Executive Summary  Review and Capacity Assessment of DanChurchAid

Results: DCA general produces good results in its programming, both ‘on the ground’ and in national and international advocacy. In development there is an increasing focus on rights, concurrent with and in synergy with support to improved livelihoods (through Right to Food Programmes) mainly for disadvantaged, rural populations. Results are evident in influencing national policies on civil society, and in addressing access to resources, policies concerning rural development and other fields. DCA and partners have taken a leading role in linking relief, recovery and development. This linking is not easy to manage, but DCA has succeeded mainly through work with partners obtaining the right capacities and clever funding and fund allocation methods.

DCA partners, supported actively by DCA, are often successful in local advocacy, also under difficult circumstances. DCA itself is highly active internationally on issues of political space, human rights, climate change and others, often in collaboration with partners in ACT or APRODEV.

Important and strategic humanitarian results are being achieved with vulnerable people being targeted and reached. Overall, DCA humanitarian actions appear to be delivered in accordance with stated goals and objectives and the work under the Humanitarian Partnership Agreement with Danida is implemented in accordance with the agreed thematic and geographic focus areas. The Partnership funding plays a key role in DCA response capacity and in ensuring additional important humanitarian funding to increase impacts. Capacity of DCA to address humanitarian action is well developed at Head Office level and Regional/Country Office levels.

DCA actively takes part and engage in coordinated activities within humanitarian action. DCA implementation of cross-border assistance in conflict situations is an important contribution to protection of people in need. DCA development of cash transfers and involvement with HAP and Sphere are important contributions to improved implementation of humanitarian action.

In Humanitarian Mine Action, DCA has achieved significant results, which have a positive impact on the lives of conflict affected people. DCA work within HMA is increasingly focused on promoting realistic, people-centred work on Mine Risk Education, Victim Assistance and Survey. DCA has developed an approach for more community-based and development oriented Humanitarian Mine Action, while retaining capacity in certified mine clearance.

According with Danish policies, and use of DCA’s own policies and strategies: There is good level of consistency between the DCA objectives and goals for development and humanitarian action and the Danish objectives and goals expressed in the Strategies for Civil Society and for Humanitarian Action.

Management of programmes: DCA increasingly erases the previous columns of programme types, which is in line with recommendations from previous reviews. The focus is now on country programmes, which will make it possible better to exploit synergies, so apparent in the reality of the target groups. So far DCA maintains a commendable level of knowledge and experience within the previous programme areas and on crosscutting issues. The procedures and systems for management of programmes are well developed and mainly well applied, but are also time-consuming. This appears unavoidable with the multitude of donors and their incongruent requirements. DCA is still unable to provide results-based management, and for example link financial and outcome (or even
output) reporting. There is work underway to fill this gap as an important step towards improving efficiency and effectiveness.

**Monitoring.** DCA is as good as or better than Danish peers in monitoring and reporting on results, but still many elements are reduced to ‘head-counts’ (of e.g. participants) or reporting of illustrative cases. This should be improved in order to contribute better to transparency and to result-based management. The basic step in monitoring of field activities is by partners. Here the principle of participation is frequently not applied, which leads to loss of accuracy and usefulness of the process and results. DCA is encouraged to work with partners on improving this. DCA’s reporting system is tied to the LFAs and this way largely underreports on results achieved through the way DCA implements, i.e. in application of the PANEL principles.

**Organisational management:** A committed and proactive council and a professional and highly competent board lead DCA. Both collaborate well with the director general and the management team. DCA capacity for strategic and day-to-day management is based on a good collaboration between the DCA-Partners, Regional Offices, the Head Office and the DCA Governing Bodies as well as highly committed and capable staff. DCA actively supports capacity building in partners that so wish. DCA has good financial management with adequate systems and procedures. The timeliness in Reporting and in general Financial Management demonstrates a well-established organisation, which does not yet apply a system or a set of procedures for risk management.  

**Partnerships:** Partners execute most DCA activities. Partnerships are often long-term and DCA realises its own PANEL principles in work with partners, which is highly appreciated. Increasingly DCA works with partners of novel types, such as networks or social movements. These put different demands also on DCA and its roles in support of local CS and even financial management systems. The new DCA partnership policy is strategic and well-developed and it is implemented in the field.

**Efficiency and effectiveness:** DCA has undertaken and is still in the process of increasing effectiveness and efficiency. There is still much opportunity for improvement by involving these considerations in choice of and continued interaction with partners of various types. Part of the outcome hereof is assessment of the share of funding reaching beneficiaries. DCA is through the review embarking on development of tools for this. Considerations about benefits obtained from the funds and the associated support, as well as sustainability of the benefits should be added. Participation as well as the quality of local CS are key to sustainability.

**HRBA:** DCA maintains a clear focus on HRBA, in modes of operation where transparency and accountability is actively pursued; through application of HAP standards and DCAs own PANEL principles. This finds expression in work with partners, where elected representatives of national partners are now affiliated members of DCA board and where collaboration with all types of partners is increasingly equal and participatory, as well as transparent and accountable, in line with the new partnership policy and in accordance with DCAs fundamental values.

**Popular foundation:** DCA maintains and expands popular foundation, consisting of church-based groups, youth groups, volunteers and others. DCA is actively developing and implementing communication strategies for various segments of the population and enjoys wide recognition and substantial economic contributions from the public in Denmark. In this way, and through active participation (and sometimes initiation) of public debates, DCA plays a key role in the dialogue with the public on development issues.

**Financial management:** DCA has good financial management systems and procedures, and the DCA partners met by the review express a high degree of appreciation. The review has highlighted some areas in need for a more focused attention: Ability to attract and retain financial staff at Regional
level; Decentralising more to the capable Regional Office/Country Offices; Efficiency and effectiveness and results-based monitoring and reporting, including performance indicators and link to finance. Work in these areas is in progress but they still need more attention.

Follow-up on recommendations from last review:

DCA has met major recommendations from review in 2011, except regarding the development of results-based-management, which is in progress and the use of risk assessment and risk management. Within the new partnership policy work is still outstanding on identifying different common, partner types.

Recommendations resulting from present review:

1. **Partnerships:** In the continued strategic development of partnerships, the review recommends to include in the partnership agreements issues of joint long-term goals, pathways of change, sustainability, and considerations of effectiveness and efficiency.

   It is recommended DCA identifies common traits and change pathways for groups of typical partners and apply these in descriptions of and in support to partners.

   It is recommended to ensure further development of modalities for how to work with a range of non-traditional partners, including: association-type partners, activist partners, other constituency partners, and more transient movements partners. The modalities should include more flexible ways to support new type of partners that do not have strong management.

2. **Linking relief, recovery and development (LRRD):** The review recommends that DCA further develop a guideline for how to undertake the work related to LRRD.

   The review recommends that DCA seek to increase reporting across the programmes on progress within the area of LRRD. This includes LRRD-related activities and approaches in relief, DRR, CCA, and right to food work as well as advocacy.

3. **Flexibility of funding when operating cross-border and inside countries:** The review recommends that DCA utilise opportunities for flexibility in humanitarian funding from Danida to the crisis in South East Myanmar and apply funding inside country and cross-border in accordance with DCA context analysis of the situation. Continuation of a mix of cross-border and inside country humanitarian support is deemed necessary for the coming years.

   The review recommends that DCA utilise the flexibility in applying humanitarian funding from Danida inside country and cross-border if deemed necessary in other crises and if based on thorough context and situation analysis.

   The review recommends that opportunities to promote longer-term commitments in humanitarian funding from Danida to prolonged crisis are further discussed and developed.

4. **Integration of Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA)/Safer Communities with DCA programmes:** The review recommends that DCA continue integration of HMA/Safer Communities into the overall work and structure of DCA and into country strategies, while retaining accreditation and ensuring access to funding for HMA from a broad range of donors.

   The review recommends that DCA seek opportunities for funding the development aspects of HMA/Safer Communities (Mine Risk Education, Victims Assistance, Surveys – work on Safer Communities) through the development funding, in line with funding to DRR.

5. **Effectiveness and efficiency:** As part on the work on improving effectiveness and efficiency, the review recommends that DCA complete the work initiated on how to estimate shares of funding used for
management and implementation and how much that ‘reaches the ground’, and that further testing of a
workable system are implemented with a view of wider application within DCA.

The review recommends that DCA programme monitoring system is developed to include practical and
workable solutions to results documentation, linking outcome and financial aspects and measuring of
benefits at rights holders’ level. This also involves measuring sustainability (and specifically participation
and strength of local CS as main elements of sustainability), measuring effects of capacity development
and advocacy, measuring the effects on DCA legitimacy and the use of participatory monitoring
methods.

6. Risk Management: The review recommends DCA further design and establishes a coherent set of
procedures for risk assessment and management and addressing risks. This includes identification of
areas of potential risks in diverse aspects; such as financial, implementation, partner collaboration
(including work with commercial partners).

7. Financial systems and procedures: The review team recommends that DCA financial systems and
procedures are simplified and seek a faster system for funds transfer to partners especially those
without full-fledged management.

8. Financial management: The review team recommends that DCA increase efforts to attract and retain
financial staff at Country/Regional level; especially the Financial & Administration Coordinator is
crucial.