



Newsletter

August 2019

Welcome message from the Chair



Dear Friends, Welcome to the 2nd quarter 2019 Newsletter. I am honored and excited to be the new Chair of the g7+, replacing H.E. Nabeela F. Tunis who has taken up new portfolio as Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone.

The second quarter of 2019 has been very productive for the g7+ with two major Ministerial Meetings - the Justice Ministers' meeting and the Annual g7+ Ministers' meeting - held back to back in June 2019.

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I would like to thank g7+ member countries for the active engagement that made our 5th Ministerial Meeting, held in Lisbon, Portugal from 26-27 June 2019 was a huge success. I look forward to our collective efforts in achieving the commitments and priorities set out in the Lisbon Communiqué.

The g7+ family I expresses its grave concern for the people of Yemen who are facing the horrors of an active conflict and famine. In the same vein, the g7+ family also shares the agony of the People of Democratic Republic of Congo, who are facing an outbreak of Ebola that has claimed so many lives and has become a global concern. We stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in these two countries and to support them in any way we could bring an end to their predicament and for them to forge ahead with their pursuit of peace and development in their respective countries.

I commend the effort of our development partners in their continued support to the g7+ group's agenda of peacebuilding and statebuilding at the country and globally. We thanked in particular, the Government of Sweden for their support to the g7+ Secretariat, the pledge of support by the Government of Finland and we look forward to expanding our collaboration with the Republic of Korea and other potential donors. I thank you and hope you enjoy reading our newsletter.

Francis Mustapha Kaikai
Minister of Planning and Economic Development and chair of the g7+

5th g7+ Ministerial meeting: Leading the Change in consolidating peace and development, 26-27 June 2019



The g7+ held its 5th Ministerial Meeting during 26 - 27 June 2019 in Lisbon, Portugal. The main objective of the meeting was to consolidate the group the platform for countries affected by conflict and fragility to promote the cause of Peace and stability.

At the opening session, Chair of the g7+, Francis Kaikai delivered his welcoming remarks emphasised the importance of promoting home grown solution that involves peace and reconciliation and addressing fragility in g7+ countries. Maintaining and sustaining peace should be at the core of the development agenda in g7+ countries.

In his keynote speech, Eminent Person of g7+, Xanana Gusmão expressed his disappointment on how people suffer due to ongoing conflicts in countries. He reminded the National interest of bring about Peace should be placed above individual or group interest. We must maintain peace because children, deserve to enjoy peace and stability. The Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs and cooperation of Portugal, Teresa Ribeiro further stressed the importance of investing in young people so that they can play their constructive role in Nation-building.

Assistant Secretary General and UNDP Assistant Administrator of United Nations, Asako Okai, who also oversees the Crisis Bureau, shared the UNDP role in helping development and humanitarian assistance to some g7+ countries, and looking forward to continue supporting the g7+ countries.

In line with the ambition to consolidate the g7+ group and systematically evaluate its impact, the g7+ had commissioned and independent review. An interim report of this review that was conducted by BRICS policy centre was presented at the meeting. The finding of the review were welcome by the members and other participants. The Final report will be available for public audience soon.

During the two-day Ministerial Meeting, the g7+ countries endorsed the strategic priorities plan for the period of 2019 - 2021. Main priorities include Advocacy to promote g7+ mission and create policy impact, strengthen peer learning and Fragile-to-Fragile (F2F) cooperation, and strengthen g7+ as a group. The Fragile-to-Fragile (F2F) Cooperation action plan was also agreed upon.



The agenda included reviewing Governance of the g7+. Member countries agreed that Sierra-Leone can continue to chair the group given the on-going process of seeking observer status for g7+ at the UN. Hence, Minister of Planning and Economic Development of Sierra-Leone, Francis Kaikai was assigned to be the Chair of the group. Deputy Minister for Policy, Ministry of Finance Afghanistan, Naheed Sarabi was selected as Deputy chair of the g7+. At the same time, Jose Ramos Horta, Former President Republic of Timor Leste and co-recipient of the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize for working “towards a just and peaceful solution to the conflict in East Timor”, was appointed as a special envoy of the g7+. Given his expertise in peace and reconciliation and network at the global level, he agreed to help in the g7+ in its advocacy.

To further strengthen the g7+, members will expedite the process of g7+ charter ratification. The ratification of the g7+ charter by member countries will increase the chance of g7+ to seek Observer status at the United Nations. The members also agreed to convene a Ministers of Foreign affairs level meeting during 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, engage with the 5 Permanent members of Security Council to seek their support in the process of seeking observer status, and create friends of the g7+ in New York.

Development partners and Think-Tanks were invited to attend the meeting as observers. Finland committed to provide financial assistance to the g7+ Secretariat for Fragile-to-Fragile cooperation. This was very much appreciated by member countries. United States Institute of Peace presented the final report of the Task Force on Extremism in Fragile States “Preventing Extremism in Fragile States: A New Approach”. The recommendations includes among others that the United States should adopt a harmonized framework of engagement in conflict affected countries. The World Bank representative presented the draft of World Bank’s FCV (Fragility, Conflict and Violence) Strategy. The g7+ had conducted first consultation meeting with the World Bank Senior Management on the FCV Strategy during the Bank Spring meeting in April in Washington.

The meeting was concluded with the Lisbon communiqué that was agreed and signed by the members.***

g7+ Ministerial Meeting on Access to Justice for All in Conflict-Affected Countries **The Hague, 19 - 20 June 2019**

The g7+ organised a Ministerial Meeting on Access to Justice for All in Conflict-Affected Countries in the Hague, The Netherlands, during 19-20 June 2019. The meeting brought together the g7+ Ministers of Justice, attorney Generals and High Level representative to discuss the unique needs and challenges of the g7+ Ministers in strengthening access to Justice. It was also an opportunity to share innovative models that have succeeded in delivering access to justice in g7+ countries.



The meeting was supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and facilitated by the Rule of Law Collaborative (ROLC) at the University of South Carolina. In addition to Ministers and officials from g7+ countries, the meeting was also attended by Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of Netherlands, and Chair of the Elders, Ms Mary Robinson. The meeting was also attended by Mali, donors, CSOs and Think-Tanks.

“Justice plays a fundamental role in the prevention of conflict. Prevention is at the heart of our concerns”

Mary Robinson, The Elders

During the discussion, the Ministers agreed to meet regularly and appoint a working level official focal point from each member countries as liaison to the g7+ secretariat on justice related matters. The participants agreed to strength peer learning among g7+ members. Assistant Secretary General and UNDP Assistant Administrator of United Nations, Asako Okai, who is also oversees the Crisis Bureau, shared the UNDP role in helping development and humanitarian assistance to some g7+ countries, and looking forward to continue supporting the g7+ countries.

The meeting was concluded with a joint action plan that was duly signed by all the members and includes 8 collective actions that will be further followed and monitored.

8 COLLECTIVE ACTION

ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL

1. Present the perspective of conflict-affected countries at the High Level Political Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals.
2. Participate in SDG Voluntary National Reviews.
3. Improve data collection, monitoring, and evaluation of people's justice needs.
4. Develop national access to justice strategies.
5. Ensure that national indicators are aligned with global indicators and national justice strategies.
6. Collaborate with donors to embed the justice needs of conflict-affected countries in their assistance policies and strategic frameworks.
7. Enhance regional and global coordination on access to justice.
8. Convene regular meetings on access to justice.

Conference on State Fragility: “Natural Resources for Resilience and Development”



The g7+ together with the Club of Lisbon held a conference “Natural Resources for Resilience and Development”, on 25 June 2019 at the EDP Auditorium in Lisbon, Portugal. The Conference was an opportunity to share ideas and perspectives on how natural resources should be managed so that they can support peacebuilding and statebuilding in g7+ countries. The Conference brought together government members from various g7+ countries, including the distinguished Chair of the g7+ and Minister of Planning and Economic Development of Sierra-Leone, Francis Kaikai, Eminent person of the g7+, Xanana Gusmão, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste, Dionisio Babo Soares, and Deputy Minister of Mines and Petroleum of Afghanistan, Wali Zadran.

Other participants included Jose Ramos-Horta, Special Envoy of g7+, and the renowned scholar, Sir Paul Collier, in addition to other academics and representatives of international organizations, civil society and the private sector.

All the participants agreed that natural resources can be a curse as well as a blessing, and that institutions and policies are the key to determining which of these two outcomes prevails.

State fragility was regarded as a characteristic of all states at various times, not just countries experiencing or recovering from conflict. The contemporary pressures of globalization create strains on the State as an institution which is a universal element of fragility and requires innovative and cooperative solutions.

Some of the institutions for natural resource management that were discussed at the Conference included mechanisms for accountability and transparency, checks and balances, sovereign funds to ensure that revenue streams are spread out over time, auctions, and licensing rules.

It was also pointed out that beyond mechanisms for transparency and accountability, a purposive and forward-looking vision by the country's leaders about where the nation is heading is a key factor for ensuring that natural resources constitute a factor of progress and development. The g7+ will be establishing a platform in the context of Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation, with support from the g7+ Foundation, to promote peer learning and the sharing of experiences on natural resource management, with a view to issuing a flagship publication on this topic.****

g7+ HLPF Side event: SDG 16 in Conflict-Affected Situation; Ambition vs Reality



Five of the g7+ countries (Central African Republic, Chad, Cote D'Ivoire, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste) presented its Voluntary National Reviews at the HLPF 2019, which included a review of SDG 16 since the adaption of Agenda 2030.

The g7+ together with the Permanent Mission of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Korea, Republic of Sierra Leone and Centre for International Cooperation (CIC), co-hosted a High-Level Side Event on “SDG 16 in Conflict Affected Situation; Ambition vs Reality” on 17 July 2019, in the margin of the High Level Political Forum in New York.

The side event aimed at highlighting the peculiarly and progress on SDG16 in in g7+ countries. The g7+ members provided update on progress and common challenges in implementing and monitoring SDG 16 “Peace, Justice and Effective Institutions”

Moderated by Ms. Sarah Cliffe the panellists included Minister of Planning and Economic Development of Sierra Leone and Chair of g7+, H.E. Francis Mustapha KaiKai, Minister of Justice of Sierra Leone, H.E. Priscilla Schwartz, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation of Central African Republic, H.E. Felix Moloua, Ministers of Justice of Central African Republic, H.E. Flavien Mbata, Deputy Ambassador from Afghanistan, H.E. Mohammed Wali Naemi, Ambassador H.E. Vicky Tchong from Timor-Leste, President of KOICA, Ms. Lee Mi Kyung, , donor, Civil Society and International Think-tanks.

The g7+ has been among the strongest advocates for the inclusion of the SDG 16 as a stand-alone goal in the Agenda 2030. Hence, the realization of the SDG 16 has special significance for g7+ group. Ending violence and conflict through Dialogue and reconciliation and promoting Peace stood out to be the common aspiration of the g7+ group. National, regional and international cohesion and unity to foster Peace is of paramount importance. Countries in conflict post conflict situation believe that Peace is a precondition for Sustainable Development. International community and development partners have important role to play in assisting countries reserve the gains in terms of Peace.

The chair of g7+ and other speakers from the group highlighted the importance of addressing fragility as condition to achieve the aspiration of Agenda 2030. Countries affected by conflict are anticipated to be home to more than 80% of the poorest by 2030; if proved true, this will imply our failure in achieving the ambition set by agenda 2030.

The panellist emphasised the importance of country ownership, in implementing Agenda 2030. Experiences from countries that have achieved stability after prolonged conflict provide ample evidence how important is country leadership in achieving Peace and stability.

“Many g7+ countries have integrated the SDGs into the national plan, with SDG 16 being the most crucial. The biggest challenges are lack of funding, capacity and insecurity”

The g7+ Secretariat launched the report on the 20 SDG indicators jointly monitored by the g7+ group. An interim version is now available on the g7+ website.****

Voluntary National Review Process in Central African Republic

By: Mr. Bienvenu Herve-Kouvongbo, g7+ Focal Point in CAR.



Upon the return to constitutional order, the Central African Republic Government organized in June 2016, the official launch of activities to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the political level. This event was placed under the Very High Priorities of The President of the Republic, His Excellency, Professor Faustin Archange TOUADERA.

The Government has also embarked on a comprehensive process of reconstruction of the country through a voluntarism and consensual policy through the development of the National Plan for Recovery and Consolidation of Peace (RCPCA), with the support from the United Nations (UN), the World Bank and the European Union. This plan is broken down into three pillars: (i) to support peace, security and reconciliation; (ii) renew the social contract between the state and the population; (iii) economic recovery and revival of the productive sectors. This plan was presented at the donors ‘and investors’ conference in Brussels on 17 November 2016.

The country is now established on the trajectory of recovery, peacebuilding and revival of its economy. Since June 2018, the country has begun the process of alignment, contextualization and prioritization of the SDG targets on the RCPCA with the international technical assistance through the UNDP regional office in Addis Ababa. This process continued until February 2019 enabled the Integrated Rapid Assessment (RIA) to measure the degree of alignment of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan on the SDGs to around 50% and about 38 targets were prioritized.

In addition, the country has volunteered to conduct its National Review of the SDG 16 “Peace, Justice and Effective Institutions”, monitor and regularly submit a follow-up report on the implementation of the SDG to the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF). Since January 2019, the government set up a task force team on Voluntary National Review (VNR) led through the National Multi-stakeholder Coordination, placed under the supervision of the Minister of Economy, Planning and Development Cooperation to prepare the VNR report. This process has been conducted in a very inclusive way involving representatives of Republican institutions, sectoral ministries, civil society organizations, private sector, local communities, women and youth and women.

The VNR report of SDG was validated in March 2019 and its conclusions show that, despite the progress made, the country still faces enormous difficulties. From 08 to 11 May 2019, His Excellency the Prime Minister, Head of Government has officially launched the enrichment work of the VNR report and this work continued until June through a wide consultation for the validation of the report. Civil society also organized in parallel with the support of the TAP Network, SCPPS, CORDAID, World Vision and the New Deal Country Team in a workshop on May 7th to consolidate their contribution to the VNR.

On July 17, 2019, the Central African Republic presented its first National Voluntary Report to the HLPF on the six SDGs ODs goals namely: SDGs 4, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17, which highlight our progress in sustainable development and reflect on the challenges facing the country, after four years of implementation the 2030 agenda, and especially after three years of implementation of the National Recovery Plan and Consolidation of Peace (2017-2021).

In conclusion, the signing of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement in February 2019 with the various armed groups and the formation of a Government of National Unity testifies to the Government’s desire to make peace a prerequisite for its development. The operationalization of a special criminal court has given a strong signal of a state of law that is recovering in and will help restore the confidence of citizens and opens up prospects for reviving the business climate.

The Central African Republic is still relying on the international community to support its efforts to recover and consolidate peace. It calls for the lifting of the arms embargo on the country to provide the Forces with defence and security of the country to ensure the security of the entire territory.****

From the desk of the General Secretary



Dear readers, I hope you enjoy reading this edition of our newsletter. At the operational level, we really took our work seriously to strengthen the g7+ Headquarters in Dili and the Hub in Lisbon.

I am pleased to inform you that the g7+ Secretariat has successfully organized the 5th Ministerial Meeting in Lisbon on 26-27 June 2019. In the margin of

the Ministerial Meeting, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Estoril Higher Institute for Tourism and Hotel Studies based on Lisbon. This MoU intends to develop cooperation between the two organisations in helping member countries to promote tourism sector as means to diversify economy. In addition, the g7+ also signed MoU with Centro Nacional Chega (CNC) and the Radio & Television Timor-Leste (RTTL) to leverage the g7+ work to the wider audience.

From 27 to 29 May 2019, the g7+ and Faculty of Law of the university of Coimbra held a training program on “Constitutional building and Statebuilding, Judicial System and Finance and Tax System” for senior officials from the Ministry of Justice of Timor-Leste, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé e Príncipe, Côte d’Ivoire and Sierra Leone. The program took place in Coimbra, Portugal, and focused on the leading role of the judiciary in ensuring the access to justice in fragile countries. The Coimbra Workshop was developed under the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the g7+ and the University of Coimbra in 2017. This partnership aims at sharing with and among the g7+ member countries legal study for the continuing enhancement of development and resilience of the g7+ member countries.

On behalf of the g7+, I participated in the Stockholm International Peace and Research Institute (SIPRI) Forum from 14 to 16 May, where, the g7+ was invited to speak on the session “. I also attended the Conference on “Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies: Sustainable Development Goal 16 implementation and the path towards leaving no one behind” in Italy, from 27 to 29 May 2019. These events enabled the g7+ to share its perspectives, making the g7+ more visible optic-wise in the international stage.

As Timor-Leste is celebrating its 20th Anniversary of Referendum, I am very thrilled to welcome several representatives from g7+ countries who will attend this historic event, as a sign of sharing experiences in reconciliation, peacebuilding and statebuilding. I sincerely thank all the support and collaboration from our member states, stakeholders, partners and civil society organizations. ****