



Keynote speech

H.E Kay Rala Xanana Gumão, Eminent person of g7+
The g7+ Senior Official Meeting
30 November 2021

Good morning, Excellency, chair of the g7+, Dr. Francis Kai-kai, who is temporarily represented by Ms Abie Kamara, from Serra Leone, respected focal points and Senior officials from all of g7+ member states and Dr. Helder Da Costa, General Secretary of the g7+ secretariat.

Greetings to all of you. I really hope you and your loved ones are safe and healthy.

Last time when we met virtually in December 2020, we commended and prayed for peace processes in Afghanistan, South Sudan, Yemen, and other countries to succeed. We struggled to realize the ambition of making ceasefire everywhere. We made repeated pleas to the parties involved in conflict to pursue peaceful means of reconciliation and dialogue. **But most of these were to no avail.**

We expected that the peace process in Afghanistan would result in national unity and hence stability for its people. Instead, we witness a regime change and collapse of democracy.

People in South Sudan and Yemen continue to suffer from extreme poverty and lack of access to basic services.

The people of Haiti had to witness the assassination of their president and they continue being on the spotlight of humanitarian assistance needs.

We saw military coup in Guinea.

And the list of incidents marked by insurgency, military coups, unexpected regime changes can go on if we speak of countries that are not part of G7+.

Such rapid turbulences have unfortunately become an associated feature of our countries. Despite the resilience of our people who continue to endure this turmoil, conflict affected countries are ranked fragile, failing and failed states. **Engagement of global powers in conflict affected countries is premised on their own national interest rather than that on pursuing stability in our countries.**

What befell all these on us? Is it our post-colonial fate that our countries must be in perpetual quagmire of instability? Or is it the legacy of cold and now proxy wars that keep us haunting? Are the suffering of our people the outcome of authoritarian overreach, economic mismanagement, and eroding democratic norms or do they point to the failure of international community who engages in or another way?

As a citizen who has lived through each of these phases, I say **all these factors equally contribute to fragility and vulnerability of our countries.** Each of these reinforces the other. But we need to pursue change from somewhere!

What do we need to change the fate of our Nations? What should we do to arrest the democratic backsliding that has undermined stability in our countries? What is required to let our generation live in state of peace? What will it take to change the narrative that is responsible for the ill-management of our affairs on part of our international partners? And who are responsible for peace and stability in our countries?

The answers to these questions lie in our resolve as the citizens and leaders of fragile countries. **We need to drive the change from within us.** We need to unite our efforts and show in action that we are committed to pursue peace and stability. The United Nations has only been able to react with the humanitarian and peacekeeping assistance. **Its potential to pursue stability**

in conflict affected countries have been drained by the big power differences.

The g7+ is the only platform that can mobilize such commitments. It is the only avenue that can lead us to influence the behavior of the international community including reforming the UN. Therefore, we have to demonstrate our leadership in fulfilling these expectations. The g7+ with the impact it has made so far has the potential to play a critical role in addressing conflicts and reforming the way international community engages in our countries.

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to conclude by challenging us the g7+, which is founded to achieve peace and stability to rise to the occasion and pursue peace and stability in countries where there is conflict. I call upon all of us to make help in uplifting the profile of the agenda of g7+ to the highest level. And I would like to remind everyone that observer status at the UN will prove meaningful only if we operationalize it by raising our voices at the UN!

I thank you for your attention.