



**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
OF DENMARK**  
*Danida*

---

**HOW-TO NOTE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF “THE WORLD WE SHARE”  
PEACEBUILDING AND STABILISATION**

---

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark**

**August 2022**

This note is one of 12 notes developed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark to ensure the implementation of the strategy for development cooperation “The World We Share”

1. Fighting Poverty and Inequality
2. Energy Transition and Emission Reductions in Developing Countries
3. Climate adaptation, Nature and Environment
4. Migration and a Fair and Humane Asylum system
- 5. Peacebuilding and Stabilisation**
6. Job creation and Sustainable growth
7. Human Rights and Democracy
8. Danish Support for Civil Society
9. Denmark as a Humanitarian Actor
10. Social Sectors and Social Safety Nets
11. Securing Coherence between Humanitarian aid, Development cooperation and Peacebuilding (the HDP Nexus)
12. Agriculture and Food Systems – green transition and food security

# How-to-note for implementation of "The World We Share" Peacebuilding and Stabilisation

## 1. Purpose of the note

This note aims to provide specific guidelines on how to implement Denmark's strategy for development cooperation "The World We Share", the Government's Priorities for Danish Development Cooperation 2021-2025 and the four-year plans. The two overall purposes of the note are:

- **To create consistency** between strategy, policy, planning and budgeting as a shared framework of reference for the implementation of "The World We Share" and its objectives.
- **To set the framework** for prioritising, selecting and deselecting in adherence to the principles of *Doing Development Differently*, which call for taking a holistic and adaptive approach.

The main target group for this note is employees at the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs responsible for implementing "The World We Share". Furthermore, it may serve to inform external partners. The note will be available on the Aid Management Guidelines site as an internal guidance document. Specifically, the note is intended as a reference document in programming (including in Programme Committee meetings and on the Council for Development Policy (UPR), as well as in the monitoring (e.g. in appraisals and reviews), in the dialogue with partners, and in the work with international norms and standards.

In principle, the note will remain valid for the duration of "The World We Share", and will be revised as required in response to changing contexts and priorities. The political priorities in the Finance Act will always have primacy to this note. The note complements the other thematic How-to-Notes and should therefore be read together with the other notes.

## 2. Strategic background and definitions

### Objectives

Peacebuilding and stabilisation are objectives both in Denmark's strategy for development cooperation "The World We Share" and in the official 'Foreign and security policy strategy' from 2022. The latter affirms, for instance, that "We will ensure Denmark's safety by increasing stability and preventing conflicts. We will support conflict prevention and peace and state building in fragile and conflict-ridden countries, especially in Africa." The strategy also specifies that "The Government will continue Denmark's military and civil engagement in the Middle East, the Gulf and the Sahel. In order to prevent terror groups from putting down roots and create additional destabilisation, to resolve conflicts that

paralyse the region, and to ensure that migration pressure in Europe does not increase. And the Government will strengthen the cooperation with allies and partners with regard to managing the threat from the east.” This calls for taking a holistic approach in which civilian and military interventions go hand in hand.

Denmark’s strategy for development cooperation ”The World We Share” includes objective 4: “Denmark must deliver safety and security through peacebuilding and stabilisation”. Under this objective, the strategy lists five points, namely, that “Denmark will:

- Fight the fundamental causes of fragility, instability, crises and conflict through systematically integrating prevention in our activities, supporting conflict prevention, peace and stabilisation, and incorporating marginalised groups, women children, young people, climate and human rights in everything we do. We will integrate humanitarian action with stabilisation efforts and long-term development.
- Contribute to rebuilding societies so as to enable people to create a life for themselves in their home countries. This can incorporate everything from rebuilding damaged roads, hospitals and schools to supporting democratic institutions, such as parliaments, the public sector and the justice system.
- Support UN peace and stabilisation programmes and EU civilian missions in crisis areas. We will focus on political dialogue and facilitate full, equal and meaningful participation of women and young people in conflict prevention and peace-building activities, in accordance with the peace and security agendas (UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 2250).
- Support and strengthen multilateral cooperation in relation to fragility, conflict and violence. A cornerstone is the Danish candidature to the UN Security Council in 2025-26. It will partly build on Denmark’s profile as a strong supporter of the UN development and humanitarian system.
- Cooperation with local, regional and international actors, including the African Union, in the stabilisation and conflict-prevention efforts in fragile and conflict-affected areas, and in the prevention and countering of organised crime, piracy and violent extremism.”

## ***Definitions***

The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has not previously defined ‘peacebuilding and stabilisation’, nor is there an internationally accepted definition of stabilisation that we may utilise. Therefore, the definition below has been tailor-made for this note and is based on Danish practice in the field:

*“Peacebuilding and stabilisation interventions are engagements in unstable and conflict-affected areas whose objective is to support sustainable peace, understanding sustaining peace as a process towards the creation of a society that takes the needs of all population groups into account.”<sup>1</sup>*

---

<sup>1</sup> The UN concept of *sustaining peace* has been the primary framework for the UN’s peacebuilding work since 2016, when the member countries passed identical resolutions in the General Assembly and in the Security Council. The agenda focuses on conflict prevention and builds upon principles of national ownership, inclusion and partnerships, particularly with regional

Accordingly, this note operates with a combined definition of ‘peacebuilding and stabilisation interventions’. This is because the officials involved need not make a clearcut distinction between peacebuilding and stabilisation, as long as interventions rest upon solid conflict analysis and otherwise contribute to achieving peace. Experiences have shown the inconvenience of operating with a dichotomy of two types of intervention, for instance, by perceiving stabilisation as short-term and/or militarised. Similarly, there is no need for a division into phases, in which stabilisation precedes peacebuilding. This is most clearly reflected in the Danish Peace and Stabilisation Fund (PSF), which is concurrently involved in fostering both peace and stabilisation with a wide array of interventions.

The focus in this definition is on the objective of interventions, which is to support sustainable peace. Thus, it is the objective of interventions that make them peacebuilding and stabilisation rather than the choice of aid modality of the source of finance. They may be carried out with a range of different means depending on the needs in the context at hand. See also the thematic scope below.

As phrased in ”The World We Share”, peacebuilding and stabilisation must “fight the fundamental causes of fragility, instability, crises and conflict”. It follows that activities seek to assist the parties to a conflict in finding peaceful solutions to the root causes of conflict and move towards a situation in which local institutions become capable of handling social tensions. Indeed, peacebuilding and stabilisation aim to prevent conflicts from breaking out, escalating, continuing and repeating themselves. This cuts across the traditional division into pre-conflict, conflict and post-conflict as separate and distinct stages. It often involves strengthening relevant institutions and securing a political space for negotiations. Although Danish interventions should, in principle, address the root causes of conflict, it may sometimes be required to also work with more short-term dynamics if, for example, support for an infrastructure project can change peace talks from a zero-sum game to a positive-sum game, boosting the incentive to find solutions.

The absence of an international consensus on the definition of peacebuilding and stabilisation makes it important to communicate clearly. When collaborating with external actors whose definition differs from ours, it can be useful to work out a shared understanding of each other’s use of the concepts. Within the UN, for instance, peacebuilding is defined broadly to cover both peacebuilding and stabilisation, and the term ‘stabilisation’ is rarely used. Among civil-society actors, the concepts are generally narrower and more distinct, and ‘stabilisation’, in particular, is perceived by some as referring to short-term military interventions.

## **Geographical scope**

The World Bank Group is playing an increasingly prominent role in efforts to fight fragility, conflict and violence (FCV). This work is described in its FCV strategy.<sup>2</sup> It is important to distinguish clearly between fragility, conflict and violence. Denmark works with peacebuilding and stabilisation in contexts affected by fragility and conflict. In areas, which, using the World Bank’s terminology, are characterised by widespread violence, for example in personal relations or as organised crime, but which are not otherwise

---

organisations. Furthermore, the UN’s use of the term sustaining peace stresses the need for an integrated approach across the three UN pillars (human rights; development; peace and security), just as it pursues the agenda regarding women, peace and security. The full definition of ‘sustaining peace’ is laid down in: [A/RES/70/262](#)

<sup>2</sup> [World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict, and Violence 2020-2025](#)

very fragile, fall outside our geographical scope. Fragility is about countries' capacities to manage their own challenges. As affirmed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' 'Fragility Risk and Resilience Analysis Tool' ([FRRAT](#)), fragility can be analysed based on economic, political, societal, security and environmental factors. The more fragile a context is, the higher is the likelihood of social tensions existing or arising that cannot be dealt with by current institutions. This may concern, for instance, the distribution of resources between different population groups. Such tensions risk turning into (armed) conflicts.

Peacebuilding and stabilisation efforts are most relevant in the most fragile contexts and where there is conflict or a high risk of conflict (re)occurring.<sup>3</sup> Whenever possible, peacebuilding and stabilisation will take place alongside development aid - possibly in the form of a country programme - and together with humanitarian aid, when this is seen as necessary. Such interventions can be relevant in whole countries or selected provinces. For instance, the Iraqi component of the Peace and Stabilisation Programme for Syrian and Iraq focuses mainly on areas liberated from Islamic State. At the same time, peacebuilding and stabilisation may be relevant in areas that cross national borders and where whole regions are involved, such as Liptako-Gourma in the borderland between Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger. However, a context may also be too conflict-ridden for civilian means to be meaningfully used without excessive risks to the staff's safety and an unacceptable danger of the inflow of resources intensifying the conflict. Accordingly, the issue is not just to find the worst affected contexts to work in, but areas where it remains possible to have a constructive presence. There is a tendency to perceive stabilisation as something to be deployed in the most active war zones, but this is rarely optimal. Indeed, the point is also to identify the best opportunities for fostering peaceful development.

## Thematic scope

This note is about peacebuilding and stabilisation from the development-aid viewpoint of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and hence deals only tangentially with military and defence matters.<sup>4</sup> Denmark supports actors and process within civilian peacebuilding and stabilisation in the following thematic areas:

- *Inclusive mediation and peace negotiations.*
- *Reconciliation processes and social cohesion.*
- *Human rights monitoring* and other measures aimed at preventing and prosecuting violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.
- *Military contributions* (though this issue is beyond the scope of this note, it is essential to take it into consideration), including capacity building, among other measures.
- Targeted engagements that provide a *peace dividend* and hence reduce the incentives to conflict.
- *The ability of local authorities to manage conflict.*

---

<sup>3</sup> See also the OECD's States of Fragility platform, which assesses fragility at the country level ([Compare your country by OECD](#)). In 2020, 57 countries were fragile, of which 13 were extremely fragile.

<sup>4</sup> There used to be a connection between stabilisation and military instruments. Thus, in the 2000s, stabilisation was mostly described in military doctrines and the like. This is no longer the case, however, especially because the consensus is that civilian interventions are necessary. This is particularly due to the objective of creating room for peacebuilding being understood as a political process. Accordingly, civilian interventions are always a part of stabilisation, while military instruments can never stand alone, and need not always be involved.

- *Basic services and access to natural resources*, if this may help alleviate instability and conflict.
- Conflict prevention and peacebuilding through *Danish civil-society partners and their local partners* with their often nexus-oriented approach and engagements.<sup>5</sup>
- *Prevention and countering of violent extremism (P/CVE)*.
- *Prevention and countering of corruption, disinformation, cyber-attacks, and transnational organised crime*, when these scourges are fuelling conflict dynamics.

### 3. Approach

Across the various types of Danish support in this field, the approach will be based on *Doing Development Differently*; the human rights-based approach; conflict prevention; the effect of climate change on security; Youth, Peace and Security; Women, Peace and Security; the pro-poor orientation; local ownership; the whole-of-government approach and the HDP nexus; and long-term realism.

**Doing Development Differently (DDD)**: Peacebuilding and stabilisation are supported in some of the world's most difficult places for the implementation of projects and programmes, which makes the DDD approach particularly relevant. Its flexible and adaptive qualities are manifested in peace and stabilisation work in terms of a relatively high degree of risk tolerance. There are almost bound to be major programmatic, institutional and contextual risks. Furthermore, direct monitoring tends to be hard or impossible for security reasons. This makes it essential to be able to monitor indirectly and to make the most of the monitoring opportunities provided by the context. This can be third-party monitoring, delegated partnerships with actors who have better access, triangulation of reports from independent sources, etc.

Flexibility and adaptability are often brought into play too, since fragile or conflict-affected contexts tend to change on short notice, or no notice at all. Programmes and projects may to a certain extent be reformulated so as to continue, possibly in an adapted fashion. The foundation structure of the Syria Recovery Trust Fund, for instance, made it possible to take advantage of the opportunity that arose when the military coalition against Islamic State liberated north-eastern Syrian. This enabled support for stabilisation through projects that provided the local population with a peace dividend. Unfortunately, the opposite often occurs, and changes in the context may also lead to partners facing a shrinking operating space, or to projects having to be abandoned altogether. This calls for not expecting conflicts to evolve in a linear fashion and for trying to adapt the theories of change to the complex reality in which peacebuilding and stabilisation operate.

It can be impossible to predict dramatic developments in the context, which is why the best way to manage risk is to continuously update the conflict analysis, and adjust programmes as needed. Scenario planning may be a good tool. In this regard, the holistic approach overlaps with the HDP approach of working in the intersection between the humanitarian, development and peace, the key point being that conflict analyses need to substantiate all programming, which is then made relevant by addressing the underlying causes of conflict or conflict dynamics. See the separate note on the HDP nexus. In

---

<sup>5</sup> See also the approach note on the HDP-nexus.

connection with (the updating of) conflict analyses, we may usefully incorporate relevant research and assessments carried out by think tanks and the like. The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has entered into cooperation agreements with, among others, the Danish Institute for International Studies, the International Crisis Group, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Adelphi, and others, whose expertise we may draw upon in specific contexts.

### **Tip for conflict analysis and programming**

It is a good idea to use the template [Annex 1- Context Analysis](#) from the Aid Management Guidelines, when writing a conflict analysis. It is important to be explicit as to which factors are driving the conflict concerned, including the role of the partners. It is necessary to name the actors that our analysis has shown to have a particular responsibility for the conflict, or for violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. If possible, the analysis should also describe any window of opportunity for fostering peaceful solutions.

The conflict analysis must be used actively in programming, at least in the sense that being aware of the conflict dynamics makes it possible to avoid exacerbating them (the do-no-harm principle), but ideally also by programming interventions that address the conflict dynamics head-on.

Finally, Danish interventions for peacebuilding and stabilisation are more often than not co-financed with other donors. Denmark is rarely alone with its initiatives. For instance, Denmark contributes to MINUSMA's Trust Fund in Mali alongside Norway, Sweden, the UK, the Netherlands, Germany and Canada. It is important to consider to back existing or new joint initiatives, thus ensuring that we do not duplicate or work against the efforts of like-minded actors.

In highly fragile contexts, DDD becomes, all things considered, quite demanding on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a donor. It is important to keep one's finger on the pulse in such programmes and projects, and we must secure sufficient resources to work with DDD when planning to provide aid in fragile areas.

**The human rights-based approach:** Human rights and democracy are at the heart of peacebuilding and stabilisation. In the words of the OHCHR, human rights violations can be a cause, a trigger and a consequence of conflict. When rights fail to be protected, it may foster exclusion and marginalisation. This, in turn, provokes tensions, distrust of institutions, displacement and other frequent factors of fragility or conflict. By promoting human rights, we may prevent and fight many of the root causes of fragility, instability, crises and conflict.

Implementation of the human rights-based approach entails a focus both on the capacity of accountable authorities to uphold human rights and on people's ability to stand up for their rights. This is why it is an integral part of the context analysis during the preparation of projects and programmes. The approach is particularly relevant as regards stabilisation projects and support for peacebuilding. The interventions, instruments and mechanisms that exist within the human rights architecture may usefully be seen as the international community's toolbox to support member states in achieving sustainable peace. For example, recommendations from the Human Rights Council's Special Procedures or Universal Periodic



Review can identify causes of conflict and possible measures to address them.<sup>6</sup> Conclusions and recommendations from human rights groups should also form part of our dialogue with the duty-bearing (accountable) authorities as a way of increasing the costs of violating human rights, thus contributing to conflict prevention. See the separate how-to note on human rights and democracy for further guidance.

**Conflict prevention:** Denmark focuses on conflict prevention and seeks to reduce the scale of conflicts as much as possible. This also applies to ongoing conflicts, in which preventative interventions aimed at stopping the conflict from spreading should be prioritised. It calls for early warning through continuously updated conflict analyses, including in contexts where open conflict has not occurred (yet). Denmark also supports conflict prevention directly and indirectly through a series of interventions within the country programmes, with SPA partners, multilateral partners, the Civil Society Fund administered by CISU, climate interventions etc. In addition, we contribute to the UN Peacebuilding Fund and to the World Bank's State- and Peacebuilding Fund (SPF). In the diplomatic track, there is also scope for becoming more active within the EU, which conducts, for instance, its early warning exercise every two years, aimed precisely at predicting the location of the conflicts of tomorrow.

**The effects of climate change on security (Climate/Security).** Climate change is already manifestly exacerbating the root causes of conflict, for instance in terms of more widespread and violent struggle for scarce natural resources. As climate change worsens, there will be a growing need to understand and address its effects on conflict situations, particularly in areas that are already fragile. Climate security is now on the agenda of the UN, EU and NATO, but Denmark can still, with an active diplomatic effort, join the group of first movers to promote this agenda, and may benefit from seeking partnership with countries such as Germany and Sweden. An obvious way forward is to use the membership of the UN Peace Building Commission and Security Council to enhance the UN commitment to the climate-security agenda.

**Youth, Peace and Security (YPS).** To build lasting peace and stability, it is essential to involve the young generations, who are often sent to fight on the front, and who are going to be responsible for keeping the peace in the future. In this regard, it is relevant to focus interventions against violent extremism, not least by recognising and incorporating young people in political processes, in peace processes and in peacebuilding, as well as in measures that enhance their sustainable opportunities going forward. In the diplomatic track, Denmark was a co-sponsor of the latest Security Council Resolution 2535 (2020) on Youth, Peace and Security.

**Women, Peace and Security.** The how-to note on human rights and democracy describes Denmark's approach to women's and girls' rights as a general priority that cuts across all humanitarian, development and peace interventions, in addition to featuring as a targeted activity in pursuit of gender equality. This note looks at Women, Peace and Security. Denmark sees addressing conflicts as an important step towards gender equality, just as the promotion of gender equality is a necessary part of supporting lasting peace. Inequality between men and women is often a root cause of fragility, whereas gender equality may serve to build greater resilience. The approach is largely prescribed by "Denmark's national action plan

---

<sup>6</sup> Recommendations for specific countries and subjects are found at the OHCHR's [Universal Human Rights Index](#)

for R1312 – Women, Peace and Security, 2020-2024). The [Guidance note for Women, Peace and Security](#) sets out the parameters for our meaningful implementation of Women, Peace and Security in peacebuilding and stabilisation. This encompasses a context analysis aimed at uncovering gender dynamics, barriers and opportunities for women’s meaningful participation. We integrate the focus on preventing gender-based violence (GBV) in conflict situations, including assistance to victims, and we are improving efforts against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.

In the diplomatic track, Denmark uses both bilateral and multilateral forums to advocate for women’s right to full, equal and meaningful participation in peace and stabilisation processes, conflict prevention and protection of girls and women in scenarios characterised by conflict. Within the framework of Women, Peace and Security as defined in UN Security Resolution 1325 (2000) and later resolutions, Denmark will boost its work to promote gender equality and women’s rights.

**Pro-poor orientation.** Poverty and inequality are often both a cause and a consequence of fragility and conflict. Thus, Syria was a middle-income country before 2011, but is now in a disastrous economic situation. By 2030, close to 70% of the world’s extremely poor are expected to live in fragile countries and regions. This is why it is a fundamental principle that Danish development cooperation must fight poverty and equality, and foster sustainable development, peace and stability with special emphasis on fragile countries and regions. Violence and insecurity limit the opportunities of individuals and groups. Accordingly, personal security is one dimension of the multidimensional poverty concept with which Denmark operates. This applies, for instance, when physical, psychological or sexual violence, or threats of violence, restrict people’s chances of exercising their human rights. As stressed in ”The World We Share”, our policy goal is to create hope and opportunities for people in fragile countries and regions affected by conflict and catastrophe. One of the aims is to strengthen the capacity of and incentives for states to deliver security. Specifically, this will often entail a greater focus on addressing resource scarcity and poverty reduction in order to boost the sustainability of interventions working with peacebuilding and conflict management at the local level. The approach note on fighting poverty and inequality elaborates on this.

**Local ownership.** The definition of ‘sustaining peace’ as a “a goal and a process to build a common vision of a society, ensuring that the needs of all segments of the population are taken into account” brings local ownership to the fore. It entails changes in society, and thus becomes political. Achieving such aims calls for thinking and working politically. We need to interact with those stakeholders in our partner countries who can bring about sustainable change in a peaceful direction. The political dialogue with local partners, but also with international actors, e.g. through EU Heads of Mission meetings, is crucial to connecting our programmatic peace and stabilisation work to our political objectives.

Likewise, context analysis, including not least conflict analysis, needs to spring from inputs from local stakeholders and civil society. It is their conflict, and it also has to be their peace. See also the how-to note on engagement with civil society. Denmark’s role should be confined to backing locally owned negotiations and peace processes, both formal and informal ones. In all cases, our focus will be on greater inclusivity in the processes, since this increases the likelihood of a sustainable outcome. Groups that are often overlooked, yet may have valuable contributions, include women, young people, the business

community, trade unions and the like. Whenever possible, we should support interaction between formal and informal process both horizontally and vertically.

The starting point for peacebuilding and stabilisation is cooperation with local, national and regional authorities. One objective could be to strengthen the legitimacy of the authorities through cooperation. In this case, the stabilisation effect consists of local actors seeing how the support benefits them, thus giving them an interest in backing the authorities cooperating with Denmark. A good example is the Somalia Stability Fund, which invests in projects, including in local services and job creation. This allows the government to make its presence felt, and fosters the dialogue between government and society. It can be a practical necessity to use an implementing partner in our support for authorities, but this does not have to come at the expense of local ownership.

When we cooperate with security actors, including military and police, special attention must be paid to the role they are expected to play in their societies, not least in the light of rule-of-law principles. Many countries have a militarised approach to internal security challenges, and we might need to think through whether we wish to contribute to this. Often the return of an effective state, fighting crime and terror, will be better placed with the police, particularly if the goal is long-term rebuilding of a peaceful society. In keeping with the human rights-based approach, we see the authorities as bearers of the duty to respect, protect, and promote human rights.

#### **Dilemma: cooperation with actors perceived as illegitimate**

In our interventions to fight terrorism and stop violent conflict, we often find ourselves pressed to enter into more or less direct cooperation with authorities that are perceived as illegitimate by parts of the population. This might be, for instance, because they are associated with discrimination and ill treatment targeted at particular population groups. In some situations, the challenge can be addressed directly by focusing on improved relations between the national forces and local communities to promote trust, on greater knowledge of human rights, or the setup of specific mechanisms that foster participation, transparency and holding authorities to account. In practice, however carrying out this kind of interventions can be exceedingly difficult, which means institutional risks need to be pondered carefully.

It should be continuously weighed up whether actors who are (still) perceived as illegitimate cross the line into undermining the changes that we are seeking to bring about, hence making it ill-advised to cooperate with them. Likewise, when programming in conflict-affected contexts, it is necessary to continuously assess the partners, since political and military alliances can change swiftly, and enduring armed conflict often leads to brutalisation of the parties involved.

**Whole-of-Government approach and the HDP nexus:** Involving a variety of actors and not least the use of military instruments calls for an integrated approach to peace and stabilisation interventions – we call it the Whole-of-Government approach. This may consist of designing interventions jointly between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Justice, including the National Police, as institutionalised in the Steering Committee of the Peace and Stabilisation Fund. However, an integrated approach is relevant even when military instruments are not a part of the

equation, for instance by securing coherence across diplomatic and programme interventions. This is why we apply a consistent HDP nexus approach, in which ‘H’ stands for humanitarian, ‘D’ for development, and ‘P’ for peace (stabilisation and peacebuilding). See also the approach note on the HDP nexus. The present note may provide inspiration for strengthening the ‘P’ in ‘H’ and ‘D’ programming. The importance of integrating interventions refers not only to work funded by Denmark, but also by other international and national actors with a view to achieving the desired effect and avoid fragmentation.

Certain peace and stabilisation projects are mainly distinct from development or humanitarian interventions by having the explicit motivation of addressing conflict dynamics. In northern Mali, for instance, we support young entrepreneurs, because it gives action-minded young people a peaceful alternative to the armed groups. Both humanitarian and development programmes may have peacebuilding and stabilising effects, which is obviously positive, even if it was not the chief objective. The link has become even closer as a result of the UN Sustainable Development Goal 16 including support for peaceful and inclusive societies in its definition of sustainable development. Since contemporary conflicts tend to be addressed with all types of intervention simultaneously, it is crucial for success that different interventions communicate and complement one another. The Whole-of-Government approach and an enhanced HDP nexus approach is an obvious place to boost the Danish profile both in programmes and in the diplomatic arena, since Denmark already has highly developed cooperation between programmes, authorities and actors.

### **Dilemma: stabilisation, HDP and humanitarian principles**

It is important to keep in mind that the concept of ‘stabilisation’ can be polarising, as many humanitarian actors understand it as involving military actors or politicising aid. Accordingly, many humanitarian actors will be wary of entering into cooperation with stabilisation actors. One of the issues at stake is the possibility that someone might question the humanitarian actors’ continuing neutrality, impartiality and independence.

To address this, it is important that we, as donors, pay attention to such risks and conduct a dialogue with the various actors in order to map specific concerns and risk, finding context-specific solutions in keeping with the HPD approach.

**Long-term realism:** Stabilisation and peacebuilding occurs in the short, medium and long term. Accordingly, it is rarely possible to define beforehand how long a Danish intervention needs to last. Thus, stabilisation interventions need not have a short time horizon. For instance, the so-called SIGAR report, which analyses 20 years of US experiences of working with reconstruction in Afghanistan, found that the Americans had actually drawn up 20 one-year strategies, rather than thinking through the intervention from the outset.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, whenever possible, we will reflect on the long-term perspective from the beginning. As a minimum, there should be a clear exit strategy for new programmes and projects, following up on a continuous basis whether they remain realistic. This is important not least because

---

<sup>7</sup> [SIGAR 21-46-LL What We Need to Learn: Lessons from Twenty Years of Afghanistan Reconstruction \(globalsecurity.org\)](https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/other/sigar/21-46-LL-What-We-Need-to-Learn-Lessons-from-Twenty-Years-of-Afghanistan-Reconstruction.pdf)

peacebuilding calls for peacefully addressing the structural and underlying causes of conflict, such as exclusion, inequality and bad governance, with a view to creating resilience and preventing future conflict. It may thus become relevant, over time, to consider transitioning into a development programme, if the original instability has been adequately addressed. In this case, a conflict-sensitive HDP approach becomes essential. In Iraq, for example, considerations are ongoing to close down the Funding Facility for Stabilisation and replace it with a more traditional development approach.

### **Dilemma: short-term ambitions versus long-term goals**

Peacebuilding and stabilisation interventions are often initiated in reaction to changes in a given context after identifying an opportunity to make a difference with a rapid response. The change is often a (fear of) conflict escalation, but it could also be progress found worthy of support. Usually, the hope is that peacebuilding and stabilisation are only required in the short to medium term. However, it is rarely possible to solve the root causes of conflict with short-term interventions, which is why such undertakings end up being extended. Accordingly, we see a trend towards projects carrying on in the long term, which makes sense if they are assessed to be still relevant and effective. For instance, the Peace and Stabilisation Fund has assimilated this lesson learned over time by having designed long-lasting programmes, currently covering 3-4 years (the latest programme in the Gulf of Guinea covers the five-year period 2022-26).

### **Modalities**

Denmark works with peacebuilding and stabilisation both at the programmatic and at the policy level. This takes place through bilateral programmes, partnership agreements with multilateral organisations and peace operations which Denmark supports financially or otherwise participates in. At the policy level, Denmark is particularly active at the UN in New York, at the EU and NATO in Brussels, and at the OECD in Paris. Moreover, in individual country contexts, it may be relevant for Denmark to take an integrated approach to the myriad levels of engagement in peacebuilding and stabilisation. In the Sahel region, for instance, Denmark has major bilateral programmes. These are implemented alongside programmes funded through the UN Peacebuilding Fund, which Denmark also supports. In addition, MINUSMA and G5 Sahel are present, which Denmark has contributed to as well. Finally, experiences and results from the Sahel region feed into policy discussions on peacebuilding and stabilisation in a variety of forums where Denmark sits at the table.

### **Danish interventions**

As a minor actor in conflicts far away from Denmark, we rarely choose to enter into bilateral peacebuilding and stabilisation engagements. When we take part in diplomatic negotiations directly, it is usually within the framework of multilateral cooperation, such as sending a Special Representative for Maritime Security under the aegis of European Maritime Awareness in The Strait of Hormuz (EMASoH), or being a candidate for membership of the UN Security Council (in 2025-26) and of the UN Peacebuilding Commission (2023-24). In addition, Denmark has a series of programme modalities that advance peace and stabilisation in various ways, as set out here below.

### *Danish Peace and Stabilisation Fund (PSF)*

Through the programmes of the PSF, which are primarily multiyear and regional, work takes place in a series of conflict areas – the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, Syria and Iraq, as well as Ukraine and others, in order to stabilise conflicts and build sustainable peace. The PSF programmes are implemented in close cooperation with the Danish Ministry of Defence, thus helping to bridge the divide between traditional development programmes and Denmark's military operations and contributions to international military operations under the aegis of the UN, NATO and various international coalitions.

In the course of 2022, the Danish Ministry is rethinking the Peace and Stabilisation Fund in the light of lessons learned from the first ten years of programmes, and based on the recommendations of a recent evaluation. This will result in an update of the PSF's priorities, structure and guidelines. The focus will be on the Whole-of-Government approach, learning and coordination, not least with simultaneous development interventions, climate interventions and undertakings carried out by SPA partners.

### *Denmark's Peace and Stabilisation Response*

Through the annual framework appropriation of DKK 30 million for Denmark's Peace and Stabilisation Response, civilian experts are posted to priority countries and regions, where Denmark contributes in terms of integrated interventions, including in the Sahel, Iraq, Somalia and Ukraine. The primary Danish inputs consists of experts for the EU's civilian crisis management missions, but experts are also sent to other organisations, e.g. in 2022 a WPS advisor to the NATO mission in Iraq. The civilian experts work with a range of tasks in fields such as civilian crisis control and conflict management, capacity building of public institutions, and development of rule of law. Moreover, election observers are posted to EU and OSCE election observation missions through the Peace and Stabilisation Response. At the same time, the National Police sends its advisors to the EU's civilian missions.

### *Country programmes*

Sustaining peace requires a country to reduce the factors that create and constitute fragility and conflict potential. Danish country programmes contribute to this effect, e.g. when they succeed at fighting poverty and inequality, or building democratic institutions. The country programmes, in other words, help alleviate the economic, political, societal, environmental and security-related causes of fragility. This is relevant both to prevent that countries become unstable in the first place and to avoid that unstable countries lose such progress as has been achieved. For programmes to contribute effectively to peacebuilding, it is important that our own as well as our partners' programming rests on a holistic, context-specific and conflict-sensitive analysis, and that the DDD approach is reflected in our interventions. One of the aspects to be secured by the strategic framework at the country level is complementarity between different Danish-supported programme interventions. This encompasses bilateral country programmes, peace and stabilisation programmes, as well as interventions being implemented by our multilateral partners. It may entail, for example, that Danish bilateral country programmes focus on the long-term aspect of peacebuilding, while peace and stabilisation programmes are designed with an emphasis on the needs that a country programme is unsuited to meet. These could

be more security-oriented undertakings in cooperation with police and military, just as it can be support for regional or other engagements that cut across borders and hence cannot be unambiguously placed within a single country programme.

#### *Civil-society organisations*

Danish civil-society organisations work with a wide array of interventions against fragility and for peacebuilding. In particular, the local level of conflict resolution and prevention is a focus for many of these organisations and their local partners. In 18 Strategic Partnership Agreements with Danish NGOs for 2022-2025, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has given civil-society partners more latitude to break down the silos between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding work. Several NGOs have thus undertaken to find concrete solutions and create coherent interventions within the HDP nexus (see separate approach not on the HDP nexus). While experience has thus far been accumulated chiefly within the HD spectrum, the peace dimension is increasingly coming to the fore under the new partnerships, which includes interventions for dialogue, conflict resolution and prevention, even in some highly fragile contexts. Another characteristic of the Strategic Partnerships is their general focus on strengthening local civil societies and local partners as a significant component of developing free, fair, democratic societies as a prerequisite for peaceful coexistence.

#### *Regional climate security programme in the Sahel*

In 2021, Denmark launched its first dedicated climate security programme aimed at reducing the consequences of climate change in the Sahel, and its effect as a multiplier of conflict drivers in a fragile context. The programme also focuses on migration and displacement.

## **Multilateral cooperation**

### *The UN*

The UN's priorities for conflict prevention and peacebuilding are largely an extension of Danish strategic priorities. Accordingly, the work of UN organisations in fragile and conflict-affected contexts is an important tool for Denmark. We support a host of relevant UN organisation, both through core contributions and through many of our peace and stabilisation programmes, as well as country programmes. For example, a great deal of the Peace and Stabilisation Fund's budget is channelled through UN organisations working in the intersection between peace and development in several countries. Moreover, Denmark is among the top-five donors to the **UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)**, which is designed to be the UN's risk-tolerant, catalyst-acting financing instrument for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Through donor dialogues and engagements with the PBF, Denmark may pursue a number of its thematic priorities, such as involvement of civil society, women and young people, climate security, and human rights. As a PBF donor, Denmark also contributes to discussions on how best to secure predictable and sufficient funding of peacebuilding within the UN.

Furthermore, Denmark works at the policy level in UN headquarters in order to set and strengthen the norms and direction for the approach to peace and stabilisation. This applies, for instance, to **the Security Council**, which Denmark is a candidate to join in 2025-26. Denmark has also been elected to

the **Peacebuilding Commission** (PBC) for the period 2023-24. The PBC has an advisory role vis-à-vis the Security Council and pursues a number of thematic priorities in the field of peacebuilding as well as in specific country situations. Alongside like-minded countries, Denmark is a member of the **Human rights and conflict prevention caucus in New York and Geneva** with a view to enhancing understanding of how protection and human rights promotion may contribute to peacebuilding and conflict prevention. We support sections of the **UN Secretariat** that are at the heart of policy development and implementation within conflict prevention and peacebuilding, for instance through core contributions to the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and with a JPO for the new Climate Security Mechanism. Moreover, Denmark is vocal in its support for the UN Secretary-General's reform track for peace and security, and for the recommendations in his report 'Our Common Agenda'. As part of this, we work for human rights to feature prominently in our and other people's work with peacebuilding and stabilisation. This includes support for the Secretary-General's 'Call to Action for Human Rights', particularly the section on 'Rights in Times of Crisis'.<sup>8</sup>

Across our considerable engagement with the UN both at the global policy level and the country-programme level, it is important that experiences and learning from the field feed into Danish endeavours in the headquarters, just as programmes and other interventions at the country and regional level should also reflect and help advance the Danish policy priorities that are pursued in multilateral forums.

### *The EU*

**The EU's Global Strategi for Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS)** from 2016 introduced the EU's integrated approach to external conflicts and crises, which aims to bolster human security by resorting to all of the EU's relevant tools, including diplomatic, development, security and defence instruments. This fits in well with Denmark's integrated approach, and Denmark is an active participant in the EU's peace and stabilisation work. We continue to contribute to policy development in the EU track, e.g. by representing our interests at an early stage of the initiative to formulate an '**EU Consensus on Peace**'. In addition, Denmark is continuously seeking to improve the language on issues of Danish concern, including **civilian crisis management** (under the Common Security and Defence Policy, **CSDP**), climate security, Women, Peace and Security, as well as gender. Denmark is working for effective implementation of the EU Civilian Compact by the summer of 2023, and for the new compact to be ready to serve as an extension of the current one.

We are co-financing the **European Peace Facility (EPF)**. This is a new instrument meant to help the EU strengthen its profile as an attractive partner with a holistic outlook in the field of peace, security and stability in strategically important conflict zones. To this end, the EPF is to finance various types of intervention: i) funding the shared costs of EU military operations and missions; ii) contributing to military peace-support operations under the African Union; and iii) funding capacity building of military actors in third countries through aid measures. Thus far, Denmark has only been able to take part in the

---

8

[https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/2020\\_sg\\_call\\_to\\_action\\_for\\_hr\\_the\\_highest\\_aspiration.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/2020_sg_call_to_action_for_hr_the_highest_aspiration.pdf)



two latter due to the country's opt-out from EU defence cooperation. Now that the opt-out has been abolished by referendum, Denmark can also contribute in the operations pillar. In negotiations on the EPF, a Danish priority is that interventions cover the geographical spread of Danish priority countries to the extent possible. Furthermore, Denmark is seeking to keep up the focus on distributing the budget between military crisis-management missions and crisis operation on the one hand, and aid measures on the other. The point is to make sure that EPF undertakings are realistic and based on a solid conflict analysis. In this regard, we draw special attention to safeguards as one of the means of ensuring human rights protection, anti-corruption and good governance.

The EU's **Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)** has a global thematic pillar, which encompasses a budget for peace and stabilisation interventions. In fragile countries, we believe that conflict prevention should feature prominently in EU country programmes and that finance from the NDICI thematic framework allocations can be advantageously supplemented by each country framework allocation, which is, *ceteris paribus*, significantly larger. Just as in the Danish country programmes, we work for EU instruments to take an HDP approach. We seek influence on the spending of NDICI funds in fragile countries, including through our embassies representing our interests directly vis-à-vis the EU delegations.

To ensure Danish insight and influence, we work for **Danish secondments** to relevant posts in most of the EU's civilian mission, in Danish priority countries, and in the EU's common foreign service. It is a clear priority for Denmark to work for more flexible mission mandates, better working conditions and work environment, including in order to be able to increase recruitment and retain the services of women posted abroad.

#### *The World Bank*

The World Bank has a strong focus on peace and stabilisation, particularly as regards prevention and early engagement. Its aforementioned 'Fragility, Conflict and Violence' strategy is a significant step, whose implementation is backed by Denmark. In recent years, the World Bank has been more dedicated to interventions in these areas with an emphasis on stronger cooperation between humanitarian, development, peace and security partners. Substantial financial means have also been allocated. Through our caucus in the World Bank's Board of Directors, Denmark is actively engaged in the Bank's peace and stabilisation work, and this has been defined as a priority area for the caucus, within which we work for greater cooperation and coordination between the World Bank, the UN and other organisations. We also participate in the State- and Peacebuilding Fund (SPF).

#### *NATO*

Capacity building is considered one of NATO's key tools in efforts to create stability beyond NATO's own borders. One of the aims is to contribute to building local capacity in the security sector in selected NATO partner countries. The interventions may include various forms of support such as strategic advisory services on defence-and-security-sector reforms, building of defence-and-security institutions,

and training of local security forces. NATO has a variety of support funds to which the allies, Denmark included, have continuously contributed funding and personnel.

### *AU and regional organisations in Africa*

Through the **Africa Programme for Peace (2018-2023) (APP IV)**, Denmark is helping to strengthen selected African intergovernmental organisations' abilities to act effectively on challenges regarding peace, security and good governance in the continent, thus enhancing their capacity to contribute towards positive peace. Denmark has been a longstanding partner of the **African Union (AU)**, supporting the operationalisation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). It has focused on preventative diplomacy and conflict mediation, as well as better management of border conflicts. To achieve lasting and durable peace and to promote democratic institutions, support is also given to the African Governance Architecture (AGA) and to the AU offices for, respectively, election support and inclusion of women. The **regional organisations in Africa** are key actors in peace and stabilisation in their various regions of the continent. In particular the Economic Community of West African States, **ECOWAS**, is a crucial political actor when it comes to conflicts in the Sahel. Denmark has long been supporting ECOWAS within conflict prevention and mediation. Moreover, we support the regional organisation for the Horn of Africa, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, **IGAD**, both its conflict-mediation work and its centre for prevention of violent extremism (ICEPCVE). Finally, during the second phase of the regional peace and stabilisation programme in Sahel (2018-22), Denmark has supported the OHCHR's work to set up a human rights framework for **G5 Sahel**.