

Newsletter



Deputy Chair Alfred Metellus, Special Envoy Emilia Pires and Chair Kaifala Marah

RECENT ACTIVITIES

Our last newsletter was released just prior to the 3rd Ministerial Meeting of the g7+ held in Lomé, Togo on the 29th and 30th of May 2014. This meeting was a very significant one for the group; Sierra Leone, represented by H.E. Kaifala Marah was appointed as the new Chair. Other appointees were Deputy Chair, Haiti, represented by H.E. Alfred Metellus, Special Envoy, H.E. Emilia Pires and first member of the Advisory Council of the g7+ H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão. The host location of the g7+ Secretariat was also confirmed by the Ministers as Dili, Timor-Leste.

Other important decisions undertaken in Lomé included the admission of two new members: Sao Tome and Principe and the Republic of Yemen bringing the membership of the g7+ to 20. The g7+ Charter was discussed and endorsed, an important step in the institutionalization

of the group. All members updated delegates about progress in their respective countries and a g7+ Work Plan for 2014/2015 was adopted.

Only a few weeks later many of the g7+ focal points and officials were travelling to Freetown in Sierra Leone for the 4th Global Meeting of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding held on the 18th of June. The focus in Freetown was on the ability of the New Deal to deliver peace in countries in crisis and transition. A special aspect for the g7+ was an ID Justice Meeting where g7+ Justice Ministers, development partners and justice experts shared experiences and challenges in the justice sector and discussed opportunities to support progress towards PSG 3.

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COUNTRY UPDATES

Our **Central African Republic** g7+ and New Deal focal point, Bienvenu Hervé Kovoungbo reports: In January 2014, with the establishment of the new transitional government, the Ministry of Economy, Planning and International Cooperation resumed an active partnership with the g7+ and the International Dialogue for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding [IDPS]. Based on this renewed dialogue, several meetings on the situation in CAR

have been undertaken, with representatives of the Government emphasizing their intention to revive the implementation of the New Deal, especially as CAR is a pilot country for implementation. Discussions on how the New Deal can help overcome the challenges in CAR were a central concern of the Freetown IDPS meeting held in June where there were agreed policy actions and technical aspects. The Trust Fund of the EU, as a

Welcome!

As the new chair of the g7+ and on behalf of Sierra Leone, I welcome all our members and friends to this new edition of the g7+ newsletter. Sierra Leone's appointment during the Ministerial Meeting in Togo in late May and the Official Handover during the IDPS Meeting in June, in my own city of Freetown, were very special occasions.

As I said on both of those occasions, it is an honor to hold the position of Chair and this role is accepted with humility. With the rich experience of our Deputy Chair and Special Envoy, a strong and capable Secretariat and the commitment of our member country Ministers and Focal Points, we are well positioned to push ahead with the vital work of the g7+ group.

The health challenges we are facing in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone today only highlight the importance of building the capacity of our institutions backed by efficient relationships with partners, especially when we are faced with such extraordinary circumstances. With support from the rest of the world we will put this public health malaise behind us.

Kaifala Marah

Chair of the g7+



common funding mechanism, was identified as an appropriate instrument for financing activities in the CAR.

The following themes, in connection with the Transitional Government's road map have been recognized as strategic for the commitment under the New Deal: security, inclusive political dialogue and national reconciliation, economic recovery,

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RECENT ACTIVITIES CONTINUED ...

This was the first of a number of activities proposed by the g7+ to engage g7+ Ministers outside of the usually represented portfolios of Finance, Planning and Development, on issues that are directly related to the Peacebuilding and State-building Goals of the New Deal.

Both of these meetings produced outcome documents; the Lomé Communiqué and the Freetown Communiqué.



Participants in the ID Justice Meeting in Freetown

In July the g7+ Secretariat capitalized on the holding of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries [CPLP] Summit in Dili, Timor-Leste. The General Secretary was able to brief representatives of the 8 CPLP member states on the work of

the g7+. The translated documents for this event in Portuguese are now available from the resources page of the g7+ website. Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe and Timor-Leste are g7+ members who are also members of the CPLP.

Another opportunity to “spread the word” was taken up when the General Secretary participated in the Pacific Islands Forum in Palau. The forum includes g7+ members Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

Important upcoming meetings include those occurring as part of the 69th United Nations General Assembly [UNGA] in New York late in September and the World Bank Annual Meetings in Washington held in October. The UNGA meeting will be turning to the Post-2015 Development Agenda, an area in which the g7+ has been advocating for the special needs and vulnerabilities of its member states to be adequately addressed and more specifically for the inclusion of a separate goal on Peaceful Societies and Effective Institutions. We have an update on this process later in the newsletter.

We will be reporting on the Round Table Discussion between representatives of the g7+ and G20 taking place in Korea this month in the next edition of the newsletter. In the mean time there is a little more about this exciting initiative in this edition’s note “From the Desk of the GS.” ●

COUNTRY UPDATES CONTINUED ...

job creation and inclusive growth, capacity building of civil servants and payment of salary arrears.

A mission to CAR led by the co-chairs of the IDPS is scheduled for late October 2014 to raise awareness of the role the implementation of the New Deal can play in helping to establish peace.

Meetings will be held at the highest political level to build ownership and commitment.

In addition the UNDP has initiated a dialogue with the Government through the Ministry of Economy to explore the possibility of strengthening the Government’s participation in aid coordination and to begin educating stakeholders and local donor representatives to revive the implementation of the New Deal in the CAR if the situation allows. The organisation act for this program have already been approved by the government and it only remains to fill positions and ensure funding. The UNDP is also involved in the establishment of a United Nations Multi-Partner Trust for CAR, under the New Deal in collaboration with the World Bank and other donor funds.

Efforts to promote national reconciliation and living together that are at the heart of the work of the Transitional Government are providing a horizon of hope and must be supported by the international community.

Mr, Abraham Diing Akoi, Policy Advisor at the **South Sudan** Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning has shared this update:

We are not abandoning all long-term efforts. Together with some of our partners, we are trying to do things differently. For example, our national budget is already trying to free up resources for reconciliation: things that bring people together once peace is found. Be it a road, markets or schools. While providing humanitarian support, our partners are also striving to maintain investments in core public functions. Be it payroll systems, local administration or social services.

At the same, we are looking for opportunities where development investments can directly contribute to better humanitarian results to lay the foundation for a more resilient society. For example, de-

spite the crisis, the EU, the US, the World Bank and others have stepped up their investment in agriculture so that our food deficit goes down in the long-term, and so that farmers in stable regions can produce more food for people in humanitarian need.

The current national crisis can only be resolved through dialogue. Now, the warring parties, civil society representatives, faith based, and other stakeholders are talking in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This is important in order to ensure the ownership of the peace agreement by all South Sudanese and guarantee its sustainability.

Once peace returns, engagement in South Sudan will have to start with a rigorous assessment of our fragility – across all its dimensions: politics, security, justice, the economy and services. We will also refocus on the New Deal Compact initiative with the participation of all the stakeholders (Government, Civil society, faith based, and donors). ●



MEET THE MINISTER

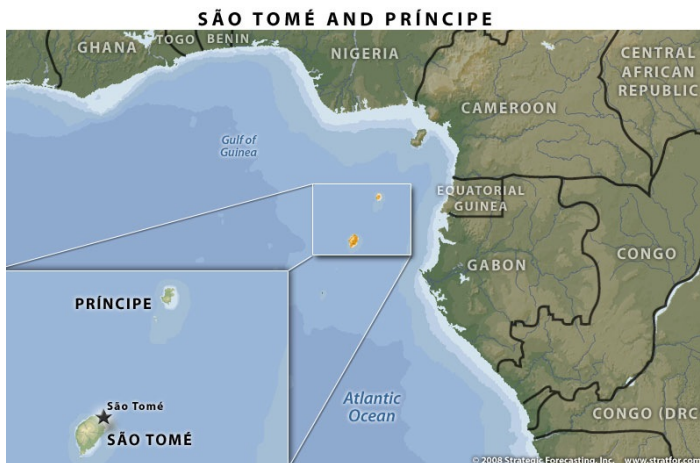
It was a pleasure to meet Minister Hélio Silva Vaz de Almeida in May during the Lomé Ministerial Meeting when Sao Tome and Principe officially became a member of the g7+. Minister Almeida is the Minister of Planning and Finance of Sao Tome and Principe and was gracious enough to give us this interview.

g7+ Media: Can you tell us what led Sao Tome and Principe to become a member?

Minister Almeida: Thank you. With regards to your question, Sao Tome and Principe sought to join the g7+ because of the organization's main principles and acts since now. We strongly believe that the g7+ is a very special organization, given the characteristics of its members, and can make a real difference in the way fragile countries, despite of the nature of fragility of each of them, address their main problems and achieve development.

g7+ Media: What are you hoping to gain and contribute with your participation in the group?

Minister Almeida: The main gain that we expect from our participation in the g7+ is to become stronger and make our voice heard worldwide. We also expect to learn from the other member states and share our best experience in the areas



where it applies.

g7+ Media: We would like to know a little more about you. How long have you been a Minister in the Government?

Minister Almeida: I have been Minister of Planning and Finance since December 2012.

g7+ Media: Day to day what are your main priorities as a Minister of Planning and Finance?

Minister Almeida: That is an easy question. Sao Tome and Principe is a country extremely dependent on external aid - more than 90% of our national budget is financed by external aid. In this context, you can imagine how difficult it is to achieve the goals the Government set for its mandate, specially when external aid is available less and less due to the financial crisis. So, answering directly to your question, I might say that as Minister of Planning and Finance my main priority is to define the priorities of the priorities each single day, according to the financial resources effectively available, in a context of permanent pressure from expenditure side.

g7+ Media: What was your background prior to assuming your responsibilities as Minister?

Minister Almeida: Before taking office as Minister of Planning and Finance I was in the Central Bank of Sao Tome and Principe, where I worked in different positions. The last one was as Director of Banking and Insurance Supervision. Before joining the Central Bank in 2005, I worked in private sector, both at home and abroad.

g7+ Media: When is the next election in Sao Tome and Principe?

Minister Almeida: Next elections in Sao Tome and Principe are scheduled for the 12th of October 2014, when we will have elections for the National Parliament/Government, the municipalities and the Regional Parliament/Government of Principe.

g7+ Media: How do you hope to see Sao Tome and Principe developing over the next 5-10 years?

Minister Almeida: My real wish as a citizen of Sao Tome and Principe is to see my country achieving a sustainable level of development in the next 5-10 years, based on a political and social stability, ensuring ease of access for the whole population to proper health care, potable water and sewage disposal, jobs for the youth and women empowerment. On another level, I would like to see my wonderful country with more infrastructure and the effective beginning of oil exploration as a platform for services to the region.

g7+ Media: How is the International Community interacting with the Government of Sao Tome and Principe?

Minister Almeida: In my view, the International Community is interacting very positively with the Government, especially considering the particular context where the Government took office. We assumed position in the middle of a legislature, after a vote of no confidence in the outgoing government taken by national parliament. In this context, we needed to make huge efforts to obtain credibility before the International Community, mainly our development partners, and we are currently receiving very good feed-back. Honestly, I strongly believe it will continue in the near future.

g7+ Media: Who are the main development partners?

Minister Almeida: The main development partners of Sao Tome and Principe are the international organizations such as the UNDP, the World Bank, the EU and other organizations from its group, the IMF and the ADB. From a bilateral perspective, we have many partners including Portugal, Brazil, Angola, Taiwan, Timor-Leste, United States, Nigeria and Equatorial Guinea.

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MEET THE MINISTER CONTINUED ...

g7+ Media: We understand exploration has begun in both your Exclusive Economic Zone and the Joint Development Zone you have with Nigeria. Production was hoped for 2015 but may be delayed. What are your hopes and expectations on the impact of oil and gas revenues for Sao Tome and Principe?

Minister Almeida: Well, that is a difficult question. The delay that this process is incurring makes it very difficult for us planning in this field. But of course, I believe that with the start of production the country will take a significant step towards development. The main point, in my view, is the management of the revenues arising from the production; it is crucial that these resources are well managed to ensure their correct application for the real benefit of the country and its population. In this regard I believe that our national law includes a strong tools that could drive us to achieve the transparency required in the oil sector.

g7+ Media: We were also pleased to see you in Dili, Timor-Leste, recently – the home of the g7+ Secretariat, as part of the CPLP Summit. You are clearly a very busy man serving your country. If you ever have a day off how do you like to enjoy it?

Minister Almeida: I definitely need some holidays but it is really difficult to take them in the current context. But when I have the opportunity to take a day off I usually try to walk around the country, enjoying our beautiful beaches and our breathtaking natural scenery. From my perspective it is the best way to get feedback from those who effectively are destination of the government's actions and measures.

g7+ Media: And lastly - do you have any final words for the g7+ family and supporters?

Minister Almeida: Of course. I would like to thank the members for their acceptance of Sao Tome and Principe as a member of the g7+ and reiterate our strong commitment and believe in the success of our organization. I believe that the philosophy of the g7+ will make a real difference in our countries, individually and as a group, changing the way we are seen in the international arena and also providing the required support for defeating our fragilities. ●

POST-2015 UPDATE

The process to determine the Post-2015 development agenda reached another significant milestone when the UN Open Working Group concluded its 13th and last session on 19 July 2014, with a proposal for 17 new Sustainable Development Goals. The proposal includes a goal on peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions. The Open Working Group's report will be presented to the UN General Assembly in September, and is to be considered as part of a range of inputs by the UN Secretary General who will release a synthesis report in November. It is anticipated that these reports will set the basis for the inter-governmental negotiation to lead into the special summit to be held in September 2015 to adopt a new international development agenda to supersede the Millennium Development Goals.

The issue of peaceful societies, effective institutions and rule of law was the subject of much scrutiny throughout the Open Working Group process. As we head into the inter-governmental negotiation, it will be important to build on the momentum of this latest report, while recognizing there remains some divergence on this issue. Continued opportunities for informed dialogue and the sharing of experiences will help us to ensure that the final agenda includes a goal on peaceful societies, access to justice and capable institutions. ●

Derek Brien

From the Desk of the GS

I am excited about the meetings to be co-hosted by the g7+ Secretariat and the KDI School of Policy and Management in Seoul on 18-22 August 2014, around the time this newsletter is published. The Round Table discussion between the g7+ and the G20 officials is another step in advocating the g7+ in the international arena. It will be an opportunity to speak and listen in an environment where participants are keen to learn and understand each other. I am particularly delighted to know that the G20 officials are also very keen to share their experience in the development trajectory with g7+ officials.

This year's G20 agenda in Australia highlighting job creation, growth and investment in infrastructure is one that clearly features priority areas for our g7+ countries. We look forward to developing this new relationship and others like it that can lead to better results for our member states.

In a special technical meeting of the g7+ in Seoul, we will also discuss our work priorities towards the UNGA side event, annual IMF/World Bank meetings and New Deal Implementation at the country level.

Enjoy this Newsletter & Happy Reading!

Heiker da Costa

General Secretary of the g7+



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