

Danida

Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Gender Equality in Danish Development Cooperation

Strategy

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Strategy

Gender equality between men and women is neither social nor cultural cosmetics; rather it is an economic, political and democratic necessity.

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Contents

1. Introduction	4
Status and challenges in the field of gender equality	4
Rights	5
Resources	5
Influence	6
2. Promoting gender equality: an international and national obligation	8
3. Definition, objective and methodology	10
Definition of gender equality	10
Objective	10
Methodology	11
4. Important elements in the work on gender equality	12
Sex-disaggregated data	12
Strategic partnerships	12
5. Implementation of the Danish strategy	14
6. Work on gender equality at country level	15
National overview as a point of departure for defining priorities and focus	15
Local ownership and starting point for gender equality efforts	16
Mainstreaming	16
National poverty reduction strategies	17
Work at sector level	17
Special interventions	18
Danish non-governmental organisations	19
7. International cooperation	20
Normative cooperation	20
Multilateral organisations and international NGOs	21
Special policy areas	23

8. Capacity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the resource base regarding gender equality	25
9. Monitoring	26
10. Appendix	27

1. Introduction

The new strategy for gender equality between women and men in Danish development cooperation has been drawn up on the basis of the Government's priorities for development assistance for the 2004-2008 period. To achieve the maximum impact on poverty reduction, these priorities focus on Denmark's activities to meet the following five central challenges:

1. Human rights, democratisation and good governance
2. Stability, security and combating terrorism
3. Refugees, relief work and areas of origin
4. The environment
5. Social and economic development

The vision is a development policy that places people – women as well as men – at the centre. The aim is to promote a society capable of enabling the human dignity and freedom of the individual, subject to accountability for his or her actions.

Status and challenges in the field of gender equality

The status of women and the gender equality between men and women improved considerably in many developing countries throughout the last half of the twentieth century.

- The difference in school attendance between boys and girls has been reduced. In South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa the primary enrolment rates of girls has almost doubled.
- The life expectancy of women has increased by 15-20 years in the developing countries.
- The number of women on the labour market has increased and gender gaps in wages have been reduced.

Despite the indisputable progress, women and girls still suffer extensive, systematic gender discrimination in the vast majority of the countries of the world. The nature and extent of this discrimination vary across different countries and regions. There is,

however, hardly any developing country where women have an equal status to men with respect to legal, social (including sexual and reproductive rights) and economic rights. Furthermore, there are considerable gender gaps in access to and control of resources, economic opportunities, and in power and political influence.

Rights

In many parts of the world women do not have the right to inherit from a deceased spouse, including the right to inherit land. Even in countries where it is legally possible to inherit land, traditional norms may constitute an obstacle. In many countries women do not have the right to conduct business, to vote, or to travel without the permission of their husband. In many societies the sexual and reproductive rights of women, including the right to take decisions about their own bodies are violated, not least in connection with armed conflicts. Female refugees do not have the same rights as male refugees in situations involving divorce or the death of the spouse.

Violence against women is widespread and taboo. In many countries, developing as well as developed, up to one in four women will be exposed to violence from their partner or ex-partner during their lifetime. Approximately 130 million women have been subjected to female genital mutilation and an additional two million girls and women are exposed to it each year. The killing of wives, sisters and daughters because of dowries or in the name of honour is a common phenomenon in several countries. Every year around two million girls between the ages of 5 and 15 are trafficked and/ or forced into prostitution. Millions of girls and women are prevented from protecting themselves against HIV/AIDS due to their inferior status in society and in the family and their lack of sexual and reproductive rights. Therefore, in many countries there are more HIV-infected girls and women than men. It is estimated that between 60 and 100 million women have “disappeared” world wide, in comparison to the natural demographic development, due to female infanticide, deliberate sex-selection favouring boys, and negligence of girls.

Violence in situations of conflicts and crisis presents a special problem. Despite political, religious, ethnic, geographical, economic and other differences, in a number of modern conflicts the female body has become part of the battlefield through systematic rape, kidnapping and forced pregnancies without subsequent legal proceedings. The history of Rwanda, Bosnia, East Timor and Sierra Leone illustrates this trend.

Resources

Women perform more than half of all economic activity in the developing countries, but only approximately one third of their work is registered in the statistics. Women's work in the reproductive economy in terms of responsibility for the family and the running of the household is unpaid and often overlooked.

Compared with men, women have systematically less control over productive resources such as land, information, technology and financial resources, including credit. Girls and women still have more limited access to education than boys and men although progress has been made in this area. Investing in girls' education is the investment with the greatest impact in terms of poverty eradication, declining population growth, lower infant and child mortality, less widespread malnutrition, rising school attendance, and improving health. To this must be added an increase in job opportunities for women as a result of education and better possibilities of gaining political influence at several levels.

Women's parcels of land are, as a rule smaller and of poorer quality than men's. If women's access to agricultural input and revenue was on a par with men's, in Kenya, Burkina Faso and Cameroon, the yield could be increased by as much as 20 per cent. Women are responsible for up to 80 per cent of the food production in sub-Saharan Africa, but only receive approximately 1 per cent of total agricultural credits. Businesses run by women are usually undercapitalised and have less access to equipment, advisory services and credit facilities than businesses run by men. Women's access to the labour market is often limited to certain occupations and will frequently be marked by a number of problems relating to wages and working conditions. The implication is that women will not be in a position to benefit fully from business and industrial development or from the potentially positive opportunities arising from globalisation.

Inequalities in access to resources create very different possibilities for women and men to escape poverty, and the unequal division of resources is an obstacle to societies' efforts to reduce poverty and create economic growth.

Influence

Limited access to resources, greater workloads than men and unequal rights limit women's ability to influence economic decisions in the household. Inadequate rights and low social status in comparison to men limit the possibility of influencing decisions in the local community and at a national level. Women's workloads often mean that they cannot spare the necessary time to take part in decision-making processes at different levels in order to achieve influence. Women occupy far fewer leading positions in most societies than men and continue to be seriously underrepresented in national parliaments where, on average, they occupy approximately 10 per cent of the seats. It is only in 7 countries in the world that 30 per cent of the parliamentarians are women.

Increased gender equality in terms of rights, resources and influence has a positive impact on the lives of women, men and children as well as on a country's possibility of promoting economic growth, poverty reduction, and democratic, good and effective governance. Promoting gender equality is, therefore, important for the overall Danish

development policy goal of reducing poverty, which aims at promoting the possibility for all people to move out of poverty and contribute to human and economic development.

Experience shows that the political will to create changes with regard to gender equality is more crucial than the level of income. In some cases, low-income countries exceed far richer countries with respect to the development opportunities offered to women, which is clearly illustrated by the situation in a number of Arab countries. This further indicates that gender equality can be promoted in very diverse cultures and economic circumstances.

Empowerment is a key condition for enabling women to demand and make use of equal rights, resources and influence and thus for gender equality. The concept implies that each individual acquires the ability to think and to act freely, to take decisions and to fulfil his or her own potential as a full and equal member of society.

2. Promoting gender equality: an international and national obligation

Denmark – and many of the UN member states – have committed themselves, internationally and nationally, to promoting women's status and gender equality by ratifying the UN conventions on human rights and the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), as well as the associated Optional Protocol. The political commitments are also a consequence of accession to the UN Action Programme from the Population Conference in Cairo in 1994, which recognised women's and girls' sexual and reproductive rights, as well as the Beijing Platform for Action from the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, which drew attention to mainstreaming (cf page 11) as a central strategy for achieving increased gender equality and identified 12 critical areas of concern for promoting the status of women (cf box below).

The Beijing Plan for Action 's 12 critical areas of concern for promoting the status of women:

1. Women and poverty
2. Education and training of women
3. Women and health
4. Violence against women
5. Women and armed conflict
6. Women and the economy
7. Women in power and decision-making
8. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women
9. Human rights of women
10. Women and the media
11. Women and the environment
12. The girl-child

The UN Millennium Declaration from September 2000 and its translation into the eight international Millennium Development Goals also focuses on gender equality. This applies to gender equality as a goal in itself (Goal 3) and gender equality as a necessary precondition for combating poverty, hunger and disease and for promoting

sustainable development, and is thereby a precondition for achieving the remaining Millennium Development Goals (cf below).

The Millennium Development Goals

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and the empowerment of woman
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other infectious diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

The international framework for the work on gender equality combines a rights-based approach with a development approach by focusing on improving women's access to rights, resources and influence. Despite documented progress, it remains a major challenge to make the actual conditions that women and girls live under in many regions of the world conform to the international agreements, norms and objectives in the field of gender equality.

3. Definition, objective and methodology

Definition of gender equality

The term gender equality, i.e. equality between women and men, can be defined in many ways. In this strategy the following definition is used:

“Gender equality:

- (i) Equality under the law,
- (ii) Equality of opportunity (including gender equality of rewards for work, and gender equality in access to human capital and other productive resources that enable opportunity)
- (iii) Equality in terms of political and economic influence (including the ability to influence and contribute to the overall development process).”

Objective

The objective of this strategy is to contribute to the promotion of:

- Equal rights (political, civil, economic, social including sexual and reproductive as well as cultural) for women and men
- Equal access to and control of resources for women and men
- Equal opportunities to achieve political and economic influence for women and men

The implementation of the strategy will demand changes to existing power structures, the status and roles of women and men. Therefore, working with gender equality will in many contexts be conflictual. The Danish effort must be based on acknowledgement of cultural and religious differences within the frames of universal human rights. However, religious and cultural values and traditions must never be allowed to serve as an excuse for depriving the individual – woman or man – of her/his freedom and rights.

Improving gender equality requires a focused, strategic, persistent, result-oriented and long-term effort, as well as partnerships among many actors, including not least between men and women.

The ambition of this strategy is to prioritise gender equality interventions in Danish assistance, thereby increasing its effect and the impact.

Methodology

The strategy utilises a two-pronged methodological approach:

- **Mainstreaming** – Defined as considering both men’s and women’s wishes, needs and experience in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and efforts. At all levels, an assessment of men’s and women’s rights, access to resources and decision-making can provide guidance for mainstreaming efforts.
- **Special interventions** – Defined as efforts aimed at creating fundamental structural changes in institutions, policies, legislation and allocation of resources to promote gender equality between men and women, and based on the specific needs in the individual country, policy area or organisation.

4. Important elements in the work on gender equality

Sex-disaggregated data

Statistical data disaggregated according to gender are crucial for evaluating the level of gender equality, for example, women's access to resources and the impact of possible policy initiatives on men and women, respectively. In many developing countries the existing statistical basis is an obstacle to the assessment of problems and possible solutions.

Strategic partnerships

Strategic partnerships with different actors at country level and in international work on gender equality are necessary to bring about lasting changes in societies. Partnerships can include the government, the administration, civil society, Danish NGOs, the private sector, the media, research institutions, and other bilateral and multilateral donors. It can be appropriate to identify "agents of change" in the form of prominent personalities who are advocates for a given aspect in the field of gender equality.

The composition of the partnerships will often depend on whether the intervention focuses on rights, resources or influence.

In the area of rights, legislative amendments aimed at promoting gender equality under the law will, as a general rule, involve relevant government actors and the parliament in a country. Generally, prior to this there will most frequently also be a need for cooperation with civil society, the media and possibly research institutions to prepare the ground for legislative amendments. Multilateral organisations with a special mandate within the field of rights can be important partners. Legislation is a necessary but usually not sufficient condition for increasing gender equality in practice. Furthermore, there will be a need to ensure the capacity of the administrative and executive authorities who are to implement the legislation, and to support women's possibilities to advance their own rights, including e.g. overcoming the opposition in traditional norms. Partnerships could therefore also include authorities such as the police, and the legal system, as well as traditional and religious leaders.

When focusing on gender equality in terms of resources, the World Bank, the relevant governmental actors, such as ministries of finance and planning, civil society representatives and other donors, would be obvious partners at the macroeconomic level with regard to poverty analyses and strategies. On the sector level, the sector-relevant group of actors could be involved.

When it comes to promoting gender equality with regard to influence, the partnership constellation will depend on the specific focus area. If the issue concerns women's participation both as voters and candidates in national or local elections, for example civil society representatives, the media, representatives of the political parties and the parliament could be partners as could the multilateral organisations holding a special mandate within the fields of good governance and democratisation, such as the UNDP. Similarly, on other issues, local and international actors working on institutional reforms, decentralisation processes and education policy can play a role.

5. Implementation of the Danish strategy

The strategy will be implemented through:

- Interventions at country level in the 15 programme countries and other countries in accordance with the Government's priorities
- International cooperation
- Strengthening of the capacity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the network with the Danish and international resource base in the field of gender equality.

Where possible and considered to improve the impact, the aim is to increase the synergy between multilateral and bilateral assistance.

6. Work on gender equality at country level

The opportunities for promoting gender equality vary in the different programme countries as well as within the different focus areas and sectors. Consequently, the specific interventions promoting gender equality and the results of these interventions will also vary between individual countries. The challenge will be greatest in societies where gender discriminatory cultures and norms are most pervasive.

The promotion of gender equality in the programme countries will follow two tracks, which will also be reflected in the country strategies:

- Priority will be given to a minimum of one special intervention promoting gender equality in rights, access to and control of resources or political influence.
- Work on mainstreaming will be intensified in sector support and in the support for human rights, democratisation and good governance. The mainstreaming work will also take the promotion of equal rights, access to resources and influence as a point of departure.

The objectives of gender equality will be rooted in the policies and strategies etc. of the individual programme countries, where relevant and realistic objectives already exist. In countries where such objectives are not well defined, Danish assistance could support the process of developing gender equality objectives and policies on the basis of international legal and political obligations (e.g. CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action, and the Millennium Development Goals) in dialogue with the government and other partners.

National overview as a point of departure for defining priorities and focus

Due to the resource constraints of the government, the donors and the civil society in a given country, it will be necessary to prioritise and to focus in the specific context to achieve the most significant impact of the activities in the area of gender equality. At the same time, however, it is clear that greater efforts must be made to promote gender equality.

In some programme countries the need may exist for supporting the establishment of a national overview of gender equality in close cooperation with the recipient country and other partners. Such an overview of the challenges and opportunities in the area of gender equality within different policy areas, areas of intervention and sectors could form the basis for joint strategic initiatives. Such initiatives could relate to the poverty analysis upon which a given poverty reduction strategy is based, or to an independent analysis of the gender equality situation if one does not already exist. In Uganda, for example, Denmark cooperates with the government, the World Bank, other donors and representatives of civil society on incorporating gender equality into the national poverty analysis and the poverty reduction strategy (PRS).

Local ownership and starting point for gender equality efforts

The international obligations and norms in the area of gender equality are globally rooted and can provide the starting point both for a dialogue about possible interventions in the area and for a specific identification process. However, selecting the specific priorities must evidently depend on conditions in the various regions, countries, policy areas and sectors. The approach must be realistic, flexible and relevant and utilise existing and arising opportunities for intervention.

Local ownership and local rooting are essential for the long-term sustainability of gender equality efforts. One or more donors will often be able to promote gender equality in the short term within a narrow area, but gender equality cannot be promoted for the majority of women without key actors in the country taking ownership of these efforts. This is because the promotion of gender equality questions and challenges existing power structures that are deeply rooted in institutions from the local level (the family) to the national level (rules and norms).

Mainstreaming

Sector programme support, with its focus on the long-term, the necessity of ownership, and a coherent policy and strategy, as well as the introduction of poverty reduction strategies (PRS), create new opportunities for mainstreaming.

To simplify somewhat, mainstreaming means that during the identification/formulation, implementation and monitoring of a given intervention, a sector programme or a project –the key question of, ‘How do we secure the maximum possible benefit for the poor from a given intervention?’, is broadened to asking, ‘How do we secure the maximum possible benefit for (the poor) women and men from a given effort?’. As a rule, the answers to these two questions will be different, which should be taken into consideration during the development of specific policies and strategies as well as the planning of the specific activities.

An analysis of women's and men's rights, access to resources and influence is an important indicator for a focused mainstreaming effort on all levels.

National poverty reduction strategies

National poverty reduction strategies (PRS) and the process for drawing them up constitute the foundation for Denmark's work in the programme countries. PRS is, among other things, significant for the distribution of public expenditures in the countries, as PRS is translated into finance acts and medium term expenditure frameworks. Currently, only a few PRS integrate gender equality aspects satisfactorily.

Mainstreaming of gender equality into PRS has potential for the promotion of gender equality and for improving the efficiency of poverty reduction. Mainstreaming of PRS implies e.g. that women are included in the development and revision of PRS on a par with men; that the gender aspect is reflected in the poverty analysis on which the PRS is based; that the gender specific poverty analysis is used to define prioritised public interventions in PRS; and that the gender aspect is gradually reflected when the implementation of PRS is monitored, i.e. that gender specific objectives and indicators are defined. In most countries, such work would take some time.

Denmark will work to promote the mainstreaming of gender equality in PRS in the programme countries, in the political dialogue, and where there are opportunities - and needs not otherwise addressed by other donors - via concrete support for this mainstreaming.

Work at sector level

Experience indicates that some sectors have more immediate importance for gender equality than others – even though the maximum impact is often achieved through synergy between activities across different sectors.

Interventions in education and health, including reproductive and sexual rights and HIV/AIDS, have an immediate and significant impact on e.g. the status of women and poverty reduction. Therefore, the government allocating higher priority to education and health in Danish development assistance is an important point of departure for gender equality interventions.

Interventions in agriculture and business sector development, including equal access for women to micro financing (savings, credit), also have potentially significant effects. Agriculture is important because, among other things, a considerable proportion of the poor, the majority of them being women, live and work in rural areas, and because discrimination against women can often be found in agriculture. Business sector development is important because it creates a platform for the creation of jobs to the advantage of

women and their families, and is required to secure the economic growth that is a necessary – although not sufficient – prerequisite for poverty reduction for women and men.

Investments in water, energy and transport can significantly reduce the time burden associated with women's traditional work areas.

Danish support to mainstreaming at sector level, in cooperation with relevant actors, will focus on

- Development of gender specific sector policies and strategies
- Specific activities promoting gender equality

There is a need to prioritise Danish efforts in order to achieve the greatest possible impact in a given country. This priority setting will be based on an assessment of the sector in which an investment in gender equality will have the greatest impact, as well as the extent to which other donors contribute to work in this field.

Work at sector level can be used to identify the need for amending legislation, for institutional reform, the need for greater prioritisation of gender equality in PRS, and the need for increasing the allocation of resources to interventions promoting gender equality in national budgets. At sector level it will also be possible to provide assistance for innovative projects contributing to the promotion of the rights of small groups of women and their access to and control of resources and/or influence. Such pilot projects will in part contribute to the empowerment of small groups of women and, in addition, could form a foundation for policy changes, and could be scaled up to cover improvements for the sector as a whole.

Special interventions

In many countries the need exists for interventions complementary to mainstreaming efforts – especially in areas where blatant gender discrimination prevails. Such efforts will typically fall outside the scope of general sector programme support.

Work on mainstreaming at sector level and/or project level would help uncover structural and/or legislative problems concerning the equal rights of women, such as ownership/rights to use of land, the right to inherit from one's husband, or the right to equal division of property – issues that cannot be addressed solely within a limited sector. In these cases the challenge consists in raising key questions to the relevant political level in the government. This can be achieved through the political dialogue conducted between Denmark and the authorities. However, it will often have to form part of a broader political dialogue that also includes other actors (donors, civil society, etc.) in order for sustainable results to be achieved.

The identification of a special area of intervention in a given country intended to create fundamental structural changes in institutions, policies, legislation and allocation of resources to promote gender equality between women and men should be based on the 12 critical areas of concern from the Beijing Platform for Action (see box on page 8). National CEDAW reports and any existing analyses of the gender equality situation in a given country can also be used to identify special interventions.

Illustration of types of possible special interventions

- Assistance for eliminating discrimination such as violence against women in peacetime and situations of armed conflict, female genital mutilation, reproductive and sexual rights and trafficking in women, etc.
- Assistance for the development of sex-disaggregated statistics and financial planning.
- Assistance for amending, implementing and enforcing legislation, e.g. concerning inheritance and property rights, and support within the judicial system, the police or in the area of human rights.
- Assistance for women's access to increased political influence locally and nationally, e.g. in connection with elections, development of gender equality policies for political parties and assemblies (elected or appointed) at all levels.
- Assistance for advocacy groups, awareness raising and educational campaigns.

Partnerships with other actors will often be a key factor for work on special interventions and include the government, civil society, research institutions and media as well as international organisations and other donors.

Danish non-governmental organisations

Due to their special ability to establish close partnerships with organisations in the South, NGOs are well suited for contributing to gender equality in individual countries. The strategy for Danish assistance to civil society in developing countries, which came into effect in 2000, indicates that crosscutting issues in Danish development policy with regard to strengthening the aspect of gender equality should also apply to NGO work. In addition, it is expected that Danish NGOs adhere to the guidelines of this strategy. In this connection, there is a requirement that NGO project applications should detail how both men and women are secured access to and control of opportunities, resources and decision making in connection with Danish-supported activities. Corresponding information must also constitute part of both status reports and project completion reports.

7. International cooperation

In accordance with the Danish government's prioritisation of Danish development assistance, international efforts in the field of gender equality during the strategy period will focus in particular on violence against women during peacetime and situations of armed conflicts sexual and reproductive rights in relation to health, HIV and AIDS, and access to resources via the mainstreaming of gender equality in PRS.

Violence against women in peacetime and situations of armed conflict is a major problem attracting increasing international attention from both a rights-based and a development perspective. In recent years, women's rights, in particular their sexual and reproductive rights, have come under increasing pressure from religious fundamentalist forces in both the Western and Muslim worlds. Consequently, special efforts are needed in these areas. Access to resources in the broad sense is essential in order to make use of rights and possibilities for exerting influence, which is why access to resources via PRS constitutes the second area of focus.

In addition, the set list of priorities provides an opportunity for increasing the synergy between bilateral and multilateral efforts at the political and the strategic level and in the programme countries.

The themes indicated above, set the priorities for Denmark's participation in international cooperation on gender equality both at the normative level, in relation to cooperation with multilateral organisations, and with respect to special policy areas. The established focus of the Danish efforts does not exclude cooperation with other organisations at capital or country level or efforts within other policy areas

Normative cooperation

The political normative work on gender equality and women's rights takes place at the UN General Assemblies, in ECOSOC, the Commission on the Status of Women, and the Commission on Human Rights.

Denmark will continue to give priority to active and targeted participation in the normative work under the auspices of the UN with the intention, as a minimum, of main-

taining and, if possible, strengthening international legal and political frameworks for the promotion of gender equality between women and men, including the follow up to the recommendations of the World Conferences on Women and the other relevant UN conferences. A special effort will be undertaken to maintain and, if possible, strengthen the sexual and reproductive rights and health of women, which Denmark considers essential for gender equality. The area of sexual and reproductive rights in particular is under significant pressure internationally, with the implication that at the present moment it is not possible to reconfirm by consensus either the Action Plan from the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, or the Platform for Action from the Beijing World Conference on Women, or Beijing + 5.

In addition, Denmark will make special efforts to ensure that Beijing Platform for Action (including women's rights, inclusive of sexual and reproductive rights and violence against women) is integrated in the follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals and the Millennium Declaration, with a view to securing and, if possible, enhancing both a rights based and a development perspective. The International Gender Equality Committee, including Danish women's organisations, will continue to be useful advisors to the government in the field of international gender equality.

In cooperation with like-minded donor countries and developing countries, including Danish programme countries, Denmark supports the work of the UN on reaching agreement on an integrated follow-up to the last decade's UN conferences. The integrated follow-up is expected to lead to the presentation of crosscutting issues of relevance to all conference outcomes. Denmark will promote gender equality as a key crosscutting issue.

Denmark will continue to work towards all countries acceding to, ratifying and implementing CEDAW and the associated Optional Protocol. Denmark will make active use of the CEDAW Committee's recommendations in bilateral and multilateral cooperation where these are relevant, e.g. in connection with special interventions and mainstreaming at sector level in the programme countries.

Multilateral organisations and international NGOs

The UN organisations and the international financial institutions supported by Denmark and the EU are committed to the principle of mainstreaming in the Beijing Platform for Action and to the Millennium Development Goals.

In the Danish organisations' strategies and the political dialogue, Denmark will hold multilateral organisations accountable to these commitments and to participating in the necessary donor coordination internationally and at country level with a view to pro-

moting increased gender equality. This applies to international financial institutions, UN funds and programmes and specialised agencies, and the EU.

In addition, Denmark will utilise the methodology and expertise held and developed by multilateral organisations within their respective mandates and comparative advantages.

Focused cooperation with multilateral organisations

In the area of gender equality, Denmark will allocate special priority to cooperation with the multilateral organisations listed below. The specific priorities are accounted for in the Danish strategies for the respective organisations.

World Bank

The World Bank is a key player in relation to PRS, poverty reduction, and the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals, and is one of the leading organisation in terms of conducting economic analyses of the significance of gender equality efforts. In 2004, the World Bank will also commence analyses of the consequences of violence against women.

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund)

UNICEF is of particular relevance to the Millennium Development Goals as regards achieving universal primary education (Goal 2), including the organisation's special focus on primary education for girls; the reduction of the child mortality rate (Goal 4); reduction of the maternal (pregnancy and childbirth) mortality rate (Goal 5); and the combatting of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis (Goal 6). The organisation also develops methodology concerning rights-based approaches to development efforts, inter alia within the focus areas of reproductive health and rights as well as post conflict situations.

UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund)

UNFPA focuses on sexual and reproductive health and rights in the light of the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994, on strategies for sustainable population development, and on gender equality and strengthening the role of women. The organisation is especially relevant for the Millennium Development Goals as regards promoting gender equality and empowering women (Goal 3); reducing the maternal (pregnancy and childbirth) mortality rate (Goal 5); and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis (Goal 6).

UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women)

UNIFEM focuses on strengthening women's economic security and rights. It supports women's participation in the political decision-making processes and peacemaking, and promotes the human rights of women, including combating violence against women.

The organisation also facilitates the mainstreaming of gender equality in the UN system and develops policies and methodology in the area of women's rights and gender equality.

OECD/DAC

The OECD/DAC Network on Gender Equality is an important international forum for cooperation and coordination in the area of gender equality with respect to both policy development and development of specific guidelines.

This prioritisation indicated above does not preclude cooperation with other international organisations, such as UNDP.

International and regional NGOs

International and regional NGOs and networks are important partners for work on gender equality and women's rights in the developing countries. Their comparative advantages relate in particular to establishing networks in the South between civil society, the research institutions and other actors as well as to the dissemination of information and knowledge of gender equality aspects. Additionally, NGO efforts concerning combating violence against women, female genital mutilation, trafficking in women, combating the spread of HIV/AIDS, and women and armed conflict are important. Denmark will continue to assist various international NGOs.

Special policy areas

The selected special policy areas are central both to the Danish government's development policy priorities and to the work of promoting women's and men's equal rights, access to and control of resources and influence, and require both bilateral and multi-lateral efforts.

Peace and security, refugees and humanitarian aid

Peace and security have traditionally been discussed from a conflict-management perspective with no particular reference to gender as an important variable.

The armed conflicts of the last decades have primarily been internal conflicts/civil wars that to a high degree affect the civilian population and create millions of internally displaced people and refugees. As stated in the introduction, women and men are affected differently by armed conflict. UN Security Council Resolution SR 1325/2000 on women, peace and security focuses on women as both victims and resources in the different stages of armed conflict: conflict prevention, conflict situations, conflict resolution, peace keeping and reconstruction. The resolution presents specific recommendations to the UN Member States and the UN Secretary General and other actors and parties involved in the different stages of armed conflict, and emphasises the involvement of women in all these stages.

Denmark will actively provide political and economic support to the implementation of SR 1325 in multilateral work. During the expected Danish membership of the Security Council in 2005-06, Denmark will take into account the recommendations of the resolution in connection with Security Council work on situations of crisis and conflict.

In the planning of Danish humanitarian assistance, consideration will be given to the special needs of particularly vulnerable groups, including the large groups of women and children. Denmark will urge international organisations, including the UN and the EU, as well as Danish NGOs to place greater emphasis on promoting gender equality aspects in their humanitarian aid. This includes support for special protective measures against the violation of women's human rights and other conditions endangering women in crisis situations.

Regional political dialogue and assistance

Gender equality must be promoted not only internationally and in the Danish programme countries, but also regionally. Denmark will focus in particular on the Arab world and NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) in Africa.

Women constitute a considerable, and to a great extent unexploited, potential at many levels in the Arab world. Women's lack of empowerment, inequalities in terms of rights, and a low level of female education are considered to be the greatest barrier, to development in the region. Support to the promotion of women's rights, access to and control of resources as well as political influence will be incorporated as elements in the activities under the Danish government's Arab Initiative.

NEPAD was adopted in July 2001 with the overall objective of reducing poverty in Africa and promoting sustainable growth and development, as well as securing African access to world trade and political influence by realising the Millennium Development Goals. NEPAD is constructed around three elements: (1) the conditions for sustainable development, including efforts regarding peace, security, good political and economic governance, good corporate practice and a sub-regional and regional approach to development, (2) sectoral priority setting, and (3) resource mobilisation .

NEPAD has been criticised *inter alia* for not involving civil society and integrating gender equality to a sufficient degree. In the light of the unexploited development potential that women in Africa represent, Denmark will work towards greater integration of gender equality in the initiative.

8. Capacity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the resource base regarding gender equality

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will strengthen the competence development of its own staff and ensure exchange of experience and knowledge sharing between the Danish and international resource bases, inter alia via supplementary training and professional and web-based networks.

In order to strengthen the professional base for mainstreaming at sector level in the programme countries, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will, inter alia on the basis of international experience, develop 'best practice' that gathers experience from promoting gender equality in connection with the preparation and implementation of sector programme support and large-scale project assistance for the promotion of respect for human rights, democratisation and good governance.

9. Monitoring

Follow-up on work promoting gender equality forms part of embassy performance contracts. In connection with the annual reviews of the sector programmes, an assessment is made of how individual programmes have promoted work on gender equality, including whether there are problems that need to be followed up, and if so a plan of action in this regard will be drawn up. Once a year, the embassy prepares an assessment report on the performance of the country programme, including the work on gender equality and if necessary submits proposals for possible follow-up. A summary of both the sector and country programme assessment will be included in Danida's Annual Report.

In connection with the on-going performance review of the country programmes, of which 7-8 are implemented each year, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will follow-up on progress and problems related to the implementation of the gender equality strategy in the individual countries.

The Board of International Development Cooperation will receive an annual report on international cooperation concerning gender equality.

10. Appendix

Previous experience with gender equality in development cooperation

Prior to the drafting of the present strategy Denmark collected experience from previous work in the field of gender equality, including the implementation of the special allocation of DKK 70 million¹ which in 2002 was earmarked for methodological development on poverty reduction and gender equality. Five countries received funds from the special allocation; Benin, Mozambique, Ghana, Tanzania and Bolivia. The funds have been used in the following areas; (a) National Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS); (b) improving women's human rights; (c) combating violence against women – including trafficking in women; (d) securing women's rights to purchase and inherit land; (e) health and education (including interventions on HIV/AIDS); and (f) vulnerable groups' access to micro-credits, small-scale enterprises and trade. Experience shows that work on gender equality can successfully be accomplished in areas such as human rights, land rights and the right to vote, as well as initiatives related to national poverty reduction strategies.

Internationally, assessments indicate that

- Good policy intentions in the area of gender equality are often not implemented satisfactorily in practice. This may be the result of insufficient planning, inadequate technical expertise, insufficient follow-up, inadequate support from middle and upper management in donor organisations, and insufficient resources. Therefore, there is a need for focus, priority setting, development of indicators and follow-up based on performance assessments of the development interventions, as well as sufficient resources to secure the impact of the interventions.
- Small-scale interventions can make a positive contribution to changing conditions for small groups of women and thus strengthen the empowerment of these women. However, such efforts rarely contribute to changing the gender equality situation in a country in key political and strategic areas. Furthermore, small-scale interventions can prove difficult to implement on a large scale. This indicates a need for special strategic interventions that on the basis of experience from small-scale activities are

¹ UDS 100 = DKK 607.56, EUR 100 = DKK 744.93

directed at fundamental structural changes of institutions, policies, legislation and allocation of resources, and which can contribute to improving women's rights, access to and control of resources, and increased opportunities for exerting political influence.

- There is a great need for improving the statistical basis for interventions in the area of gender equality in order to measure progress. Incomplete statistical material is often a barrier to the effective monitoring of initiatives. This problem has become more apparent in connection with the extensive monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals. There is a need for increased coordination amongst donors to support individual countries in this area.
- There is a need for strategic partnerships and coordination with relevant actors, including government, civil society and the private sector as well as donors in the individual programme countries, in order to create the sustainable critical mass of ownership necessary for the promotion of structural changes.
- There is a need for increased competence development in the programme countries, and in the donor organisations and for the development of usable tools and methods.

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