



# Newsletter

Welcome from g7+ Chair



H.E. Kaifala Marah, Chair of the g7+

I wish on behalf of the g7+ family, to congratulate the people and the Interim Government of the Central African Republic (CAR) on the successful Bangui Forum.

Through this forum, the people of CAR have demonstrated their desire to achieve sustainable peace and become a resilient nation. The g7+ commends the Head of the Transitional State, H.E Catherine SAMBA PANZA for her efforts in making the forum inclusive. The Forum symbolizes a new chapter in the history of the CAR - one that will require the commitment of all national stakeholders and support of regional and international actors to achieve the objectives of the Peace Accord.

I commend the international community for its commitment to the aspirations of the people and the Interim Government of CAR. Let me also applaud the Eminent Person of the g7+ Advisory Council for promoting peace and reconciliation in CAR, through the g7+ "Fragile to Fragile" Cooperation Framework. The g7+ renews its commitment to mobilizing the necessary support for the full implementation of the Bangui Forum Outcome.

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## Road to Peace & Reconciliation in CAR

**A**fter independence from France in 1960, the Central African Republic (CAR) was subject to a series of coup d'états based regimes. By the 1990s, calls for democracy led to the country's first multi-party democratic elections, which took place in 1993. Civil war erupted after a coup in 2003, and, despite a peace treaty in 2007 and another in 2011, fighting broke out between the 2 main factions in December 2012.

French troops intervened in December 2013, followed 2 months later by an EU military operation. Since September 2014, the UN has taken over and expanded the existing peacekeeping mission. In January 2014, H.E. Catherine Samba-Panza was elected interim president by the National Transition Council. She presided over the

Bangui National Forum on National Reconciliation in May 2015 and will lead the country into elections due by the end of the year.

CAR has been a member of g7+ since 2010 and has subsequently endorsed the New Deal.

Following the last political crisis in 2012, the CAR Transitional Government under H.E. President Catherine Samba-Panza, took all efforts for peace and reconciliation, through various dialog forums which aims to seek a common vision between the warring groups. The results of the said efforts are now in motion with the successful completion of Forum National Bangui, which was held from 4 to 11 May 2015.

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# Bangui Forum: A Breakthrough for Peace and Reconciliation in CAR

The morning fresh air greeted us at M'Poko International Airport, in Bangui (13/5/15). The airport looks different compared to our first visit (2/2015). Within the arrival room, numbers of delegations of various countries and organizations arrived, showing the evidence that a big event is in progress. Along the road to Capital Bangui, local radio station was broadcasting the ongoing National Forum of Bangui, taking place at the National Parliament House. While driving, the driver was focused, listening to the broadcast of the forum with an expression of hope on his face.



Head of the Transitional State, H.E Catherine Samba Panza holding the torch of peace at the closing of the Bangui

The Bangui National Forum opened on 4 May 2015 in Bangui. The overall objective of the forum was to issues a set of recommendations based on peace and security, justice and reconciliation, and socio-economic development that will be a guiding instrument towards long-term peace and security in CAR. The forum was attended by 600-700 participants from around the country, which included high level representatives

of transitional government, national political parties, non-state armed group (Séléka and Anti-Balaka), the private sector, civil society, traditional chiefs, and religious groups.

In the context of **Fragile to Fragile (F2F) Cooperation**, the g7+ group was represented by its secretariat in response to the kind invitation of the President of the Interim government to the former Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, and the g7+ Eminent Persons.

During the closing ceremony, the g7+ Secretariat pronounced the speech of H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, Former Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, and Eminent Person of the g7+ Advisory Council in front of the forum. The message was warmly received and generated a lot of traction within the audience as they all chanted our motto "Goodbye Conflict, Welcome Development" at the end of the speech.

The Bangui forum was a major milestone in CAR's transition towards peace and stability. The forum was widely considered as a success. "We need a forum like this to talk about a better life in the CAR, after the long crisis that separates us so far, this forum is our last chance to see peace and reconciliation so that our children and grandchildren can live together in the future" said Gabriel, a local driver in Bangui. \*\*\*



(i) g7+ Secretariat (ii) Prime Minister (iii) Minister of Defence (iv) Minister of Planning and International Cooperation

# Outcome of the Bangui Forum

**The forum was concluded with a set of recommendations including the following key elements:**

**1 Disarmament:** Factions of the Séléka and anti-balaka militias signed a Disarmament agreement, which called for all combatants to give up their weapons by the time of the national elections.

**2 The release of child soldiers:** Leaders of the two main armed groups have agreed to release all children under their control, estimated to number from 6,000 to 10,000 children (UNICEF).

**3** The extension of the current government's mandate: The recommendations adopted by the forum called for the mandate of the transition government to be extended to December 2015 and thus extending the timeline for the election. The new timeline will enable mobilization of resources to re-settle the IDPs, restore peace, and conduct election.

**4 National and local mechanisms for justice and reconciliation:** Participants agreed on the structures for justice and reconciliation in the country, including a national truth and reconciliation commission, as well as broad-based, local peace and reconciliation committees under the traditional chiefs given their strong influence within communities

**5 Social and economic development priorities:** Building inclusive economic institutions was regarded as extremely important for the country as a means of reducing the poverty and inequalities that have created the grief and grievances amongst different social groups in the past.

Opportunities for revitalizing the mining and agricultural sectors received the most attention from the forum's participants. The participants proposed that the sanctions imposed on diamonds in the CAR be removed and that seeds, tools, and other agricultural inputs be distributed to farmers to restart their production. The forum emphasized on the adaptation of the principles of the New Deal by the government and donors.

## Call on the international Development Community

**T**he Bangui Forum, presented an opportunity for the Government and the people of CAR to show the international community that their ambition is truly to achieve peace and reconciliation. This testament of unity, dignity and hard work grabbed the attention of the international and regional community who witnessed a moment of history where a nation decided to change its course and present their roadmap towards resilience. The people and government of CAR call upon development partners to continue their support which plays a vital role in materializing the agreed outcome of the forum. The delivery of national priorities, such as DDRR (Demobilization and Reintegration and Reconciliation), the return of IDPS, and more particularly the elections cannot be possible without the timely and flexible support of the development partners. This is

an opportunity for the international development community, particularly the endorsers of the principles of the

New Deal to prove their commitment in action.\*\*\*



(i) President of the Bangui Forum Presidium (ii) Member of the Presidium



Helder da Costa, GS of g7+ Secretariat

## From the desk of the General Secretary

We were struck by the passion expressed by participants from all parties, from armed groups to civil society organizations, for a united and peaceful Central African Republic. The signature of the official peace agreement represents a major step forward for CAR reconciliation and its transition from entrenched conflict to resilience.

I congratulate the people and government of CAR on this achievement. In the next few months, the g7+ Secretariat will continue to work with CAR and its partners in materialising the reconciliation process. Beyond this significant achievement, the g7+ Secretariat is also providing guidance on Timor-Leste's 2nd Fragility Assessment, to be conducted from June-September

2015, and looks forward to presenting the voice of its member states during

the discussions at the Financing for Development Conference in July and at the UN General Assembly meetings in September, where the Post-2015 Development Agenda will finally be launched. The g7+ is also looking forward to having its Ministerial Meeting in Kabul, Afghanistan, later this year. We have hit the ground running and we are proud to say that we are still going strong.

With this full agenda ahead of us, my colleagues and I wish to express our thanks to our member states and partners for their ongoing support. As always, we welcome your feedback: Drop us a line on Twitter at @g7plus or on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/g7plus](http://www.facebook.com/g7plus). We look forward to hearing from you very soon. \*\*\*

*Thank you*

**A**s we approach the midpoint of 2015, g7+ member countries continue to tackle the complex challenges of peacebuilding and statebuilding. In the context of **Fragile to Fragile (F2F) Cooperation**, on the 11th of May, the g7+ Secretariat was honored to be part of the closing ceremony of the Bangui National Forum for National Reconciliation in Central African Republic. The event served as a heartening reminder of the critical importance of engagement and dialogue for promoting peace and development.

## Next step...

The g7+ family stands by CAR to assist its people and government in achieving their ambition to live in peace and prosperity.



PIC 1: (i) Former Prime Minister of Timor Leste (ii) President of the National Transitional Council PIC 2: Participants of the Bangui Forum at the plenary sessions  
PIC 3: Minister of Reconciliation