



# **STRATEGY FOR DANISH SUPPORT TO CIVIL SOCIETY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

## FOREWORD

Denmark has a century-old tradition of creating popular movements based on personal involvement. We value the right to participate in such movements just as much as we value the right to express our views and promote our interests through active participation in the public debate. These rights are enshrined in our constitution and contribute to fostering cohesion and enterprise in our society.

In Africa, Asia and Latin America, the number of popular movements and organisations – also known as civil society organisations – has increased substantially in recent years. They give millions of poor people a voice and play a vital role in the fight to promote political, economic and social freedom and combat poverty. It remains a fact, however, that civil society often faces very difficult political, organisational and economic conditions. Therefore, support aimed at strengthening a well-functioning and active civil society in developing countries is an important goal in Danish development assistance.

With the presentation of this updated strategy covering all Danish support to civil society in developing countries – whether provided directly as part of official development programmes or channeled through Danish civil society organisations – I would like to place civil society even closer to the heart of Danish development policy. The vision is that the support should contribute to expanding dialogue, democratic processes and poverty reduction both at a local, national and global level, and even stronger partnerships must be created between civil society organisations in Denmark and the developing countries. Civil society organisations must be promoted

and protected where conflict and human rights violations are most wide-spread.

The strategy has been developed in close dialogue with private Danish organisations and movements involved in development cooperation. We agree that focus must be maintained on supporting capacity building and advocacy to ensure that civil society organisations in developing countries take the lead and maximum responsibility for their own interests.

It is my hope that this updated strategy will lead to further improvement of the quality of Danish support to civil society in developing countries and in this way help more poor people fulfill their dreams and aspirations.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ulla Tørnæs".

Ulla Tørnæs  
Minister for Development Cooperation  
December 2008

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest challenges facing civil society in relation to development work is to operate within a new framework, partly defined by the principles and targets set out in the Paris Declaration. In addition, civil society plays a role in ensuring that global standards and targets are translated into national action, for example in relation to the UN Millennium Development Goals, but also in relation to international conventions and declarations on human rights. Globalisation has meant that the challenge facing civil society no longer lies only in its relations to state and market but also in its relations to the international community.

Recent years have seen growing international attention on fragile states and situations. The key task in these situations is to assist with building effective and democratic states, and in these cases there will often be a huge need for efforts and activities aimed at developing civil society's capacity and institutional strength to act as both a critic and partner of the state.

The strategy for Danish support to civil society in developing countries, *The Civil Society Strategy*, sets out a number of strategic goals for Danish support to civil society development. The most important goals are presented in the box below.

Denmark will work to ensure that:

- ✓ the framework conditions for civil society's work in developing countries are improved.
- ✓ civil society is included, nationally and internationally, in the implementation and further development of the Paris Declaration, and that civil society organisations apply relevant principles from the Paris Declaration in their activities as well as work with standards for good administration, sensible division of labour, popular foundation and inclusion of target groups in decision-making processes.
- ✓ in the cooperation with civil society organisations, particular emphasis is placed on capacity development, and that the involvement of these organisations in advocacy work is promoted locally, nationally, regionally and internationally, and that the capacity to develop and participate in national, regional and international networks is supported.
- ✓ civil society organisations engaging in efforts to ensure the implementation of international conventions and declarations on human rights are supported.
- ✓ cooperation in fragile situations take place with local, Danish and international civil society organisations on promoting human rights, stabilisation efforts and services as well as conflict prevention and reconciliation efforts.
- ✓ the objectives, goals and principles for civil society support are promoted in the dialogue with programme countries, and that relevant civil society organisations – local, Danish and international – are incorporated in the implementation of the goals set out in this strategy.

*Chapter 1* of the strategy specifies strategic goals providing the basis for the future performance measurement of the Danish development interventions in this area. *Chapter 2* analyses and summarises current challenges facing civil society. *Chapter 3* presents the basic characteristics of civil society's involvement in development work, including a description of the various types of organisations as well as the different roles that civil society performs. *Chapter 4* lists the operational principles for Danish support to development of a strong civil society. *Chap-*

*ter 5* contains a review of the different forms of cooperation used in connection with Danish contributions to development activities implemented by civil society organisations. *Chapter 6* presents civil society's special tasks in connection with popular foundation, whilst *Chapter 7* elaborates on how the strategy will be implemented in practice.

# 1. OBJECTIVE AND GOALS FOR DANISH SUPPORT

## 1.1. The overarching objective

The overarching objective of Danish development assistance is to reduce poverty by promoting:

- sustainable development through broad-based, pro-poor economic growth with equal participation by men and women
- human development through expansion of the social welfare sectors, including education and health
- democratisation and popular participation in the development process, the establishment of a rule of law, and good governance as prerequisites for the stability of economic, social, and political progress.

Civil society actors contribute to promoting people's right to organise, express views and formulate demands and expectations to public authorities and other actors. This is an important prerequisite for long-term poverty reduction and promotion of democratisation, and also creates both inclusiveness and cohesion in society.

**The long-term overarching objective of Danish civil society support is to contribute to the development of a strong, independent and diversified civil society in developing countries.**

## 1.2. The strategic goals

In order to achieve the long-term objective, the following strategic goals apply to Danish support to civil society development in developing countries:

### 1.2.1. Promotion of a vibrant and open debate nationally and internationally

- ✓ Denmark will, together with civil society actors, endeavour to promote a vibrant and open debate on poverty reduction, nationally and internationally.
- ✓ Denmark will work for the establishment of a better framework for civil society's participation and work in developing countries in relation to, for example, national legislation, cooperation processes and public financing.
- ✓ Denmark will contribute to ensuring the involvement of civil society in the implementation and further development of the Paris Declaration, nationally and internationally.

In countries with scarce resources, social inequality and weak institutions, many civil society organisations perform a vital role through their efforts to ensure that marginalised population groups are given a voice and through their ability to monitor how resources are used to reduce poverty. A strong civil society creates a necessary balance in the development of society that would otherwise be dominated by the private sector's economic resources and the state's wish to uphold supervisory control and authority. Furthermore, many organisations generate debate about democracy and rights in situations where



A local committee is planning a campaign against female genital mutilation in Benin.



legislation and authorities do not effectively guarantee law and order. It is such potential in civil society that Denmark particularly wishes to strengthen.

Support to development of a strong and diversified civil society can lead to discussion – and sometimes also confrontation – when discrepancies between words and action are evidenced in the priorities of governments. It is therefore important to recognise civil society organisations as important players in the political arena, provided that Denmark is not exploited for political party purposes.

The formalisation of civil society's rights and responsibility in national legislation, the development of management principles incorporating citizens in dialogue, and the development of forms of support that promote independence and sustainability can contribute to reducing confrontation and promoting constructive dialogue and public debate.

For Denmark, it is absolutely crucial that Danish development cooperation supports locally rooted strategies and poverty reduction plans. Ownership of these strategies and plans is broadened through democratic processes and the involvement of civil society in their formulation. National ownership and greater harmonisation of donor initiatives are the cornerstone of the Paris Declaration.

### 1.2.2. Promotion of a representative, legitimate and locally based civil society

- ✓ Denmark will strive to encourage civil society organisations to apply relevant principles from the Paris Declaration in their work, such as local ownership, use of and adaptation to local systems, harmonisation and coordination of efforts, and results-orientation.
- ✓ Denmark will place greater emphasis on civil society organisations in developing countries working with standards for good governance, sensible division of labour, popular foundation and inclusion of target groups in decision-making processes.
- ✓ Denmark will support a diversity of civil society organisations, so as to ensure that the needs and circumstances of many different groups can be addressed.

Even though the Paris Declaration is generally designed for use by the official aid organisations, it contains a number of principles that civil society can draw benefit from. This applies particularly to the development of partnerships between Danish organisations and their partners in developing countries. International civil society networks and alliances are involved in interesting initiatives aimed at reducing transaction costs and strengthening harmonisation.

The **Paris Declaration** was adopted in March 2005 by more than 100 countries and international organisations, which committed themselves to increasing the effectiveness of development aid. The Declaration focuses particularly on national ownership and adaptation to the recipient country's strategies, plans and systems as well as harmonisation of donor cooperation. This is designed to ensure a more results-oriented development assistance and mutual accountability between donors and recipient country.

Many organisations are confronted with enormous challenges in relation to developing and adapting the organisation's structure and operation to new conditions and opportunities. These challenges concern, for example, the role played by management, the interaction between members and other actors, as well as the development of the necessary professional competencies. This includes their adaptability as well as their willingness and ability to explain and account for goals and results to members, public authorities and the general public.

Denmark wishes to strengthen the popular foundation of civil society actors in developing countries and thereby increase their relevance and legitimacy. In all contexts, civil society's role in organising, mobilising and engaging popular involvement should be promoted. National organisations must take the lead rather than external actors.

Marginalised people have very different circumstances and needs, and therefore there is a need for varied and broad efforts, in which the diversity of civil society organisations is a goal in itself. This diversity gives civil society the legitimacy and potential to ensure that the voices of marginalised groups are heard.

### 1.2.3. Promotion of capacity development, advocacy work and networking opportunities

- ✓ Denmark will, in cooperation with civil society organisations, emphasise capacity development, and that civil society actors in developing countries assume full ownership and independent responsibility for preparing and implementing activities.
- ✓ Denmark will promote the involvement of civil society organisations in advocacy work – locally, nationally, regionally and internationally.
- ✓ Denmark will support the capacity of civil society organisations to establish, develop and participate in national, regional and international networks.

Civil society organisations receiving Danish support must base their work on a broad understanding of the cultural, social and political reality in which the organisations operate. Particular importance is attached to their ability to take due note of current governmental policy and ongoing public initiatives. The organisations are expected to have carefully mapped and assessed the opportunities for collaboration with other actors – be they other civil society organisations or public authorities – within the field covered by the planned activities.

Particular importance is therefore attached to supporting civil society's ability to engage in active and critical dialogue with relevant authorities. In specific terms, support can be allocated to organisational and capacity development, to enhancing the organisations' ability to conduct information campaigns and

advocacy, and to enabling the organisations to participate in networks with like-minded organisations.

One of civil society's special features – and one of its decisive strengths – is the diversity represented by different organisations. At the same time, however, there is also a growing recognition of the value of strong networks and effective forms of cooperation.

Denmark wishes to see the creation of networks promoted nationally, regionally and internationally, and preferably with the participation of civil society organisations from both donor and developing countries, in which representatives and organisations from developing countries are placed centre stage and given real influence and voice. By means of knowledge sharing, coordinated efforts and joint planning and management, the objective of such networks is typically to contribute to the delivery of more effective assistance and better impact nationally, regionally and locally. The contribution of Danish organisations to this network creation process is important also for promoting the Civil Society Strategy's goals in a broader international context.

#### 1.2.4. Promotion of focus on rights

- ✓ Denmark will strengthen cooperation with civil society organisations seeking to ensure the implementation of international conventions and declarations concerning human rights, such as rights for women, children, people with disabilities, indigenous people and other particularly vulnerable population groups.

Every person has the right, either alone or together with others, to promote and strive for protection and realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, both nationally and internationally. Even though the state is the primary body responsible for promoting and protecting human rights, civil society organisations, including human rights activists, play an important role in promoting these rights and freedoms, for instance by supporting local and national authorities in their efforts to live up to this responsibility.

Through the support to civil society, Denmark will build advocacy capacity and ability in organisations which inform about rights, document violations, assist victims and fight against impunity cultures. Support can also be awarded to organisations working to reduce poverty through a rights-based approach.

The **rights-based approach** takes its starting point in universal human rights and seeks to give women, men and children in developing countries tools with which to express and exercise their rights, including, for example, the right to food, education and protection.

Besides support for the promotion of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, special attention will be given to implementing conventions and other international declarations for promoting rights of women, children, people with disabilities, indigenous people and other particularly vulnerable population groups as well as fighting against torture.

For organisations engaged in human rights protection, participation in national, regional and international networks is especially important, because it gives access to both knowledge sharing and protection of human rights activists against harm and injustice.



Women in Nepal, where Denmark among other activities supports capacity development of organisations seeking to promote womens rights.

### 1.2.5. Promotion of flexible and relevant interventions in fragile states and situations

- ✓ Denmark will, in fragile situations, work to foster cooperation with local, Danish and international civil society organisations on promoting human rights, stabilisation efforts and services as well as conflict prevention and reconciliation efforts.
- ✓ Denmark will contribute to ensuring flexible conditions enabling civil society support in fragile situations to be adapted to difficult working conditions, and will create a better transition between short-term humanitarian action and long-term development assistance.

An effective civil society is crucial for building effective and democratic states. Through civil society interventions, Denmark will support a positive development in fragile situations. In some situations, the state, the market and the civil society are all considerably weakened after years of conflict or large-scale disasters. In these situations, it is absolutely vital that the state becomes able to take responsibility for basic functions and able to deliver security, stability, social services and reconstruction as quickly as possible. Civil society organisations play a decisive role as partners in the reconstruction of public institutions and in certain cases as suppliers of essential and stabilising services when the state is unable to do so. Food security, health, water and education are examples of areas where non-governmental organisations can provide strong contributions in a transitional situation. Simultaneously, there will often be a need to provide genuine public information,

such as instruction in civic duty, human rights and democracy. In both spheres, local, Danish and international organisations can play an important role.

In countries where the state performs its basic functions effectively, but does not give space for democratic development and popular participation, support to services can be an important way of enabling civil society to develop.

Efforts and initiatives in fragile situations require good interplay between humanitarian assistance on the one hand and support to civil society development on the other. In the future, opportunities should be created for civil society support to combine better with and complement efforts and activities presently financed through humanitarian assistance. This requires that support in these situations can be planned flexibly with the particular – often very changeable – context in mind.

Flexibility and risk-taking, however, does not mean that civil society's role as an advocate for the rights of the poor and the weak should be compromised by complex construction projects, where bricks and mortar become more crucial than people and opinions. On the contrary, the flexibility, effectiveness and focus on poor and marginalised groups must be utilised in the best possible manner.

### 1.2.6. Promotion of civil society support in Danish bilateral and multilateral assistance

- ✓ Denmark will strategically and proactively promote the goals and principles for civil society support in development cooperation and in the dialogue with partners in programme countries.
- ✓ Denmark will work for the involvement of relevant civil society organisations in the planning, formulation, implementation and monitoring of official bilateral assistance.
- ✓ Denmark will apply principles and goals in the civil society support in connection with the ongoing engagement in multilateral contexts.

The Civil Society Strategy has a global objective in relation to overall Danish development assistance. Special efforts within bilateral assistance have strong relevance for the overarching objective of building a strong civil society. This applies in the programme countries, where many sector programmes (SPS – sector programme support) contain components that incorporate participation of civil society actors. Correspondingly, a substantial proportion of the local grant authority of embassies is used to support civil society projects.

In several of the Danish programme countries, the civil society organisations – particularly faith-based aid organisations – continue to have a considerable responsibility for important parts of health and education interventions due to the government's lack of capacity, resources and – in certain cases – political resolve. Support to the efforts of civil society organisations

in this area can be incorporated as an element in Danish supported sector programmes. However, it is important to keep in mind that civil society organisations should not be reduced to solely being sub-contractors of social services.



With the help from a private organisation the village Tabacoro in the Danish programme country Mali now has electricity, clean water and evening classes for women.

Denmark assumes a central role in ensuring that civil society play a democratic and critical role in development of society in the programme countries and in other countries which are recipients of official Danish development assistance. This will take place in close collaboration with the countries' authorities, other donors and in open and active dialogue with national and thematic networks of civil society organisations. Civil

society's role in development assistance will also continuously be part of Denmark's multilateral cooperation.

Civil society organisations in programme countries and internationally should present their goals and needs to Denmark and other donors. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Danish representations should on their side be responsive and in possession of a good contact network. Targeted efforts within public diplomacy can also contribute to positioning Denmark as a relevant and effective actor.

**'Public diplomacy'** is a special focus area in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark. It constitutes an integrated element of the diplomatic work carried out in both the service abroad and the home service. The objective of 'public diplomacy' is to strengthen awareness and knowledge about Denmark and Danish strongholds as well as to ensure that Danish interests are safeguarded and promoted internationally – economically, politically and culturally. The efforts are directed at opinion-formers and decision-makers abroad, including organisations, think-tanks, research institutions, media, enterprises, etc.

### 1.2.7. Involvement of Danish civil society organisations in development assistance

- ✓ Danish civil society organisations will also in future be involved in the implementation of the goals of this strategy. This requires that the organisations:
  - set clear targets for, and regularly assess their contributions to, promoting local ownership in the partnerships with civil society organisations in developing countries.
  - set clear priorities for their interventions with respect to country focus, sector and partner choice, with a point of departure in their professional competencies.
  - strengthen their results-orientation, including evaluation of the impact of activities in relation to the achievement of this strategy's long-term objective.
  - set clear goals for, and regularly assess the strengthening of their popular foundation and networks in Denmark.

Danish civil society organisations play an important role in overall Danish development cooperation. Their contributions can inject a people-to-people dimension into the interventions that create greater understanding and support in Denmark. The active involvement of partners in developing countries can ensure exchange of ideas and mutual learning of benefit to civil society activities in both Denmark and developing countries. The large number of Danish voluntary organisations that participate in development assistance is in itself valuable, because it ensures the involvement of wider sections of the Danish population.



The role of Danish civil society organisations is to support development of capacity among their partners in developing countries with the aim of enabling these partners to promote and safeguard the interests of their members and support base and to engage in advocacy work and relevant development activities. This presupposes establishment of a partnership that stretches beyond a specific project.

This division of roles, the complexity of the development issues, the rising level of competence in developing countries as well as globalisation all mean that increasingly greater demands are placed on the professional capacity of the Danish organisations. Danish organisations must not simply be a channel of funding, but must, among other things, build up core competencies where they can make a difference and help develop new innovative models.

It is important that the individual organisation itself identifies its role in the partnerships, with a point of departure in its own mandate and organisational set-up. And it is important that the cooperation between Danish private organisations and their partners changes in step with globalisation and new communication forms and with the changes that civil society undergoes throughout the world. Furthermore, it is important that the Danish organisations use their comparative advantages in their international networks and alliances for further promoting the goals set out in the Civil Society Strategy.

### 1.2.8. Collaboration with other stakeholders

- ✓ Denmark will support initiatives promoting dialogue and cooperation between civil society organisations and the business community as well as other actors, such as research institutions, media and political parties.
- ✓ Denmark will, through collaboration between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, other donors and civil society organisations in Denmark and in developing countries, promote harmonisation and adaptation of reporting tools and methods of funding.

In recent years, there has been growing contact between civil society organisations and the business community. This has taken place, for example, in connection with ‘Corporate Social Responsibility’ and the ‘Global Compact’, through which companies make their contributions to development of society.

The concept of ‘**Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**’ covers the voluntary efforts of companies to integrate social, ethical and environmental considerations in their business activities and in relation to their stakeholders. Companies can contribute with voluntary initiatives internally in their organisation and in the value chain for their products.

One such initiative is the UN ‘**Global Compact**’, in which companies endorse ten principles in the areas of human rights, labour standards, the environment and anti-corruption.

Sometimes, a direct partnership between civil society organisations and private enterprises can ensure new funding opportunities. Public-Private Partnerships can also beneficially be used to involve actors from civil society.

The **'Public-Private Partnerships'** programme under Danida's business support instruments supports the establishment of partnerships between Danish enterprises and local enterprises, organisations and public institutions in developing countries. Here, both financial and consultancy support are used to promote responsible business operations within the framework of the UN Global Compact. The partnerships contribute to promoting human and labour rights, improving the environment and fighting corruption in the partnership countries. In addition, initiatives are supported that increase the investment opportunities in the partnership country as well as innovative ideas that enhance competitiveness in the partnership country.

The ambition is not simply that the business community should finance the organisations' activities. In many contexts, there is much to gain by mutual sharing and utilisation of each other's competencies within technological, technical, administrative and management-related areas.

In the same way that donors in other areas harmonise their practices and procedures, Denmark will engage in cooperation aimed at promoting more effective forms of support to the benefit of local civil society organisations. This applies not only to procedures and forms of cooperation where several do-

nors pool their resources in order to support individual organisations, but also to new initiatives where donors through, for example, basket funding make it possible for civil society organisations to seek financial support for their activities.

### 1.2.9. Goals and results

- ✓ Denmark will, through collaboration between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Danish organisations, strengthen results-orientation of the activities implemented in support of civil society development.
- ✓ The Ministry of Foreign affairs will report on progress in relation to the above strategic goals.

For initiatives implemented under civil society support, clear goals will be defined and reports submitted on progress and results of the activities. In this way, organisations can focus their interventions and harmonise their resources in relation to these goals, and effectively communicate with public authorities, the general public and other stakeholders concerning management of their mandate. Civil society's legitimacy and popular foundation are strengthened, if outsiders have easy access to information about the organisations' focus areas and results.

Efforts in this area are, however, impeded by the fact that civil society organisations are required to meet quite diverse reporting and account-keeping requirements set by the individual donors. It is desirable that organisations operating in development can use the same reporting procedures for several different donors.



An Ugandan firm teaches teachers in Kampala about computers. The firm works with a Danish firm to improve knowledge sharing and distribution of computer equipment.

## 2. NEW CHALLENGES FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

### 2.1. Changing conditions

Conditions for international cooperation and development have changed rapidly in recent years. Private foreign investments and migrant remittances are moving financial resources far exceeding the value of development assistance. Similarly, the opportunities to establish and develop contacts between people in widely different parts of the world is constantly increasing.

Globalisation of production, trade, security and human rights protection and promotion leads government authorities and private enterprises to operate and collaborate regionally, internationally and transnationally to an increasing extent.

In the majority of Denmark's programme countries, development assistance and the issues of debt relief, the environment, climate change and trade barriers constitute highly important factors in their development. For civil society organisations, not just relations to the state on the one side and the market on the other, but also relations to the international community will impact on their situation and set new agendas for their interventions.

The increasing focus on the role of civil society organisations as social and political actors is accompanied by increasing focus on, and understanding of, the necessity for civil society organisations in developing countries to have the opportunity and capacity to contribute to the discussions in the fora that set the agenda for national development. Indeed, international cooperation on advocacy work has also in recent years become increasingly important for many civil society organisations. This applies to the environmental and climate issues, but the need

and tendency is also clear within areas such as human trafficking, migration, refugees, and agricultural and trade policy.

It is vital to relate to new opportunities and challenges that constitute global framework conditions for civil society's role in the fight against poverty and in the efforts to foster good governance. The section below presents some of the key challenges.

### 2.2. New framework for official development assistance means changing conditions for civil society

For the official aid organisations, the Paris Declaration – formulated in 2005 – constitutes a new and decisive framework for making development assistance more effective. This assistance must clearly support national goals and priorities established by the developing countries and must have greater emphasis on results-orientation using national administration systems.

The Paris Declaration makes specific reference to the importance of civil society's participation in developing and implementing the development plans and strategies of partner countries. Among civil society organisations, there has been both support for and criticism of the Paris Declaration. Many have been in agreement on the need for improvement in planning and delivery of development cooperation, and there has also been recognition of the need for improved cooperation among civil society organisations, as well as the necessity for a clearer understanding of how to deal with national authorities. However, scepticism has also been voiced, partly because civil society organisations have only been partially consulted in connection with these extensive changes, and partly because it is unclear

what role civil society is to play in the realisation of the Paris Declaration. Whilst no government donors have expressed the view that the new development aid modalities are to be implemented at the expense of civil society organisations – perhaps rather the contrary – there is concern among some civil society organisations that civil society is viewed by donors as sub-suppliers to the government rather than constituting an independent space for the ability of people to organise themselves.

It is important to maintain that national ownership in developing countries is a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable development. Ownership must be ensured through a sustained focus on ensuring that national development plans emerge from democratic practice, where citizens through an open political process have not just been informed, but also through their organisations have been genuinely involved in the preceding political processes. Bilateral assistance has a particular responsibility to promote supportive framework conditions and concrete involvement of civil society organisations.

### **2.3. Better framework conditions for civil society**

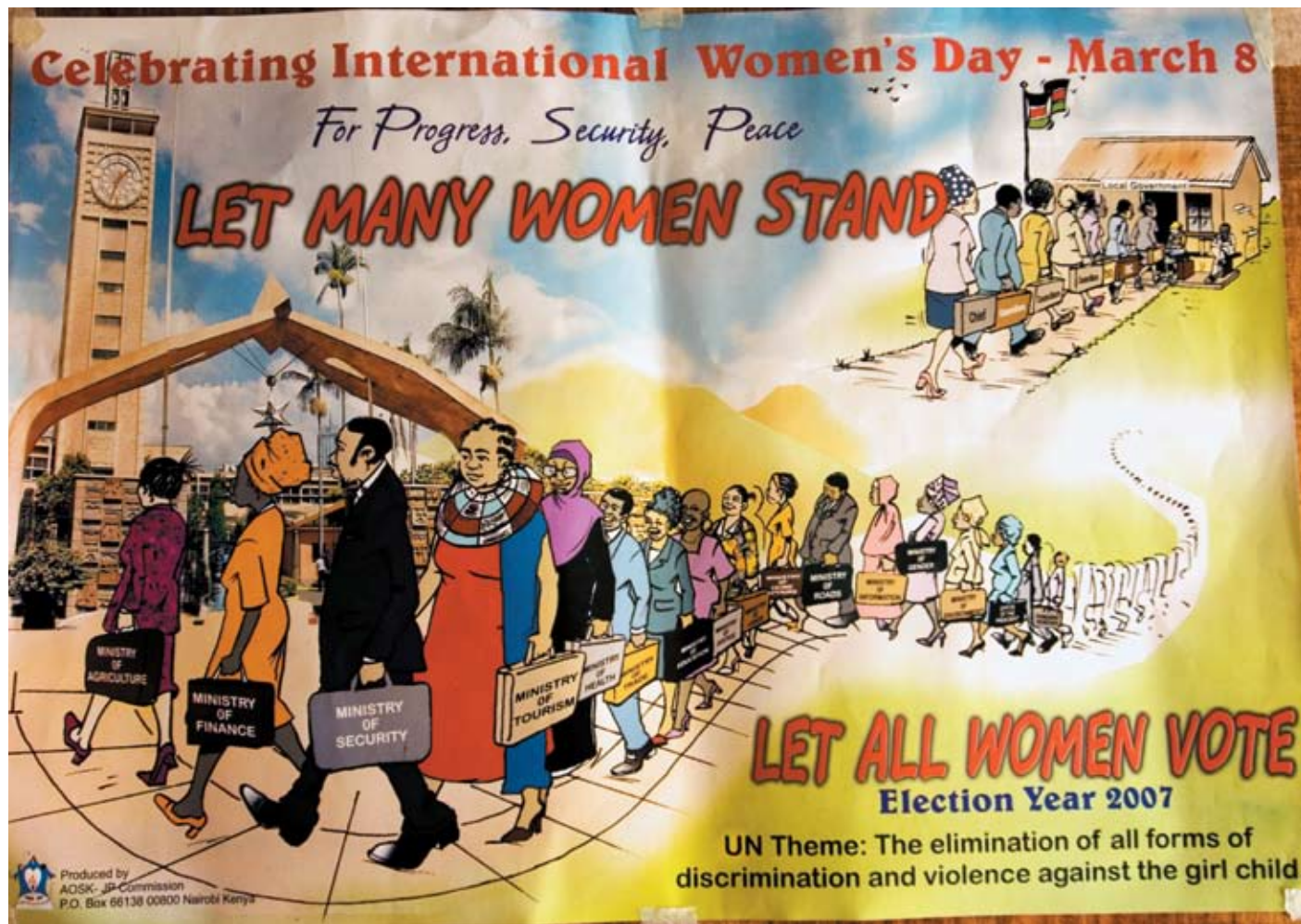
The role of civil society in development activities is often defined by national legislation and regulations that lay down requirements and principles for organisational freedom, reporting and participation in the political debate.

The more wide-spread emergence of democracy in the 1990s in many developing countries created a new, vibrant and often unregulated space for civil society, where the state only laid down formal requirements to a limited degree. In recent years,

a number of opposing tendencies have characterised the opportunities for a free and diversified civil society. In many countries, national legislation has been tightened, with requirements for increased registration and monitoring of civil society organisations, partly rooted in a wish to fight terrorism. The rulers have used it as a pretext for reducing the ability of many organisations to keep authorities and decision-makers accountable for improving people's living conditions. This has resulted in increased political pressure on organisations which previously enjoyed widespread recognition.

At the same time, there are civil society organisations – both local and international – which find it problematic when the authorities intervene and desire information about their activities. Denmark and other international donors expect civil society organisations – in the same way as public authorities – to meet requirements regarding the general public's access to information about their work. Correspondingly, it is desirable that fora are established nationally and locally, where civil society organisations and the authorities can learn more about each other's work. Isolated and scattered interventions planned and implemented without knowledge about the focus areas of other actors will often not be sustainable. It can be appropriate for civil society organisations to collaborate on developing a code of conduct that establishes standards for the organisations' activities and interaction with other actors.

The formulation of legislation and regulations for civil society will often be determined by domestic political factors. External actors – bilateral/multilateral donors and international organi-



Placard in Kenya advocating for the right of voting for all women.

sations – can, however, support these processes by undertaking facilitating roles and promoting trust-building measures. Likewise, experience from other societies can provide national stakeholders more alternatives than a deadlocked situation might otherwise seem to allow for.

Civil society organisations often participate in broader public information campaigns and political initiatives, for example in connection with revising the constitution and influencing legislation, or information campaigns that contribute to ensuring equal voting rights at national and local elections. In these cases, the organisations operate in contexts where disagreement, debate and conflictual positions are often both unavoidable as well as conducive to wider democratisation.

### **Globalised and nationalised organisations**

Civil society organisations participate in international cooperation in increasingly new ways. Many have utilised information technology to create new networks and other forms of cooperation. Regional networks are gradually emerging, with the result that more voices from developing countries can be heard in the global development debate, with clear ambitions of seeking influence at international conferences and in decision-making processes.

Many civil society organisations have realised the importance of gaining greater insight into and influence in, for example, UN, World Bank and EU policy. However, the dialogue between civil society and the international organisations continues to be dominated by civil society organisations based in donor coun-

tries. Correspondingly, there is need for better collaboration between intergovernmental organisations in developing countries, such as SADC, ECOWAS, ASEAN and MERCOSUR, and corresponding regional civil society networks.

The regional/sub-regional organisations include as mentioned among others the Southern African Development Community (**SADC**), the Economic Community Of West African States (**ECOWAS**), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (**ASEAN**) as well as the Mercado Común del Sur (**MERCOSUR**) in Southern Africa, West Africa, South-East Asia and South America, respectively. All of these organisations seek to promote economic development and cooperation through regional cooperation. MERCOSUR's primary objective, for example, is to create a customs union in the region. Similarly, ASEAN primarily directs its focus on the economic cooperation between the countries. In addition, SADC and ECOWAS also seek to promote political stability in the regions.

A small circle of large American and European organisations have evolved into transnational organisations with offices in the large OECD countries and in a number of developing countries. They have an opportunity to influence international decision-making processes in EU, World Bank and UN systems. However, such organisations have taken few steps to ensure that their departments or partners in developing countries achieve real influence.

Other international networks have developed a more federal character based on the network's members in the respective countries. Besides international impact, the goal is also to

achieve better programme cooperation, greater division of labour and harmonisation of interventions as well as securing a common platform where civil society organisations can meet. International organisations have also been created, which have been established for the purpose of influencing specific international decisions or policy areas, and where a common professional identity plays an important role.

Lastly, international civil society organisations are seeking to attain status as a national organisation in the respective developing countries instead of a presence with status as an international organisation. The motives for this ‘nationalisation’ are often mixed. Firstly, there is a wish to secure greater local ownership and popular participation by establishing decision-making structures where local partners assume a greater role. Secondly, these organisations react to the decision of official donors to decentralise administration of development assistance by seeking out places where there appears to be access to a new source of funding for civil society activities. Among civil society organisations in developing countries, these initiatives are received with mixed emotions. While the opportunity for a more continuous dialogue with international partners is valued, many see this behaviour as evidence of an attempt by these organisations to adopt business models from the private sector in order to outmatch organisations in developing countries.

#### **2.4. Stronger intervention in fragile states and situations**

In recent years, there has been growing international attention focused on fragile states and situations, where the state either does not have the resolve or the ability to undertake basic functions

and satisfy the needs and expectations of the population. However, the countries are far from homogeneous and the challenges faced may be quite different. In a number of contexts, there are repressive and authoritarian government regimes in power, whereas in others it is the lack of capacity that is the crucial factor. In fragile situations, the social contract is broken or weakened as a result of the absence of structures facilitating accountability and communication between state and population. The central task in fragile states is to assist in the building of effective and democratic states, and there will often be a huge need for efforts that aim at developing civil society organisations’ capacity and institutional strength to act as a critic and partner of the state.



Institutions and state capacity in Afghanistan are weakened after several years of conflict.



Development assistance in such situations has often been characterised by a changing division of roles between the actors. In the light of the often serious and pressing humanitarian need, the civil society organisations – often international organisations – have had a more implementing role, in which there has been little emphasis on building long-term partnerships with local organisations. Support to activities designed to secure immediate improvements in, for example, food security, safe drinking water access as well as improved health and education have been given greater priority, whereas it has often been more difficult to plan long-term initiatives aimed at strengthening the rights of marginalised people.

In these fragile situations, there is need for flexibility and willingness – amongst both donors and civil society organisations – to ensure that the organisations' efforts acquire a different and more operational character. At the same time, however, it is important to plan the work with the aim of developing capacity among national and local authorities to undertake responsibility for protecting the basic rights of citizens. Support to civil society's engagement in humanitarian tasks should not conceal the principal duty of governments to produce durable and long-term solutions. Correspondingly, it is crucial that civil society organisations are kept on track in their task of supporting people's ability to organise, so that the target group itself acquires the strength to present their needs and demand that public authorities meet their responsibilities.

## 2.5. People's rights and civil society's political roles

Within the last few years, a clear international agenda and more effective instruments have been delivered for promoting the rights of marginalised people, not just in the UN Millennium Development Goals, but also in international conventions and declarations concerning, for example, women's rights, indigenous people, children and young people as well as people with disabilities. Conventions and other international agreements commit national authorities to, for example, complying with minimum standards and establish the foundation for a good code of conduct.

The **UN Millennium Development Goals** were formulated in the UN Millennium Declaration adopted in 2000. A total of 189 countries have committed themselves to reducing poverty through focus on eight goals: extreme poverty and hunger, school education, gender equality, infant mortality, maternal mortality, the spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases, the environment and a global partnership for development.

However, all experience indicates that there is a long way from the signature to the realisation of these intentions. Here, civil society plays an important role in pushing for the introduction of these global standards and goals in national legislation and their translation into action by the authorities.

Civil society organisations operating in the field of human rights protection are often specialised networks driven by personal engagement rather than broader popular movements. Besides supporting the concrete activities of these organisations in the particular field, there is a need to expand the efforts and establish alliances with other broader-based organisations.

#### **2.6. Donor interest in collaboration with civil society organisations**

Ongoing dialogue and collaboration between state donors and civil society organisations can inject a number of important qualities into the overall development work. Thus, civil society organisations will often develop new proposals and ideas for how strategies and programmes can be planned. Similarly, these organisations will also possess considerable resources in the form of professional insight and valuable contacts to marginalised groups. Lastly, there is often a common denominator between Danish development policy goals and the advocacy and campaign activities carried out by civil society organisations.

By virtue of their cooperation with civil society organisations, Denmark and other donor countries also gain the opportunity to take action in situations where the official donors might otherwise have difficulty in doing so. This is due partly to the concentration of the official development assistance and partly to the fact that conflicts and crises in for instance fragile situations may create a political situation where it is impossible to conduct official development cooperation.

## 3. THE ROLES OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

### 3.1. General characteristics

Civil society is an umbrella term for a very broad and complex myriad of groups, organisations and networks positioned between the state and the market because their purpose and mandate is primarily to represent and express group interests, rather than produce for commercial gain.

Civil society in all its complexity constitutes a crucial connecting link between state and society. But civil society cannot and should not replace public authorities or democratic institutions. Consequently, it is difficult to refer to a single, unique civil society identity. This identity is determined by the relationship to authorities, political parties, the press, donors, own support base and the general public.

Often, the term civil society is used solely about formal organisations that have a clearly defined agenda, such as human rights organisations, faith-based organisations and trade unions. By thinking in such terms, there is a risk of disregarding a large number of associations and informal groups. This applies, for example, to self-help groups, traditional associations and local women's groups. In the Civil Society Strategy, the term civil society is therefore used about all types of informal and formal structures through which people organise themselves.

In many countries, governments accuse civil society of acting in the interests of the opposition, while others may perceive civil society organisations as being too close to the state. Over time, civil society's relationship to the state can thus develop in

quite an antagonistic direction, while at other times it will be characterised by cooperation.

An independent and critical press is of great importance for enabling civil society to act as an active partner and critic of the state. The press can direct a necessary focus at civil society's strong points and not so strong points. The mass media are not regarded in the Civil Society Strategy as a part of civil society, but are reckoned among the private sector and the public sector, respectively.

Civil society often develop broad political agendas that stretch beyond the safeguarding and protection of interests of single groups and single issues. Experience shows that if democratic reforms with, for example, multi-party systems and constitutional amendments are to take root, authorities and international donors must expand efforts and meet citizens' expectations of participation and influence to a far greater extent. Genuine democratisation requires that citizens in their daily lives experience a greater degree of influence and respect for rights, including less inequality, and that government and the public sector enjoy popular legitimacy. In many countries, civil society has played an absolutely crucial role for whether democratic reforms take foothold and lead to concrete, tangible changes for poor and marginalised groups. Conversely, civil society organisations must in these instances also acknowledge that their popular and political legitimacy can be called into question if they allow themselves to be used to promote special party political viewpoints. With regard to political parties, they are solely included in the Civil Society Strategy when they

contribute through cross-party efforts to, for example, promoting democratic reforms and the like.

A characteristic of civil society organisations will often be that volunteers play a strong role in the decision-making and task delivery of the organisations, without this being specified in an employment contract. The management structure is often fleeting and complex with no clear hierarchy – which, in contrast, often characterises public authorities – or without a clear goal orientation – which characterises a privately owned company. Most associations and organisations will have a notion of their membership and support base. However, far from all civil society organisations have a requirement of formal membership, membership dues, articles of association and competent assemblies such as annual meetings or general meetings. Such lack of formal structures can create difficulties if the same organisations wish to administer grants from public authorities and international donors.

Civil society is not static. New structures and movements are formed, and others are dissolved. Civil society organisations will often reflect and reproduce other trends in society. In general, formal associations and informal groups are neither good nor bad simply because they are part of civil society. Civil society houses both organisations fighting to improve the rights of poor people as well as movements promoting narrow interests which can undermine democratic institutions. But civil society is a necessary element and adds an important dynamic to society. In poor societies with weak public institutions, strong and viable civil society organisations can contribute to ensuring that, for example, the poor and underprivileged are given a voice.

Civil society organisations have continuously criticised how economic and social development fostering greater inequality create a democratic deficit and increase the risk of returning to social conflicts and authoritarian systems of government. Globalisation creates new challenges for civil society, which has employed new forms of cooperation and new campaign methods in order to ensure that previous democratic advances are not undermined by events taking place far outside the local community and the particular country. Conversely, globalisation has provided opportunities to establish contacts with like-minded organisations in other countries and opportunities to communicate information more quickly and more widely to a large number of people.

### 3.2. Different types of civil society organisations

Civil society organisations have a prominent place today in development cooperation, but there is no single recognised definition of the different types of civil society organisations.

In developing countries, there is a diversity of **organisational forms in civil society**. CSO (*Civil Society Organisations*) is the broadest and internationally most used term for these organisations.

The term NGO (*Non Governmental Organisations*) is also used broadly, but often about large organisations which work to support and help other groups – from a humanitarian, people-to-people or professional point of departure. A special group is the national Red Cross agencies which are present in all countries having signed the Geneva Conventions. ▶▶

▶▶ In addition, there is an abundance of so-called popular organisations. These organisations are often national or regional organisations and movements where people organise themselves in order to safeguard and promote own interests. This could for example be farmers' movements and trade unions. In addition, there are organisations which focus on particularly vulnerable population groups, such as people without caste and people with disabilities. A number of the popular organisations are called grassroots organisations or often CBOs (*Community Based Organisations*). They are found in the majority of developing countries. Here people are organised at local level to safeguard and promote own interests as well as organise own development, for example in the form of self-help groups, women's groups, etc.

In addition to these there are church and other religious organisations as well as traditional organisations. The last-mentioned group includes so-called "traditional" political, social, cultural and ethnic structures, often at village or local area level. Lastly, there are the cultural organisations, which can encompass groups within both culture and sport.

International networks also play a role in civil society in developing countries. This applies to organisations with closely collaborating international structures (e.g. Save the Children International and Care International) and also to looser networks that seek to promote cooperation and knowledge-sharing between different parts of civil society throughout the world, such as CIVICUS, an organisation which seeks to strengthen civil society's participation and dynamism all over the world through global cooperation.

Despite significant differences between types of organisations, there are often strong ties and contacts across civil society. In many cases, these constitute a basis for effective alliances that can ensure broad support for the efforts to improve the living conditions of poor people. In other cases, civil society is characterised by sharp rivalry and competition for access to public authorities and international aid organisations. In development, there has been growing interest in supporting networks among civil society organisations, partly in order to give the interventions greater outreach, partly to avoid being hijacked by special interests, partly to provide space for experience sharing and capacity building.

The wish to support civil society organisations often gives rise to difficult considerations. Thus, in a given context, the complexity of civil society may warrant a mapping of key actors and their interrelations. Correspondingly, it is important to assess legitimacy, determination and capacity to express and represent the interests of poor people and also the capacity of the organisations to formulate and implement programmes with the necessary efficiency. In this regard, it becomes central how civil society organisations both ensure the necessary technical expertise and professionalism and maintain the notion that the fight against poverty comprises fundamental political dimensions which cannot be reduced to simple technical solutions.

In development cooperation, donors have often expressed a wish for more formalised organisational set-ups. This can conflict with the wish to deliver support directly to marginalised people whose organisational structures often are less formal

and durable. There has been a growing interest among donors to support fundings arrangements targeting a broad section of civil society organisations, where the funds are managed by an independent institution using more flexible application procedures.

### 3.3. Diverse roles for civil society organisations

Across the different types of organisation, a predominant feature in recent years has been that civil society organisations – e.g. disability organisations – have moved from having an immediate focus on improving the daily life of their members to engaging in a far broader and more demanding effort to promote the rights of the marginalised. The new and challenging element facing many organisations has been to create strong linkage between, on the one hand, local activities and the target group's immediate needs and, on the other hand, national and international agendas providing opportunities and framework for binding political decisions regarding improved rights.

There is also an extensive variation in how civil society organisations administer their mandate and relations to authorities. Civil society organisations fill a special role which in crucial areas differs from official donors and authorities in the developing countries. Civil society can be a bridge builder between, on the one hand, government interests and, on the other hand, the needs of marginalised population groups to voice their views and influence social development.

In the development process, this type of civil society organisation can contribute to:

- mobilising and organising local communities as well as marginalised population groups
- promoting the rights of poor and marginalised people/groups
- monitoring that authorities and donors live up to their promises and adopted policy
- access for poor people to basic services
- building strong coalitions and networks for increasing civil society's influence
- inspiring and challenging public authorities through collaboration regarding innovative methods and a focus on particularly vulnerable population groups
- raising new financial, knowledge-related and political resources through global cooperation.

The history and composition of civil society differ greatly between the three continents where Denmark has country programmes, and experience gained from Latin America cannot automatically be copied to Africa and Asia. At the same time, the organisation of civil society varies from country to country, and the cooperation therefore must be based on a concrete assessment of the characteristics of civil society in each particular country.

## 4. FUNDAMENTAL OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES

To support goal attainment, a number of fundamental operational principles will need to be reflected in the planning, design and implementation of specific interventions and activities.

### 4.1. Support to capacity development

Both in connection with assistance through Danish civil society organisations and directly through official Danish development programmes, organisational and capacity development will constitute an important element. Strengthened capacity is important in itself, but it is also a prerequisite for achieving a number of other goals set out in the Civil Society Strategy.

Capacity development can include strengthening the partners':

- ability and organisation to implement the desired and agreed activities, including monitoring, learning and adjusting on an ongoing basis
- ability to carry out lobbying and advocacy, so that the partners themselves can voice needs and promote their interests
- ability to inform, explain and conduct campaigns aimed at increasing knowledge as well as change attitudes and behaviour among the target group, and ability and determination to inform openly about the organisation itself and strengthen its activities
- access and ability to engage in networks with like-minded organisations – locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. In networks, the participants can rally around a common cause, share experience and promote coordination of complementary activities.



Information campaigns about the risk of HIV/AIDS in Ghana.

Capacity development will also often entail the transfer of knowledge and experience from Danish or other partners with a special and relevant professional, technical or organisational background.

### 4.2. Support to advocacy

Denmark supports civil society organisations' engagement in advocacy at both local, national, regional and international level. Advocacy is undertaken with a view to securing lasting changes and improvements as a result of a specific intervention or as a general effort to promote and safeguard the interests of the target group.

With globalisation, more issues have acquired an international dimension – and few issues are solely national or local. Consequently, there is a growing need for relating complex global agendas to the experiences, living conditions and expectations of the poor.

Support can be awarded to advocacy when:

- knowledge is demonstrated of relevant political, legal and economic aspects, processes and decision-makers that need to be influenced in order to secure the desired long-term changes
- the division of roles between partners is clear – civil society organisations in developing countries must themselves be able to speak their case locally, nationally and internationally
- organisations are able to speak with strength in local, national or international fora based on relevant professional insight and specific experience from improving the living conditions of poor people
- Danish support is not used by the organisations for political party purposes in the developing countries.

#### 4.3. Support to service delivery

Activities carried out with the aim of delivering specific services within, for example, education and health or for promoting income-generating activities can – in the context of capacity development and advocacy – be included in connection with Danish support to civil society organisations. Through such activities, the aim is to create the basis for organisational

and capacity development, advocacy as well as discussion of underlying causes of poverty.

Support can be awarded to service delivery when, depending on the specific context:

- a link to capacity development and advocacy can be demonstrated enabling the target group to acquire increased political capacity and ability to influence the underlying causes of poverty, inequality and marginalisation
- the existing division of roles between government programmes and civil society activities is addressed to prevent duplication of work and establishment of parallel structures
- the activities test new, innovative methods or prepare the ground for popular mobilisation regarding, for example, health care or education
- the services are targeted at poor and marginalised groups who for political, ethnic or social reasons are excluded from public services and national programmes
- it can be demonstrated that the intervention can be replicated by others thereby reaching a larger part of the marginalised group
- existing competition laws are taken into account in each case.





Through a project in Uganda people with disabilities and beggars are taught mathematics, languages and sewing.

#### 4.4. Support to income-generating activities

Often civil society organisations wish to engage in activities enhancing the target group's access to resources through income-generating activities since increased earnings is an important element in the fight against poverty.

However, particularly in relation to micro-financing, experience shows that it is wise to leave management of credit programmes to specialised institutions. Nevertheless, civil society can play an important role in promoting such arrangements.

Denmark can award support to income-generating activities when:

- the partner organisation has the necessary professional capacity to plan and implement such activities
- there is full clarity regarding the legal, administrative and management-related challenges involved in allocation of resources to the target group.

#### 4.5. Partner choice and preconditions for partnership

The choice of partner naturally has great bearing on whether the partnership and the support ultimately lead to the achievement of the Civil Society Strategy's overarching objective.

In choosing partners, effort should be made to:

- promote the goals regarding diverse and broad participation, which means the choice should also constitute a genuine offer to groups that are marginalised due to social status, gender, ethnicity, disability and religion etc.

- ensure that cooperation takes place with organisations with determination, ability and popular legitimacy to participate in decision-making processes, as well as with formal and informal organisations representing marginalised groups.

The partnership can be constructed in many ways, but the following preconditions must be met:

- The partners in the developing countries – and not the Danish organisations – must assume primary responsibility for implementation of activities. All interventions and activities should therefore as far as possible be managed by local partners
- Danish organisations must provide partners in developing countries with good opportunities to participate in international networks
- Efforts must be made to ensure that organisations receiving Danish support secure their financing from several different sources, so that the financial security is not solely dependent on Danish contributions.

#### 4.6. Contributions of Danish civil society organisations to partnerships

Danish civil society organisations receive financial contributions which make it possible for partners to design and implement development activities. However, it is important that the contributions of Danish organisations are not solely financial. The added value of the partnerships must be evidenced in contributions within a number of different areas:

- *Professionally*: The Danish organisation contributes to promoting professional knowledge and insight of benefit to the partner's activities.
- *Popular contacts and information*: The partnership contributes to strengthening, for example, contacts between members, support base and local communities in Denmark and in developing countries, and it ensures that information campaigns about the partner's activities are conducted.
- *International agenda*: Cooperation with the Danish partner offers the partner better opportunities to link their work and experience to broader international and global agendas, partly through access to international networks.
- *Rights*: The Danish organisation can transfer knowledge about fundamental rights within its area of work and about how they are used in practice.
- *Protection*: Contact to a Danish partner can be a shield against attack and pressure from the state and politicians.
- *Diversity*: The diversity of Danish organisations contributes to greater diversity in developing countries, thus ensuring that a number of marginalised groups are reached.

## 5. COOPERATION MODALITIES

This chapter describes the cooperation modalities which will contribute to achieving the goals set out in the Civil Society Strategy. Section 5.1 deals with cooperation administered by Danish embassies primarily in the programme countries. Section 5.2 describes cooperation modalities in relation to development activities through Danish organisations.

Like other Danish development assistance, support to civil society development is awarded to interventions in developing countries within the budgets defined by the annual Appropriations Acts and in accordance with the administrative guidelines regulating the different modalities.

### 5.1. Danish cooperation with civil society in developing countries

This section focuses on the role of the Danish representations and the types of cooperation used by them in delivering support to civil society within the framework of Danish bilateral development cooperation.

#### 5.1.1. Analyses of civil society's role

The embassies will use analyses of civil society's composition, framework and working conditions, strengths and weaknesses, representativeness and roles as contributions to country strategies and in planning the most appropriate civil society support. In general, the embassies will make use of available analyses or draw up such assessments in collaboration with other donors and/or national authorities. In special cases, however, it will be relevant to draw up actual country analyses of the characteristics of the civil society.

Correspondingly, there will be a varying need to conduct studies of civil society's role and capacity in connection with the formulation of sector programme support. Where Denmark is lead donor within a certain sector or in connection with programmes to promote good governance, democracy and human rights, Denmark will endeavour to ensure that analyses of civil society are incorporated as part of the overall analyses conducted. Danish civil society organisations and local partners with longstanding experience of working in the particular countries will often be able to contribute to such studies.

#### 5.1.2. Sector programme support

Sector programme support will in relevant cases include support to capacity building of government partners enabling them to incorporate and promote popular participation in the programmes as well as administrative transparency in the most effective manner. At the same time, action must be taken to ensure inclusion of relevant civil society organisations in the dialogue regarding planning, monitoring and evaluation of Danish-supported programmes. Within sector programmes, local civil society organisations can be particularly qualified to promote mobilisation and organisation of local society and to conduct information campaigns.

In its cooperation with other donors, Denmark will work to ensure that in connection with the implementation of broader reform programmes, resources are set aside to actively incorporate and promote civil society interests in sector policies and other strategic development initiatives. In planning and prioritising such interventions, Danish non-governmental organisa-

tions will in a number of situations be able to provide valuable contributions.

In several of the Danish partner countries, programmes (particularly within the social sectors) involve private actors, including civil society organisations. In other countries, civil society organisations have for decades operated, for example, health care and education institutions in the absence of government capacity. In these cases, efforts must also be made to create a better framework for civil society's participation in the delivery of services, for example with the use of Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), where privately run institutions are awarded public financing towards running costs.

Denmark will cooperate with authorities in the programme countries and other donors to establish a clear framework for the roles of civil society in connection with decentralisation and outsourcing.

### 5.1.3. Direct cooperation with local civil society organisations

Danish embassies will continue to contribute directly to activities implemented by local civil society organisations. Denmark will in the programme countries work to ensure that different support mechanisms are used to prevent dependence on either the state or any single funding institution. The embassies will maintain an open dialogue with local authorities regarding how donors like Denmark best support civil society development.



A South African organisation seeks to inspire the local community of Johannesburg to initiatives promoting the development of a greener city.

Danish organisations have considerable experience in supporting civil society organisations in a number of Danish programme countries, and can be usefully consulted in connection with selecting partners from among civil society organisations.

### **The Local Grant Authority (LGA)**

Danish embassies can support local initiatives in programme countries with funding from the Local Grant Authority (LGA). Often, these resources are used to accommodate requests from local civil society organisations. The LGA takes its starting point in the Civil Society Strategy when awarding support to development interventions carried out by local civil society organisations.

### **New funding mechanisms**

Where relevant in programme countries, Denmark will seek collaboration with other donors to establish joint funding mechanisms which are long-term, sustainable and independent of the local authorities' supervisory control, for example to support promotion of human rights. This will take place in consultation with local civil society organisations. Local support mechanisms such as basket funds for civil society must, depending on the particular context, be administered in accordance with national legislation and good administrative conduct. The administration can be undertaken by private organisations/institutions with in-depth experience and professional expertise to work strategically with civil society. Emphasis must be placed on developing forms of support and administrative principles promoting civil society's diversity

and which are not just directed at a narrow group of organisations. Funding mechanisms should also comprise advice and support to capacity development aimed at improving the quality of the interventions.

#### **5.1.4. Dialogue and reporting**

The embassies will maintain ongoing dialogue with partners within civil society. The dialogue will particularly focus on issues connected to Danish-supported sector programmes and other assistance projects and programmes, so that civil society perspectives and experience can contribute to ensuring the quality of these activities. When relevant, the embassies discuss framework conditions for civil society with both authorities and civil society representatives. The embassies will organise at least one annual round of discussions of the above issues with civil society partners including Danish organisations present in the country.

### **5.2. Cooperation between Danish civil society organisations and civil society in developing countries**

This section deals with the cooperation modalities used to channel government funding through Danish private organisations.

#### **5.2.1. Cooperation under framework agreements**

Danish organisations with framework agreements can, based on their own visions and goals, develop long-term and strategic programmes in collaboration with their partners in developing countries. The multi-year funding perspective creates stable conditions for efficient operation and capacity devel-

opment of the Danish organisations as well as their partners. Similarly, a framework agreement provides flexibility to adapt the activities to lessons learned and changing circumstances. The principal idea is that the framework organisations themselves, within the specific framework, identify, plan, launch, implement, monitor and evaluate their own development assistance activities. The activities within the framework agreements are concentrated around the organisations' core areas of activity, including possible follow-up on early recovery interventions.

At present, framework agreements have been concluded with MS Danish Association of International Cooperation, DanChurchAid, the Danish Red Cross, IBIS, CARE Danmark and Save the Children Denmark. Framework agreements can be concluded with more organisations when preconditions are met regarding relevance to the organisation's mandate and programme objectives as well as on the basis of capacity assessments. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs conducts regular reviews of the existing framework agreements. Funding is provided through the annual Appropriation Acts and is regulated according to results achieved assessed in the context of overall development policy objectives and principles.

### **5.2.2. Other forms of cooperation with Danish organisations**

Organisations with sufficient capacity, which have not entered into framework agreements, can apply for grants to implement activities in cooperation with partners in developing countries in the form of programme agreements, large-scale single projects and alliance programmes. In addition, such organisa-

tions will be able to seek support for conducting appraisals and evaluations.

### **Programme agreements**

The objective of programme agreements is to establish the basis for implementing combined efforts with greater impact, more continuity and better dialogue with partners in developing countries. Support to programme agreements can be awarded to organisations which in their activities have a clear strategic focus (geographical, sectoral or thematic) that makes it relevant to incorporate the organisation's activities or parts thereof into a comprehensive programme rather than implementing single projects. Programme agreements are based on capacity assessments.

### **Individual projects**

Support can be provided for large-scale individual projects in areas where grant funding is not awarded through programme agreements. Eligibility for this type of support is subject to requirements regarding documentation of professional expertise and country knowledge as well as appropriate coordination and cooperation with partners in developing countries. In the long term, the aim is to channel the bulk of support to Danish organisations with major development activities through framework and programme agreements.

### **Alliance programmes**

Alliance programmes must aim at stimulating increased cooperation and learning between organisations with different areas of strategic focus and complementary core competencies as

well as through involvement of other actors, such as the business community and research institutions. The intention is also to contribute to more coherent interventions enhancing the quality of the assistance in the recipient countries. Support can be awarded to both programme-implementing alliances and alliances that strengthen international thematic advocacy networks.

### **5.2.3. Delegated funding arrangements (pools)**

Delegated funding arrangements will, within specified funding thresholds, be used to provide support to small-scale development activities which, depending on the size of the grants, are subject to less stringent requirements regarding professional and administrative capacity. The administration of these arrangements is undertaken by the Danish organisations and the budget frames for such pools are defined in the annual Appropriations Act.

### **The Mini-Project Fund under the Project Advice and Training Centre**

The Project Advice and Training Centre (PATC) runs an advisory service which aims at strengthening the capacity of Danish organisations and raising the quality of their activities as part of the implementation of the Civil Society Strategy. Furthermore, the objective is to strengthen popular participation in promoting visibility, ownership and cooperation regarding civil society support in Denmark. This includes strengthening participation of groups with special resources and/or circumstances, such as refugee and immigrant groups.

PATC administers a Mini-Project Fund for organisations that do not wish – or do not have the necessary professional capacity – to implement large-scale development activities. Under this fund requirements are balanced with the scale of the activities, the amount applied for, and the fact that many applying organisations predominantly are based on voluntary work. Support can be given both to appraisals, project implementation as well as partnership cooperation. Support is not awarded to activities eligible for support under other pools.

### **Pooled funding arrangements with umbrella organisations**

With these pools, opportunity is provided for Danish umbrella organisations to assist their Danish member associations with professional advice as well as financial support for small development projects and partnership activities with their counterparts in developing countries. Furthermore, support can be awarded for deployment of volunteers. The projects are used mainly for developing new cooperation concepts and piloting activities with potential partners in developing countries. At present, pooled funding arrangements have been established with Disabled Peoples Organisations Denmark, the Danish Mission Council Development Department and the Danish Youth Council.

### **Support to renovation and shipment of used equipment**

Grants can be awarded to Danish associations and individuals for renovation and shipment of used and donated equipment collected in Denmark. This facility provides an opportunity to involve a broader section of the population in development cooperation at local level both in Denmark and in the partner



countries. An agreement has been concluded with MS Danish Association for International Cooperation for administration of this pool.

### **Professional networks and capacity development**

The intention is to support a joint platform for networking which contributes to capacity development of Danish organisations. Support can be awarded to capacity development in strategically important areas, where the theme reaches beyond the scope of the individual organisation. Networking can comprise initiatives under broad themes, more narrowly defined activities with a specific thematic focus, or stand-alone events. Networking activities must be sufficiently flexible to allow for developing and testing new approaches to development.

#### **5.2.4. Dialogue and reporting**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs engages in continuous dialogue with Danish organisations regarding progress of their work and lessons learned. For the larger organisations with framework agreements and agreements on delegated funding arrangements, annual consultations are held based on reporting formats described in the administrative guidelines for civil society support. Consultations will review results, lessons learned, problems encountered, new developments in partnerships as well as the popular foundation of the organisations.

Danish organisations are also encouraged to engage in ongoing dialogue with the broader Danish resource base (including research institutions, consultants and the business community in general), so that experience with civil society support can contribute to ensuring the effectiveness and high quality of overall Danish development cooperation.

An annual meeting with representatives of the Danish organisations will follow up on the goals set out in the Civil Society Strategy. In continuation of previous positive experience – and when deemed relevant – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will, together with representatives of Danish organisations, also take the initiative to organise NGO workshops or similar events involving a wide range of stakeholders.

## 6. POPULAR FOUNDATION AND INFORMATION ACTIVITIES

### 6.1. Popular foundation

A vital quality in the role of civil society in development cooperation is the engagement of a broad range of social actors – in Denmark as well as in developing countries. In recent years, great emphasis has been given to ensuring that private Danish organisations engage in concerted efforts to maintain and enhance their popular foundation.

It is important also in the coming years to maintain a broad approach to this work. Diversity in Danish civil society is a vital quality, and therefore the individual organisations will choose different parameters in this work. Some have clear advantages of a large membership, others have advantages in relation to conducting nationwide fund-raising campaigns, while others again can mobilise extensive volunteer support.

Concrete goals have been formulated especially for organisations with framework agreements and the challenges concerning, for example, increasing membership and self-financing have been taken up by the organisations with positive results. In the coming years there is a need to consolidate and diversify this work taking into account the distinctive character of the organisations.

Denmark also wishes to strengthen civil society's popular foundation in developing countries and its broader credibility and legitimacy. Both through partnerships between Danish civil society organisations and local organisations in developing countries – and through support by embassies to local initiatives – focus should be placed on civil society's role

in relation to organising, mobilising and engaging popular participation in the development process. In the years ahead, focus must be gradually shifted towards poor peoples' own organisations.

Popular foundation and broader legitimacy of organisations in developing countries involves more than high membership figures and clean accounts. Many civil society organisations enjoy great respect and acknowledgement by virtue of their ability to reach out and engage poor and underprivileged population groups.

This focus on the 'inner life' of organisations must be complemented by initiatives promoting networks and alliances between civil society organisations in developing countries. This applies, for example, to the need for greater contact between national civil society organisations – often with offices in the country's capital – and community based organisations in rural areas.

Denmark will, together with other donors, emphasise the need for strengthened mutual cooperation and coordination between civil society organisations. Also civil society needs to improve efficiency and reduce transaction costs through focus on results, clear action areas and mutual 'added value', whilst simultaneously respecting the fundamental wish for diversity.



An organisation in Honduras approaches street children and tries to motivate them to come to the centre of the organisation, where they receive food and medical treatment.

### **6.2. Information activities on development and global issues**

In general, civil society organisations have extensive networks and contacts in the societies and communities in which they operate. Thus civil society organisations are well positioned to reach a broad target group with information about their activities and broader global issues. For many organisations, information activities are already an integral part of their work. Such activities entail both specific initiatives where education and information campaigns are used to enhance the effect of the development initiatives to raise greater awareness and foster further support in Denmark.

Denmark will invite civil society organisations to collaborate on, for instance, public information campaigns to increase awareness of poor people's social and political rights as well as knowledge of global development issues, including the UN Millennium Development Goals. New opportunities for cooperation will be examined in the years ahead, partly in relation to Danish public diplomacy initiatives and in connection with international events, such as UN summits. Such efforts may involve civil society organisations in developing countries or in Denmark, but they can also be based on partnership agreements with organisations in the North and South jointly launching information initiatives.

### **6.3. Programme-related information activities conducted by Danish organisations**

Danish organisations can play an important role in deepening awareness about and fostering understanding of the problems faced by developing countries and the importance of Danish

participation in international development cooperation. Therefore, costs for programme-related information activities carried out in Denmark can be included in applications for support to civil society activities. Such information activities should be based on the organisations' concrete cooperation in developing countries, and can also be used for larger comprehensive information campaigns relating not only to a specific programme or project.

The quality of the information activities and needs for improvement will be assessed regularly, partly with a view to developing new methods and incorporating new media, and partly to improve the incorporation of prioritised target groups. Opportunities for enhanced cooperation between the individual grant recipients will be assessed in this context.

## 7. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

The Civil Society Strategy presents key terms, objectives, goals and principles as well as different cooperation modalities for Danish support to civil society development in the South. The Appropriations Act determines the financial resources to be allocated to these efforts.

As a global framework for Danish support to civil society development, the strategy encompasses:

- support to civil society organisations channelled through Danish organisations or administered directly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the local embassies
- official bilateral assistance to governments in developing countries which often includes projects and programmes of great relevance for civil society
- multilateral assistance to international organisations, where Denmark will actively strive to ensure that these organisations support and promote civil society involvement and poor people's rights.

The strategy will be translated into guidelines by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for both Danish organisations and bilateral assistance. These will be updated regularly on the basis of lessons learned and in dialogue with key internal and external stakeholders. Grants to civil society support will be administered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danish embassies and other representations.

On the basis of the strategy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will draw up an action plan setting specific goals and indicators for implementing the strategy. An annual report on tendencies in the administration of the strategy and key financial figures on the use of the grants will be published. The implementation of the strategy will be evaluated in 2012.

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK  
DANIDA**

**THE CIVIL SOCIETY STRATEGY –  
STRATEGY FOR DANISH SUPPORT TO CIVIL SOCIETY  
IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

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