

**Speech of the Danish Ambassador to Kenya, H.E. Mette Knudsen
on the Occasion of the Official Hand-Over of the
Danish – UK donation of EASF Start-Up-Kit**

Your Excellency Ambassador Chanfi Issimail, Director EASF, Your Excellences the Ambassadors to EASF Member States, Friends of EASF, Technical Advisors to EASF, EASF Staff, ladies and gentlemen.

It is a great honour for me to be here today on the occasion of the official hand-over of the Danish – UK donation of the equipment for the EASF Rapid Deployable Forward Force Headquarters – also called the “EASF Start up Kit”.

This donation will significantly contribute to the ability of EASF to deploy and command and control its forces in a future mission.

The mission for EASF, as one out of five regional standby forces, is to prevent and confine threats towards peace and security in Eastern Africa and across the continent.

I believe it is well known that one of the major drivers preventing sustainable development is armed conflicts in all its configurations.

Not only will armed conflict cause loss of human lives and values, armed conflicts do also represent human tragedies in a variety of other ways such as deceases, separation of families, displacement of people, etc. The displacement of people – or refugees - is a highly topical issue in Europe currently as a result of the current conflicts in the Middle East and Syria.

Thus, investment in capacities that contributes to peace and security by preventing conflicts to break-out is of major importance to the Danish government. Obviously, this effort must be seen in conjunction with other important contributions within the field of stabilisation and development efforts.

This is the reason why Denmark in close cooperation with the other Nordic countries and partnering with UK, Germany and others has supported the establishment of EASF since 2009.

Being a strong proponent and believer in multilateralism, Denmark is certain that cooperation among neighbouring and regional states in meeting mutual challenges is a force-multiplier and a powerful contributor to confidence building among the African people.

EASF achieved yet another important milestone by the end of 2014 as it declared full operational capability (FOC) and its readiness to deploy. It is our conviction that EASF with the Danish – UK donation of the Force Headquarters equipment will be provided an important capacity to support this ambition.

The Danish government is looking forward to see EASF deploying and contributing actively in promoting peace and security in the region and across the continent. As a part of the Danish Whole of Government Peace and Stabilisation Programme for 2015 – 2017, Denmark is looking forward continuing our strong partnership in our joint endeavour.

Let me take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the United Kingdom and Brigadier Christie for excellent cooperation and partnership in making this occasion a reality. It has proven to constitute yet another pleasant example the great collaboration between our countries.

I will like to conclude by congratulating, not only the Director of EASF, Ambassador Chanfi Issimail and his able staff, but in fact all of us with this important milestone in the development of the Force's capacity.

I thank you.