



Newsletter

December 2017

Welcome message from the Chair



Dear fellow members and friends of the g7+, I am excited to update you with the impressive results we have achieved in 2017.

The g7+ Secretariat, with the support of the Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste, organised two high level

side events (HLSE) at the 72nd United Nations (UN) General Assembly (UNGA), in New York in September. The main thematic discussion at UNGA was sustaining peace, and our events – on promoting justice and peace, and reconciliation – led to national ownership being our top list recommendation for the UN to advance this agenda.

At the country level, I would like to congratulate our brothers and sisters in Cote d’Ivoire and Haiti who said farewell to UN peacekeeping missions this year, on 30 June and 15 October respectively. We commissioned the Center of International Cooperation (CIC) to compile experiences and lessons from g7+ countries who’ve completed UN peacekeeping missions. This study will provide practical inputs to the UN reform agenda. I invite you to read the article about the g7+’s high level roundtable discussion on managing UN transitions in this newsletter.

We saw two rounds of a peaceful and successful general election in Liberia. The first election run by the country institutions and security forces. This shows our advocacy on strengthening national capacity is working.

In the last few months, Guinea-Bissau has completed their Fragility Assessment, we wish them a successful presentation at the council minister. South Sudan has reviewed and updated their Fragility Assessment to align with the National Development Strategy, and just finished a stakeholder consultation process, one of the key requirements to fulfil the peace agreement. We hope the findings of the Fragility Assessment can be translated into the National Development Strategy. Finally, Liberia is working towards conducting its 2nd Fragility Assessment.

Afghanistan, Central African Republic (CAR), Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen have continued to be challenged by conflict

and fragility. The g7+ will seek ways to assist and engage with these countries to move towards stability.

We look forward to working together in 2018, with renewed energy and motivation for our g7+ family. Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

H.E. Momodu Lamin Kargbo
Minister of Finance and Economic Development and Chair of the g7+

The core of the g7+ agenda: Sustaining peace, access to fair justice and conflict prevention



The unanimous adoption by the Security Council of Resolution 2282, and by the General Assembly of Resolution 262 in 2016 on sustaining peace and conflict prevention, indicates a global recognition of the importance of investing in endogenous foundations to sustain peace. It further calls for proactive and long-term multi-faceted support to avoid countries falling into crisis.

These resolutions indicate that the making, building and sustaining of peace must be locally-driven. A state’s ability to maintain the delivery of basic services (such as security and justice) creates a more peaceful situation, and thus establishes state legitimacy. Based on first-hand experiences of dealing with conflict and fragility, the g7+ stands for these very principles. The g7+ group has made an effort to share relevant experiences and perspectives with the UN and other platforms, in order to make this vision a reality.

The g7+ remained active in pursuing its advocacy during the 72nd UN General Assembly (UNGA) in New York. The group organised High Level Side Events (HLSE) on promoting peace through organic means and access to fair justice.

Access to fair justice: a binding factor for the social contract between a state and its citizens

During the g7+ Ministers of Justice meeting in September in New York, attendees (Ministers and diplomats from g7+ and non-g7+ countries, and representatives from multilateral organizations) emphasised the importance access to justice by citizens. Access to quick and fair justice determines state legitimacy, and eventually builds trust between people and government - a factor for sustaining peace. This meeting was organized to follow up on suggestions made at a technical meeting in Lisbon, in July 2017.

In their remarks, the Eminent Person of the g7+, Xanana Gusmao, and chair of g7+ Minister Momodu Lamin Kargbo, recognised that a state's ability to provide justice is a core pillar of the social contract between people and governments. The complexity of fully promoting justice and the rule of law in g7+ countries, however, is often poorly understood by international actors.



Instead of imposing international standards, which are not in line with g7+ country contexts, Xanana Gusmao invited the international community to “step out from their comfort zone and try to understand the unique trajectories of these countries”. This includes supporting and strengthening existing justice systems and the rule of law at the country level.

Other ministers agreed that a lack of capacity is the major challenge faced by local justice systems. A lack of awareness of citizens' rights, poor infrastructure and insufficient human resources contribute to the slow pace of justice systems in many g7+ countries. In addition, conflict affected countries inherit multiple justice systems as they transition, including the existence of UN-supported justice systems, traditional justice/or community based informal systems and formal or state-provided justice systems. The goal is to integrate these systems in a complementary way.

Justice systems would be worse without international support, but participants agreed that international support should reflect local and national country contexts. A strong justice system provides confidence to foreign investors, and encourages job creation. It also leads to growth in economic activities. g7+ representatives and other participants agreed to outline areas of justice collaboration. Collaboration is designed for member countries to share experiences and lessons with other countries facing similar situations, and to advocate for contextually sensitive assistance.****

Making, building and sustaining peace is a nationally-driven process that needs support not direction



We organized a HLSE on peace and reconciliation to share first hand experiences from g7+ countries on country-led dialogue and reconciliation. During the event, the g7+ launched its flagship study about the experience of Timor-Leste and Indonesia's reconciliation after an injurious 25 year occupation.

In his remarks, the President of the General Assembly, Miroslav Lajcak said “*the international community has a major role to play [to help countries build and sustain peace]. But this should come in the form of support not direction*”.

He added that the twin sustaining peace resolutions, mentioned above, confirmed that “*efforts to build and sustain peace must be nationally-driven if they are to succeed.*” Preventing conflict to happen in the first place is the key to maintaining peaceful societies. This includes supporting mediation programs planned by national actors rather than designed missions from the Security Council.

The 2015 review of UN peace operations points out many priority areas for support. For example, justice and economic foundations did not receive adequate international funding. In fact, they received the least. Therefore, international support is not matched to national priorities.

Delivering a statement on behalf of the President of Sierra Leone, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Samura Kamara applauded our initiative to drive global attention and focus to the sustaining peace agenda in g7+ countries. This is because g7+ countries have first-hand experience of conflict and violence, displacement, death and injury. The members of g7+ are in solidarity, committed to building peace and avoiding conflict. These countries, however, are also predicted to have the highest rates of poverty by 2030 if the SDG agenda is not achieved.

Speaking of countries' experiences, Indonesia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Retno Marsudi, recalled Timor-Leste and Indonesia's 2005 reconciliation process stating it is an “*exemplary solution to overcoming contemporary conflict and grievance*”. On behalf of the former President of Indonesia, Susilo Bambang



Yudhoyono, Dino Patti Djalal outlined four reconciliation success factors: leadership, a strong commitment to reconciliation, a forward-looking vision and political goodwill on both sides.

While sustaining peace is a common agenda, the forms of crises are different in each country (i.e. internal conflict, terrorism). Each crisis requires a tailored approach. At the HLSE, Afghanistan's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs explained that to tackle terrorism in Afghanistan, regional and international cooperation is needed. The government is committed to pursuing peace and stability, and the support of regional and international actors is indispensable in initiating peace talks, reconciliation and dialogue.



The representatives from donor countries, civil society and multilateral agencies reiterating their strong support for the sustaining peace agenda, by aligning it with the security, humanitarian and development agendas in g7+ countries. ****

In countries affected by conflict and fragility, conflict prevention is the key to achieving the SDGs

The g7+ collaborated with the chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), South Korea, held a side event on Conflict Prevention: Supporting Societies through Sustaining Peace, in the Margins of the High Level Political Forum in New York. The event became a new platform to establish close relationships, and to share experiences in post conflict peacebuilding and recovery.



Momodu Lamin Kargbo shared experiences on peace and development challenges in Sierra Leone. He invited all stakeholders to work collaboratively to “focus and stay” on preventing conflict as the key to eliminating conflict, eradicating poverty and achieving all SDGs.

He emphasised the importance of the New Deal principles – the first aid architecture agreed in Busan in 2010 to develop long-term peacebuilding in g7+ countries. The New Deal guides country-led planning and is adaptable to unique contexts and challenges of each g7+ country. These principles help donors, international actors and recipient countries be accountable in achieving sustainable peacebuilding and state building.

Many PBC countries have had turbulent pasts but are today peaceful. Such countries, with experience in post-conflict recovery, have knowledge and lessons that can be shared with the six g7+ countries on the PBC's agenda (Burundi, CAR, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone). The event was also an opportunity to share best practice with other g7+ member countries who face similar experiences.

In his remarks, the Ambassador of Korea, Hahn Choong Hee emphasised his support for this initiative, and would like to facilitate further concrete work between the g7+ and PBC groups under South Korea's leadership.

A representative from civil society said, “youth constitutes the majority population in g7+ countries but there are high percentages of unemployment at the country level”. Securing peace is a major obstacle when youth populations are involved in rebellious and violent activities. The event concluded with both g7+ and PBC agreeing to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to further strengthen partnership and collaboration between the two organisations.****

Rethinking UN peacekeeping and Political Mission in g7+ Countries



The purpose of UN peacekeeping is to provide security, and the political and peacebuilding support to help countries transition from conflict to lasting peace. This includes facilitating the political process, protecting civilians, assisting the reconciliation, supporting elections and assisting in restoring the rule of law. In many cases, however, missions depart countries without properly preparing hosts to take ownership of institutions, security, peace and sustainable development. The UN system often focuses on internal reforming and improving capacity building, but fails to consult and listen to the host countries' perspectives on managing the transition.

Five g7+ countries, Cote d'Ivoire, Haiti, Solomon Islands, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste, have said goodbye to missions. Based on this, we organised a High Level Roundtable Discussion in our European hub, Lisbon, to listen to host countries' perspectives on managing UN peacekeeping and political missions. We also commissioned the CIC to prepare a study of host nations' views on UN peace and security reform proposals.

The event was attended by four representatives from g7+ countries (Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and Timor-Leste), donors and multilateral partners, and underlined the importance of supporting local actors to achieve peace.

Chaired by Kay Rala Xanana Gusmao, it was stressed that the meeting was not to criticise the UN. Instead, it highlighted that the UN system should be sensitive to country contexts and help citizens to be in charge, to allow a smooth and sustainable transition process.

Peacekeeping without peace and sustainability. The Chair of South Sudan's Peace and Reconciliation Commission, Chuol Rambang Louth, said although South Sudan has signed a peace agreement between warring parties the situation had not yet improved significantly. The UN has not been able to build a strong relationship with local partners, creating an imbalance of power sharing. In South Sudan, it is difficult for the UN to pursue an independent approach, "the UN is cleaning the floor while the tap is on", said Louth. According to Louth, the South Sudanese expect the UN to make a difference, and indeed the situation would have been worse if the UN was not there. The UN, however, cannot assume it does not need to change its ways, and that it knows best; it is usually not the case when poverty is very high.

From keeping peace to building peace. The infrastructure for peace is institutional capacity. Louth recommended the UN delegate authority to country level missions, so that mutual trust with the people is built. Louth added that achieving 'big peace' requires an investment in 'small peace'. There is an economic logic to fighting, he said "destitution is a breeding ground for mobilisation". Last but not least, South Sudan is a landlocked country, which puts great strain on the country's ability to export and gain economic independence.

During the 'tour de table', Parliamentary Minister of State of Guinea-Bissau, Soares Sambu, shared his experience leading the



Ministry of the Economy and Regional Integration during the 2012 and 2014 transitional government. Guinea-Bissau was organising the election. The UN estimated it would cost \$13 – 20 million. Under the umbrella of Fragile-to-Fragile (F2F) Cooperation, Timor-Leste extended its support and reassessed the cost of the election to be at \$6 m, and granted this amount to the Government of Guinea-Bissau. This is the example he would like adopted by the UN reform agenda.

The President of the g7+ Foundation, Ambassador Prosper Pierre-Richard, recalled his experience in drafting a peacekeeping resolutions. He recognised it was a one-way process and that there was a lack of coordination between the Security Council, the UNSG Office and peacekeeping in designing the resolution and operation mandates. He recommended a slower pace for preparing resolutions to for allow greater input from both the UN and recipient countries. This will help guide the UNSG and DPKO when they design and construct operations.

The meeting was concluded with drafting a closing statement. The CIC will be scheduling meetings with other g7+ Permanent Representatives in New York to ensure all experiences are represented and reflected.****

The g7+: Fragmented budgets means unsustainable development



The consolidation of state institutions after decades of war and conflict has always been the first priority of conflict affected countries. Fixing shattered capacity, which is exacerbated by fragmented, ad-hoc, short-lived and short-sighted aid tools, is the biggest challenge for state authorities. During transition, leadership in these countries struggle with how to lead and own the reform process, with donors playing a supportive role. The g7+ has always advocated for country leadership to guide this process, and called upon partners to stay engaged and to be far-sighted.

The first-hand experiences of member countries provide ample evidence that transitions towards state institution resilience should be owned and led by countries themselves. We commissioned a *comparative study: State building in conflict-affected and fragile states*, conducted by the Institute of State Effectiveness (ISE) and supported by the g7+ Foundation.

The study, which was launched at our HLSE at the World Bank Annual Meeting, looks at Public Finance Management (PFM) reform in Afghanistan and Timor-Leste.



Findings confirm the importance of country ownership over budget processes to finance development more effectively and sustainably.

The chair of g7+, other ministers, deputy ministers and officials from g7+ countries reiterated that aid channelled through national systems and budgets is more effective than if provided outside national systems.

Attendees provided these recommendations:

- Provide clear political guidance from capitals to country of offices on the importance of using country systems to deliver sustainable state building and development
- Increase the share of aid delivered as budget support;
- Establish the use of country systems as the default tool, even for non-budget support modalities
- Limit the use of Project Implementation Units and review their harmful practices.

The report stated that the use of country systems is the essential link connecting financing, ownership and national development.



It highlights that the national budget should be the primary tool of development policy – to increase state legitimacy and national ownership over the development process.

Many donors are concerned with lack of capacity or weak governance. The experience of Afghanistan and Timor-Leste shows that it does not have to be a trade-off between achieving sustainable development through using country systems, and accepting greater fiduciary risk. Fragmented systems that do not build and invest in national capacity will not deliver sustained development outcomes and may weaken national systems - worsening fiduciary risk.

A representative from Sweden described the event as “*quite an intense learning for the donors and we fully support the use of country systems*”.

Finally, Liberia’s Minister of Finance, Boima Kamara, expressed Liberia’s willingness to take responsibility in reforming their system to make it more accountable to citizens and donors. ****

F2F Cooperation Works: Bangui M’Poko IDPs Camp closed down

In the Central African Republic (CAR), the Bangui M’Poko international airport, home to approximately 28,000 internally displaced people (IDPs), has closed. Opening in December 2013, it was the largest site for IDPs. Former occupants have gone back home or chosen to live elsewhere in areas that are safe.

How did we achieve this result? The g7+, and Social affairs and National Reconciliation Ministry civil servants, believe it started at the time of the presidential campaign. The current Head of State, who was then an electoral candidate, promised the IDPs he would do everything to assure a return to their homes. At the March 2016 election, a process to manage this was launched, and two structures were put in place.

The first structure was a strategic committee presided over by the President of the Republic. This committee grouped the Government together with high-level representatives of local technical and financial partners, along with the international humanitari



an community. The two parties suggested two plans. For the Government, the closing of the airport site was a priority because of occupants’ safety. For the humanitarian community, a voluntary return process up to 2019 had to be launched - the Government decided not to adopt this proposal.

The Government committed to put into action a site closing plan, despite hesitations from the international humanitarian community. Profiling operations were launched and achieved, with technical support from the Ministry of Planning Economy and Cooperation. OCHA and UNHCR’s involvement led to the development of identification and communication tools and payment cards. This operation was well received by IDPs who were exhausted following three years in an unbearable camp.

It was agreed that safety conditions in the suburbs of re-entry were to be handled by the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization mission in CAR (MINUSCA) and the Ministry of Public Safety. When the Government was under financial strain to support the IDPs’ return to life outside the camp, the g7+ sent a joint mission led by Xanana Gusmao in September 2016. Following this, Timor-Leste granted \$1.5 m to CAR to support the camp closing processes. The fund was channeled directly to CAR’s Finance Ministry, using its country system.

The Government equally contributed 250 million (CFA francs) to the process.

On December 14, 2016, the President of the Republic presided over the launching ceremony of the closing of the site. In his speech, he recalled Timor-Leste’s solidarity through F2F cooperation and the g7+. To this day, the airport site is closed. To finance the international standardization of the airport, the government obtained financing from Saudi Funds for Development, the French Agency for Development, and the Central African state Development Bank (BDEAC).

The airport site closing triggered the closing of 32 other IDP sites in Bangui. Following this success, the humanitarian community granted one million dollars to reinforce and accompany the returned people with water point rehabilitation and other essential social services in urban districts. It should be noted that the humanitarian agencies resources were self-managed.



The implementation project identification process towards displaced communities (PACAD), operating in the 3rd and 5th Bangui districts (where most of the displaced people live), has launched with financial support from partners. This project includes the developmental support of income generating revenues for the IDPs. The g7+ F2F cooperation was the starting point for the international humanitarian community intervention. ***

The article is contributed by Mr. Bienvenue Herve-Kouvoungbo, Director of Multilateral Cooperation at the Ministry of Planning, Economy and International Cooperation and the g7+ Focal Point in Central Africa Republic.

Joint publication launched on Fragile-to-Fragile (F2F) cooperation

The g7+ Secretariat with the UN Office of South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) launched a publication on F2F cooperation in Turkey in November. The publication includes an overview of F2F, its principles and aims, and achievements. F2F has been implemented in several g7+ countries including CAR, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone and South Sudan.



The publication details examples of F2F cooperation in the promotion of peace and reconciliation, support to elections, natural resource management and dealing with emergencies. These examples show that “in spite of the difficulties that these countries face, they have a lot to offer to each other,” said Momodu Lamin Kargbo.

Speaking at the launch, the General Secretary of the g7+, Helder da Costa underlined that “in each of these cases, the assistance has come in a spirit of voluntarism and solidarity, free from any conditionality or vested interests.”

“It is an important complementary modality to North-South cooperation. As evidenced in this publication, F2F cooperation has much to contribute to peacebuilding and State- building. Through activities including sharing experiences, engaging in knowledge exchange, and providing financial assistance, F2F activities are directly contributing to national development objectives, and the creation of a more peaceful world” said Jorge Chediek, Envoy of the Secretary-General. ****

Somalia: A resilient nation in the mist of global challenges



Somalia, a member of the g7+, has recently witnessed severe drought and terrorist attacks. The prolonged famine left more than half of the population in need of humanitarian assistance. These challenges have made international media headlines. Like other conflict-affected countries, negative media headlines contribute to a damaging stigma attached to fragility. Upon visiting Somalia, one realizes how much perceptions can be influenced by the news. Somalis have a welcoming attitude, and the resilience of the country is overwhelmingly clear.

The g7+ Secretariat, represented by Habib Mayar, was invited to attend the Somali Partnership Conference, on 5 December 2017, in Mogadishu. This was the first conference to review progress on the Somali Partnership for Somalia on Peace and Prosperity, launched in London in May 2017. The President and Prime Minister of Somalia, Somali cabinet members, Members of Parliament, development partners, and civil society organizations were in attendance.

In his opening remarks, the President of the Republic of Somalia, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed confirmed his government’s commitment to its people, to restore peace and achieve social and economic development. Building on the success of the 2017 election, he said “the government will move from a clan power-sharing formula in choosing its leadership, to a representative, inclusive, and accountable democratic model.”

The Government of Somalia has completed 2/3s of the second International Monetary Fund (IMF) staff-monitoring program. This is an indication of the successful implementation of the government’s robust reforms, reforms that are intended to enhance the social and economic wellbeing of Somali people.

To enhance the impact of international development assistance, donors should invest in infrastructure in line with Somalia’s National Priorities. The construction of dams, for example, is a recommended strategy to reduce the likelihood of recurring famines. The construction of roads and ports can enhance connectivity and trade, creating jobs and livelihoods, further increasing national revenue.

“The narrative that defined this country and its people for the past three decades may have been one of division, insecurity and a lack of governance, but rest assured Somalia is a resilient nation” said President Mohamed.

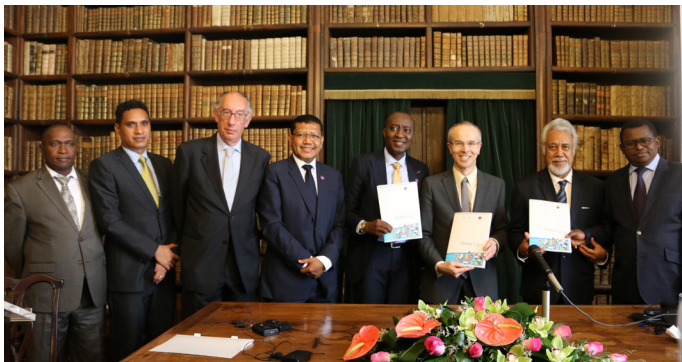
The reforms undertaken by the government need continued support from donors. The g7+ is committed to helping Somalia. We will do this though facilitating a sharing of experiences between g7+ peers. In a bilateral meeting between the Minister of Planning of Somalia and the Deputy General Secretary of the g7+ Secretariat, it was agreed that the Secretariat and the Ministry will work together to develop a program to mobilize the sharing of knowledge and experiences between countries. This will also provide an opportunity for Somalia to share its lessons with other member countries. ****

Opening a hub in Lisbon: expanding our visibility in Europe



Helder da Costa signed a MoU with Lisbon City Council in May 2017 that granted an office space to the g7+ group for 10 years for free, with the possibility of an extension for another 10 years.

In addition to our g7+ headquarters in Dili, Timor-Leste, the new office expansion enables the g7+ group to increase its visibility and presence in Europe. The hub will serve as a regular meeting venue for g7+ member countries.



The hub will double our office footprint and supports the g7+'s growth strategy to build and strengthen its relationship with donor countries based in Europe. The g7+ secretariat will recruit a technical person to manage the office.

At the time of the office launch, the g7+ delegation travelled to Coimbra, to one of the world's first universities: Universidade Coimbra. In Coimbra, the g7+ hosted a public lecture on the challenges of peacebuilding and state building in conflict affected states.

The event featured speakers from the Universidade Coimbra, Afghanistan, Burundi, CAR, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste. The focal point from Afghanistan, Mustafa Aria said, "*we are the victims of international terrorism and geopolitics, we are not in civil war*". The Minister from CAR, Yerima Mandjo, explained that CAR cannot become fully stable and calm as "*service delivery is difficult when many parts of the country are occupied by armed groups*". At the end of the event, the g7+ signed an MoU with Coimbra University to supporting the g7+'s advocacy work.****

From the desk of the General Secretary



I am very pleased to see our chairing country, Sierra Leone, took the initiative in establishing the g7+ Trust Fund and pledged \$250,000 as seed funding for the g7+ Secretariat. We hope this encourages other member countries to contribute to ensure the Secretariat's sustainability.

Following an invitation from the Peacebuilding Office, I delivered a statement on behalf of the g7+ group at the Asian Conference on Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention in Seoul, in November 2017.

The g7+ Deputy General Secretary, Habib Mayar, spoke at the 16+ Forum Annual Showcase in Tbilisi, Georgia, in October/November 2017. He also took part in the delegation to attend the International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) Task Team Meeting in Paris, in November together with International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and State building (IDPS) Secretariat as the observer. In the same month, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) invited Deputy Mayar to share g7+ perspectives at the ODI event: *Is Inclusive peace and recovery possible after conflict?* In London he met with DFID UK to explore opportunities regarding g7+ advocacy work.

In August, the g7+ Secretariat organised a public lecture for students studying international relations at the Universidade de Dili about peacebuilding and state building. I hope this activity can be rolled out in other g7+ member countries.

Finally, the Secretariat had just celebrated Christmas festivities with orphans in Dili. We have come a long way this year, and we will use this holiday season to reflect at our staff retreat in January 2018. It will help us to consider the progress and challenges of 2017 and plan for 2018, in order to serve our member countries to the very best of our ability. Thank you. ****