in this area. Additionally, for Democracy and Human Rights to truly be the foundation of the strategy, their **interlinkages** must also be implemented throughout the other two thematic areas 2. Fragility, Conflict and Crises and 3. Climate, Nature and Environment why this is also addressed.

TARGET GROUP AND USE

This document is meant for decision makers and implementers of Danish development cooperation. It is meant to be used as guiding objectives for how to develop, govern and adapt policies and programmes on democracy and human rights in Danish development cooperation. It sets out sub objectives that in some areas are already being followed and in some areas are not, thus presenting a set of approaches to guide our existing and new work regarding democracy and human rights.

PROCESS BEHIND THE DOCUMENT

Over 120 participants took part in four workshops to co-create the contents of this document. The workshops were open to everyone in the sector, with high participation from Danish civil society, creating important legitimacy and commitment to the work. In all four workshops speakers from the Global South provided essential inputs and inspirational advice for the process.

OBJECTIVE 1

DENMARK MUST

Take action to strengthen human rights, good governance, and participation in programmes, decision making processes, and international action.

DENMARK WILL

- Have as a high priority to use its political dialogue in both multi- and bilateral partnerships to promote **good governance and address human rights violations to ensure that fundamental human rights are respected, protected and fulfilled**. This includes Denmark's candidacy towards the UN Security Council.
- Promote **democratic processes and infrastructures in multilateral organisations and collaborations**, with a focus on transparency, accountability, and full, equal and meaningful civil society participation.
- Support the **independence and role of National Human Rights Institutions as effective mechanisms for the protection and promotion of human rights, including by ensuring their adherence to the Paris Principles**, their ability to hold states accountable and seek and obtain redress and reparation for those whose rights have been violated.
- Support the **empowerment of people to influence decisions that affect their lives** by promoting an enabling democratic environment for rights holders specifically supporting women, LGBTIQ+ people, racialised groups, indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, children, youth, religious minorities, internally displaced people, refugees, migrants, and others at risk of being exposed or targeted.
- Strengthen the **participation of groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination** in democratic and decision-making processes. This entails including local actors and civil society representatives from the Global South in Danish development cooperation and international processes such as at the UN General Assembly (UNGA), Conference of Parties (COP), and Human Rights Council (UNHRC). This can be done by allocating seats to civil society representatives in both online and offline UN negotiations and encouraging other member states to do the same, as well as meaningfully include civil society before, during and after meetings.
- Promote **women and girls' full, equal and meaningful participation, influence, and representation** in decision-making and democratic processes.
- Promote the human rights to participation, expression, association, assembly, free media, and access to information to support **enabling environments for elections and other national democratic processes and infrastructures**.
- Ensure that **human rights in the digital space are respected, protected, and fulfilled**, including the rights to privacy, expression, non-discrimination, association, access to information, and freedom from harassment. With special attention to combating online discrimination of certain groups such as women, LGBTIQ+ people, racialised groups, indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, children, youth, religious minorities, internally displaced people, refugees, migrants, and others at risk of being exposed or targeted.
- Ensure **corporate respect for human rights** throughout the entire value chain. This includes working towards ambitious human rights and environmental due diligence legislation and policy, including access to justice and corporate liability for serious harm, at national, regional, and global level based on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPR) and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.
- Work actively and support initiatives for **policy and legal change as well as effective prevention, protection, and accountability for the gravest human rights violations**, including torture or other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment.
- Promote effective accountability processes and mechanisms for human rights violations, and contribute to ensuring individual, state and corporate responsibility for violations of fundamental human rights.
- Ensure **accountability of its Official Development Assistance (ODA) spending** by drafting a human rights and democracy action plan and inviting key stakeholders, including civil society in Denmark and from the Global South, to hold Denmark to account on its commitments.
- **Listen to people directly affected by or living in countries that receive Danish Official Development Assistance (ODA)** with special attention to people at risk of being exposed or targeted. Invest in local research networks and resources and ensure local research findings are fed into Danish policy and programming to strengthen a shift of power.

OBJECTIVE 2

DENMARK MUST

Promote global gender justice by supporting locally led solutions, combating intersecting oppressions and applying a feminist foreign and development policy.

DENMARK WILL

- Broaden their approach to **promoting gender justice through their foreign affairs**, ensuring its strong focus both within and beyond the strategy for development cooperation. This means actively supporting and promoting sustainable and feminist solutions to the global climate-, health- and economic crisis.
- **Operationalise Leave No One Behind** by adopting an intersectional approach to all programmes and initiatives with the aim of acknowledging different exposed or targeted groups and the multi-layered discrimination they face.
- Ensure that **no foreign affairs or development cooperation efforts are counterproductive to the work on Leave No One Behind**, with special attention given to women, LGBTIQ+, children, racialised groups, indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, children, youth, religious minorities, internally displaced people, refugees, migrants, and others at risk of being exposed or targeted.
- Strengthen the promotion of women's and girls' **economic empowerment, socio-economic justice, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and full, equal and meaningful democratic participation**.
- Use its international leverage to **amplify the voice of exposed or targeted groups facing harassment, violence, and multi-layered discrimination**, using its different channels to create change and promote the leadership of these groups, including by supporting the role and participation of human rights defenders in local and international fora.
- Establish a fund with the aim of supporting and strengthening **locally based feminist, women-led, and LGBTIQ+ civil society actors and movements**, and use its global position and networks to advocate for a substantive increase in global funding for these groups.
- Work actively for policy and legal change as well as invest in sustainable prevention, protection, prosecution, and access to justice in relation to all kinds of **sexual and gender-based violence**, including harmful practices, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, economic violence, and digital violence. This includes strongly encouraging countries to ratify the Istanbul Convention and promoting the Call to Action on gender-based violence in emergencies.
- Support organisations working to **eradicate gender stereotypes and shift norms** that perpetuate and normalise inequality, discrimination, and sexual and gender-based violence. This can be done by supporting local women, LGBTIQ+ and feminist civil society, facilitating community dialogue, engaging men, and training professionals in justice, health, and education.
- Ensure that all policies and programmes are informed by **power and gender assessments** that are translated into time-bound and measurable objectives and indicators with the purpose of achieving gender equality.
- Take lead on promoting **Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) globally**, especially with regards to areas such as abortion, Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and LGBTIQ+ rights that are constantly challenged by strong opposition. This can be done by pushing for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights advances through bilateral partnerships and strengthening Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights work on grassroot level where local organisations lead, as well as being a vocal champion of SRHR and its inseparability from human rights and gender justice.

OBJECTIVE 3

DENMARK MUST

Support a free, diverse, inclusive, and resilient civil society, and actively promote an enabling environment for civil society, equal partnerships, and local leadership to ensure lasting change.

DENMARK WILL

- Play a leading role in **advocating for strengthening civil society** on a global level. Civil society plays a vital role in the implementation of the strategy for development cooperation and humanitarian action which is why the share of Official Development Assistance to civil society should increase from 17 percent to 25 percent. This would also strengthen the position as global frontrunner for promoting civic space, including ensuring the right to freedom of expression, association and assembly as well as the voices and participation of civil society actors in local, national and multilateral fora.
- **Protect democracy and human rights defenders at home and in exile**, including but not limited to artists, journalists, political opposition, legal actors, activists, protestors, students, and trade union activists. Special attention should be given to women and girls and other democracy and human rights defenders facing multiple and intersecting layers of discrimination. This can, among other things, be done by continuing the support to Danish actors' civil society partners in danger, e.g. through funding and support mechanisms which are flexible, agile, without geographic limitation and designed to meet local needs.
- Engage duty bearers to **include all people more actively in participatory decision-making processes**, with special attention to women, LGBTIQ+ people, racialised groups, indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, children, youth, religious minorities, internally displaced people, refugees, migrants, and others at risk of being exposed or targeted.
- Facilitate **space for local civil society actors and amplify their voices** in bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Promote opportunities for local organisations to influence decision-making in national and international policy processes.
- Support and promote **organisations led by different groups at risk of being exposed or targeted** to have a voice of their own and to ensure their perspectives and objectives are heard and incorporated at all levels of decision making.
- Support initiatives that develop **organisational resilience and capacity of civil society** through mutual experience sharing and transformative education.
- Work for a **diverse civil society globally** that includes exposed and targeted groups facing multiple and intersecting layers of discrimination, ensuring that civil society actors are able to engage in work and actions that promote democracy and human rights and reduce poverty across a broad range of themes, partnerships, and geographies.
- Promote **informal and formal leadership opportunities** for local civil society actors and facilitate that Danish civil society organisations are able to achieve this through their partnerships, and that it is a feature across Danish development aid and partnerships.
- Have a **conducive regulatory framework to support civil society's new ways of working**, facilitating that Danish civil society can engage in sustainable national and international partnerships and networks with both formally and informally organised civil society actors and movements. This includes ensuring that Danish development assistance is supportive of and sufficiently risk willing to enable Danish support to engage in these partnerships.
- Enable **Danish civil society organisations to employ flexible funding modalities** to promote a diverse civil society through their partnerships, leading to more sustainable funding to local civil society actors in the Global South. Risk sharing and risk transfer must be part of the dialogue around funding modalities.
- Ensure and support **access to long-term, flexible, and quality funding** to civil society actors in line with Denmark's commitment to the OECD DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance. This includes the support Denmark provides through its strategic partnership with Danish civil society organisations and civil society organisations in the Global South, and it also includes Denmark's potential in encouraging its peer donors to work in the same direction.

OBJECTIVE 4

DENMARK MUST

Apply and promote a cross-ministerial rights-based approach to all humanitarian, development, and diplomatic actions informed by local needs and priorities in the Global South when responding to forced migration and displacement, conflict and the climate crises.

DENMARK WILL

- Recognise and promote the **respect, protection and fulfilment of human rights of all human beings** without any form of discrimination and with due attention to groups at risk of being exposed or targeted. Recognise and promote indigenous peoples' rights as a goal in itself and as a necessity to create effective and sustainable solutions to conflicts and to climate change.
- **Empower rights-holders to collectively and individually defend their rights and have their voices heard** in human rights protection and promotion, conflict resolution, sustainable peacebuilding and climate action. This involves giving special attention to women, LGBTIQ+, children, racialised groups, indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, children, youth, religious minorities, internally displaced people, refugees, migrants, and others at risk of being exposed or targeted as well as ensuring an intersectional approach to meaningful participation in decision-making and implementation of actions.
- Fully implement its **National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2020-2024** including by integrating Danish civil society and civil society from the Global South perspectives, as well as mainstreaming UN Security Council 1325 and its progeny into Denmark's foreign policy priorities.
- Ensure that Denmark's humanitarian and development interventions adhere to **global standards, principles, and legal frameworks**, including but not limited to international human rights treaties and standards, the Refugee Convention, the Humanitarian Principles, the Core Humanitarian Standards, Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), Do No Harm, human rights-based approach, and the principle in the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development of Leave No One Behind.
- Promote the principle of subsidiarity by **devolving decision making to the local level in the Global South**, including facilitating that both formal and informal local actors have access to funding and ensuring that funding and programmes are based on local needs and local priorities.
- Work to ensure that **climate solutions promoted in Denmark's development cooperation are grounded in democratic governance and contribute to the fulfilment of human rights**. This should be reflected in key climate and nature policy frameworks such as aid management guidelines, bilateral partnership agreements, and the Climate and Development Ministers' annual reports to the Danish Parliament.
- Promote **transformative climate action that enables systemic change**. In development cooperation, climate action should always have social justice and poverty reduction as a part of its goal.
- Through its bilateral and multilateral climate and environmental diplomacy efforts, advocate for a **global human rights-based approach to the green transition**. This includes the demand that all global climate finance mechanisms comply with international human rights conventions and standards through adequate safeguards, and that the EU's Nationally Determined Contribution commits member states to respect, protect and fulfil human rights.
- Apply and promote a **human rights-based approach in their international cooperation in relation to climate action and forced displacement and migration** as well as advocate for enhanced focus on and response to the nexus between climate change and displacement nexus, focusing holistically on root causes, not limited by geography and politics. Denmark's efforts to prevent forced displacement and address the climate crisis will recognise and promote the right to freedom of movement, protect the rights of persons on the move, including the right to seek asylum in accordance with the Refugee Convention and international human rights law as well as Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights.
- Encourage the promotion of best practises of the **Humanitarian – Development – Peace (HDP) nexus approach** to address root causes of vulnerabilities and risks in the contexts of fragility, conflict, and climate change, including influencing other actors to adapt the same approach. The HDP nexus should be operationalised through adaptive management to respond to risks and trends in order to urgently meet local needs.
- Recognise the value of **local communities' participation and bottom-up approaches** in HDP nexus in general and in order to ensure sustainable solutions for long term conflict prevention.
- Ensure that all support to **border management and migration management efforts supported with ODA are in line with the Development effectiveness principles, have a development impact and are human rights based and compliant**. It should always employ a Do No Harm approach and ensure that no transfer of assets, resources and capacities are subsequently used in a way or with a purpose that contradicts these approaches. This includes development assistance channelled through EU and multilateral systems.

The background of the entire page is a dense, overlapping pattern of human head silhouettes. Each silhouette is filled with a different color of crumpled paper, ranging from light beige and cream to deep browns, oranges, and a touch of pink. The crumpled texture of the paper is clearly visible within each silhouette, creating a rich, tactile visual effect. The silhouettes are arranged in a way that they appear to be layered, with some appearing more prominent than others.

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