



# INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COOPERATION

Strategy for the Government's approach

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## WHAT IS DENMARK'S APPROACH TO INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COOPERATION?

The Government will:

- Work towards improving the human rights protection of everyone by promoting countries' compliance with their human rights obligations.
- Counter measures which may call the universality of human rights into doubt or undermine them.
- Ensure that the promotion and protection of human rights is mainstreamed into all foreign policy areas and activities.
- Foster a strong human rights culture in the international cooperation that Denmark participates in at regional and international levels.
- Work towards increasing support for international instruments in the field of human rights.
- Involve civil society, on an ongoing basis, in deliberations regarding the formulation and implementation of Denmark's international human rights policy.
- Support independent international monitoring of human rights compliance and work towards strengthening its quality.
- Cooperate with international monitoring institutions.
- Work towards ensuring that the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) becomes a credible, efficient and operational tool.
- With a view to achieving better human rights protection consider on an ongoing basis whether initiatives should be taken to develop new commitments to human rights obligations.
- Make the will to comply with human rights obligations a key factor in the development of Denmark's bilateral relations with other countries.
- Attach importance to the attitude to and effort made in international human rights work in the development of Denmark's bilateral relations with other countries.
- Assess, where human rights are violated, how to improve the situation best and most efficiently through dialogue and cooperation as the primary tools.
- Combat poverty and promote equal opportunities for everyone in partner countries.
- Strengthen the will and ability of cooperation partners to comply with human rights obligations through development activities.
- Enhance cooperation with civil society organisations working for the implementation of international human rights conventions and declarations.
- Strengthen the involvement of regional and international human rights institutions in the bilateral development assistance and vice versa.

- Strengthen the effort to develop effective democratic institutions and well-functioning legal systems in partner countries.
- Enter into long-term partnerships with both State and non-State actors in order to foster freedom and equal opportunities for all to the benefit of poor and marginalised groups.
- Strengthen efforts to bring together bilateral and multilateral initiatives in the field of human rights.
- Apply relevant recommendations from the UN Special Procedures and Special Rapporteurs in Denmark's and the EU's bilateral development cooperation and political dialogue.
- Strengthen the EU's effort to promote and protect human rights in the dialogue and cooperation with other countries and through common positions in the regional and international cooperation fora on human rights on the basis of the Danish approach to human rights.
- Work towards enhancing the independent activity of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, including the OHCHR's key functions in Geneva.
- Work towards ensuring that the UN Human Rights Council becomes the central and effective forum for international activities that promote and protect human rights.
- Work towards strengthening the UN organisations' human rights activities.
- Work towards strengthening the special role of the Council of Europe in the regional activities for the promotion and protection of human rights, including through reform of the European Court of Human Rights.
- Work towards strengthening the human dimension of the OSCE, including in areas where the OSCE provides added value compared to the activities of other organisations.
- Contribute to strengthening the effort to foster human rights in the international financial institutions, especially the World Bank.
- On an ongoing basis, adjust the prioritisation of which current human rights issues Denmark should follow particularly closely.
- Contribute to protecting human rights defenders in third countries.
- Work to strengthen freedom of expression.
- In an international context, underline the significance of rule of law principles to human rights protection.
- Through development cooperation, contribute to strengthening the institutions that are crucial to a well-functioning law-governed society.
- Work towards combating the impunity of perpetrators of human rights violations, and in this connection supporting the International Criminal Court.

- Work towards ensuring that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) develops into an effective tool for the purpose of promoting and protecting human rights.
- Work towards ensuring the elimination of all forms of torture and other ill-treatment and maintain and develop the involvement of the EU and of the UN in the effort to eliminate torture and other ill-treatment.
- Work for the worldwide abolition of the death penalty.
- Work towards promoting respect for the individual's right to choose his/her faith or to have no religion, including with special attention to the situation of religious minorities throughout the world.
- Work towards ensuring that the fight against terrorism is conducted with full respect for human rights.
- In cooperation with the Greenland Home Rule Government, promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples.
- Enhance gender equality and women's rights through bilateral dialogue in international fora and through development cooperation, and promote the third UN Millennium Development Goal - MDG3 – through follow-up on the Government's international campaign "MDG3 Global Call to Action".
- Work towards promoting and protecting the rights of the child in recognition of children's special needs.

## WHY AN INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS STRATEGY?

Human rights and compliance with human rights are fundamental to the lives, integrity and dignity of all human beings, and they constitute a key element of the Government's value basis. The reason is that lasting peace, security, development and stability can only be achieved with respect for human rights. Violations of human rights may prepare the ground for instability and political extremism. Therefore, promoting and protecting human rights is not only to the benefit of the individual human being, but also in our own national interest. It is sound investment in a better and more secure future for all of us.

Internationally, modern human rights work was launched with the adoption of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 1948. At that time, two world wars had made it obvious that there was a need for reaching agreement on universal principles regarding States' obligations to citizens and regarding the rights of individuals in relation to the State. However, even though 60 years have passed, the importance of compliance with human rights has not declined. Every day, serious violations of human rights are committed against civilian populations, vulnerable groups and individuals.

Respect for human rights is not a given matter. Efforts to promote and protect human rights throughout the world often encounter opposition. Both in countries where there are violations of human rights, but also in the international bodies set up to foster human rights. This is, for example, the case regarding the UN Human Rights Council and the international debate on the limits of freedom of expression where some countries are working in a targeted manner to give religion as such human rights protection that takes precedence over the human rights of the individual. Also in the fight against terrorism, there are examples of suspects who have been deprived of their rights.

Denmark pursues a targeted, consistent and principled human rights policy on a broad front. Efforts are made both bilaterally and multilaterally in regional and international contexts to promote and protect human rights. At the same time, the Government is working actively together with cooperation partners to counter any steps backwards. There are not many easy victories in human rights work. It is a matter of systematic and sustained action, leading step by step to important progress. The Government is committed to continuing the long haul, among including by strengthening the effort to promote human rights in the regional and international cooperation bodies where Denmark is represented and by strengthening development cooperation.

An active Danish effort to foster human rights in an international context is based on a long tradition in Danish politics and on broad political support. This is due to the Danish conviction that indifference to the sufferings of others is unacceptable, and that action must be taken against human rights violations, irrespective of where they take place. The Government is convinced that tolerance, dialogue and cultural understanding are important aspects in promoting human rights. The Government also encourages dialogue with civil society about the Danish human rights effort in order to ensure that compliance with human rights becomes a matter of general public interest.

There is a need for a Danish effort, and the Government will maintain its high profile in the international cooperation to promote and protect human rights.

### UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights

On 10 December 1948, the UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which in 30 Articles covers civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. The Universal Declaration is the most well-known human rights document in the world and reflects a common standard for human rights goals among all peoples and States.

### UN Human Rights Council

The Human Rights Council was set up in 2006 to replace the UN Commission on Human Rights with a view to strengthening the UN human rights system and the broad UN reform process. The Council has 47 members, who are elected for a 3-year term by the UN General Assembly.

## WHAT VALUES AND PRINCIPLES APPLY TO DENMARK'S APPROACH TO HUMAN RIGHTS?

The Government will

- Work towards improving the human rights protection of everyone by promoting countries' compliance with their human rights obligations.
- Counter measures which may call the universality of human rights into doubt or undermine them.
- Ensure that the promotion and protection of human rights is mainstreamed into all foreign policy areas and activities.
- Foster a strong human rights culture in the international cooperation that Denmark participates in at regional and international levels.
- Strengthen efforts to bring together bilateral and multilateral initiatives in the field of human rights.

Human rights are universal. This appears from the UN Charter and from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and it has been constantly confirmed subsequently. It means that human rights apply to all human beings, at all times, throughout the world, irrespective of government system and cultural, ethnic or religious background and gender. Therefore, countries cannot point to special conditions such as religion, culture or tradition as reasons for violating, departing from or diluting human rights.

The Government will actively work for upholding the universality of human rights. Human rights place the individual at the centre and are only subject to restrictions provided by or allowed under international human rights conventions. It is not a matter of protecting cultures, religions or traditions. By contrast, it is a matter of the individual human being's right to protection against infringements by the State or other social actors. This protection of the individual is necessary in order for citizens to have confidence in the State and the society in which they live, and thus fundamental for the ability to maintain a well-functioning democracy. In its foreign, development, security and trade policies, Denmark will continue to actively work for the promotion of these values.

As globalisation has enabled more frequent and easier contact between people, it has become easier to monitor human rights compliance worldwide. The increased contact means at the same time that people in different countries, parts of the world and different cultures to an increasing extent gain an insight into how life is lived in other places in the world and also an insight into what values and opportunities are prevalent. This is in itself positive, but the new insight implies also a risk of new tensions and increased polarisation among cultures and among parts of the world. Furthermore, greater migration between countries and parts of the world together with climate change and increased political and religious radicalisation in both Western and non-Western countries present new challenges to compliance with human rights.

Human rights are indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. This was established at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993. They are all equal, and countries cannot single out some rights as more worthy of protection or respect than others. Thus, all countries are under an obligation to protect and promote all human rights. These generally accepted principles are the point of departure for Denmark's approach to the cooperation on human rights. They may appear self-evident, but the principles are under pressure, nevertheless. There are govern-

### UN Charter

The Charter of the United Nations is the treaty that established the international organisation known as the United Nations. The treaty entered into force on 24 October 1945 after having been ratified by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. When the UN was set up in 1945, there were 51 States. Today, there are more than 190 members. Negotiations take place on the basis of majority vote at intergovernmental level.

ments that endeavour to change the focus from protection of the individual's rights to protection of religions, and other governments find that human rights do not apply to all groups in society. They refer in this context to special religious, historical or cultural conditions. There have also been examples of this in connection with the fight against terrorism, where suspects have been deprived of their rights.

At the UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, it was established that human rights are a legitimate matter of international concern. This applies not only to the general issues which over time have been considered in international fora, but also to where human rights are really put to the test, namely with respect to countries' compliance with their obligations to the people they are responsible for.

The declaration from the 2005 UN World Summit recognised that the international community has a responsibility to protect (R2P) civilian populations from grave violations of human rights. The Government finds that such a commitment is a natural development, not least in the light of Denmark's increased involvement in countries with armed conflicts and in vulnerable States where the promotion and protection of human rights is an important lever with a view to lasting security and stability.

Efforts to combat impunity and the issue of the responsibility of the State in connection with the deployment of personnel to international operations abroad are other areas in which increased international involvement and cooperation has brought up the question of what should be the consequences of human rights violations.

It is a fundamental principle of the Government's human rights policy that failure to comply with human rights must have consequences. Violations of human rights take place every day throughout the world. They include genocide, torture and discrimination on the basis of, for example, race and gender. In each situation, Denmark will consider how to react. Dialogue with the countries that are incapable of or do not have the focus on complying with their obligations is often the best way forward, and it is the initiative that should be tried out first.

At the 2005 World Summit, it was recognised that there is a direct connection between security, development and human rights. Respect for human rights contributes to security and stability and to social and economic development, and the sovereignty of the State cannot be used as a pretext for not protecting the rights and security of the individual.

Denmark is a member of a variety of fora where action is taken in the field of human rights. This requires that the Danish effort is coordinated and consistent. Thus, the promotion and protection of human rights is incorporated into the foreign, development, security and trade policies and reflected in the Danish efforts, be it in areas such as conflict management, the fight against terrorism, development cooperation or the conclusion of trade agreements – at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels. At the same time, the Government's efforts must support each other and the Government will generally strengthen the work towards coordinating bilateral, regional and multilateral efforts in the field of human rights

### **Responsibility to Protect – R2P**

The R2P Doctrine according to which the international community has a responsibility to act/protect if a sovereign State has no will or ability to protect its own citizens from genocide or a number of other massive human rights violations.

### **2005 World Summit**

In September 2005, the UN held a summit in New York, which took stock of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. The summit convened Heads of State and Government from more than 170 countries. The summit was held as part of the efforts to reform the UN.

## HOW DO WE TAKE ACTION?

In the Government's efforts to promote and protect human rights, there are a number of cross-cutting themes that appear in various contexts because they are fundamental tools for human rights work. The Government pays particular attention to the following considerations:

*Strengthen international cooperation in order to foster human rights through dialogue and monitoring.*

The Government will

- Work towards increasing support for international instruments in the field of human rights.
- Involve civil society, on an ongoing basis, in deliberations regarding formulation and implementation of Denmark's international human rights policy.
- Support independent international monitoring of human rights compliance and work towards strengthening its quality.
- Cooperate with international monitoring institutions.
- Work towards ensuring that the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) becomes a credible, efficient and operational tool.
- With a view to achieving better human rights protection consider on an ongoing basis whether initiatives should be taken to develop new commitments to human rights obligations.

Since the UN Charter came into force in 1945, human rights cooperation has in particular focused on ensuring the adoption and implementation of the international norms that apply to the countries in their treatment of their own and foreign citizens. It started with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and the two covenants that ensued from the Declaration i.e. the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, both of them from 1966. Subsequently, a great number of conventions in more specific fields have been adopted. The Government considers, on an ongoing basis, whether there is a need for further international regulation in the area. Similarly, Denmark works actively towards encouraging all countries to accede to the international instruments in the human rights field.

As the norms have gradually been established, the challenge has been to translate words into action and concentrate the effort on effective implementation of the adopted obligations in practice. The establishment of the position as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in 1993 is a reflection of the countries' recognition of the fact that focus needs to be placed on the implementation. The set-up of the International Criminal Court for the purpose of prosecuting perpetrators of grave violations of international law (genocide, crimes committed against humanity, war crimes) is a reflection of the same tendency. In practice, it is often countries' resources and effort in relation to compliance with and follow-up on international obligations that constitute a challenge.

### International Bill of Human Rights

The informal name given to the package consisting of the first instruments in the field of human rights: The Universal Declaration, the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

### UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

The mandate for the High Commissioner was established in 1993, among others on a Danish initiative, in order to strengthen the UN human rights work. The High Commissioner coordinates UN human rights activities, including research, education, information and secretarial assistance to the UN human rights institutions.

Civil society, including independent international organisations, plays an important role in a globalised world where more and more problems and solutions are of a transnational nature, which calls for international cooperation. Independent organisations make a great effort both nationally and internationally as watchdogs and champions of human rights, and at national level they provide expert knowledge in their respective areas. Also national human rights institutions carry out great efforts in monitoring, reporting and giving advice on human rights. These institutions are based on a number of principles approved by the UN to ensure that the institutions have a broad mandate to promote and protect human rights. The mandate from the UN means that special importance will be attached to their contributions to human rights work.

The Government gives high priority to good cooperation with civil society, national and international NGOs and national human rights institutions. At its best, this cooperation is of benefit to all parties. The Government wishes to continue this cooperation. It is of invaluable importance that the Government can draw on the expertise and commitment of these actors, both in Denmark and in other countries. Denmark will continue to support the participation of civil society in international human rights work and will, on an ongoing basis, involve relevant organisations in deliberations regarding the formulation and implementation of Denmark's international human rights policy. The Government will consider within which framework this cooperation can be best promoted.

Furthermore, the Government supports the regional and international monitoring and control bodies, including complaints bodies set up in connection with the individual conventions. The work of the UN Special Procedures/Special Rapporteurs plays an important part in the independent international monitoring of human rights. The Government finds it of great importance that all countries, like Denmark, issue a standing invitation to the Special Procedures established by the Human Rights Council, in the first instance the Special Rapporteurs. A standing invitation implies that countries are prepared to receive a visit from any Special Rapporteur. The criticism that a visit from a Special Rapporteur may lead to is part of a useful dialogue that contributes to promoting and protecting human rights. Monitoring and control bodies' interpretations of the extent of international obligations and their recommendations in that connection are not legally binding. However, the fact that a country has acceded to a convention with an associated control body means that the country is under an obligation to scrutinise the interpretations of the obligations and the recommendations presented by the control body. The Government will work towards ensuring the quality of the monitoring work, including through the opportunity for constructive dialogue between the countries and the monitoring bodies.

An important innovation in the monitoring work is the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) under the Human Rights Council. This is a tool to discuss the human rights situation in all UN Member States through constructive dialogue and, through recommendations, to assist countries that fail to meet their obligations in rectifying the situation. The Government prioritises this as an important tool in the effort to focus on the implementation in practice of human rights.

### **Special Procedures/Special Rapporteurs**

This is one of the means of the Human Rights Council. Special Rapporteurs are appointed to monitor human rights developments either in thematic areas or in particular countries. This gives the Council the opportunity to obtain impartial information about a subject. At the same time, the Special Rapporteurs holding the mandates draw attention to the subjects selected.

### **UPR**

The Universal Periodic Review is a mechanism under the UN Human Rights Council, which on a regular basis is to review the individual UN Member States' fulfilment of their human rights obligations. The mechanism was set up in 2006, simultaneously with the Human Rights Council.

*Promote freedom and equal opportunities for all people in partner countries.*

The Government will

- Strengthen the effort to develop effective democratic institutions and well-functioning legal systems in partner countries.
- Combat poverty and promote equal opportunities for everyone in developing countries.
- Enter into long-term partnerships with both State and non-State actors in order to foster freedom and equal opportunities for all to the benefit of poor and marginalised groups.

The Government will continue its strong commitment to fostering democracy and human rights in developing countries. Free and democratic societies that are based on rule of law principles and respect for human rights are a precondition of lasting peace, security, development and stability. Denmark's increased involvement in countries with armed conflicts and in vulnerable States is also based on this precondition. In future, a greater effort will be made to support the establishment of effective democratic institutions and to strengthen the rule of law in partner countries.

The Government is convinced that fostering democracy and human rights is an end in itself as well as a means to combat poverty. Poverty has many faces and many causes. Very often, violations of rights, powerlessness and marginalisation are some of the causes. A high degree of inequality may contribute to curbing economic growth and makes it more difficult to attain the UN Millennium Development Goals. The Government considers it a fundamental development policy goal to combat poverty, and Denmark's efforts in this field contribute to fostering human rights in developing countries.

Denmark cooperates with both State and non-State actors in the effort to foster democracy and human rights in developing countries. The State is under an obligation to protect the individual from infringements and violations, and Denmark renders assistance in developing the capacity and ability of the countries to fulfil this responsibility. The Government recognises the important role played by civil society in this work, both by virtue of its advocacy for discriminated, vulnerable and marginalised groups, and by virtue of the special efforts of benefit to the poor, as for example legal aid and citizenship education.

Political parties and parliaments working according to democratic rules are the corner stones of democracies, also in developing countries. Previously, there was a tendency to ignore the parliament as an important democratic actor and to refrain from helping political parties to better administer their popular mandate. The Government will intensify its support to these areas. The aim and objective is to establish effective, transparent and responsible parties and parliaments. Both are key to the consolidation of a democratic society.

Denmark has developed a special competence in the work at reforming legal systems. A well-functioning legal system is a key lever with respect to a great number of rights and it is the backbone of a law-governed society. Poor

**Partner countries**

The countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, EU neighbours to the east and southeast (especially the Balkans and Caucasus) and the Middle East with which Denmark cooperates in the field of development assistance.

**UN Millennium Development Goals**

In 2000, the UN General Assembly adopted the Millennium Declaration, which contains i.a. a number of goals in the area of development assistance to be achieved by 2015. Subsequently, the Declaration's goals have been rendered concrete in the form of eight specific development goals – the so-called Millennium Development Goals.

people are often denied access to the legal system as the institutions are either too far away, too expensive or they are discriminatory. Instead, poor people are forced to resort to local and alternative ways of resolving conflicts. In addition to making the legal system more accessible, the Government will therefore contribute to ensuring that existing informal legal systems respect human rights.

## WHERE AND HOW TO PROMOTE THE GOVERNMENT'S STRATEGY?

The Government will – on its own and together with other countries – work towards promoting and protecting human rights, both in bilateral relations with other countries and in regional and international cooperation. The Government considers it of great importance that the various actions complement each other, thus providing added value.

### 1. *Bilaterally*

The Government will

- Make the will to comply with human rights obligations a key factor in the development of Denmark's bilateral relations with other countries.
- Attach importance to the attitude to and effort made in international human rights work in the development of Denmark's bilateral relations with other countries.
- Assess, where human rights are violated, how to improve the situation best and most efficiently through dialogue and cooperation as the primary tools.
- Strengthen the will and ability of cooperation partners to comply with human rights obligations through development cooperation.
- Enhance cooperation with civil society organisations working for the implementation of international human rights conventions and declarations.
- Strengthen the involvement of regional and international human rights bodies in the bilateral development assistance and vice versa.

The Government will discuss human rights issues on a bilateral basis with other countries and through the EU. The aim of this dialogue is to promote Denmark's viewpoints and thus contribute to strengthening human rights. Subjects for the dialogue may be both the lack of compliance with human rights of the country concerned, and its lack of will to promote and protect human rights in international cooperation. The objective of the dialogue may, for example, be the possibility to establish bilateral cooperation on human rights policy, or to induce a country to contribute to the international work regarding the promotion and protection of human rights.

As part of the dialogue with countries where the human rights situation is not satisfactory, the Government will consider how best to construe the effort in the specific situation. Which effort can best make a difference will be decisive in this regard. Dialogue can, at its best, lead to cooperation and exchange of experience and good practice. In development cooperation, the political dialogue is a permanent part of Denmark's efforts in addition to the specific support to improve the human rights situation.

In cases where dialogue fails to lead to any improvement of human rights, it may be necessary to induce countries to act in the desired manner through other means, for example by way of resolutions

### Country resolution

This is a document adopted by the UN General Assembly or the UN Human Rights Council, which contains criticism of the human rights situation in a particular country.

adopted by the UN Human Rights Council or the General Assembly where the human rights situation in a particular country is criticised, and the country is called on to improve the situation. These resolutions may be an important step towards promoting and protecting human rights and towards maintaining the credibility of our human rights policy. In a few cases, it may prove necessary in the relevant regional or international bodies to raise the question of whether to resort to stronger means such as sanctions or other measures, primarily within the framework of the UN. The choice of action will always be the subject of specific assessment as the Government wishes to act in the most effective manner in each individual case. Which action to choose is often discussed with like-minded countries in order to achieve the best ways of making an impact.

In developing countries, Denmark contributes to promoting equal opportunities for all, irrespective of gender, race, sexual orientation, ethnicity and religion, and to promoting human rights through its efforts to combat poverty. Furthermore, for two decades, Denmark has supported special actions with a view to promoting and protecting human rights in general through development cooperation. Danish efforts have increased steadily in both scope and geographical span. Today, they are targeted at our partner countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, EU neighbours to the east and southeast (especially the Balkans and Caucasus) and the Middle East. The development assistance programmes are planned in cooperation with the partner countries on the basis of an assessment of where efforts can be made most effectively. In future, cooperation will to a greater extent be planned in consideration of recommendations from the Special Procedures and Special Rapporteurs.

Up to now, the support provided has included a broad array of initiatives such as constitution drafting, election support, legal reforms and court reforms for the purpose of strengthening independent complaints bodies, free media, civil society and women's rights. Denmark will continue to make a special effort in this field in developing countries. In future, the Government will, among other things, give priority to support for the development of democratic political systems, including capacity development of political parties and parliaments as well as the strengthening of the parliamentary processes in a working democracy. The Government will also prioritise well-functioning and fair legal systems, including support for informal legal systems based on local common law, such as village councils of elders, where these respect human rights. Denmark will, furthermore, through support for civil society build advocacy capacity and ability in organisations that provide information about rights, document violations, assist victims and combat impunity cultures. The participation of these organisations in national, regional and international networks is particularly important as it provides access to knowledge sharing and

## **OHCHR**

The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is part of the UN Secretariat. The Office, with headquarters in Geneva, was set up in 1993 as an important step towards the promotion of human rights worldwide. The OHCHR is responsible for ensuring the mainstreaming of human rights in the UN system and for promoting universal ratification and implementation of human rights conventions.

## **EU crisis management missions**

Since 2003, the EU has initiated a number of civilian and military crisis management missions in the Western Balkans, in Africa, in the Middle East and in Asia. The objective of the missions is to foster human rights, the rule of law and security for the civilian population. So far, more than 20 missions have been launched within the framework of the European Security and Defence Policy.

## **EU Special Representatives**

Persons appointed by the EU for selected regions and policy areas. They are to promote the policy and the interests of the Union in selected regions and countries affected or threatened by conflicts. They play an active role in the consolidation of peace and stability and the development of the rule of law. The EU Special Representatives cover countries and regions such as Afghanistan, the African Great Lakes Region, the African Union, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Central Asia, Kosovo, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Middle East, Moldova, the South Caucasus and Sudan.

protection of human rights defenders against infringements.

Similarly, cooperation with regional and international human rights bodies, such as the African Human Rights Commission, the OHCHR and the UN Special Procedures will have a more prominent place in bilateral programme cooperation. In future, development assistance programmes in this field will to a higher degree be planned in consideration of recommendations from the Special Procedures and Special Rapporteurs.

In general, human rights are actively included in the political dialogue with partner countries and will, to an increasing extent, be part of the work in countries with armed conflicts and in vulnerable States. Also in the future development of bilateral relations, the Government will attach importance to other countries' will to cooperate on human rights.

## 2. *The EU*

The Government will work towards strengthening the EU's effort to promote and protect human rights in the dialogue and cooperation with other countries and through common positions in the regional and international cooperation fora on human rights on the basis of the Danish approach to human rights.

Human rights are an integral part of the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy, including the European Security and Defence Policy. Thus, it appears from the Treaty on European Union that it is a key goal of the Common Foreign and Security Policy to develop and consolidate respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Human rights play a great part also internally in the EU, which is underlined, for example, by the set-up of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.

The EU plays a key role in international cooperation regarding the promotion and protection of human rights. It takes place both through economic assistance with a view to improving the human rights situation in a number of countries, i.a. by supporting capacity development, and by way of discussing human rights issues as part of the political dialogue which the EU conducts with other countries. It further takes place through EU efforts in the regional and international cooperation fora on human rights. To promote and protect human rights is also an integral part of EU crisis management operations and is included in the mandate for the EU Special Representatives.

The Government attaches great importance to the role of the EU in international cooperation as an instrument to supplement and complement the national Danish effort in the field of human rights. Therefore, on the basis of the Danish approach to human rights work, the Government is making an active effort in all relevant fora in the EU, including in particular in the EU Working Group on Human Rights, to enable the EU to adopt common positions in relation to the current challenges in the human rights field.

As part of the EU human rights work, a number of guidelines have been drawn up for ways in which the EU is to handle human rights violations in relation to, among other things, torture and human rights defenders. These guidelines are used for example in connection with criticism of human rights violations in third countries. The EU is, furthermore, a significant development assistance actor, and the Government strives to increase cooperation with the EU in this field in partner countries. Violations of human rights are most often part of conflicts and crises. The Government finds, therefore, that the promotion and protection of human rights is a crucial element of sustainable conflict resolution and the establishment of lasting peace

### **EU Guidelines on Human Rights**

In order to maximise EU efforts in the human rights field, guidelines have been drawn up for EU work on a number of subjects: the death penalty, torture, dialogues with third countries, human rights defenders, children affected by armed conflicts, the protection of the rights of the child and gender equality.

and stability. The Government supports a strengthening of systematic integration of human rights aspects in EU crisis management missions, both with respect to the planning phase and during the implementation of activities in the field.

The Government considers it of great importance that the development of third countries' political and economic relations with the EU depends on the ability and will of the third countries concerned to promote and protect human rights. One of the important tools in this connection is the human rights clauses that are part of the agreements concluded with third countries, and which may lead to suspension and in the last resort to termination of the agreement in case of persistent human rights violations. The EU has at its disposal more radical means with a view to promoting and protecting the human rights situation in third countries. Thus, as has already happened in a number of cases, the EU may of its own accord or against the background of UN Security Council decisions introduce, for example, targeted political and economic measures against third countries. Dialogue with third countries is naturally always the preferred instrument to promote and protect human rights, but together with the other EU Member States the Government will on an ongoing basis consider which means should be regarded as most suitable in the specific situation.

### 3. *Multilaterally*

The Government will

- Work towards enhancing the independent activity of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, including the OHCHR's key functions in Geneva.
- Work towards ensuring that the UN Human Rights Council becomes the central and effective forum for international activities that promote and protect human rights.
- Work towards strengthening the UN organisations' human rights activities.
- Apply relevant recommendations from the UN Special Procedures and Special Rapporteurs in Denmark's and the EU's bilateral development cooperation and political dialogue.
- Work towards strengthening the special role of the Council of Europe in the regional activities for the promotion and protection of human rights, including through greater efficiency of the European Court of Human Rights.
- Work towards strengthening the human dimension of the OSCE, including in areas where the OSCE provides added value compared to the activities of other organisations.
- Contribute to strengthening the effort to foster human rights in the international financial institutions, especially the World Bank.

Denmark will, in the regional and international organisations of which Denmark is a member, alone or together with other countries, work towards strengthening human rights. In this connection, it is important to be aware, on an ongoing basis, that organisations and the focus of organisations must be adjusted to the current challenges in the human rights field, and that the organisations must use their respective strengths and competencies in order to provide the necessary dynamism and added value to the human rights cooperation. The work of the organisations must complement each other, and unnecessary duplication must be avoided. The most important platforms for Denmark's regional and international cooperation are the following:

#### **UN General Assembly**

The only UN organ where all Member States are represented. Each Member State has one vote. The General Assembly subsidiary organs are divided into six main committees and a number of subcommittees. Human rights are dealt with by the Third Committee together with other social, humanitarian and cultural issues. In 2005, the General Assembly declared the protection of human rights to be one of the UN's three main tasks together with security and development.

**A. The UN**

The UN is the only worldwide forum involved in the promotion and protection of human rights. Therefore, the UN plays a particularly important role in the international human rights cooperation, and the key human rights conventions take their point of departure in the UN cooperation in this field. The Government supports the ongoing reform activities, which means that the UN also in future will be the key international forum for international human rights cooperation.

The UN General Assembly plays a crucial role in human rights cooperation, including not least in connection with the adoption of new conventions and in connection with discussions of the state of affairs of human rights work and countries' compliance with their human rights obligations.

However, the key forum of the UN with respect to human rights work is the UN Human Rights Council. Denmark's involvement in the Human Rights Council is based on a desire to enter into a constructive and open dialogue with all UN Member States across regional groups in the efforts to promote and protect human rights. However, during the first years after the establishment of the Human Rights Council, some countries have pursued a policy that may lead to dilution and undermining of the credibility of the Human Rights Council and hence of human rights. The Government will oppose the negative trends in the Council to distort the cooperation on human rights. The Government will make an effort to ensure that the Human Rights Council fulfils the role envisaged i.e. as a key forum for the promotion and protection of human rights, including by maintaining focus on the real problems in the human rights field, for example within the constructive and forward-looking dialogue of the UPR mechanism.

The Government will continue to actively support the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the High Commissioner's Office, the OHCHR, where Denmark is one of the major voluntary financial donors. The High Commissioner contributes to promoting and protecting human rights through dialogue with Member States combined with specific assistance to the States. The Government attaches great importance to the independent position and activity of the High Commissioner, and together with like-minded countries Denmark strives to ensure that this independence is not challenged through any attempts by Member States to micro-manage the activity of the High Commissioner.

The ILO safeguards the rights of employees and has, among other things, adopted a great number of conventions that ensure freedom of association and the right of collective bargaining on the labour market as well as protection of vulnerable groups on the labour market. The Government will make an effort to ensure that these minimum rights are complied with in the international negotiations on trade liberalisation. This work will take place both in the individual countries where Denmark will contribute to the protection of employee rights as well as internationally where

**UNDP**

United Nations Development Programme is the largest UN development organisation. In the field of human rights, the UNDP is involved in capacity development, including support for national strategies and human rights training.

**UNIFEM**

United Nations Development Fund for Women, the objective of which is to promote women's human rights, women's participation in politics and in economic activities.

**UNFPA**

The UN Population Fund is the UN key fund for family planning and reproductive health, especially in developing countries. It is involved among other things in combating HIV/AIDS and supporting pregnant and child-bearing girls and women.

**UNICEF**

United Nations Children's Fund is an advocate of the rights of the child and assists developing countries in improving the living conditions for children, young people and women. The work of UNICEF is based, among other things, on the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Denmark will strive to strengthen the ability of the labour market parties to better safeguard these interests. Furthermore, the Government will make an active effort to enhance the development organisations' human rights work, as for example the UNDP, UNIFEM, UNFPA and UNICEF.

### ***B. The Council of Europe***

Since it was established in 1949, the Council of Europe has played an invaluable role in the efforts to promote and protect human rights in Europe. A great number of conventions and recommendations have been drawn up by the Council of Europe. Among these, the European Convention on Human Rights and the associated European Court of Human Rights have a special status as a unique protection system for the 800 million citizens in the Member States of the Council of Europe. The end of the Cold War and, in continuation of that, a substantially increasing number of members has posed a challenge to the Council of Europe, which has had to adjust to new realities. The Government will work towards maintaining and developing the Council of Europe's special role in terms of setting norms and forming the legal basis internationally in the human rights field, and towards making its efforts a source of inspiration to non-European countries. In spite of reforms in relation to the European Court of Human Rights, the fact that cases are piling up is one of the major challenges. The European Court of Human Rights has become a victim of its own success, and it is a particularly high priority for the Government to see the European Court of Human Rights streamlined through changes to its procedures and through a considerable effort with regard to supplementary training of judges, prosecutors, police officers and attorneys, especially in the countries that give rise to many legal proceedings.

### ***C. The OSCE***

Efforts to promote and protect human rights – the human dimension – have been part of the OSCE's work since the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, but did not gather momentum until the end of the Cold War. Today, from a Danish point of view, the human dimension has become the OSCE's key cooperation area with its point of departure in the value basis and the definition of democracy on which agreement was reached in the Charter of Paris. The OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) testifies to the key importance of the human dimension in the same manner as the annual meetings at which countries' fulfilment of their obligations within the human dimension is reviewed. The OSCE has played and continues to play an important role due to its field missions in the Western Balkans, in Eastern Europe, in the Caucasus and in Central Asia. Together with the ODIHR and the Representative on Freedom of the Media, the OSCE offers, among other things, specific advice to countries on the drafting and implementation of legislation.

The Government finds that work on the human dimension plays an important role in the effort to promote and protect human rights. Denmark will endeavour to maintain this role, especially in relation to the work that is carried out in the Council of Europe, and strive to counter trends to dilute the OSCE obligations in the democracy and human rights field.

### **Council of Europe**

The Council of Europe was set up in 1949 for the purpose of promoting key values such as democracy, respect for human rights and the development of law-governed societies. Today, there are 47 members of the Council, which is situated in Strasbourg, where also the European Court of Human Rights is located.

### **OSCE**

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe is the world's largest regional security organisation with 56 participating states: all countries in Europe, as well as the USA and Canada and the five Central Asian republics. The OSCE traces its origins to the Helsinki Final Act 1975. The activities of the OSCE comprise conflict prevention, crisis management and reconstruction.

### **Charter of Paris**

The Charter of Paris is an OSCE document of 1990, in which the OSCE Member States commit themselves to building societies on democracy, among other things based on human rights and fundamental freedoms.

***D. International financial institutions***

For many years, Denmark has been a key contributor to international financial institutions. Even though the financial institutions by their nature have a primarily economic mandate, it is important that they as a minimum ensure that their policy areas and actions cause no harm by violating fundamental rights. The Government will contribute to strengthening human rights work in the international financial institutions, especially the regional development banks and the World Bank. Due to the key role of the World Bank in many developing countries, it is important to ensure that regard for human rights is incorporated into the Bank's activities wherever relevant. To contribute to this, Denmark together with the other Nordic countries has established a trust fund in the World Bank which is expected to contribute to incorporating regard for human rights and to training relevant staff in human rights. Moreover, the Government will follow up on the activities to promote MDG3 (the third Millennium Development Goal, which is to "Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women"), to which the Bank has committed itself in the Danish campaign "MDG3 Global Call to Action".

**World Bank**

Through loans and advice, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) aims to reduce poverty and promote sustainable economic growth in middle-income and creditworthy poorer nations. The generated income of the IBRD helps financing development activities and offers the Bank's poorest clients good borrowing terms.

## WHICH CURRENT SUBJECTS WILL DENMARK FOCUS ON IN INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COOPERATION?

The Government will, on an ongoing basis, adjust the prioritisation of which current human rights issues Denmark should follow particularly closely.

The Government will continue to make an active effort in human rights work on a broad front in recognition of the fundamental equality of all human rights. However, it is not possible to take maximum action in all fields at the same time. The Government will, therefore, in particular commit itself to subjects of special interest to Denmark, or to subject areas where Denmark is in a special position to make a difference. The Government's prioritisation will, naturally, be influenced by current human rights challenges. The Government will make an effort where there is a need for special action. A number of the current action areas are set out below.

### *Human rights defenders*

The Government will contribute to protecting human rights defenders in third countries.

Human rights defenders are individuals and non-State organisations involved in promoting and protecting human rights without resorting to violence. They are people who put their lives at risk every single day. They depend on and make active use of freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and the right to liberty and security of person in order to be able to perform their work. They are particularly vulnerable and they will often be the first victims of human rights violations.

Even though it is States that are responsible for promoting and protecting human rights, also individuals and social groups play a decisive role in the work to foster human rights. The Government recognises the role which human rights defenders play in drawing attention to human rights violations and is aware of the possibility of raising the conditions of national human rights defenders as part of bilateral dialogue with other countries. The Government will contribute to protecting human rights defenders in third countries.

### *Freedom of expression*

The Government will work to strengthen freedom of expression.

Freedom of expression is a corner stone of any democratic society. The right to freely express opinions is a precondition of participating in societal debate and political life. Freedom of expression is, furthermore, a precondition of the exercise of other human rights. Restrictions on freedom of expression must respect the limits to exceptions as laid down in the international human rights obligations, for example the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Consequently, restrictions shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary for respect of the rights or reputations of others, for the protection of national security or of public order (ordre public), or of public health or morals. Furthermore, any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law.

Modern ways of communication have opened up new opportunities to make use of freedom of expression by disseminating information efficiently, swiftly and inexpensively throughout the world. It makes it easier to keep up-to-date with the activity of others, and it increases the risk of being confronted and offended by, expressions of others. This has led to increased pressure on freedom of expression, which is reflected for example in the deepening divisions in the UN, in the discussion about whether it should be possible to limit freedom of expression in order to protect religions from defamatory speech. The Government will work against this for the reason that religions cannot and should not have human rights protection. Another example of the dilution of freedom of expression is countries' censorship of the Internet, which means that entire populations are deprived of the possibility to receive desired

information. The Government will also counteract this in order to strengthen freedom of expression. The media play a special role in the exercise of freedom of expression. It is Denmark's policy to support free media and the rights of journalists. The presence of free media is of crucial importance to human rights compliance and the consolidation of a democratic society.

### *The rule of law*

The Government will

- In an international context, underline the significance of rule of law principles to human rights protection.
- Through development cooperation, contribute to strengthening the institutions that are crucial to a well-functioning law-governed society.
- Work towards combating the impunity of perpetrators of rights violations, and in this connection supporting the International Criminal Court.

Denmark is a staunch advocate of an international legal order which implies, among other things, judicial settlements in the wake of armed conflicts and prosecution of perpetrators of the most serious international crimes. With a view to combating impunity, Denmark has contributed actively to the establishment of the International Criminal Court. Both the UN and the EU are based on rule of law principles as key foundations. The principles imply that all are equal before the law and that laws are not discriminatory; that all have access to an independent and well-functioning legal system; that all are entitled to a fair trial and that all are protected from the arbitrary use of power. The Government considers the rule of law an important precondition for human rights protection and will underline this correlation in bilateral relations, in regional and international fora and in development cooperation.

A well-functioning, independent legal system is a crucial work condition for economic growth and, thus, for poverty reduction. Unless there is sufficient legal protection of investments, foreign investors and citizens will have no incentive to invest. Similarly, without sufficient protection of, for example, land rights, citizens will have very limited prospects of obtaining credit.

The capacity of the legal system is extremely limited in developing countries, and huge population groups have no access to legal protection due to economic, social, linguistic and geographical barriers. This has a negative impact on the consolidation of democracies and the implementation of rights. Therefore, the Government considers it an important action area to strengthen the institutions that are crucial to a well-functioning law-governed society.

### *Gender equality*

The Government will enhance gender equality and women's rights through bilateral dialogue in international fora and through development cooperation, and promote the third UN Millennium Development Goal - MDG3 – through follow-up on the Government's international campaign "MDG3 Global Call to Action".

Denmark is actively involved in promoting and protecting gender equality and women's rights, among other things on the basis of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the international political framework for women's rights work.

Even though women's status and equal rights between men and women have improved considerably in many countries, women and girls continue to be exposed to comprehensive discrimination. The degree of discrimination varies over continents, countries, regions and cultures. But even today, there are many countries where women do not

have equal rights with men in terms of legal, social (including sexual and reproductive) and economic rights. Similarly, there are huge inequalities with regard to women's and men's access to and control of resources, economic opportunities, and political power and influence. In some countries, for example, women have no right to own land or property, no right to inherit the estate of a deceased spouse, and no possibility of obtaining parental responsibility for children in the event of divorce. In other cases, traditional customs that discriminate against women will be of greater importance to women's legal position than formal legislation.

Denmark has made gender equality and the empowerment of women a top priority in development cooperation because gender equality is one of the preconditions for reducing poverty. Therefore, the Government has enhanced its targeted effort by launching "MDG3 Global Call to Action". It is an international campaign that is to mobilise increased financial resources for gender equality and women's opportunities and ensure that the issue is placed high on the international agenda. With the campaign, the Government has established that action is needed and that commitments made will be followed up on continuously. Similarly, Danish development assistance focused on gender equality and the empowerment of women will be raised.

With respect to women's reproductive health and rights, there is increasing political and religious pressure to dilute already adopted declarations and action programmes. According to these declarations and action programmes, women have a fundamental right to decide over their own bodies and their own sexual and reproductive health. Moreover, there must be equal access to information about family planning, and women must have access to health services, also in relation to family planning.

Violation of women's and girls' rights in connection with crisis and conflict situations presents one of the greatest human rights challenges of our time. Through a national action plan to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, the Government is making an active effort in the foreign and security policy context to protect women's and girls' rights in such situations.

The Government will keep up and maintain its sharp focus on MDG3 and gender equality in international fora and the bilateral dialogue.

### ***Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)***

The Government will work towards ensuring that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) develops into an effective tool for the purpose of promoting and protecting human rights.

States are obliged to protect and promote human rights. However, there is an increasing recognition that the private sector also has a responsibility for human rights compliance. Thus, it is accepted to an increasing extent that the universal human rights standards also constitute part of Corporate Social Responsibility.

### **MDG3**

The third Millennium Development Goal is to promote gender equality and empower women.

### **Women's rights**

The international framework for women's rights work is among others the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) from 1979, which is legally binding, and the politically binding 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the 20-year action plan adopted at the UN International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994 concerning i.a. sexual and reproductive health and rights, and the UN Millennium Declaration and the UN Millennium Development Goals from 2000.

The Government finds that enterprises should be based on active respect for human rights as enterprises have the potential to make a difference in the countries where they are engaged. In 2008, the Government therefore launched an action plan for CSR according to which the Government over a broad front supports the Danish business community's CSR work, among other things through export promotion. Also in the field of development assistance, Danish CSR efforts are crucial to responding to challenges involving social responsibility (human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption). In the years ahead, there will be increasing focus on strengthening social responsibility in developing countries.

The Government contributes actively to the development of CSR in both the EU and the UN. Thus, Denmark was one of the driving forces behind the decision to create the mandate of a UN Special Representative on human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises, and the Government has actively supported the UN's work on CSR, known as Global Compact.

### UN Global Compact

Global Compact is the world's largest corporate responsibility initiative. The objective is to involve private enterprises in the solution to some of the huge social and environmental challenges presented by globalisation. This is achieved by urging enterprises to support 10 principles in the areas of human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption.

### *Freedom from torture and from the death penalty*

The Government will

- Work towards ensuring the elimination of all forms of torture and other ill-treatment and maintain and develop the involvement of the EU and of the UN in the effort to eliminate torture and other ill-treatment.
- Work for the worldwide abolition of the death penalty.

The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights says that no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. This obligation is an expression of an absolute prohibition that is implemented in the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. This has not led to the elimination of torture, but that torture in most cases is inflicted in secret and in spite of official denial. This makes the fight against torture particularly difficult and constitutes a serious challenge in international cooperation.

Torture is one of the most serious violations of human rights and of human integrity and dignity. The fight against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment is therefore a key issue for this Government. Denmark is at the front in the international community's fight against torture and submits every year the comprehensive resolutions against torture in the UN General Assembly and in the UN Human Rights Council. In the EU, the Government strives to ensure that the fight against torture receives special attention, and Denmark has assumed the role as burden sharer, which means that Denmark is particularly committed to promoting EU efforts in the field of torture. This applies especially to the systematic work against torture that takes place within the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy. The Government is also active in the fight against torture and other ill-treatment with the OSCE.

In addition to the prevention of torture, the Government attaches importance to the rehabilitation of the victims of torture. Danish medical doctors' pioneering work to rehabilitate torture victims and conduct research in torture, especially within the Danish and international Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Torture Victims (RCT) and the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) as well as Amnesty International, has resulted in considerable Danish – and international – expertise in the field and testifies to a very strong professional and popular

commitment to this cause.

Similarly, the Government is working actively to restrict the use of the death penalty worldwide with a view to abolishing this punishment at global level.

### ***Freedom of religion***

The Government will work towards promoting respect for the individual's right to choose his/her faith or to have no religion, including with special attention to the situation of religious minorities throughout the world.

Freedom of religion gives the individual human being the right to express his/her religion or faith. This also implies the right to change conviction or to have no religion at all. In a world in which people are constantly confronted with the – often very different - views and values of others, the function of religious and cultural values as a firm basis for the individual is strengthened. Therefore, religion and religious and cultural values play a great role in many countries and in international contexts, including i.a. in conflicts and crises. The Government wishes to keep the focus of the international human rights conventions on the individual's right to choose his/her religion, conviction or to have no religion in order to underline that it is the individual human being's freedom to choose that is in focus. It is not religions or values as such that need to be protected.

The effort to uphold freedom of religion is also of decisive importance to religious minorities worldwide who wage a daily struggle not to be subjected to the conviction of the majority. Especially to religious minorities, religion is a very important identity factor in a majority society. The need for respect and peaceful coexistence between majority and minority groups has increased as a result of globalisation. Respect for other religions and cultures cuts both ways, and dialogue and tolerance are the way ahead also in this context.

### ***Upholding human rights in the fight against terrorism***

The Government will work towards ensuring that the fight against terrorism is conducted with full respect for human rights.

International terrorism is one of the great security policy challenges of our time. The attacks on the USA on 11 September 2001 clarified the scope of the threat, and a number of other serious terrorist attacks in recent years have underlined the need for effective, persistent and comprehensive action. The Government finds it very important that the action should be conducted in full respect of human rights as human rights apply to everybody including terrorists and persons suspected of terrorism. Considering that terrorists are basically opposed to human rights, it may seem paradoxical that human rights impose restrictions on the action against terrorism. In practice, however, the wish for and the necessity of effective anti-terrorist measures poses no contrast to full compliance with human rights – on the contrary: it contributes to reinforcing legitimacy, popular understanding and thus the effectiveness of the necessary measures that they are in full compliance with human rights. Consequently, it is quite clearly in the interests of a democratic society that human rights are always complied with. They are part of the basis of our societies, and if double standards are accepted in this area, we contribute to undermining the values and principles on which society rests and which the Government represents. Respect for human rights, justice and tolerance are some of the most important elements in the fight against the totalitarian ideology that supports terrorism.

Together with our partners, the Government responds to the international challenge of terrorism in order to protect Danish nationals, Danish interests, and Danish values. The effort is made on the premises of the law-governed society. The Government finds it of great importance that respect for human rights is safeguarded as an integral part of the action against terrorism. The Government is, for example, making a targeted effort to ensure that the fundamental procedural safeguards in a democratic society are complied with in connection with the inclusion of persons and terrorist organisations in the international terrorist lists. This is in accordance with the multilateral action in the area. It appears for example from the 2006 UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy that all efforts targeted at combating terrorism must take place with full respect for human rights compliance.

### *Rights of indigenous peoples*

The Government will, in cooperation with the Greenland Home Rule Government, promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples.

Denmark works actively towards promoting and protecting the rights of indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples are in some contexts particularly vulnerable to human rights violations, including when new challenges occur as, for example, climate change. To the extent that their rights are recognised, which in itself has been a problem at times, one of the great challenges is to ensure respect for and compliance with these rights. It is a welcome defining issue for the Danish Government as the Home Rule Arrangement and the future Self-Government Arrangement for Greenland provide Denmark with a special basis for promoting indigenous peoples' rights. A result of the Danish effort has been that the UN, at Danish/Greenland initiative, has established a Permanent Forum for Indigenous Peoples which has been in operation since 2002. This forum has already shown its worth as a venue for governments and representatives of indigenous peoples worldwide. It is the only forum where individuals and groups of indigenous peoples are represented. The forum strives actively to draw attention to the situation of indigenous peoples in the entire UN system.

In addition, Denmark and Greenland have jointly participated actively in negotiations on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which was adopted in 2007. The Declaration is an important point of departure in the future work to ensure indigenous peoples' human rights and their survival through respect for their culture, language and way of life. The Government is, furthermore, making an effort to ensure that the establishment in 2008 of an Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which reports to the UN Human Rights Council will contribute positively to the fight for indigenous peoples' rights. Moreover, Denmark supports the work carried out by the UN Special Rapporteur in the field.

*Children*

The Government will work towards promoting and protecting the rights of the child in recognition of children's special needs.

Like other human beings, children are protected by human rights. However, children have special needs, which the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child clearly reflects. All Member States of the UN have ratified the Convention apart from two countries. Unfortunately, formal accession to the Convention does not fulfil and protect every child's basic rights and millions of children worldwide continue to suffer every day. Therefore, promotion of and respect for the human rights of the child remains a great and important task.

Children and young people make up half the population of the world and they are the most vulnerable group in the event of poverty, conflicts and natural catastrophes. This appears among other things from human rights violations such as child labour, child soldiers and trafficking in children. Children are the future of our societies. The Government supports efforts to foster children's rights and will take active part in the negotiations concerning a future complaints mechanism in relation to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, when these negotiations commence.

