

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Danida**

Guidelines for

**High-Level Consultations (HLC)
between Denmark and partner countries**

May 2009

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1. Purpose of the High-level Consultations

Increasing donor coordination and harmonisation along with mounting national ownership to the poverty reduction agenda have changed the context for bilateral consultations. More and more issues of common donor concern in the partner countries are dealt with in joint partner country/donor fora, such as budget support reviews and PRS-reviews.

Nevertheless, the need to maintain a forum for regular high-level political and developmental dialogue with partner countries remains. The HLC is the main occasion for discussing with the partner country general foreign policy issues of mutual concern, including regional problems and issues pertaining to the economic situation, the development policy and specific challenges related to the development cooperation with Denmark.

The purposes of the High-level Consultations (HLC) are, through a focused dialogue with the partner countries;

- To discuss issues of mutual interest related to global and regional affairs.
- To engage in an exchange of views on key political, economic and other relevant issues of importance to the partnership.
- To promote Danish development policies and priorities, including cross-cutting issues; and
- To discuss and reach agreement on key issues of the Danish development cooperation with the partner country, including adjustments to the country strategy framework for the development cooperation, if needed.

The HLC is conducted according to the following principles:

- The dialogue on development issues should support the common donor agenda established in the partner country and should – if possible – be conducted back-to-back with existing joint donor-partner country forums.
- HLC should be conducted as a minimum every third year.
- The Board of Danida will be informed about the results of HLC as part of the Representations annual reporting. In extraordinary cases, where the results of HLC will have major implications for the Danish development cooperation, the Board will be informed immediately after HLC.

A chronological overview of the different phases, tasks to be carried out and responsible units is attached (annex 1).

2. Responsibility and participation

The relevant Regional Department in the Danish MFA is overall responsible for the HLC. The consultations are led by the Under-Secretary for Africa, Asia, America and the Middle East, or by the Under-Secretary for Development Policy. In specific cases the

consultations can be led by a Head of Department. HLC may also be undertaken as part of a visit by the Minister for Development Co-operation.

The Under-Secretary (or the Head of Regional Department) and the Head of Representation will, together with relevant staff of the Representation, participate in the meetings on the Danish side.

3. Preparation

As a general rule HLC should be held as a minimum every third year. However, HLC's may be organised more often, if need arises. The approximate date for the next HLC should be agreed upon during the previous meeting.

The relevant authorities of the partner country as well as the Regional Department of the MFA approve the agenda. It is the responsibility of the Representation to develop the draft agenda of the HLC in collaboration with the authorities of the partner country and in consultation with the Regional Department.

The purpose of the agenda is to centre the HLC on mutually agreed issues. The agenda should focus on a maximum of 3 to 5 issues in order to allow for in-depth discussions.

When setting the agenda it is important to take into consideration positions of the joint donor dialogue with the partner country, as well as particular issues that may have arisen from recent sector and programme reviews. If a joint forum exists for handling the issues at stake – and if there is no specific Danish position – it should be avoided to have a bilateral HLC dialogue covering the issue. HLC should – to the extent possible – be held back-to-back with, or coordinated with other political processes between partners (e.g. CG-meeting, PRSP, review of budget support etc). If possible, HLC should be conducted jointly with like-minded donors.

4. Documents for preparation

For the purpose of consolidating the Danish position between the Representation and MFA, the Representation will prepare a short draft annotated agenda (not to exceed 5 pages). The draft annotated agenda should focus on Danish points of view and concrete messages to be delivered during the HLC regarding highly prioritised issues. The annotated agenda is to be regarded as an internal Danish paper.

The annotated agenda may be written in Danish or English (or a combination of background in Danish with speaking points in English – or other language under which the HLC are conducted).

The Representation must submit the draft annotated agenda six weeks in advance of the HLC to the Regional Department. The Regional Department finalises the draft annotated agenda and circulates it for internal consultation in the MFA to relevant departments.

The final annotated agenda must be submitted to the Under-Secretary for Africa, Asia, America, and the Middle East or to the Under-Secretary for Development Policy for approval no later than two week in advance of the HLC.

5. Minutes

Normally, minutes from the HLC will be made for internal use only and be restricted to short bullet points covering the main issues and decisions made during HLC. Agreed minutes will only be made if the government of the partner country so requests, or if there is a specific Danish need for signed documentation of decisions made. The Representation drafts the minutes (internal or agreed).

Based on the minutes the Representation will follow up on the discussions and agreements made during the consultations, which could include MoU or other types of agreements needed to substantiate the conclusions of the HLC.

6. Reporting to the Board of Danida

The Board of Danida will be informed about the outcome of the HLC as part of the Representation's annual reporting on progress of the development cooperation, which takes place during the months of February, March and April. The presentation to the Board is a short 3-4 pages document (based on the standard format for reporting to the Board in annex 2), highlighting the most important political and economic development in the country during the past year, development of the country programme, and – in years with HLC - main issues raised during the HLC. The latest Country Assessment will always be attached to the presentation together with minutes from the HLC, if such minutes exist.

In cases where the outcome of the HLC has major implications for future implementation of Danish cooperation, the embassy will report to the Board immediately after the HLC (e.g decision regarding major adjustments in the country programme, new country strategies etc.).

The Representation is responsible for presenting (via video-conference) to the Board.

Minutes from HLC will, unlike most other presentations to the Board, not be made publicly available on the Danish MFA Homepage.

7. PDB

The Representation is responsible for uploading the internal minutes (and agreed minutes, if any) of the HLC on PDB before presenting the outcome of the HLC to the Board of Danida.

Annex 1: Time line/Responsibilities for High-level Consultations (HLC)

What?	When?	Who?
Agree on dates with partner country and Country Office	As early as possible	Representation
Send draft annotated agenda to Regional Department	Six weeks before HLC	Representation
Circulate draft annotated agenda for internal hearing at MFA	Four weeks before HLC	Regional Department
Send updated annotated agenda to Under-Secretary	Two weeks before HLC	Regional Department
Finalise annotated agenda and send to participants in the Danish delegation and Representation	After approval by Under-Secretary	Regional Department
Minutes	To be elaborated in parallel to the HLC	Danish delegation /Representation
Issue press statement in partner country	During HLC	Danish delegation /Representation
Report to the Board of Danida based on Country Assessment, and/minutes from HLC	Deadlines established for presentations to the Board by Department for Humanitarian Action, Development policy and Civil Society	Representation
Participation in Board meeting		Representation and Regional Department

Annex 2: Standard format for presentations to the Board of Danida

NOTITS

Til: Styrelsen for Internationalt
Udviklingssamarbejde

J.nr.: XXX

CC: Bilag: Country assessment, Minutes HLC
(internal)

Fra: Ambassaden i Maputo

Dato: Februar – marts

Emne: Årlig rapportering om
bistandssamarbejdet i Mozambique

Resumé:

Landefakta (opdateret fra hjemmesiden):

Areal: 802.000 km²

BNI pr. indbygger: USD 210(2001).

Forfatning: Gældende forfatning vedtaget i 1990.

Hovedstad: Maputo. **Indbyggertal:** 18,0 mio.(2000).

Officielle navn: Republic of Mozambique.

Religion: Kristne 30%, muslimer 17%, oprindelige afrikanske religioner og andre trosretninger 45%.

Sprog: Portugisisk (officielt statsprog).

Valuta: Metical.

Vækst i BNI pr. år: 14% (2001).

Statsoverhoved: Joaquim Alberto Chissano.

Regering: Består af medlemmer af partiet FRELIMO.

Regeringsleder: Statsminister Pascoal Mocumbi.

Relevante ministre: Udenrigs- og udviklingsminister: Leonardo Santos Simão, Planlægnings- og Finansminister: Luísa Dias Diogo.

Parlamentets sammensætning: FRELIMO: 133 pladser, RENAMO-koalition: 117 pladser.

Styreform: Parlamentarisk republik.

1. Den vigtigste politiske og økonomisk udvikling i landet
2. Udvikling i donor harmonisering og tilpasning til landets egne systemer
3. Hovedkonklusionen fra HLC (hvis HLC i året som rapporteres om)
4. Konsekvenser for bistandssamarbejdet