

Democratisation and Human Rights for the benefit of the people

Strategic Priorities for Danish Support for Good Governance

DRAFT, 18 May 2009

Contents

1. Key messages.....	2
2. Preface	3
3. Introduction.....	5
4. Vision and values	7
5. Key challenges and guiding principles	10
6. Strategic priorities for Danish support	15
6.1 Thematic areas and strategic priorities	15
6.2 Deepening democracy	16
6.2.1 Promoting democratic political processes	17
6.2.2 Strengthening participation and voice.....	19
6.3 Realising human rights	21
6.3.1. Building societies based on justice and the rule of law	22
6.3.2. Strengthening national human rights oversight.....	24
6.3.3. Empowerment and enabling access to justice for the poor and marginalised.....	26
7. Making better use of global partners.....	29
8. Danish capacity for support for human rights and democracy.....	33
9. Monitoring	34
10. References.....	35

1. Key messages

Denmark will:

- Promote human rights as a universal value system that provides a shared normative framework for dialogue and cooperation.
- Assert that human rights are central objectives of development and instrumental for sustainable development, poverty reduction, peace and security.
- Maintain the promotion of democracy and respect for human rights as key priorities in Danish development cooperation.
- Strengthen efforts to support democratic societies based on justice and the rule of law, by:
 - o Supporting the development of pluralist political systems, including support for democratic political parties.
 - o Increasing its focus on parliamentary development.
 - o Increasing its focus on national human rights institutions.
 - o Supporting the development of informal systems of justice that respect human rights - or that are willing and able to change norms and practices that infringe on human rights.
- Address the particular challenges of fragile states and fragile situations.
- Maintain a strong commitment to mainstream human rights and democracy in all development cooperation.
- Increase the synergies between bilateral programming in partner countries, political dialogue and engagement in multilateral forums.
- Increase cooperation with regional human rights bodies.
- Increase cooperation with the EU and international financial institutions in support of human rights and democratisation.
- Promote and apply the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action with a view to strengthening human rights and democratic processes in partner countries.

2. Preface

Denmark pursues a targeted, consistent and principled human rights policy on a broad front. The Danish strategy for the Government's approach to international human rights work from 2009:

- Presents a value-based point of departure for tackling the challenges that Denmark and like-minded countries face in promoting and protecting human rights; and
- Identifies issues where Denmark will make a special effort in the years ahead.

Efforts to promote democracy and human rights are always undertaken after careful consideration of which actions might best make a difference - including in countries facing the deterioration of human rights. With this in mind, one of the issues on which Denmark will focus over the coming years is building strong societies based on the rule of law.

The purpose of the current strategy is to implement this aspect of Denmark's overall human rights strategy with a particular focus on the promotion of democracy, justice and the rule of law in developing countries:

- To consolidate Denmark's current development policy approach;
- To institute a value-based approach; and
- To enhance the effect and quality of Danish development cooperation in pursuit of democratisation and human rights.

The strategy complements the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' publication on Denmark's strategic priorities for support for effective and accountable public sector management in developing countries. It sets out:

- The overall vision and values that permeate Denmark's development cooperation throughout the field of human rights and democratisation.
- A set of strategic priorities and guiding principles for the implementation of Danish development cooperation in this field.

The strategy will be further operationalised by a series of 'how-to-notes' on selected issues.

The priorities and principles set out in the strategy will focus and strengthen Danish development cooperation in:

- Main partner countries of Danish bilateral assistance;
- Other countries receiving Danish development assistance (including fragile states); and
- Multilateral frameworks.

Further Reading

The Danish Government launched an overall strategy for its international human rights work in 2009. The first paper on strategic priorities for good governance support in developing countries was launched in 2007 - 'Effective and Accountable Public-Sector Management – Strategic Priorities for Danish Support for Good Governance'.

These papers, and other documents related to democracy and human rights, are included in the list of

The vision, values, priorities and principles in the strategy will also be the basis for:

- Dialogue with partners in development, including:
 - o Governments of partner countries;
 - o Civil society organisations and other non-state actors; and
 - o Other donors and actors in national, regional and international forums.

- Improved links between bilateral and multilateral engagements (including links between development policy and foreign, security and trade policy).

3. Introduction

The purpose of this strategy is to institute a value-based approach to development policy on democracy and human rights, which at the same time embraces on-going Danish support and points to new focus areas for the future.

Human rights are a universal value system. Because they are closely linked to democracy, the Danish Government believes that human rights are best assured by democratic societies based on justice and the rule of law. Such societies provide the best opportunities for people, for reducing poverty, and for promoting sustainable human development, peace and security. The promotion of democracy and human rights therefore benefits not only the individual, but also the entire community - locally and at the global level.

A key task for the Danish Government is to support the promotion of democracy and respect for human rights for all people, with the support of the United Nations and through the joint efforts of the international community. The task is not easy, as developments in various regions have shown. Authoritarianism and disrespect for human rights are still part of everyday life for millions of people. Even in formal democracies, deficiencies in democratic procedures and the creation of a genuine democratic culture remain challenges. Recognising the extent of the challenge, the Danish Government will continue to promote human rights rigorously, and advocate for participatory and liberal democracy in its multilateral cooperation and its direct cooperation with partners worldwide.

Democracies are also better at promoting and overseeing human development. Although the promotion of democracy and respect for human rights are not prerequisites for economic growth, they are central to sustained economic growth and ensuring and maintaining high levels of human development. In fact, undemocratic practices can hinder poverty reduction and human development.

Promoting democracy and protecting human rights is also essential for reducing inequality and improving income distribution and education for all members of society. It also encourages the establishment of institutions, legal guarantees and protections for the full exercise of human rights. This in turn creates a stable and secure environment and greater opportunities for individuals to flourish.

The promotion of gender equality is of particular relevance. For women living in poverty, the most important challenges are ensuring their equal rights, equal access to influence and services, freedom to make decisions about their own lives, a greater say in public affairs, and equality in property rights and family law.

The Danish Government is committed to contributing to the deepening of democracy and the realisation of human rights in developing countries for the benefit of poor, women and other marginalised people. In fact, democratisation and the realisation of human rights have been priority areas of Danish development cooperation for two decades. This commitment remains strong and to this end, the Danish Government will:

- Support human rights and democratisation as objectives in their own right, and as a means of reducing poverty and promoting peace and security.
- Apply a comprehensive and long-term approach to support.
- Address the political character of the issues involved.
- Promote a dynamic interaction between the state and civil society.
- Address the particular challenges of fragile states and fragile situations.

New areas of support will include:

- Support for the development of pluralist political systems, including support for democratic political parties.
- An increased focus on parliamentary development.
- An increased focus on national human rights institutions.
- Support for the development of informal systems of justice that respect human rights, or which are willing and able to change norms and practices that infringe on human rights.

Denmark is actively engaged in multilateral cooperation on human rights and democratisation, particularly with the United Nations (UN), and will strive to increase the synergies between bilateral programmes, political dialogue and multilateral frameworks. In this regard, the Danish Government will:

- Encourage partner countries to ratify human rights conventions, join individual complaint mechanisms, and monitor human rights breaches.
- Use human rights conventions that have been ratified by governments in partner countries when designing and implementing Danish support for human rights and democratisation.
- Use decisions and recommendations of the international community related to human rights and democratisation in bilateral development cooperation.
- Use the human rights indicators produced by UN treaty bodies during political dialogue with governments in partner countries and when monitoring programmes.
- Increase cooperation with regional human rights bodies in bilateral development cooperation.

Respect for human rights can be achieved in the short term through providing assistance in individual human rights cases, supporting human rights defenders and so on. However, promoting democracy and human rights usually requires a comprehensive, long-term perspective adapted to the political context and culture in each country. Although progress is and will be uneven, and although flexibility is required to adapt and respond to changing circumstances, challenges and new opportunities, the Danish Government is determined to make the most of these opportunities and meet any new challenges that may arise.

4. Vision and values

'We will not enjoy development without security, we will not enjoy security without development, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights. Unless all these causes are advanced, none will succeed.' (United Nations. In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All)

Human rights are important tools for addressing contemporary development problems - including inequality, discrimination and exclusion. Respect for human rights is a prerequisite for ensuring that people are protected from abuse and deprivation. In fact, international instruments bind state parties to respect, protect and fulfil human rights. Most also require individuals to respect the rights of others, and some create duties on individuals related to their communities.

Human rights and democracy are closely linked - as illustrated by Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states 'the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government'.

International instruments

International instruments are documents, mainly dealing with various human rights issues. Countries are asked to commit to protecting the rights in these by signing and ratifying the instrument (making them a 'party' to it).

Most international instruments are produced by the UN. Well known examples include:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)
- Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR)
- Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)

Article 21 - UDHR

- (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of (their) country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
- (2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in (their) country.
- (3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

The importance of human rights and democracy, and the link between them, is also recognised in numerous United Nations declarations and General Assembly statements – for example, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (adopted at the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights). The 'Vienna Declaration':

- Reaffirmed that all human rights are universal, inalienable, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated; and
- Stressed that democracy, development and respect for human rights are mutually reinforcing.

The UN General Assembly confirmed this approach at the 2005 World Summit - which recognised that the full enjoyment of human rights is essential for development, peace and security. World leaders at the Summit also agreed that the best way of assuring human rights is through democratic and participatory governance based on the will of the people. Despite this recognition, the task remains to ensure that every man, woman and child is able to live in freedom and with respect for their rights and dignity regardless of where they live.

Denmark regards the reduction of poverty and the promotion of economic growth as a fundamental development goal. Denmark's efforts in this field aim to enhance human development and foster human rights in developing countries. In addition, human rights and democracy are identified as cross-cutting considerations which are mainstreamed in all development assistance programming – for example, by including economic, social and cultural rights in sectors such as health and education.

This strategy focuses on promoting democracy, justice and the rule of law in developing countries. A well-functioning, independent legal system is a crucial requirement for economic growth - and thus for poverty reduction too. Yet the capacity of the legal system in many developing countries is limited and large population groups often have no access to legal protection because of economic, social, language and geographical barriers. This has a profoundly negative impact on the consolidation of democracies and the implementation of rights in many countries.

Building democratic societies based on justice and the rule of law is also critical in ensuring human rights are respected, since they provide the best opportunities for promoting sustainable human development, peace and security.

Democracy is also required to sustain people's rights to equality and non-discrimination, to express their views, to choose their government, to a fair trial, and to the full enjoyment of all other human rights. Democracy also ensures that everyone has the opportunity to exercise their rights and to participate politically, economically, socially and culturally in society. In return, the

Key concepts

Rule of law. The 'rule of law' means that all people, organisations, institutions and the state itself are accountable under laws that are publicly promulgated; equally enforced; independently adjudicated; and consistent with international human rights law.

Equality and non-discrimination are key 'building blocks' for democracy. They ensure that everyone is able to participate equally in society – including groups that are often marginalised (such as women, indigenous peoples and the poor).

Accountability is meant to exist between the state and its people. Accountability is where governments respond to the needs and respects the rights of the people when exercising their power; where all people have a voice in decision-making; and where the people are able to hold government to account for its decisions and actions.

Legitimacy. Governments get their legitimacy firstly by being democratically elected - but also from their ability to provide security and respect for the rule of law; by ensuring equal access to justice; and by supplying basic public services (like health care and education).

Transparency is about the free flow of information between people and the state to ensure that well-informed decisions are made about how to respond to people's needs. Equally important, government is expected to ensure that individuals, civil society and other non-state actors have access to information they need to take decisions for themselves - and to hold the government to account.

equal participation of all people and their active use of their rights (with respect for the rights of others) help to strengthen democracy by ensuring the accountability and legitimacy of the state.

Just as importantly, democracy requires states to be transparent in their actions and in decision-making to ensure the free flow of information and support the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

Democratic principles and human rights are also vital to good governance - they provide a framework of rules and principles that govern the relationships between the state and individuals, and between individual members of society. This interdependence between good governance, democracy and human rights is highlighted by the definition of 'good governance' adopted by Denmark and based on the Cotonou Agreement between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific States (June 2000):

'Good governance is the transparent and accountable management of human, natural and economic and financial resources for the purposes of equitable and sustainable development, in the context of a political and institutional environment that upholds human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law.'

Note

This definition also forms the basis for the Danish Strategy in Support of Effective and Accountable Public Sector Management in developing countries.

Lastly, corruption (both political and administrative) has severe consequences for the legitimacy, transparency and accountability of the state. Particular challenges facing cooperating partners in this regard include the financing of political parties, the incentive structures of politics, government and public institutions, and the corrupt practices of justice personnel.

Note

For more on Denmark's focus on anti-corruption, see the Strategy in Support of Effective and Accountable Public Sector Management.

5. Key challenges and guiding principles

Overall guiding principles, vision, values and key challenges

Denmark will:

- Promote democracy, human rights, justice and the rule of law as fundamental values and principles for how societies should function.
- Support democratisation and human rights as objectives in their own right, and as means of reducing poverty and promoting equality, non-discrimination and sustainable development.
- Apply a comprehensive and long-term perspective to deepening democracy and realising human rights.
- Promote dynamic interaction between the state, civil society and other non-state actors.
- Promote and apply the 'principles of aid effectiveness' in the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action with a view to strengthening democracy and human rights.

The need for political commitment

Democratic societies require constant political commitment from those in power to promote and respect human rights and deepening democracy. This requires participants in political processes to commit themselves to be bound by the rules that regulate democratic societies – the 'rules of the game'. Governments must be prepared to accept the will of the people, even if it means political defeat, and to accommodate divergent views and needs in society.

Working in fragile states and situations

Human rights violations, poor governance and lack of democracy are common in fragile states and fragile situations. At the same time, human rights violations and poor governance (including corruption and a lack of democracy) contribute to state fragility and instability and therefore become an obstacle to development, peace and security. The degree of promotion of, and respect for, human rights and democratic principles are therefore key indicators of progress or deterioration in fragile states and regional destabilisation. In situations of fragility, women and girls are often particularly affected by violations of human rights, discrimination and exclusion.

Efforts to improve democracy and respect for human rights may in some situations contribute to instability. For example, the redistribution of power, new awareness and increased expectations stemming from democratisation and the realisation of human rights often leads to resistance from those who stand to lose resources or influence. This in turn creates resistance and tensions in society.

Because of this, the promotion of democracy and human rights in fragile states requires:

- The willingness to take and manage risks; and
- Flexibility in planning and implementation to respond to developments and take advantage of possible windows of opportunity.

Good examples of how efforts must be adapted to dynamic political realities are provided by the current Danish support to Afghanistan and Nepal. Efforts in these countries are designed to be flexible and innovative. A central challenge is to improve civil-military cooperation and continuously adjust efforts swiftly, in response to developments locally, taking into account that assistance (humanitarian – military – development etc.) may take on varying forms within a country or a region and that situations also regress over time.

Note

A paper on working in fragile states and situations is being prepared (2009), which will contain strategic guidelines and good practices.

Civil society and non-state actors

The participation and voice of the people are especially important for democracy. This is expressed by voting during elections, and through parliament and civil society engagement in policy formulation and implementation between elections.

As a result, well-functioning, participatory, liberal democracies are characterised by robust and active legislative bodies and vibrant civil societies.

Other non-state actors (NSAs) (such as political parties, the media, research and education institutions and the private sector) also play important roles in improving democracy and compliance with human rights. With all their diversity and complexity, civil society organisations and NSAs provide a crucial link between the state and the people.

Civil society

Civil society is made up of:

- Non-governmental organisations
- Community-based organisations
- Faith-based organisations
- Labour unions
- Informal institutions, networks and groups

Depending on their roles and mandates, these organisations and institutions are able to:

- Demand accountability from the state on behalf of the people.
- Advocate for the rights and needs of poor people to be respected, thus giving them a voice.
- Empower poor people to make their own demands.

Strong, independent and diverse civil society organisations (CSOs) and NSAs also contribute to creating dynamic social cohesion. In countries where states show little interest in deepening democracy and realising human rights, civil society is often the key partner in strengthening reform-oriented forces and promoting a bottom-up approach to change.

The ability of CSOs to cooperate and form networks and coalitions (thus creating a genuine human rights movement) is often a key factor in carrying out successful advocacy for reforms. However, this requires a legislative and administrative environment that allows and enables freedom of association.

Support for civil society in developing countries has other challenges too. For example:

- Some CSOs and NSAs have been linked to human rights violations.
- Not all CSOs have a membership base, and their legitimacy and accountability should also not be taken for granted.

Limited capacity of role players

Capacity is required to perform the functions of an accountable and legitimate state – but capacity is often limited in developing countries. For people to be able to claim their rights and make demands:

- Civil society must be able to support poor people to acquire a voice in decision-making.
- The judiciary must uphold (and be able to uphold) justice and the rule of law.
- Political parties and parliaments must exercise (and be able to exercise) their role as formal representatives of the people, and provide (and be able to provide) checks and balances on government power.

Opposition and resistance to change

Human rights and democracy are sensitive issues that go to the heart of power relations and politics. They are simultaneously under pressure and in demand. Strengthened democracy and increased realisation of human rights can limit power structures and lead to loss of influence and resources for powerful individuals and groups in society. This in turn can lead to opposition and resistance to change. It is crucial to understand these forces and to acknowledge the political character of the issues involved while still maintaining a clear vision of the importance of democracy and human rights.

Human rights are not realised overnight, and democratic societies are not built by the mere adherence to basic principles. Both are continuous processes:

- Democracy must be constantly deepened and adapted to meet challenges in society, and cannot be confined to a single model.
- Human rights must be continuously respected and promoted according to international and national obligations.

Denmark recognises that these processes must be people-driven and rooted in the local society. This is a lengthy process and in recognition of this, Denmark will apply a comprehensive and long-term perspective, acknowledging that progress might be uneven and that backlashes may occur.

The deepening of democracy and the realisation of human rights must also be pursued with in-depth knowledge and understanding of the overall governance situation, and how this is shaped by the general development of each country and domestic, regional and international influences. These factors must be taken into account throughout the design and implementation of Danish development assistance to ensure that the most adequate means are constantly applied.

Aid effectiveness

The 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness commits donors and development partners to increasing their efforts to harmonise, align and manage aid for results, with a set of monitorable actions and indicators. In keeping with the Paris Declaration, such efforts should be based on national strategies and priorities and undertaken in close cooperation with partner countries. This approach requires that local actors be given a certain degree of discretion when deciding on relevant initiatives in their countries.

The 2008 Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) aims to accelerate and deepen the implementation of the Paris Declaration. The AAA contains a strong political commitment that:

“Developing countries and donors will ensure that their respective development policies and programmes are designed and implemented in ways consistent with agreed international commitments on human rights, gender equality, disability and environmental sustainability.”
(AAA, 13 (c)).

The Danish Government supports the emphasis on democratic ownership reflected in the AAA. It recognises that implementing the principles and commitments of the Paris Declaration and the AAA will advance human rights and democratisation by improving the effectiveness of development cooperation in these areas. At the same time, applying human rights and democratic principles to development will advance the implementation of the Paris Declaration and the AAA by building on experiences and approaches from these fields - further anchoring the development process with the very people it aims to support, especially with regard to ownership and mutual accountability.

For example, donor and developing countries can support broad-based, national ownership of the development agenda; improve inclusive participation in decision-making; and broaden and deepen ownership of development processes by:

- Including parliaments in support to be provided; and
- Ensuring that adequate funds are allocated to capacity development for civil society (especially those organisations representing minorities and marginalised and vulnerable groups).

These principles of aid effectiveness will therefore continue to govern Denmark’s support for democratisation and human rights.

Mutual accountability using the existing human rights framework

Since the human rights framework (standards and institutions) is essentially a global accountability framework, donors and developing countries can use it to help develop concepts and practices of mutual accountability. It provides an opportunity for framing the concept of accountability based on mutually agreed standards and within a pre-existing and internationally recognised normative framework. Furthermore, human rights accountability processes demonstrate that public accountability can be most effectively achieved by engaging a broad range of stakeholders.

Denmark will endeavour to make use of the existing human rights framework to ensure mutual accountability with developing countries, and will strive to accommodate and incorporate new and emerging thinking on aid and domestic accountability.

6. Strategic priorities for Danish support

6.1 Thematic areas and strategic priorities

Thematic areas

Danish engagement will centre on two thematic areas:

- Deepening democracy; and
- Realising human rights.

The strategic priorities and guiding principles for these thematic areas are discussed in more detail in the sections that follow.

Strategic priorities

The strategic priorities outlined below relate to Danish bilateral cooperation regarding:

- Thematic programmes in support of democratisation and human rights; and
- Mainstreaming of crosscutting issues in sector programmes.

These priorities also serve to support political dialogue in partner countries, and dialogue and cooperation with multilateral actors.

Focusing on the strategic priorities in this paper does not rule out Danish financial support to other areas of democratisation and human rights. Such financing will continue to take place on the basis of country-specific needs, programme design, and funding modalities (amongst other criteria). Joint donor funding of broader programmes is also correctly increasing in partner countries and Denmark is committed to engaging in joint approaches supporting democratisation and human rights. It will take advantage of the opportunities presented and meet the challenges related to such engagements. Likewise, Denmark will continue to support international efforts undertaken by various international organisations working with human rights and democratisation issues of special interest.

Note

Detailed guidance on implementing the strategic priorities in bilateral and multilateral development assistance will follow in a number of focused “how-to-notes”.

The strategic priorities outlined in the current strategy are complemented by Danish papers on support to:

- Effective and accountable public sector management;
- Gender equality;
- Indigenous peoples’ rights;
- Children and youth; and
- Civil society.

Further Reading

A full list of these publications appears in Chapter 10 - References.

While the current strategy builds on the strategic guidance in these other papers, it focuses on the overall agenda of deepening democracy and realising human rights.

6.2 Deepening democracy

For two decades, Denmark has provided substantial support for the promotion of democracy in all partner countries selected for programme cooperation, and in other countries receiving Danish development assistance (such as those undergoing a transition and fragile states). This support has focused on:

- Constitution-building.
- Electoral systems and parliaments.
- Promoting popular participation.
- Gender equality and the empowerment of women.
- Civic education.

Denmark's experience in these areas, combined with recent international development analyses and lessons learnt provides a good vantage point for future Danish engagement in deepening democracy.

Denmark's support to deepening of democracy will focus on:

- The promotion of democratic political processes by institutions and political parties; and
- The promotion of popular participation and ensuring a voice for poor and marginalised groups.

Denmark will engage in continuous political dialogue with partner countries and other development partners on the fundamental values, norms and priorities that guide political practice, and how these affect people's participation and voice. To ensure sustainability, Danish support will be linked to wider efforts to deepen democracy rather than evolving in isolation.

6.2.1 Promoting democratic political processes

Guiding principles – promoting democratic political processes

Denmark will:

- Promote the strengthening of democratic institutions, their accountability and political practice.
- Support the development of pluralist political systems based on accountable and legitimate political parties.
- Support parliamentary development as a key domestic mechanism of democracy and ensure that parliamentary strengthening is addressed in Danish support and political dialogue.
- Promote a democratic political culture through interaction between institutions, civil society and political actors.

Various processes and institutions make up the political practice in any country. These processes and institutions include parliamentary work, political parties, electoral processes, civil society, the media, local governance, independent mechanisms of accountability, and gender equality.

Denmark will strengthen processes and institutions that enforce political practices based on non-discrimination, accountability, legitimacy and transparency within a framework of respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law.

Experiences and challenges

From a donor perspective, democratisation was for many years seen as a matter of supporting the establishment of formal institutions (such as election commissions to run free and fair elections), parliament and a free media. This view was based on an understanding of democratisation as a linear course of development with occasional minor setbacks.

It is now recognised that democratisation is about processes of political change. Democratisation affects how power is distributed, used, contested and controlled. Because it is usually based on compromises between different elites and socio-economic interests in society, some individuals and groups will therefore resist changes to the rules of the game.

Apart from establishing formal institutions, democratisation requires the development of political practices by institutions that allow for accountability mechanisms and participation in decision-making by all segments of society. To ensure non-discrimination, accountability, legitimacy and transparency, the development of a democratic political practice must address various levels and actors as well as their linkages with each other.

There is a growing recognition of the vital role of support for parliaments and political parties in democratisation and the adverse effects of shying away from engaging with them. Not only do these connect people with their government, they also:

- Provide a forum for representing and expressing the will of the people through a formalised accountability mechanism; and
- Provide avenues for promoting political change.

It is now widely recognised that all democratisation efforts should complement and reinforce each other and that promoting democracy is political in nature. The transition to democracy typically reflects compromises and changing power relations between various socio-economic groups and cannot be reduced to technical inputs.

New avenues must therefore be found to ensure effective support to developing pluralist political systems in partner countries. Lessons learned point to the need:

- For a realistic vision of the roles, potential and needs of parliaments and political parties.
- For support and cooperation to be demand-driven and to focus on drivers of change.
- For a strategic focus on the chains of accountability between different domestic accountability institutions.
- To address the political character of the process, including political demands, power structures and political behaviour.

Support for strengthening the capacity of political parties must be based on a non-exclusive approach and clear criteria, including respect for human rights. It must also promote dialogue and cooperation between political parties.

Possible entry points for engagement include:

- Promoting cooperation and dialogue between political parties and a democratic political culture focusing on women and youth in particular.
- Strengthening the role of parliaments and parliamentary involvement in key decision-making processes regarding national policies and budgets.
- Improved engagement with voters, media relations and good governance to increase the public legitimacy and accountability of parliaments and political parties, and to combat corruption.

Local governance also has a major impact on democratisation. Local governance concerns not only technical matters but also changes in decision-making processes and the control over resources at the national and local level. Efforts regarding local governance and democratisation must be closely coordinated to be mutually supportive. Experience shows too that local governance based on popular participation and accountability may provide more voice to women and marginalised groups and promote democratisation from the bottom up. It thus becomes an important vehicle for political change, local ownership and overall democratisation.

Note

For more on Denmark's focus on local governance, see the Strategy in Support of Effective and Accountable Public Sector Management.

6.2.2 Strengthening participation and voice

Guiding principles – strengthening participation and voice

Denmark will:

- Promote formal and informal processes and institutions that:
 - Support the participation of poor and marginalised groups in formulating and voicing their demands; and
 - Empower them to engage in democracy and take decisions regarding their own lives.
- Support free and fair elections in pursuit of long-term democratisation.
- Support a free and diverse media (and independent self-regulatory bodies) as a watchdog and platform for democratic debate with a view to:
 - Building inter-communal understanding; and
 - Forming democratic processes.
- Promote the equal participation and voice of women and men in all aspects of democracy.
- Support and stimulate cultural diversity and freedom of cultural expression.

The participation and voice of all people in society, including the poor and marginalised groups, lies at the heart of democratisation. Voice and participation is particularly important to poor people on issues that affect their right to earn a livelihood and to economic, social and cultural rights (including access to public services). Efforts to support participation and voice should make individuals aware of their rights - thereby empowering them to participate and voice their demands to their political leaders, to improve their lives, and to influence the actions of government. To be efficient, such support needs to link consistently to mechanisms that strengthen the accountability of state actors at both the national and local levels.

Support in this area encompasses:

- The promotion of women's and youth's active participation in politics in recognition of their vital importance as driving forces in achieving sustainable and democratic development.
- Ensuring equal rights for men and women, including in the areas of:
 - Property rights and family law;
 - Equal access to and control over resources; and
 - Equal opportunity to achieve political and economic influence - including freedom to make decisions about their lives.
- The pursuit of independent accountability mechanisms and a free and diverse media (including alternative means of freedom of expression).
- The right to hold an opinion and to gain access to information.
- Raising awareness of these and other rights and empowering people to claim their rights.
- Advocacy by civil society.
- Civic education.

- Promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities (such as dalits, people with disabilities, and other marginalised groups).

Experiences and challenges

It is usually very difficult for poor people to influence the shaping of political priorities and to demand action from the state. Participation in itself does not ensure that their voice is taken into account in the political process. The challenge is therefore to ensure that poor people have both the opportunity to participate and the means to assert their voice and influence.

It should also be recognised that the voices of the poor are far from homogeneous, and addressing the demands and needs arising from the population (including the poor) is not necessarily a consensual and conflict-free process. Political economy analyses of power and change in a particular country or setting should be undertaken, preferably jointly with other donors, to arrive at a deeper understanding of the interaction between formal and informal institutions, and of the incentives framework within which actors operate.

Denmark will:

- Promote the participation and voice of poor people and marginalised groups in society, thus promoting democratisation based on the rule of law, non-discrimination, accountability, legitimacy and transparency.
- Continue to support civil society in accordance with the goals set out in the Strategy for Danish Support to Civil Society in Developing Countries (December 2008).

Elections are central processes for managing competing interests, allowing people to choose their representatives and providing legitimacy to those holding political office. Elections are thus both a matter of processes and institutions, and of people's participation and voice. Most importantly, elections should not be seen as one-off events, but rather as part of the checks and balances in a long-term process of deepening democracy. Recent history has shown that elections held in unstable and dysfunctional democracies (where little attention is paid to consolidating a democratic political culture) can trigger violence and conflict. They can also possibly retard rather than advance democracy. When designing support for elections, careful attention should therefore be paid to the types of assistance, choice of partners, the political context, and how the elections fit into the overall process of democratisation.

The media is a platform for democratic debate and performs a variety of functions, including:

- Providing information for individuals to form their own opinions.
- Channelling the voice of people.
- Acting as a watchdog over other institutions.

The media is also a social, political and economic actor in its own right - defined by its own editorial positions, ownership, and the individual positions of journalists and editors.

Community radio in particular has been used to raise awareness and give voice to poor people and marginalised groups (although it has also been abused to incite violence and hatred). The rapid increase in internet access and use of mobile phones provides new opportunities for

informing and involving people that should also be considered - especially when trying to reach and give voice to young people.

The Danish Government will strengthen efforts to support a free and capable media in partner countries that allows for diverse, nuanced, inclusive and transparent public debate.

Gender equality is, and will continue to be, a key priority of Danish development cooperation. The participation of women in democracy is vital to ensuring that the needs of women and their children are taken into account by governments.

Denmark will continue to give high priority to the promotion of equal participation of men and women, and to non-discrimination in all dimensions of democracy.

6.3 Realising human rights

For two decades, Denmark has provided substantial support to the promotion of human rights in developing countries. This includes support to all partner countries selected for programme cooperation as well as other countries receiving Danish development assistance (such as fragile states and countries undergoing transitions).

Danish support has included:

- Support to legal and judicial reform.
- Support to oversight bodies (such as human rights commissions and ombudsman institutions).
- Promotion of access to justice.
- Creating enabling environments for non-state actors to monitor and advocate for human rights.

This experience, combined with recent international development analyses and lessons learnt, provides a good vantage point for future Danish engagement in this area.

Denmark will provide support towards realising human rights in developing countries with a particular focus on:

- Ensuring that structures and institutions adhere to human rights standards; and
- Supporting relationships and processes that will empower individuals to claim their rights and access to justice.

Denmark will support activities that are explicitly grounded in human rights commitments and obligations at the national level and that specifically refer to such commitments. This will include activities and efforts to:

- Increase respect for freedom of opinion and expression and greater tolerance - including issues related to combating all forms of discrimination.
- Increase access to information.
- Fight against torture, wherever it occurs.
- Promote gender equality.

- Improve compliance with the rights of the child, indigenous peoples and minorities (such as dalits).
- Continue to embed corporate social responsibility in efforts and programmes, based on the 10 principles of UN Global Compact.

Even when states have ratified human rights treaties, implementation of these can be contested, uneven and slow. Denmark acknowledges the long-term nature of these processes and will remain committed through political dialogue and development cooperation.

6.3.1. Building societies based on justice and the rule of law

Guiding principles – building societies based on justice and the rule of law

Denmark will:

- Be guided by international human rights standards and obligations in its activities to support justice and the rule of law.
- Support sector-wide approaches to justice reform with due respect for the functional independence of the judiciary and other independent institutions. This includes improving justice institutions and the linkages between them.
- Maintain a balanced approach to state, government and civil society. Where applicable, coalitions and partnerships will be built between the various stakeholders in the sector.

The justice sector offers a means of resolving disputes and preventing conflicts. Providing support to this sector helps build societies based on justice and the rule of law, which is one of the most efficient ways of supporting the realisation of human rights.

The “justice sector” is understood here as a web of formal and informal justice delivery institutions, involving a broad range of state and non-state actors, both legislative, executive and judicial. It cuts across ministries and branches of government and includes:

- Parliaments and law reform commissions
- Ministries of justice and the interior
- Police and prison services
- Public prosecutors
- The judiciary and quasi-judicial institutions
- Bar associations and legal aid providers
- Civil society

Experiences and challenges

Not everyone in a society has the same access to justice. Women in particular are generally excluded and have limited access.

Research also shows that justice matters to the poor and that disputes and conflicts burden them more than other groups. Yet the formal justice system is expensive and largely inaccessible to them. Other marginalised groups - such as people with disabilities, indigenous peoples and minorities such as dalits – also often lack access and experience negative bias against them.

Corrupt judges and police officers adversely affect the rule of law and peoples trust in the justice system. Legal and judicial reform is therefore a crucial gateway to combating corruption and enabling just systems - for example, by promoting decent terms and conditions for justice personnel, and enhancing transparency and accountability in justice operations.

Civil society contributes to justice delivery in many ways - for example, through the provision of legal aid. Strong civil society involvement is also necessary to balance the focus on the supply of justice with appropriate attention to the demand side. Failing to consider justice reform holistically can marginalise civil society and limit their contribution.

Voices of the Poor

The World Bank's Voices of the Poor research from 2000 surveyed over 60,000 poor people from 60 countries. It provides a unique insight into poor people's preoccupation with safety, security and justice issues – which they ranked at the same level of importance as hunger, unemployment and lack of safe drinking water.

For more on this study, visit www.worldbank.org/poverty/voices/index.htm

To address these challenges in the justice sector, efforts should be strengthened to:

- Favour sector-wide approaches – targeting formal and informal institutions, and covering both civil and criminal law.
- Define eligibility broadly to ensure that as wide a range of institutions as possible are included.
- Ensure that support to one part of the sector contributes to the effectiveness of the sector as a whole.
- Encourage reforms that are aligned with national plans and procedures and pay due regard to human rights.

Examples of sector-wide support include:

- Vision development and strategic sector planning based on human rights values and standards.
- Measures to promote the separation of powers and the maintenance of judicial independence – although care must be taken that 'judicial independence' is not used by the judiciary to oppose and obstruct reform.
- Strengthening of national legal aid schemes involving ministries of justice, bar associations and civil society.
- Efforts to create links between formal and informal systems of justice - for example, by linking courts with other, informal mechanisms of justice.

In fragile states and fragile situations, support to transitional justice can lead to conciliation and help lay the groundwork for new, credible and legitimate justice delivery institutions. At the very least, support to transitional justice may prevent public confidence in the justice system from being undermined.

Lasting stability and development in post conflict societies requires that those responsible for serious crimes and violation of human rights be held accountable. Denmark will support national efforts to strengthen the fight against impunity.

Transitional justice

Transitional justice can take many forms - from international tribunals (such as the International Criminal Court), national prosecution, truth and reconciliation bodies, and traditional justice mechanisms.

Establishing justice and the rule of law go to the heart of societal development. But justice sector reforms aimed at ensuring equal access to justice for all face sensitive and complex issues of power, poverty and inequality. Recognising this, Denmark will place clear emphasis on poor people and marginalised groups in society in its sectoral approach.

6.3.2. Strengthening national human rights oversight

Guiding principles – strengthening national human rights oversight

Denmark will:

- Promote autonomous and independent national human rights institutions to monitor and report on human rights issues.
- Encourage political commitment by states to ensuring national human rights institutions that have the necessary mandate and adequate resources to perform their functions.
- Encourage national human rights institutions to cooperate with government and civil society (including the media), the UN, and regional human rights bodies.

The implementation of human rights standards and obligations at the national level requires strong national human rights institutions (NHRIs). These are quasi-governmental or statutory bodies with human rights as part of their mandates – the most common being:

- National human rights commissions.
- Ombudsman institutions.
- Thematic commissions - such as women’s commissions, equal opportunity commissions and commissions for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Although they are established by the state, NHRIs are positioned between civil society and the executive branch of government. They therefore have the ability to bridge the divide between the state and government, on the one hand, and civil society on the other. They have access to

government, civil society and the media, and can build alliances with these to respect, protect and promote human rights.

National human rights commissions are central to protecting, promoting and monitoring the realisation of rights in developing countries, fragile states and situations of fragility. They are usually mandated to:

- Monitor the state of human rights in their country.
- Investigate complaints of human rights violations.
- Advise government (for example, by reviewing draft legislation and policies for compliance with human rights).
- Work with civil society and the media to inform the public about human rights violations.
- Conduct public education and awareness on human rights.

Ombudsman institutions usually deal with matters of maladministration in the public sector. In some cases, they may also investigate complaints by individuals or groups about violations of their human rights.

Thematic commissions usually focus on monitoring and advocacy in relation to disadvantaged and marginalised groups.

Because it has the potential to create a strong base for the realisation of human rights, the media provides for a complementary counterpart to NHRIs. This mutually reinforcing and protective relationship between the media and NHRIs can ward off attempts to exert political influence over both - with NHRIs being able to raise violations of freedom of expression and press freedom; and the media overseeing the actions of NHRIs and their independence from government, political groups and vested interests.

Denmark will continue to prioritise the national implementation of human rights standards by supporting domestic mechanisms like the above that monitor and report on the human rights implementation process.

Experiences and challenges

Although NHRIs are on the increase around the world, those in developing countries continue to face challenges and obstacles that donors can assist to address and overcome:

- Levels of independence and impartiality of NHRIs vary greatly from one to the next.
- Some countries set up NHRIs to create the illusion of respect for human rights. They then hamper their work by giving them narrow mandates and inadequate and unsustainable funding.
- In some cases, commissioners appointed to the institutions are political appointees or lack the required expertise.

The UN has prioritised NHRIs because of their potential to radically improve respect for and compliance with human rights at the domestic level. For example:

- The establishment and strengthening of NHRIs is a major priority of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, which provides significant support in this area.
- The UN has developed criteria for the establishment of NHRIs (the Paris Principles), which aim to improve independence and impartiality and create a yardstick against which NHRIs may be measured.

UN Paris Principles

The Paris Principles deal with the establishment, status and functioning of NHRIs. They were adopted by the UN General Assembly on 20 December 1993 and provide guidance to NHRIs on:

- Their competence and responsibilities.
- Composition and guarantees of independence and pluralism.
- Methods of operation.

The focus on NHRIs by the UN provides Denmark with the opportunity to cooperate with key multilateral partners in the field of human rights at the country level. It also allows Denmark to link experiences and dialogue at the national level with cooperation and dialogue at the international and normative levels.

NHRIs are part of a global movement that includes international, regional and national networks of human rights role players (including civil society and the media) that require support. Building linkages with civil society also strengthens human rights oversight at the national level. Civil society should therefore also be supported - especially where NHRIs have yet to be established or are weak.

6.3.3. Empowerment and enabling access to justice for the poor and marginalised

Guiding principles – empowerment and enabling access to justice for the poor and marginalised

Denmark will:

- Support access to justice for the poor, women and the marginalised.
- Increase its focus on informal justice systems - with particular attention to the respect for human rights.
- Support civil society organisations to assist people to formulate their demands, carry out advocacy and provide legal assistance to poor and disadvantaged groups.

Limiting anyone's access to justice is in effect a denial of justice. Without ensuring that all members of society enjoy equal access to justice, donor support to strengthening the rule of law may only reinforce the privileges of those who can afford justice's costs. Poor and marginalised groups in particular are often discriminated against and excluded by formal justice institutions.

Improving access to justice therefore often requires discrimination and exclusion to be addressed and overcome. Discrimination and exclusion are key causes of poverty, conflict and fragility – but by focusing rigorously on access to justice, the disadvantaged (including poor

men and women, people with disabilities, indigenous peoples and other minorities such as dalits) can be supported to:

- Claim and protect their rights through the formal and informal systems of justice.
- Make effective demands.
- Trust the system enough to make use of it.
- Increase opportunities, and abilities, to benefit from and participate in development.

Denmark will pay particular attention to the obstacles the poor face when trying to access justice. This will include support to:

- Improving knowledge of basic rights through education and information.
- Making legal services accessible – physically, and in terms of language, procedures, and the availability of affordable legal aid, lawyers, paralegals, mediators and defendants (all of an acceptable standard).
- Victims of crime.
- Strengthening frameworks, procedures and mechanisms for addressing civil or administrative matters - for example, birth, marriage and businesses registration; and disputes over family relations, inheritance, land tenure and labour rights.

Since the formal system is often inaccessible, ignoring the informal justice system may exclude large segments of society from any access to justice. However, because the informal system includes a wide range of systems, support to it must be context-driven and based on respect for human rights. For example, it could include:

- Paralegal representation.
- Human rights awareness-raising activities in connection with the systems operating closest to the poor and disadvantaged.
- Support to alternative dispute resolution and rights-aligned community mediation - which helps to bridge the gap between the formal and informal systems of justice.

The informal justice system

The informal justice system differs from country to country and might include:

- Traditional systems conducted by hereditary, traditional or religious authorities.
- Semi-formal systems conducted by elected or appointed authorities.
- Modern systems of alternative conflict resolution (such as mediation or arbitration), some of which target business communities.

Customary law in particular is a difficult area, riddled with dilemmas and contradictions. Its rules and norms are seldom reduced to writing and are subject to manipulation - creating potential battlefields of power and violating human rights. The most usual area of discrimination is gender and, as a result, women (and their children) often lose out in the administration of customary law.

Experiences and challenges

To ensure a pro-poor approach, activities supporting access to justice must specifically target the poor and marginalised. These groups face major barriers to justice, including:

- Remote, slow, expensive, discriminatory, corrupt and unfair services.

- Lack of awareness of their rights.
- Intimidating and complex justice institutions and processes.

In many developing countries, only a small percentage of the population have access to courts in urban centres and informal justice systems are often far more accessible. Promoting alternatives to the formal judiciary as a vehicle for conflict resolution improves access to justice, reduces its costs, and helps to alleviate the burden on the formal system.

However, international actors are still coming to terms with the linkages between the formal and informal justice systems and examples of good practice remain few and far between. Supplementing support to the formal justice system with support to the informal system can lead to real dilemmas for donors. Although various strategies are being tried, it will take time before attempts to address these dilemmas can be measured against results on the ground. To address this, Denmark will only support informal systems of justice that respect human rights, or that are willing and able to change norms and practices that infringe on human rights.

Legislation too is often negatively biased against women or gender-insensitive, obstructing access to justice for women in many countries. Even where there is formal legal equality, women often face institutional bias in state and non-state justice institutions, and prejudice and discrimination from justice sector personnel. Structural inequalities (such as lack of time and access to resources and education) also affect women's ability to use justice institutions.

Knowledge of equal rights is a precondition for claiming them. These concerns need to be addressed in the design of justice interventions to ensure that the rights of both women and men are realised. Denmark will pay particular attention to the challenges faced by women in relation to gaining access to property and land.

7. Making better use of global partners

Guiding principles – making better use of global partners

Denmark will:

- Actively promote the vision and values outlined in this strategy and in the Danish strategy for the Government's approach to international human rights work from 2009 in relevant international and regional forums - such as the UN, EU, CoE, OSCE, OECD-DAC and international financial institutions (particularly the World Bank).
- Create linkages between efforts at the multilateral level (such as the UN and EU), and efforts to promote democratisation and human rights at country level.
- Include observations and recommendations from UN treaty bodies and special procedures in Danish bilateral assistance.
- Support international bodies (such as UN development organisations) to strengthen their human rights service, capacities and coordination.
- Strengthen cooperation with international NGOs that promote democracy and human rights.

The United Nations (UN), regional human rights bodies, and civil society movements work across boundaries and straddle national territories. This gives human rights and democratisation unique positions as global themes with global actors. It also creates the potential for deepening democracy and realising human rights through mutually reinforcing efforts at global, regional and local levels.

United Nations

Multilateral institutions such as the UN (particularly the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Human Rights Council) are responsible for setting standards and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms. Decisions and recommendations by the international community are important for deepening democracy and realising human rights and must be used in both multilateral and bilateral development cooperation with partner countries.

UN organisations, funds and programmes play an important role in advancing the objectives described in this paper at the operational level. This is especially true of the UN Development Programme (UNDP), which directly and indirectly supports institutions and programming approaches aimed at strengthening the protection of human rights and democratic governance.

The comparative advantages of the UN system are its universality, legitimacy and global presence. These must be taken into account when designing and implementing Danish support for democratisation and human rights.

Denmark will maintain its commitment to the UN's human rights and democratisation efforts in a development context by:

- Continued and focused financial contributions to the UN, its funds and programmes - including working to ensure that the UN is able to carry out its mandate at the country level; and
- Taking part in joint donor coordination and formulation of UN priorities and strategies. This will be done through continued dialogue at all levels and active Danish participation in the boards of individual funds and programmes.

Treaty bodies (and other UN entities) produce analyses and recommendations that donors can use to inspire political dialogue, guide the design of programmes, and set the framework for monitoring activities. Denmark will make use of such observations and recommendations in support of human rights and democratisation.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has regional and country offices that both monitor human rights on the ground and implement projects. Where relevant, Denmark will strengthen synergies between bilateral and multilateral activities by cooperating more closely with the OHCHR in each country. Country-specific recommendations will also guide the implementation and monitoring of progress.

UN monitoring mechanisms and bodies

The UN system has various human rights monitoring mechanisms and bodies, including:

- The Human Rights Council (and the special procedures on country situations or thematic issues established by it).
- The newly established Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council.

Independent treaty-based bodies also monitor the implementation of core international human rights treaties.

European Union

The European Union (EU) is a key international actor in the field of democratisation and human rights. The EU:

- Has established a European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.
- Is engaged in human rights and political dialogue with various countries. It is thus an important partner for cooperation with partner countries where Denmark is not represented by a bilateral mission.
- Supports human rights and democratisation in many countries, within the framework of the Communication on Governance in the European Consensus on Development and the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR).
- Has a unique presence in many fragile states, as well as a range of instruments to engage in dialogue and provide support in fragile states and situations.

Denmark will increasingly engage in dialogue and cooperation on matters of human rights and democratisation with the European Commission and other member states within the framework of the EU. Strategic priorities for this cooperation will include:

- Strengthening EU assistance to governance, democratisation and human rights.
- Further harmonisation of development cooperation between Member States and the Commission in partner countries.
- Advocating for improved collaboration at country level with relevant national, regional and international partners.
- Specific support to strengthening EU's efforts in fragile states and situations.

- Continued strong Danish engagement in the EU's political dialogue with partner countries.
- Support to on-going, cross-pillar efforts to improve synergy and coordination on issues of human rights and democratisation in the EU's external relations.

Denmark will also increase synergies between our efforts in relevant forums in the EU and our bilateral programmes.

Regional and inter-regional institutions and organisations

Africa and Latin America in particular have established regional institutions with mandates to promote democratisation and human rights. Regional and sub-regional organisations also play a significant role within the field.

The range of regional and inter-regional institutions and organisations include:

- African Union
- African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
- African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights
- The New Partnership for Africa's Development and African Peer Review Mechanism
- African Development Bank
- Economic Community of West African States
- Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
- Inter-American Court of Human Rights
- Organisation of American States
- Association of Southeast Asian Nations
- League of Arab States

These institutions and bodies are natural and important partners for Danish cooperation.

Denmark will continue to contribute to their strengthening, as well as to efforts to further cooperation with multilateral organisations such as the UN, World Bank and the EU.

Programmes supported by Denmark will actively take into account regional and inter-regional institutions and bodies, and regional political dialogue will be maintained with relevant partners (bilaterally and multilaterally).

European institutions

The Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe are crucial regional actors.

- The Council of Europe (CoE) promotes and monitors human rights, democracy and the rule of law through its monitoring mechanisms and programme activities. The European Convention on Human Rights and the case law of the European Court of Human Rights also play an important role in this context.
- The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) promotes human rights, democratisation and the rule of law in its member states. The OSCE's Office for

Democratic Institutions and Human Rights has a particular focus on election support and minority rights.

Denmark will continue to engage in dialogue and cooperation on matters of human rights and democratisation with these bodies.

International financial institutions

The following international financial institutions are major actors at the country level:

- African Development Bank
- Asian Development Bank
- Inter-American Development Bank
- World Bank

Although having an economic mandate, these institutions have the potential to play an important role in promoting human rights and democratisation. At minimum, they have a role in ensuring that no harm is caused in these areas in the pursuit of other objectives.

Denmark will work to influence international financial institutions to this effect - particularly the World Bank, where Denmark, together with other Nordic countries, has played a central role in establishing a trust fund for human rights. The mandate of the fund will be to ensure that human rights are reflected in the Bank's analyses and operations.

International NGOs

Denmark will strengthen its cooperation with international NGOs working with human rights and democratisation issues of special interest.

8. Danish capacity for support for human rights and democracy

Effective partnership requires a partner who:

- Is capable of competently engaging in technical issues;
- Has country-specific knowledge of the sectors and areas in which support is provided; and
- Has knowledge of the political economy, and of relevant contextual factors, in individual partner countries.

Denmark will strive to live up to its responsibility as a competent and relevant partner in various ways. In particular, we will strengthen our technical and professional knowledge and competencies in relevant areas for the strategic priorities set out in this strategy, such as:

- Political dialogue on democratisation and human rights.
- Development of pluralist political systems.
- Parliamentary development.
- Legal and judicial reform (of both the formal and informal systems).
- Creating synergies between the UN human rights system and bilateral programmes.
- Capacity development.
- Domestically-based governance assessments and political stakeholder analysis.

This will be done through:

- ‘How to notes’ on selected issues to operationalise and guide implementation.
- Ensuring specialised capacity in the field of human rights and democracy.
- Developing the competence of staff at Embassies and Headquarters - where possible through joint training with other donors.
- Intensified participation in relevant international and regional forums, such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC), to:
 - Share experiences;
 - Undertake joint analytical work;
 - Engage in partnership dialogue; and
 - Influence behaviour change among donors.
- Workshops and seminars in Denmark on key issues of human rights and democratisation for consultants, NGO officials, researchers and Ministry of Foreign Affairs staff.
- Active networking and communication - through our websites (www.um.dk/en and www.danidadevforum.um.dk/en), and in seminars and conferences.

9. Monitoring

The implementation of the current strategy will be monitored:

- As an integral part of existing monitoring performed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- As part of any monitoring systems that may exist in individual partner countries.

Monitoring will cover:

- 1) Assessments of the implementation of the main elements of this strategy through:
 - Assessments by Embassies and Headquarters according to their performance contracts. This includes country assessments and assessments of progress in sector programmes submitted on an annual basis and in connection with reviews.
 - Thematic reviews and evaluations.
 - Including information from these sources in various annual reports of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding Denmark's development cooperation.
- 2) Benchmarking and monitoring of governance performance in partner countries (including issues of democratisation and human rights) through a set of country- and context-specific indicators. Benchmarking and monitoring of governance performance should preferably be conducted jointly with other development partners and partner countries.

Monitoring sources will include:

- Domestically-based governance assessments.
- Reports and recommendations from UN treaty bodies.
- Reports from UN special procedures.
- EU Governance Profiles.
- EU Country Human Rights Fact Sheets.
- World Bank Institute 'Governance Matters' indicators.
- OECD Metagora.
- IDEA, State of Democracy assessments.
- UNESCO media development indicators.
- International and national civil society reports.

Programme specific indicators will be addressed in the 'how-to' notes that will underpin this strategy and detail its operation.

10. References

United Nations

United Nations. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, General Assembly Resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948.

United Nations General Assembly. Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights 25 June 1993. A/CONF.157/23.

In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All. Report of the Secretary General. A/59/2005.

United Nations General Assembly. 2005 World Summit Outcome. A/RES/60/1. 24 October 2005.

United Nations Security Council, Report of the Secretary General, S/2004/616 of 23 August 2004.

The Paris Principles; General Assembly resolution 48/134 of 20 December 1993.

UN Fact Sheet No. 19, National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (including the 'Paris Principles') – www.unhcr.ch/html/menu6/2/fs19.htm

European Union

Cotonou Agreement between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) of June 2000.

OECD-DAC

Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, OECD-DAC, 2005.

Accra Agenda for Action, OECD-DAC, 2008.

Action-Oriented Policy Paper on Human Rights and Development, AOPP (DAC, February 2007).

Update on Human Rights and Aid Effectiveness (DAC, April 2007).

Human Rights and Aid Effectiveness: Key Actions to Improve Inter-linkages (DAC, 2008).

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Human Rights Strategy for International Cooperation.

Effective and Accountable Public Sector-Management. Strategic Priorities for Danish Support for Good Governance.

Gender Equality in Danish Development Cooperation.

Support for Indigenous Peoples. Strategy for Danish Support to Indigenous Peoples.

Children and Young People in Danish Development Cooperation – Guidelines.

Strategy for Danish Support to Civil Society in Developing Countries.