



Ulla Tørnæs' tale ved seminaret "Development and Radicalisation - New Approaches in a Changing World"

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Development and Radicalisation – New Approaches in a Changing World

First of all, I would like to thank you all for participating in today's seminar on Development and Radicalisation.

The purpose of the seminar is to have an international debate on how development assistance can be used as an instrument to assist countries in combating radicalisation.

I am therefore very happy to see the broad geographical representation in our meeting today.

And in particular, I am pleased to see participation from five of the countries that are among the recipients of Danish bilateral development aid. I hope you will all take an active part in the discussions during today's seminar. I am confident that our efforts today will bear fruit and allow us - with your valuable contributions - to finalise the Country Assessment Tool on Development and Radicalisation, which we have been working on for some

time.

To set the frame for our discussions, I will focus on three issues in my intervention this morning.

Firstly, how can radicalisation affect development processes and what role can development assistance play in efforts to counter radicalisation?

Secondly, I would like to touch upon the Danish experiences so far. And finally, I will focus on lessons learnt from working with the Country Assessment Tool on Development and Radicalisation.

Let me take the issues in that order.

So, how can radicalisation affect development processes?

Before answering that question, I will try to define the phenomenon of radicalisation.

In most situations radicalism is equated with a deep-felt desire for fundamental changes of society. Such a desire is not negative by itself. A desire for far reaching reforms can be a constructive catalyst for development and progress in any society. History has borne witness to countless examples of that.

A desire for radical changes can, however, also be strongly detrimental to society

– if it is driven by ideologies that promote intolerance, hatred and violence.

Such ideologies are not open to true dialogue and debate.

On the contrary, they are based on the firm belief that they alone hold the truth. Such radical movements might be supportive of violence and terrorism as a legitimate means to bring about the desired changes. It is this latter type of radicalisation we are dealing with here.

Radicalisation and terrorism can impose high costs on developing countries.

Acts of terrorism have immediate consequences in terms of human suffering and physical damage.

On the longer term, such acts - as well as the radicalisation of certain groups, which often accompany or precede these acts - have wider consequences.

It may threaten the social fabric of society, lead to instability and eventually result in violent conflict. As such it may constitute a major threat to development and growth.

In particular, an instable environment can in today's globalized world quickly lead to a reduction in investments and a decline in international cooperation.

Developing countries, being particularly vulnerable, risk suffering the most from such effects.

So what is the role of development cooperation in countering radicalisation and terrorism?

Efficient interventions to counter radicalisation require understanding of the factors, which lead to radicalisation. What pulls or pushes people towards

radicalisation?

Problems related to governance and to socio-economic conditions play an important role. Illegitimate regimes, corruption, lack of public security, weak rule of law combined with feelings of deprivation or exclusion and lack of hope for the future can provide fertile soil for radicalisation.

It can create an enabling environment of potential sympathisers, who may not themselves use violence, but who support the arguments and platforms of the terrorists.

Development assistance may address these problems by supporting processes of change. Changes in living conditions, changes in economy, modernisation in the areas of democracy, human rights and good governance.

Its potential makes it an indispensable element in a comprehensive strategy for countering radicalisation and terrorism.

We need to acknowledge that efforts to counter radicalisation require a long-term effort. Development cooperation, working with a perspective of 15 to 20 years, can help preventing the conditions that terrorist groups exploit and depriving terrorist of popular support. A long term engagement lies at the heart of Danish development assistance.

I therefore believe that development assistance is one of many instruments in our toolbox to counter radicalisation and terrorism.

That leads me to the second point in my intervention: The Danish experience so far:

Denmark is actively engaged in a broad range of efforts to fight terrorism internationally. The fight against terrorism is one of the priorities for our membership of the Security Council for the period 2005-2006, which is reflected in our chairmanship of the Council's Counter Terrorism Committee.

In this capacity we particularly focus on the Committee's role as a clearing house for technical assistance to enhance the capability of the UN member states to combat terrorism within their own borders - with due respect for human rights.

In June this year we will be hosting the fourth ASEM counter-terrorism conference.

This will be an important opportunity to expand cooperation between European and Asian countries.

The conference will consider practical initiatives to support the U.N. in its central role in the fight against terrorism. We also aim at addressing the issue of radicalisation during the conference.

Danish development assistance is already contributing significantly to the fight against terrorism, not least through comprehensive Danish assistance to the reconstruction of Afghanistan and Iraq.

Already in 2004 the Danish government launched the Principles Governing Danish Development Assistance for the Fight against the New Terrorism.

These principles were a first attempt to set up an overall framework for our work in this area. The Government earmarked approx. 20 million EUR for new, specific efforts in the period 2004 – 2006.

Today these funds have almost been spent.

Denmark has supported activities in Asia, in Africa, in the Middle East. We have collaborated with partner countries bilaterally and through organisations like UNDP, UNODC and the African Union.

Let me give you some examples of the kind of activities that we have been supporting:

In Indonesia a reform process of the police has received support.

One of the objectives of this process is to increase confidence between the population and the local police forces and thereby enhancing daily collaboration between the parties to discover suspicious activities more efficiently.

Niger has received support for a media campaign, which aimed at enhancing the democratic debate in the country. Representatives from various religious groups were invited to televised debates on the country's social, economic and political problems.

Our experience demonstrates the difficulties of working in this area.

Countering radicalisation and terrorism raises many dilemmas: with whom can you work, how publicly can the issue be addressed, how persistently can donors suggest relevant activities – just to mention a few.

An example from Kenya illustrates these dilemmas:

A donor offered support to non-radical schools in Muslim communities in the country.

The proposal was put forward at the same time as a heated debate unfolded about whether or not Kenya's proposed anti-terror laws were targeting the Muslim community as a whole.

In that situation the schools did not want to be associated with a donor many saw as being too influential in shaping the Kenyan anti-terrorism agenda. It did not matter that the donor offered the assistance with no strings attached.

Against this background we realized a need to further investigate how to identify groups that are vulnerable to radicalisation and to take a closer look at the kind of activities that could prevent or at least minimize the risks of radicalisation.

During the spring of 2005 we decided to initiate the elaboration of a Country Assessment Tool for Radicalisation and Development for this purpose.

That takes me to the final issue, I will focus on today, namely: lessons learnt from the elaboration of the country assessment tool so far:

So what have we learnt?

First of all, we have been confirmed in our view that radicalisation is a complex phenomenon.

There is no clear pattern as to who is prone to radicalisation - the same factors that lead to radicalisation in one place, may pave the way for reforms and progress in another society.

There are no blueprints or easy fixes available when countering radicalisation. Each intervention needs thorough scrutiny and has to be tailor made.

Due to this complexity, a variety of development interventions could be relevant when considering programmes to counter radicalisation.

First of all, assistance must target core grievances of people – such as education and health or issues such as good governance, democracy and human rights. As such, quite a few of the types of interventions mentioned in the tool are well known development efforts, in which the Danish government is already actively engaged. This concerns support for public access to social services, political, legal and administrative reforms, anti-corruption efforts, police reforms and community policing, expanding opportunities for employment and secure livelihoods.

But some new areas and target groups are also pointed out in the Country Assessment Tool. Among them are:

Support for credible community leaders. They have an important role to play in promoting local debate on the consequences of radicalisation and terrorism for civil society.

Another important area is support for facilitating dialogue with radical groups.

It can be a constructive alternative to refusing to acknowledge their existence. A rejection by society makes it more likely that radical groups could turn to violence to further their political cause.

Furthermore, it can be considered to provide support for creating an exit strategy for those who wish to abandon the radical group and help them get reintegrated within their community.

The tool stresses that outsiders cannot by themselves counter radicalisation efficiently. Donors can only play a supportive role. Genuine ownership by the recipient as well as the importance of building genuine partnership is crucial to success.

Furthermore, the tool encourages the donor community to apply a fresh and innovative approach when choosing partners.

Clearly we are bound by some limits and cannot collaborate with organisations that figure on the international terror lists.

But we need to consider collaboration with groups and institutions outside the usual development circuit. Such partners often have a better possibility of reaching out to the local community.

The country assessment tool in front of you is a draft. It will be finalised based on the discussions at the seminar today.

The issue is highly sensitive to partner countries as well as to the donor community.

But I believe that this process has taken us one step further in understanding the phenomenon of radicalisation and in clarifying the role of development assistance to counter this trend.

Once the tool is finalised, the Danish government will consider how to test its findings and how to share its results with partners.

I hope that the tool will contribute to future development efforts addressing radicalisation and recruitment for terrorism and thereby to the promotion of development and security in the developing countries and at the global level.

I wish you fruitful and rewarding discussions today.

Tags

Politisk tale, Venstre

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