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Introduction

This is my third year since I have assumed the role as Chair of g7+ and I have witnessed how the work of g7+ at the global level is recognized at various international forums. As the tragic incident of conflicts continues to affect some of the g7+ member countries such as Afghanistan, Guinea Bissau and South Sudan, our cause of peace and stability became even more relevant. The g7+ will continue pursuing peace through promoting dialogue, reconciliation and sharing of experiences.

Despite the challenges caused by COVID-19 in the year 2021, g7+ strived to make policy impact at the global level. We collectively raised the g7+ perspective on how the novel pandemic has disproportionately affected conflict-affected countries such as those of the g7+.

The strategic priorities agreed in the 5th Ministerial meeting guided the work of g7+ to advance the cause of peace and stability. With the observer status at the UN General Assembly, the Group continued to engage at the UN to optimize the use of this privilege. The Group has agreed to convene the membership even at higher level to increase the impact of its work.

Therefore, I am happy to present our annual report for 2021, highlighting progress that we have made throughout the year.

I would like to use this opportunity to express my appreciation of the members of g7+ for their active role to promote the mission of g7+ and in particular the government of Timor-Leste for its support to our work.

Finally, the g7+ owe a big thank for the moral and political support from H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, the Eminent Person of g7+, and the g7+ Secretariat team led by Dr. Helder da Costa, General Secretary, for their dedication and hard work to make the g7+ more visible at the global level.

Acknowledgment

Having attained observer status at the UN, the g7+ secretariat delegation felt proud to sit on the dedicated seat allocated to the Group of Seven Plus in September 2021, at the United Nation General Assembly (UNGA). It was a proud moment for the g7+ Group that made stride since its establishment in 2010 as an informal association of conflict-affected countries. The observer seat at the UNGA is a manifestation of the relevance of the noble mission the g7+ has undertaken and of course it is the result of the commitment of the leadership, members and the secretariat team. Yet it is the beginning of an even more exciting and challenging journey of making impact at the UN.

I thank the Chair of g7+, H.E. Dr. Francis M. Kai-Kai and Eminent Person of g7+, H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão and H.E. Ramos Horta, the special envoy of g7+ for their exemplary leadership that continue to provide guidance to the work of our organization.

I am grateful to the members of g7+ for their commitment to our collective cause. On behalf of the g7+, I also would like to thank the government of Timor-Leste for the continued support to the g7+ secretariat.

Finally, I thank our team at the g7+ secretariat for their tireless efforts in 2021 that made possible for all of progress made by the g7+ at the global level. I have strong belief in the team whose commitment to the goals of the g7+ will be upheld in the years to come.
Introduction
Mission

The g7+ is an intergovernmental organization of conflict-affected countries that collectively promotes country-led pathways towards peace, stability and development, and engages in learning from the first-hand experiences regarding peacebuilding and statebuilding from one another.

The g7+ is the only intergovernmental of fragile and conflict-affected countries that is bound by the principles of solidarity rather than political and/or geographical consideration and is united by the cause of Peace.

Purpose

The charter sets the purpose of the g7+ as below:

Facilitate the sharing of lessons learned and good practices for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding among conflict or post-conflict affected states in order to further the shared goals of stability, peace, good governance based on nationally led democratic principles, economic growth and sustainable development following the principles of Volunteerism, Solidarity and Cooperation on the path to resilience.

Promote cooperation amongst Member States which is country-owned and country-led through the provision of advice and the sharing of expertise and lessons learned.

Advocate aid management policies founded on the principles of effective engagement in development tailored to the contexts of the Member States and respecting national ownership, transparency and mutual accountability.

Promote stable and peaceful societies in order to transition to next stage of development economic development while recognizing national ownership and leadership.
Haiti
Chad
Lisbon, Portugal: the g7+ European Hub
Guinea-Bissau
Guinea
Sierra Leone
Cote D’ivoire
Liberia
Togo
Sao Tomé and Principe
Democratic Republic of Congo
Burundi
Afghanistan
Somalia
South Sudan
Comoros
Timor-Leste
Papua New Guinea
Solomon Islands
South Sudan
Somalia
Democratic Republic of Congo
Burundi
Afghanistan
Lisbon, Portugal: the g7+ European Hub
Guinea-Bissau
Guinea
Sierra Leone
Cote D’ivoire
Liberia
Togo
Sao Tomé and Principe
Democratic Republic of Congo
Burundi
Afghanistan
Somalia
South Sudan
Comoros
Timor-Leste
Papua New Guinea
Solomon Islands

Promoting Peace and Stability through times of uncertainty
The g7+ is the first ever self-organized intergovernmental Group of countries affected by war, conflict and fragility established to collectively voice the priorities of these countries at regional and global level.

Recognizing the transition of some of the countries that successfully have achieved relative Peace and stability owing to their national leadership and will, the Group has promoted cooperation and peer learning founded on the pillars of solidarity and volunteerism.

Consolidating such experiences, the Group has promoted a narrative that better defines challenges and solutions thereto that is sensitive and responsive to the context of countries emerging from wars and conflict. Using the narrative, the g7+ has become a platform to negotiate the principles of engagement with donors. Hence, it agreed upon the New Deal for engagement in fragile situations, endorsed by more than 40 countries and organizations, with donors and civil society. The New Deal contains a set of principles guiding effective Peace and Statebuilding and development cooperation policies.

Globally the g7+ collectively succeeded in securing a stand-alone goal on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding within the global 2030 Agenda (Sustainable development Goal – SDG 16), which manifests the nexus between Peace and Development.

Since 2012, the Group has regularly engaged in the margins of the UN General Assembly High-level week to consolidate the voice of conflict-affected countries on related matters. Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the g7+ has also engaged regularly during the High-level Political forums to promote the contextual implementation of the SDGs in conflict-affected countries. Owing to its collective engagement at the United Nations and other global forums, the g7+ has become an interface on debate relating to sustaining peace and conflict prevention.

The g7+ developed and operationalized a concept of “fragile-to-fragile cooperation” among the member countries to support and share tangible knowledge on related matters such as Peace and reconciliation, Public Finance Management, Natural Resources Management, management of UN Peacekeeping missions, among others. The Group regularly convenes forums and Ministerial level thematic meetings of member countries to share experiences and consolidate its position on related matters. It has also established formal partnerships with UNDP, UN Office of South-South Cooperation, International Labour organization, World Bank, Rwanda Cooperation Initiative and other international think tanks and organizations to promote such experiences. In addition, such interaction has widely been recognized within the global framework of South-South engagement.
1. What we achieved in 2021
## 2021: the g7+ at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation in</th>
<th>Active and regular engagement in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than 20 International meetings and debates on addressing fragile states’ challenges</td>
<td>More than 5 High-level dialogues and global policy initiatives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Events and Initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Associate Observer Status in the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries granted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Statement of solidarity with the people of Afghanistan issued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Call to Action on powering up energy investments in fragile states launched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Virtual ministerial meeting on Building Peaceful and Inclusive Societies through Justice for All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Discussion Paper on “the Nexus between COVID-19 and Conflict” published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Training week on “Building a Constitutional State” for g7+ member countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding with the Rwanda Cooperation Initiative signed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>International Conference on State Fragility (2nd edition) held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Emergency humanitarian aid provided to Timor-Leste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Study Center on Fragile and Conflict-Affected Countries created</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>g7+ Women Forum launched</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**H.E. Xanana Gusmão, g7+ Eminent Person,**

*Speech at Waseda University, Tokyo, 24.11.2021*

> The g7+ was established on the principles of mutual understanding and respect. These are countries that want to take the wheel of their own fate and break free from the traps of poverty and conflict. While our situations are due in part to inefficient national policies, we also suffer from mismanaged and even irresponsible foreign interventions. People in these countries want to stop having to take up weapons. They want to use their voices to advocate for a change to the paradigms of engagement, so that they make an effective contribution towards peace. This requires improving both international assistance and prevention. While we fail to address the root causes of problems, it will simply be impossible to overcome the weaknesses of States.
1.1. Timeline of Activities

**January 27**
Opinion article “Prioritising fragile and conflict-affected states in a post-pandemic world” by Jorge Moreira da Silva, Director, OECD Development Cooperation Directorate, and Helder da Costa, General Secretary of the g7+.

**February 28**
Launch of the Call to Action: Powering up energy investments in fragile states, signed by more than 50 organisations and 15 present and former Heads of State and Government and focused on highlighting the potential and yet the challenges conflict-affected countries are facing in access to sustainable sources of energy.

**March 15**
The call to action followed the Debate: Powering up energy investments in fragile states, hosted by the International Growth Centre, the Council on State Fragility, and the g7+, London.

**March 18**
Participation of the g7+ secretariat represented by Habib Mayar, Deputy General Secretariat, in the UNDP Development Dialogues “Rethinking solutions to crisis in the decade of action.”

**March 23-24**
Participation in the World Trade Organization’s Accession Group Meeting, to step up efforts to advance the Trade for Peace initiative, designed to help fragile and conflict-affected states through WTO membership. The inaugural Meeting of the Trade for Peace Network took place on March 25th.

**March 19**
Discussion Paper – The Nexus between COVID-19 and Conflict: Assessing the impacts of the pandemic on peace and development. The g7+ and UNDP.

**March 23**
g7+ Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary General participated in the Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) Fragility Roundtable.

The g7+ Annual Report 2021: Promoting Peace and Stability through times of uncertainty
Virtual ministerial meeting on “Building Peaceful and Inclusive Societies through Justice for All”, jointly organized by the g7+, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, The Elders, and Pathfinders.

Debate “Call to action: Scaling up green energy investments in crisis settings”, UNDP Development Dialogues, jointly organized by the g7+ and UNDP.

Presentation by g7+ Secretary General in the UNDP Development Dialogues “Decade of Acceleration: Unlocking the SDGs in Crisis Settings”.

Humanitarian assistance from the g7+ to the victims of the flooding in Timor-Leste (4th April). In a month more than 150 affected families were assisted with relief packages and additional funds were mobilized to help the affected communities, including the donation and installation of 10 clean water tanks.

Debate “Call to action: Scaling up green energy investments in crisis settings”, UNDP Development Dialogues, jointly organized by the g7+ and UNDP.

Participation of g7+ Chair in the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) “Towards Effective Country Partnerships in Fragile States: What have we learned?”, organized by SIPRI.

14 April

Virtual ministerial meeting on “Building Peaceful and Inclusive Societies through Justice for All”, jointly organized by the g7+, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, The Elders, and Pathfinders.

22 April

Debate “Call to action: Scaling up green energy investments in crisis settings”, UNDP Development Dialogues, jointly organized by the g7+ and UNDP.

Participation of g7+ Secretary General in the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) Ambassador-level meeting on “Building and Sustaining Peace through Institutions”, focused on sharing good practices and lessons learned from experiences in institution-building on the ground.

10 April

Humanitarian assistance from the g7+ to the victims of the flooding in Timor-Leste (4th April). In a month more than 150 affected families were assisted with relief packages and additional funds were mobilized to help the affected communities, including the donation and installation of 10 clean water tanks.

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10 May

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17 May
Bilateral Meeting between the g7+ and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland, H.E. Pekka Havisto, Lisbon, to acknowledge and strengthen the existing partnership.

Meeting between the g7+ Secretariat and the Member of Parliaments of the Commission B on Foreign Affairs, Defense and National Security, National Parliament of Timor-Leste, and the technical adviser from UNDP, namely to discuss the plan to establish the g7+ Parliamentary Assembly.

"Strengthening local capacities and mobilizing resources to adapt the supply of vocational training, to emerging activities and new employment opportunities, particularly in countries experiencing situations of fragility", jointly organized by the g7+, International Labour Organization (ILO), ADECA, and the Province of Cordoba (Argentina), in the V World Forum of Local Economic Development.

Meeting between the g7+ Secretary and the Member of Parliaments of the Commission B on Foreign Affairs, Defense and National Security, National Parliament of Timor-Leste, and the technical adviser from UNDP, namely to discuss the plan to establish the g7+ Parliamentary Assembly.

g7+ secretariat participation in the First Meeting of the Halving Global Violence Task Force, a high-level political coalition that is leading the international mobilization to halve global violence by 2030.

Presentation by the g7+ Deputy Secretary General, Mr. Habib Mayar, in the debate of the UN High-Level Dialogue on Energy "HLDE 2021: Leaving (really) no one behind: Energy Access in Fragile and Conflict Affected Areas", organized by the Global Platform for Action (GPA) on Sustainable Energy in Displacement Settings hosted at UNITAR.

Participation of H.E. Xanana Gusmão, Eminent Person of g7+, at the conference "Peacekeeping and Reconciliation: Applying the Lessons of Timor-Leste", organized by the Dardania College from Kosovo, sharing the experience on the reconciliation between Timor-Leste and Indonesia.

The g7+ European Hub organized a meeting on "Reflections on development models for tourism training in Africa: The strategies implemented in Cape Verde and Mozambique". This initiative, with the participation of several Ambassadors from g7+ countries, falls within the scope of the MoU signed between the g7+ and the Estoril Higher School of Hotel and Tourism.

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27 May

Bilateral Meeting between the g7+ and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland, H.E. Pekka Havisto, Lisbon, to acknowledge and strengthen the existing partnership.

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11 June

g7+ WTO Accessions Group Meeting

21 June

Participation of H.E. Xanana Gusmão, Eminent Person of g7+, at the conference "Peacekeeping and Reconciliation: Applying the Lessons of Timor-Leste", organized by the Dardania College from Kosovo, sharing the experience on the reconciliation between Timor-Leste and Indonesia.

15–16 June

g7+ secretariat participation in the First Meeting of the Halving Global Violence Task Force, a high-level political coalition that is leading the international mobilization to halve global violence by 2030.

10 June

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24 June

Presentation by the g7+ Deputy Secretary General, Mr. Habib Mayar, in the debate of the UN High-Level Dialogue on Energy "HLDE 2021: Leaving (really) no one behind: Energy Access in Fragile and Conflict Affected Areas", organized by the Global Platform for Action (GPA) on Sustainable Energy in Displacement Settings hosted at UNITAR.

20
2nd Conference on State Fragility, Pandemics, Vaccination and Solidarity - Implication in Fragile Countries, jointly organized by the g7+ and the Lisbon Club, Lisbon.


Signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the g7+ Secretariat and the Rwanda Cooperation Initiative (RCI), providing a framework for facilitating sharing of experiences on development and peacebuilding and statebuilding between Rwanda and the g7+ member countries.

28 June

Participation of the g7+ Chair in the UNDP Development Dialogues: “Development solutions for states – the way forward.”

01 July

Participation of the g7+ Deputy Secretary General, Mr. Habib Mayar, in the debate “Re-Energizing United Nations for Peace on the Korean Peninsula”, Universal Peace Federation International Leadership Conference, Bangkok.

08 July

The g7+ was granted the status of Associate Observer in the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) XIII Conference of Heads of State and Government in Luanda, Angola. The g7+ and the CPLP objectives include reinforced political-diplomatic consultation and an enhanced presence in international spheres.

09 July

Participation of g7+ Deputy Secretary General in the debate “From Conflict and Hunger to Stability and Nourishment: A Comprehensive Approach to Peace, Development and Humanitarian Action,” organized by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

17 July

Promoting Peace and Stability through times of uncertainty.
Issuing of a Statement of Solidarity with the People of Afghanistan with an appeal to the leaders of the Taliban and other political factions to restrain from violence and put the safety of people as their utmost priority.

19 August

19 August

Members of Parliament of Timor-Leste visited the g7+ European Hub.

10 September

The g7+ participated at the 76th United Nations General Assembly under the credential as an observer to the UN.

10 September

The g7+ and the Faculty of Law of University of Coimbra organized an online training week on “Building a Constitutional State”, in which justice officials from selected g7+ member countries participated. This course is part of implementing the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2017 that has resulted in several workshops for capacity development.

14–25 September

27–29 September

Participation of Special Envoy of g7+, Dr. Jose Ramos Horta, in the Event “Trade for Peace: Back to Basic”, at the Geneva Trade Week 2021, in which WTO-Initiative Trade for Peace was discussed, ultimately contributing to international peace and stability.

27–29 September

Participation of Special Envoy of g7+, Dr. Jose Ramos Horta, in the Event “Trade for Peace: Back to Basic”, at the Geneva Trade Week 2021, in which WTO-Initiative Trade for Peace was discussed, ultimately contributing to international peace and stability.

27–29 September

g7+ WTO Accessions Group: Ambassador-Level meeting

20–24 September

20–24 September

National seminar “Long Journey for Reconciliation in Timor-Leste”, organized by the Centre Nacional Chega (CNC) together with the g7+ Secretariat, to celebrate the 16th Anniversary of Chega Report. The g7+ also receive the Chega Award.

27 October

27 October

Presentation by the g7+ Deputy Secretary-General in the ILO Fragile-to-Fragile Track 3 on “Fostering labor market integration and inclusion of migrants and refugees”, exploring Southern-led collaborations on inclusion of migrants and refugees and the situation in conflict-affected countries.

11 October

11 October

Participation in the Global South-South Cooperation Forum on “Livelihoods, Employment and Inclusion for Vulnerable Groups”, organized by ILO.

12 October

20–24 September

27 October

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24
The g7+ Secretariat launched the g7+ Youth Alliance in Timor-Leste. The Alliance consists of five enthusiastic young individuals who voluntarily support g7+ outreach activities in municipalities to share information and raise awareness among young people about the importance of maintaining peace and stability.

**29 October**

The g7+ Secretariat in collaboration with the DNPKK (National Directorate for Community Conflict Prevention) organized dialogues among martial arts groups in Manatuto and Bobonaro Municipalities, Timor-Leste.

**03 November**

Joint workshop on “Scaling-up energy investments in displacement settings”.

**10–16 November**

Organization and participation in the Senior Level Meeting of the Justice Action Coalition: “Aligning Actions and agreeing on joint deliverables”.

**18 November**

Participation of the g7+ Secretary General in the Second Edition of the SDG-UN Reform – Course “Making the Voice of Social Partners Count in the UN Process: Training Programme with a South-South Learning Approach”, organized by ILO, focusing on Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation and the links to SDG 8 and 16.

**18–26 November**

Mission of g7+ Eminent Person, H.E. Xanana Gusmão to Japan, including meetings with high dignitaries, sharing of experiences in the Parliament Committee of DIET, on “How Timor-Leste achieved reconciliation with Indonesia and resolved Maritime Boundaries with Australia after the independence”, and a Public lecture by on “Peacebuilding and Democratic Governance in an Era of Uncertainty” to International Cooperation and Peacebuilding students at the Waseda University, Japan.

**23 November**

Presentation of the g7+ Deputy Secretary General, Mr. Habib Mayar, “Fighting Food Crisis along the HDP Nexus” on the panel on “Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks, and stresses” of the 2021 Global ODA Forum for Sustainable Agricultural Development, organized by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs of Korea.

**29 October**

Joint meeting on Customary and Informal Justice Working Group Roundtable.
Participation in the 2021 Global ODA Forum for Sustainable Agricultural Development, under the theme of “Exploring the future ODA pathways for transformation of global food systems”.

23 November

The g7+ European Hub hosted the launch of the g7+ Women Forum organized by g7+ Lisbon foundation, which was dedicated to “Promoting Leadership and Political Participation of Women”. This biannual forum is a space where g7+ countries can share ideas and debate solutions for the benefit of girls and women in fragile contexts, and consequently for increasing peace, resilience and development.

23 November

The g7+ Senior Official Meeting was held, to evaluate progress achieved and identify collective way forward on how best to position the group in the global debate on post COVID-19 pandemic recovery and pursuing peace and stability in fragile countries.

02 December

Launching of the Peace Cup, an annual Futsal tournament with the motto “Sport to promote peace and development”, allowing the dissemination of fundamental principles and contributing to unite people towards non-discrimination, peace, justice and development.

03 December

Eminent Person of g7+, H.E. Xanana Gusmão gave a public lecture with the theme “Statebuilding in fragile states after COVID: Challenges and Opportunities”.

03 December

The g7+ Senior Official Meeting was held, to evaluate progress achieved and identify collective way forward on how best to position the group in the global debate on post COVID-19 pandemic recovery and pursuing peace and stability in fragile countries.

30 November

Launch of the Study Center on Fragile and Conflict-Affected Countries, by the g7+ European Hub and g7+ Lisbon Foundation in partnership with the Higher Institute of Social and Political Sciences (ISCSP) at the University of Lisboa, which will contribute to increased knowledge, scientific inputs and reflection on the challenges and responses to fragility contexts. This included a public debate with the participation of Dr. Francis Kai, Chair of the g7+ and Dr. Luis Amado, President of the g7+ Foundation. Eminent Person of g7+, H.E. Xanana Gusmão gave a public lecture with the theme “Statebuilding in fragile states after COVID: Challenges and Opportunities”.

30 November

Participation in the 2021 Global ODA Forum for Sustainable Agricultural Development, under the theme of “Exploring the future ODA pathways for transformation of global food systems”.

02 December

Participation in the expert-level virtual meeting on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Peacebuilding.

03 December

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Intervention on "Timor and the g7+: Challenges in the post-pandemic" in the conference "Statebuilding and Rule of Law in A Post-Covid World: Challenges And Opportunities", Coimbra, Portugal.

Participation in the High-Level Dialogue: Customary And Informal Justice and SDG16+, within the Working Group of which the g7+ is a partner.

The g7+ Secretariat with the support of g7+ Youth Alliance delivered a presentation to the students of Instituto Professional de Cannosa and Canossa Senior High School students to share the g7+ work in promoting peacebuilding and Statebuilding.

Meeting between the g7+ Secretariat and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, H.E. Adaljiza Magno.

The Chair of g7+, H.E. Francis Kac-Vai, presented the g7+ credentials as Associate Observer to the Executive Secretary of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP), Dr. Zacarias da Costa.

The g7+ Annual Report 2021

Promoting Peace and Stability through times of uncertainty
1.2. Policy Impact

1.2.1. Responding to a context of uncertainty and multiple crises

The g7+ pursued its activities in 2021 within a highly complex and uncertain global context, with the confluence of multiple crises that particularly affected fragile and conflict-affected countries.

COVID-19 exposed many vulnerabilities and inequities in the world and added to existing fragilities, with a disproportionate impact on fragile and conflict-affected countries, which were already the farthest left behind. While the proportion of people directly affected by the disease may not be very different in fragile countries in comparison with other countries in the world, the same cannot be said of the indirect social and economic effects, of the response capacity and of the recovery prospects. In general, conflict-affected contexts are not only more vulnerable to external shocks but also less able to address the multifaceted impact of the pandemic. Expert analyses point out a slower and more difficult recovery in conflict-affected countries.

“We had expected that the onset of the pandemic would induce empathy and solidarity and, therefore, the call for ceasefire would be respected. We had anticipated that regional cooperation would take new forms where it would rest on humane solidarity rather than mere vested political and economic interests. Our hope was that the rich nations of the world join hands to curb this crisis while leaving behind political differences. But to our dismay, the opposite happened.” – Francis Kai Kai, Chair of g7+, at the 2nd Conference on State Fragility, 28.06.2021

1. First, the pandemic has exacerbated institutional fragility related to the capacities of health systems and provision of basic services in conflict-affected countries. As the crises unfolded, health systems that were already weakened and under-resourced due to decades of crises were overburdened.

Some g7+ countries, such as Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia, had the experience of managing epidemic of Ebola that has important lessons on the right paths to follow. These experiences provide sufficient lessons to support our advocacy to respect and consider national contexts even in managing global crises such as COVID-19 that has yet unique impacts on each country. In addition, the current international attention on global health is a good basis for defending the need to gather increased support for resilient health systems in fragile contexts that can address and prevent future crises.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>g7+ member countries</th>
<th>Covid-1 confirmed cases (cumulative total)</th>
<th>Deaths due to Covid-19 (cumulative total)</th>
<th>Persons fully vaccinated per 100 population (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>187442</td>
<td>7792</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
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<td>2152</td>
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Table 1
COVID-19 cases, deaths, and vaccination rates in g7+ member countries

affected countries, COVID-19 aggravated the suffering of conditions, weak social protection, and insufficient with the already high unemployment, precarious job on extreme poverty and human development.

vulnerable social groups, derailing decades of progress of the most incidents of extreme poverty and exclusion 2. Second, the pandemic contributed to rates in the most vulnerable and poor countries. Extremely low vaccination rates are usually in countries with bigger populations or half of the g7+ countries. Extremely low vaccination rates are normally in countries with bigger populations or territories and/or with most difficult security and political situations, but lack of international support and difficulty to address distribution issues are also causes for low rates in the most vulnerable and poor countries.

2. Second, the pandemic contributed to increased incidents of extreme poverty and exclusion of the most vulnerable social groups, derailing decades of progress on extreme poverty and human development.

With the already high unemployment, precarious job conditions, weak social protection, and insufficient income generation opportunities in poorest and conflict-affected countries, COVID-19 aggravated the suffering of vulnerable people. Up to 150 million people were pushed into extreme poverty globally due to COVID-19 and, in the countries classified as fragile by the OECD, 2 in 5 people are set to fall into extreme poverty, which is two times higher than in the group of developing countries 1. Several g7+ member countries have experienced a significant increase in prices, particularly for food and fuel, with impacts in living conditions and the economy, which could be even more serious in the coming years, with the confluence of shocks (climate change and extreme weather events such as drought and floods, the side effects of geopolitical tensions among big powers, etc.), Haiti, South Sudan and Yemen are examples of g7+ countries that are already experiencing multiple factors of crises and continue to be in the spotlight of humanitarian assistance needs.

The mutually reinforcing linkages between conflict, poverty, hunger and food insecurity, mass migration, and persistent humanitarian crises are undeniable, and should be properly addressed, both by national and international actors. Therefore, the importance of the “Leave No One Behind” agenda has never been clearer, which is embedded in the need to ensure that human dignity is the minimum standard that should guide all actions and cooperation.

3. Third, the pandemic is also related to increased violence, as lockdowns and other confinement measures, combined with the cut in livelihoods, potentially open greater breaches in the social contract and affect trust in government and/or institutions, contributes to higher social unrest and tensions. Incidents of insurgency by armed groups did not stop or reduce as was expected with the outbreak of COVID-19. The number of forced displacement worldwide that had already been rising, reached a new peak in 2021, mostly caused by violent conflicts. Despite the appeals for a global ceasefire, violence has not ended with the pandemic and several fragile countries face the risk of relapsing into conflict. This has worrying consequences for fragile countries and for the world, as increased threats to peace and stability in fragile countries are also threats to global peace and prosperity.

Therefore, peace and stability through national reconciliation remained high on agenda of g7+ even during the pandemic. With the onset of COVID-19, the g7+ Group advocated for ensuring that the peace agenda does not slip in the global struggle to contain the spread of virus

1. The g7+ Annual Report 2021
5. Available at https://www.g7plus.org/resources/statement-of-solidarity-and-cooperation-of-call-for-concerted-support-in-our-efforts-to-curb-covid19
1.2.2. Implementing g7+ Strategic Priorities

A. Policy Advocacy

In 2021, the g7+ continued pursuing collective advocacy to support peace and stability in fragile and conflict-affected countries, focused on peer learning (Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation), and strived to strengthen and further consolidate the g7+ as a group to make even stronger impact.

The activities in 2021 were guided by the strategic priorities agreed upon by members:

- Despite the challenges related to Covid-19, the g7+ engaged at various levels and forums to advocate and promote the mission of g7+ with a focus on sharing the views and perspective of conflict-affected countries in regard to addressing their needs; increasing global visibility of g7+ countries’ priorities regarding peacebuilding, stability and development; and access to equitable COVID-19 vaccination.

With the nexus between Peace and Development being a central pillar for g7+ priorities, the SDG 16 on peace, justice and effective institutions and the New Deal remained a guiding framework. The UN Observer Status allows to bring the g7+ experience and voice to global forums.

Institution-building is at the core of preventing conflict, strengthening social cohesion, building and sustaining peace. Therefore, the g7+ continued advocating for a stronger focus on capacity-building and reinforcement of effective, accountable and inclusive public service delivery in fragile contexts. This was specifically highlighted in the UN Peacebuilding Commission meeting on ‘Building and Sustaining Peace through Institutions’, held in May, for which the g7+ secretariat was invited.

Advocating for inclusive and effective multilateral solutions to address challenges facing conflict-affected countries.

The need to ensure equal access to justice has figured prominently in g7+ activities in the last few years, including in 2021. These activities followed-up the Joint Action Plan of the g7+ countries, adopted in 2019, in which concrete
steps were defined towards achieving more inclusive and people-centered justice in conflict-affected countries. In April 2021, the g7+, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, The Elders, and Pathfinders co-organized a Ministerial meeting of Justice Action Coalition on “Building Peaceful and Inclusive Societies through Justice for All” that resulted in a Joint Letter to the UN Secretary-General, highlighting the priorities of the coalition. The g7+ maintains a position that putting people at the center is key to reviving the bonds that hold our societies together, and to re-establishing trust between people and communities, and governments. In December, the g7+ participated in the High-Level Dialogue on Customary and Informal Justice and SDG16+, promoted by the Working Group of which the g7+ is a partner.

Another relevant aspect of the peace-development nexus is the role of trade which is key to sustaining Peace. Multilateral trade needs to be more inclusive and equitable in order to ensure that conflict-affected countries fully benefit from trade flows and rules. Therefore, in 2021, the g7+ World Trade Organization (WTO) Accessions Group continued promoting the voice of the g7+ in this regard. In June 2021, the Group issued a declaration calling for the establishment of a dedicated Work Program on Trade for Peace for fragile and conflict-affected states. The g7+ participated in Trade for Peace initiatives and debates, during the Geneva Trade Week, held on 27–29 September 2021.

The Declaration and Join Action Plan on Access to Justice for all in Conflict-Affected Countries, adopted in the g7+ Ministerial-Level Meeting in June 2019 is available at: https://bit.ly/3eDb3is

The Working Group on Customary and Informal Justice and SDG16+, promoted by the Working Group of which the g7+ is a partner, is an alliance that draws together over 60 organizations to accelerate action on achieving access to justice for all and build consensus about what it will take to close the SDG16+ implementation gap.

Cognizant of the protectionist trends and tensions among global players arising in the last few years and its impact on the already conflict-affected countries, the g7+ promotes dialogue and reconciliation to address conflicts. The Group has raised the concern that the g7+ countries should not be victim of hegemonic contest as they have been. In 2021, the Group continued sharing these views on various forums such as the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) and the MAFFR Strategic Dialogue for Peace Diplomacy, held in Portugal.

Promoting Peace and Stability through times of uncertainty

**“Trade for Peace”, Geneva Trade Week | September 2021**

H.E. Jose Ramos Horta, Special Envoy of g7+, shared the perspective of fragile countries:

**First.** For decades, the right to equal and equitable participation of least developed and especially conflict-affected countries in global trade and cooperation have been denied. Trade has remained the promise of fewer major global powers who have used multilateralism in trade and cooperation for the benefits of narrowly defined geo strategic ends. Multilateralism can no longer survive on the pretext of balance of power among the mighty nations. It can only prosper if it becomes more inclusive and equitable and hence truly multi-lateral. Therefore, we call upon the leadership at the World Trade Organization to pursue reforms in its policies that can be conducive to the true interests of world’s least developed and conflict-affected countries. We, the g7+ through the g7+ WTO accession group offer our assistance in providing our perspective that is representative of the context of 1.5 billion people.

**Second.** Peace and stability in conflict-affected countries is a pre-condition for trade and hence development. Without peace, these countries cannot reap the fruits of trade and investment. Conflict in most of these countries is the product of interference and hegemonic quest by regional powers as much as it is the legacy of colonization and of internal factors. While realizing the polarization of politics among the global powers, we need them to truly recognize the rights to peace and stability of citizens of conflict-affected countries in their own terms. In this globalized world, no one will be in peace until everyone is in peace!

**Third.** Conflict-affected and other least developed countries are rich in natural resources. However, their exploration has rarely resulted in job creation and hence economic development. Due to lack of stability, infrastructure, institutional capacity and resources, they are left behind in trade and hence economic prosperity. If they were to manage their resources effectively, they could sustain peace and stability and hence save the billions of dollars spent on humanitarian and peace missions every year. Therefore, international cooperation systems and policies should be reformed to become pro-peace and pro-stability for our countries.

In concluding a gentle reminder that the multi-lateral trade system was created on the promise of shared prosperity. It is truly a time to ask ourselves if we have honored that aspiration.
Call for support to access for renewable and affordable energy in fragile states

Conflict-affected countries face significant and specific challenges in achieving greater access to clean, affordable, and reliable energy sources. In fact, estimates point out that, of over the 800 million people worldwide without access to electricity, more than three-quarters of them live in these countries.

Fragility and energy poverty are closely interlinked, as fragility factors hamper development, including gains in energy access, while the lack of development creates structural conditions for the persistence of fragility, social instability, and conflict – including larger effects such as mass migration or terrorism. On the other hand, investment in clean and sustainable energy is a key element in peacebuilding and offers a key tool to break the fragility cycle. The need for renewable energy should be reinforced in the efforts to recover from COVID-19 in the world’s poorest while providing a reliable electricity supply to boost the economy and transform lives.

While fragile contexts pose unique challenges to the disbursement and use of energy finance, research has shown that it is in these places that investment in green energy is most urgent and could yield the greater benefits. Considering that efforts to achieve energy access in fragile settings are off-track and more conventional energy planning may not work in these contexts, a new approach is required that better accounts for the unique challenges of these contexts.

The g7+ and the Council on State Fragility organized a high-level discussion in February 2021 and launched a global Call to Action on “Powering up energy investments in fragile states”. The call was signed by more than 50 personalities and organizations, including more than 15 former and current Heads of State and Government.

Powering up energy investments in fragile states: A call to action

(…) We, the undersigned, commit to work together to make greater energy access in fragile contexts a reality. We call on our peers and partners to help realize the following

1. The G7 should make expanding energy access in fragile contexts a priority for the next year. The United Kingdom, as host of both the 47th G7 summit and the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in 2021, should convene DFIs, private sector firms and investors, and governments of fragile states to devise practical means of bringing electricity to millions of people within the next decade. Increased bilateral aid for energy will be a vital element of scale-up efforts.

2. DFIs should scale up energy investments in fragile contexts. DFIs have a pivotal role to play in strategically deploying public funds to offset the higher risks and costs associated with fragile contexts, ensuring that private sector firms can participate.

3. The private sector’s financial resources, expertise, and management efficiency is needed for sufficient scale to be achieved. New financing mechanisms can ensure that commercially acceptable returns can be obtained, and private sector participation would complement government capacity to boost sector development.

4. Multilateral institutions should scale up access to instruments supporting investments in fragile contexts. For example, from 2010 to 2019, only 10% of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency’s new guarantee volume was in fragile states. Currency risk management instruments and political risk insurance should be made more affordable for fragile contexts and extended to both domestic and foreign investors.

5. Governments of fragile states should develop regulatory frameworks to support energy investments and commit to transparency and the rule of law. Support from aid agencies to strengthen the capacity and role of state institutions and deepen local workforce capabilities in the energy sector will be needed.

6. Improve collection and availability of data on energy investments in fragile states. This would enable tracking of commitments and support valuable research efforts to evaluate projects and inform policymaking.

Fragile states have never been at greater risk of falling behind the rest of the world. Nor have the global dangers of fragility – extreme poverty, mass migration, and terrorism – ever been more serious. Expanding energy access is essential to enable these states to escape fragility and achieve growth and development.

Acceleration of vaccination and coping with the pandemic’s impacts

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the g7+ has consistently advocated for the need to pay attention to the pandemic’s disproportionate impacts on fragile and conflict-affected settings and called for international support and solidarity to ensure that these countries are not left behind in the struggle to recover from the pandemic. As the developed countries rushed to impose travel bans, and protectionism in vaccines production and consumption increased, COVID-19 created additional pressure on the political, economic and social context in conflict-affected countries, hampering a rapid recovery.

The g7+ has strived to increase the visibility regarding understanding of challenges faced by conflict-affected countries throughout the pandemic. The g7+ jointly called on the international community to invest in public healthcare and strengthen Institutions; to care for displaced people stranded due to border closures and to pay special attention to most vulnerable social groups; and to support for economic recovery and self-reliance through debt relief and other instruments.

The g7+ has particularly focused in highlighting how the COVID-19 pandemic interacts with multiple factors of crises and fragility. The g7+ secretariat shared the collective views of the g7+ in a discussion paper on “The Nexus between COVID-19 and Conflict: Assessing the impacts of the pandemic on peace and development” jointly developed with UNDP. Evidence shows that societal tensions may increase, that there is a risk of several countries relapsing into conflict and that peacebuilding processes may have setbacks, recalling the urgency of pursuing ceasefires and supporting reconciliation efforts at all levels.

The significant inequalities in the pandemic’s impacts and in vaccination have been subject to profound debates and policy advocacy in 2021. The preferential treatment in access to vaccines has had and will have a profound impact on the global ambition that “nobody is safe until everyone is safe”. Achieving full vaccination in developing countries only by 2024 represents an impact of USD$ 5 trillion in global economic losses, while investing in greater vaccine equality would have high multiplier positive effects, both in global health and economy.

These issues were discussed in the 2nd International Conference on State Fragility, jointly organized by the g7+ and the Club of Lisbon in June 2021. The Conference was an opportunity to share views and evidence on the disproportionate economic, political and social impacts of the pandemic in several regions. The vaccination and existing initiatives and commitments in this regard were analyzed, and new perspectives were shared on what is needed to ensure a better response in fragile contexts.

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8 According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), May 2021
2nd Conference on State Fragility: Pandemics, Vaccination and Solidarity: Implications on Fragile States | 28.06.2021

The conference contributed to identify the challenges in responding to current crises, share experiences and mobilize support on promoting and strengthening international solidarity and cooperation. Among the most relevant issues debated and stressed by the participants were:

- Recognizing the disproportionate adverse impact of the pandemic in conflict-affected countries such as those in the g7+ Group, participants underscored prioritizing support to be provided by the international community.

- Realizing the increasing level of violence in the already conflict-affected settings, a strong plea was made for pursuing ceasefire. Participants called upon the international community, in particular the United Nations, regional powers and organizations, to spare no efforts to help stop wars. The common challenge – to defeat the pandemic – can only be addressed if countries are in peace.

- Commending initiatives such as COVAX, concerns were raised on the inequality in the distribution of Covid-19 vaccination. Recognizing that “no one is safe until everyone is safe”, it was underlined that developed countries and international organizations should ensure that the world’s poor countries and populations are not left behind.

- As the Covid-19 unleashes fragility in the global and national systems, participants emphasized on the need to invest in institutions in fragile and conflict-affected countries, to make them more effective and responsive.

- Participants emphasized on the need to speed up production and distribution of vaccines. Its concentration in a few developed countries is slowing the pace of vaccination of the entire population of the globe. Various possibilities were proposed, including the waiver of patents, the removal of export bans of vaccine components as well as the need to create and finance vaccine production facilities in developing countries, including in those with fragile institutions and economies.

- Participants underscored the need for global solidarity and cooperation as the only way to mitigate the grim and long-lasting impact of Covid-19, with a sense of acting urgently in poor countries. This global online event counted with the participation of 19 speakers from 13 countries, including current and former members of governments, multilateral entities, members of international initiatives, academia, the private sector, media and civil society, and was attended by 350 participants from around the globe. The concluding remarks were sent by the conference organizers to the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union Council, and an online report was produced with the summary of the debates held.

The g7+ Annual Report 2021

OPEDC consultation | March 2021

The OPEDC consultation with the g7+ member countries covered several issues pertaining development cooperation effectiveness, including representation in monitoring and the possibility of a revised indicator framework, country priorities, commitments’ implementation, enabling environment and accountability issues.

Although most g7+ member countries participate in various multi-stakeholder platforms and meetings on mutual accountability, partnership frameworks and meetings with donors at country-level, most countries still find there’s a long way to go to improve ownership, aid predictability, donors’ alignment with national priorities and the use of country systems, namely aid channelsing through national budgets and with approval by national Parliaments. All fragile states have established their own development plan and priorities, which are different in each country, accordingly with each context specificity, needs and vision for the future.

More information on the 2nd Conference on State Fragility:

Watch the videos of the conference

OPEDC consultation | March 2021

The g7+ continues to advocate for context-specific and conflict-sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding, in line with the principles of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, agreed upon in the 4th High Level Political forum on Aid Effectiveness in 2011 in Busan. The New Deal was also an integral part of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (OPEDC). The g7+ has emphasized the need for monitoring the implementation of the New Deal principles to ensure accountability.

Therefore, the Secretariat together with the members of g7+ have engaged in various forums of OPEDC and have advocated for increased ownership, donor alignment with national priorities and the use of country systems. In 2021, the g7+ member countries collaborated with OPEDC and shared their views on how to progress towards greater development effectiveness in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

Most countries have some kind of monitoring system in place, but one of the most important concerns is the lack of reliable data to enable reporting on development effectiveness, to provide for increased evidence and knowledge. Donors should also assist fragile countries in this regard, by supporting and building capacities for better data collection and monitoring. Finally, while there are mutual accountability frameworks agreed by the government and donor at country-level, these systems should be reinforced, ensuring that both parties are held responsible for the implementation of their programs and activities.

Twelve g7+ member countries participated in this consultation: Afghanistan, Comoros, Cote d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Haiti, Papua New Guinea, São Tome and Príncipe, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Togo, and Yemen.
B. Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation

Peer-to-peer learning through Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation (F2F) has been an important pillar of the g7+ work. The Eminent Person of g7+, H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão shared Timor-Leste’s experience on peace and reconciliation with Kosovo through a virtual conference organized by Dardania College of Kosovo. Although each country is unique in its context, the g7+ members have been through pathways of common nature characterized by decades of struggle to build peace. Their respective lessons have been useful for each other. The g7+ has engaged with other conflict-affected countries such as Rwanda. A memorandum of Understanding was signed between the g7+ secretariat and the Rwanda Cooperative Initiative (RCI) in July 2021, in which both sides agreed that to cooperate and facilitate sharing of experiences, as the example of Rwanda’s transformation through home-grown solutions can bring new perspectives that are useful for the g7+ member states. The g7+ also continued capacity-building and experience-sharing on peacebuilding and reconciliation to promote knowledge exchange and generation through South-South Cooperation.

The g7+ has engaged with international institutions and academia to promote knowledge-sharing on peacebuilding and statebuilding related matters in the g7+ countries, considering that the country’s economic development is still highly dependent on the importation of goods and services. Reconciliation is also a requisite to put behind historical tensions and be able to start a new chapter focused on peace. The conference was also attended by Dr. Edita Tahiri, former Deputy Prime Minister of Kosovo; Prof. Dr. Avdullah Hoti, former Prime Minister of Kosovo and Prof. Dr. Enver Hasani, former President of the Constitutional Court of Kosovo in addition to Dr. Hasegawa Sukehiro, former Special Representative of Secretary General of the UN for Timor-Leste, and Mr. Ken Inoue, Vice President of Global Peacebuilding Association Japan.

The g7+ has been working with member states and international organizations to share its perspective on the linkages between conflict and fragility and the 2030 Agenda, as well as gathering support for an adequate and adapted response to the challenges faced by fragile contexts in achieving the SDGs. During the 2021 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), the g7+ secretariat and the Permanent mission of Afghanistan to the UN co-organized a side event on “The implications of conflict on achieving the SDGs: a perspective from the 2021 VNR of Afghanistan”. The discussants that included Eminent Person of g7+, Government officials and international partners and civil society shared their views on the prospects of realizing the SDGs in conflict-affected contexts.
The implications of conflict on achieving the SDGs: A perspective from the 2021 VNR of Afghanistan | 09.07.2021

This side event to the 2021 High-Level Political Forum was jointly organized by the permanent mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations in New York and the g7+ secretariat. Having as background the Voluntary National Review (VNR) of Afghanistan, presented in 2021, the main objective was to discuss and share lessons on how conflicts affect countries’ prospects to achieve the SDGs, emphasizing the nexus between peace and development and making a strong case on improving effectiveness of development assistance in countries like Afghanistan.

Promoting national dialogue and reconciliation has been one of the biggest obstacles in achieving the SDGs, as war has weakened the productive capacity and governance, and affected basic services and social cohesion; estimates point out that the economic cost of violence is around 50.3% of the country’s GDP. The pandemic of COVID-19 and withdrawal of international forces contributed to increased difficulties, considering the limited national resources in responding to these unexpected circumstances. Therefore, he called on all international partners to continue to provide support to Afghanistan.

Mr. Abdallah Al Dardari, UNDP Resident Representative in Afghanistan talked about the role of UNDP in supporting the warring factions to pursue a ceasefire and support the Afghan Women Skills Development Center, shared her view and perspective on the role of women in Afghanistan, particularly taking into account the difficult situation in the country.

Supporting reconciliation and raising awareness in member states

In mid-2021, given the delicate moment in the trajectory of Afghanistan, the g7+ issued a Statement of Solidarity with the Afghans, calling for national dialogue, respect for the wills of Afghans, protection of women’s rights and preserve the progresses made in institution-building, health, education and infrastructure. The g7+ called on the international community to constructively engage in Afghanistan and to assist in maintaining peace and stability and support development.

Member countries’ experiences such as those from Timor-Leste has been inspiring examples for the g7+ countries. In 2021, the g7+ secretariat collaborated with Centro Nacional Chega (CNC) – the follow-up body to the Timor-Leste truth commission (CAVR) – in the dissemination of the recommendations of the CHEGA report. The secretariat also engaged with youth groups and created the g7+ Youth Alliance that disseminates information and raises awareness among young people in municipalities on the importance of maintaining peace and stability. Furthermore, the g7+ Secretariat organized dialogues among martial arts groups in several municipalities, in collaboration with the National Directorate for Community Conflict Prevention (DNPKK).

National Seminar “Long Journey for Reconciliation in Timor-Leste” | 27.10.2021

This seminar was organized by the Centro Nacional Chega (CNC) together with the g7+ Secretariat, to celebrate the 16th Anniversary of Chega Report. The main objective was to share the recommendations of this report, particularly related to reconciliation with wider community in Timor-Leste, and discuss challenges and opportunities for the reconciliation process and mechanisms. The g7+ also receive the Chega Award in recognition of the work developed in this matter.

In the seminar, g7+ Chief Operating Officer summarized the main achievements of the Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation flagship program with member countries. The Director for Research and Policy Development of the Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement from Rwanda shared the model, mechanisms and results of the reconciliation process in Rwanda, with valuable lessons learned. This case study emphasizes that reconciliation is a long-term relational process, in which balancing the demands for justice and peace remain central, and consultation and participatory approaches are key to combating discrimination and empower a home-grown approach.

Local speakers discussed and shared their views on an reconciliation according to their experience and areas of expertise, including participants from three historical political parties (UDT, Kota and Trabalhista), the representative from the association of victims and survivors from past conflicts, national prosecutors and representatives from civil society organizations and Catholic Church, as well as the Minister of Justice of Timor-Leste. Most speakers pointed out the importance of combining informal and formal justice in conflict resolution, as well as the need for open dialogue and inclusive consultation.

Promoting Peace and Stability through times of uncertainty

The g7+ Annual Report 2021
Advancing women’s empowerment and equality in fragile states

Although challenges to gender equality are common to most countries in the world – ranging from equal participation in decision-making to labor rights and equal pay, from gender-based violence to sexual and reproductive health and rights, from access to quality education to balanced legal frameworks that ensure women’s rights –, fragile and conflict-affected countries lag behind in many of these issues and face specific challenges that require tailored approaches.

All the existing evidence points out to multiplying development outcomes when we invest in girls and women’s potencies and capacities. Efforts of human development and institution building, which are key for the g7+ countries, require a stronger and active participation of women at all levels, including in decision-making. The g7+ countries will therefore not attain their full potential unless women’s discrimination and inequality factors are removed, and the role of women as fundamental development agents is strongly promoted. Applying a gender lens in all policies and responses will be key both for better responding to global challenges, and for a better and faster recovery, therefore building back better from the pandemic.

Against this background, the g7+ has created a Bi-Annual g7+ Forum on Women, Resilience and Development, as a channel to encourage peer to peer knowledge sharing for gender-based solutions. This multi-country forum, organized by the g7+ Lisbon Foundation, is a space where g7+ countries, partners and experts can share ideas and lessons learned, and debate solutions for the benefit of girls and women in fragile contexts, and consequently for increasing peace, resilience and development. The launch took place on 30th November 2021, dedicated to “Promoting Leadership and Political Participation of Women.” The Forum is co-chaired permanently by Sierra Leone (Dr. Abie Kamara) and Finland (H.E. Ambassador Satu Sulkari-Kleven), on a permanent basis, and by other g7+ countries on a rotative basis.

1st g7+ Women Forum: Promoting Leadership and Political Participation of Women | 30.11.2021

Participants in the first g7+ Women Forum mentioned gender inequalities in several areas and the pandemic’s impacts on women, the importance of women leadership and political participation, as well as the obstacles, challenges and possible responses to increase their participation.

Evidence shows that everyone benefits from more women in power. Besides embedding more inclusive institutions and governance, this contributes to effective democracies, to good governance and the reduction of political corruption, it has impacts on poverty reduction and sustainable development, and it promotes more equal and equitable societies. Beyond women’s involvement in politics, we must also see women as leaders in all sectors, so they are better able to contribute to the decisions that impact their lives, family, community, and nation. An increased engagement of women in peace processes should also be encouraged.

The need to create more opportunities for women’s voices to be heard, in both the public and the private sectors was emphasized, including by promoting an enabling environment for equal rights. Speakers also highlighted that the current crises may present an opportunity to reshape and rebuild systems, to change discriminatory laws and address legal gaps, and to build more equitable policies and institutions in order to properly address these challenges. The experiences of Timor-Leste, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau were also presented, whose lessons learned are a valuable contribution to other fragile countries.

The speakers in this first Forum included Abie Kamara (Member of the Board of Directors and of the g7+ Foundation Lisbon, and Director Development Assistance Coordination Office, Ministry of Planning and Economic Development of Sierra Leone), the Co-Chairs of Forum g7+ Women, Satu Sulkari-Kleven (Ambassador of the Republic of Finland in Portugal) and Suzi Barbosa (Minister of State, Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Communities of Guinea-Bissau), as well as Monica Ferro (Director of the United Nations Population Fund – UNFPA, Geneva) as guest speaker.
C. Strengthening the g7+

Strengthening the g7+ is an ongoing endeavor that will allow us to fulfill our mission in the most effective and comprehensive way, for the benefit of our member countries. In 2021, the g7+ continued to work towards sustainability of the organization, which included consolidating the Group. The g7+ Charter was submitted to the UN treaty section for registration. The g7+ Secretariat also continued to work with the members on the ratification of the g7+ Charter.

In the last few years, the g7+ European Hub has built its capacity to engage with European donors and international organizations, as well as to convene members on peer-learning. The European Delegation of the g7+ Secretariat in Lisbon also hosts the g7+ Foundation, created in 2021 to support g7+ work and objectives. In 2021, while the pandemic created additional difficulties, the g7+ European Hub served as an avenue for peer learning, continued to pursue discussions with relevant bilateral and European partners, and strengthened partnerships with several institutions, therefore contributing to increased visibility of g7+ as a Group and of member states priorities and needs.

Reinforcing the g7+ institutional capacity and visibility

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In the last few years, the g7+ European Hub has built its capacity to engage with European donors and international organizations, as well as to convene members on peer-learning. The European Delegation of the g7+ Secretariat in Lisbon also hosts the g7+ Foundation, created in 2021 to support g7+ work and objectives. In 2021, while the pandemic created additional difficulties, the g7+ European Hub served as an avenue for peer learning, continued to pursue discussions with relevant bilateral and European partners, and strengthened partnerships with several institutions, therefore contributing to increased visibility of g7+ as a Group and of member states priorities and needs.
Coordination with members

Seeking to overcome the practical and logistical constrains imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, g7+ member countries managed to gather virtually to exchange ideas and discuss the situation in their countries and the role of the g7+. On 30th November 2021, the annual Senior Official Meeting was held in a hybrid format. The meeting focused on discussing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and developing collective priorities. The g7+ strategic priorities and progress thereon were part of the agenda of the meeting.

Deepening and expanding partnerships

The g7+ values partnerships as the most effective way of gathering support for its collective cause. Therefore, the Group continued to work regularly with its bilateral and multilateral partners and increasing its recognition at global level.

New partnerships were formalized in 2021, as with the Rwanda Cooperation Initiative (RCI), providing a framework for facilitating sharing of experiences on development and peacebuilding and statebuilding between Rwanda and the g7+ member countries. A Protocol was signed by the g7+ Lisbon Foundation with the Higher Institute of Social and Political Sciences of the Lisbon University, focused on the creation of a Study Center on conflict-affected fragile countries, which will contribute to increased knowledge, scientific inputs and reflection on the challenges of conflict-affected contexts.

In 2021, the g7+ was granted the status of Associate Observer in the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP). The two organizations will develop efforts to promote political-diplomatic consultation and an enhanced presence in international spheres. The g7+ and CPLP will also encourage cooperation among their members, aiming to promote democratic practices, good governance and respect for human rights, as well as to engage in mutually beneficial cooperation towards durable development and resilience.
2. Challenges & recommended way forward
The year 2021 was marked by considerable challenges for G7+ member countries, within a global context of uncertainty and the multifaceted impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, few G7+ countries witnessed regime changes and crises that put restraints on their way towards stability and lasting peace.

The aspiration of shared prosperity and peace in the world depends on lasting stability and peace in the countries that have experienced conflict and crises for decades now. The G7+ is a unique forum that represents the shared aspirations and perspectives of conflict-affected countries to build and sustain peace and stability. Its uniqueness lies in the fact that it is bound by sense of solidarity rather than vested political and economic interest. Therefore, it has the potential to serve as an agent of peace in the G7+ countries and elsewhere.

The G7+ has undertaken an ambitious agenda of building peace against all the odds such as global crises affecting everyone, multipolar and complex geopolitical context and resource constrains. The outbreak of COVID-19 and the associated socio-economic impact has in particular hampered the progress of G7+ towards its common goals. On the other hand, it has also further reinforced the relevance and importance of the G7+ mission and agenda.

The section below summarizes challenges facing the Group and recommended strategy options to overcome them and hence be more impactful in its pursuit.

### Challenges

The multidimensional impacts of COVID-19 have been disproportionate and longer lasting in conflict-affected countries. This has been exacerbated by significant inequalities in vaccination. In addition, the G7+ as a group did not participate in policy dialogue at the global level on addressing COVID-19 and its impact.

The persistence or resurgence of conflicts and instability in some G7+ member countries, put restraints on the prospects for lasting peace and stability.

### Way Forward

The G7+ will need to be proactive and firm in its concerted advocacy at the global level. This will be even easier if the Group members coordinate in timely manner to seize the opportunities to share a collective perspective.

The G7+ has the potential to influence policy discourse on issues such as debt relief, IDA (International Development Association) and development aid allocations by collective engagement with multilaterals such as the World Bank and IMF.

Using the Joint Call launched by the G7+ in 2020, the G7+ Group can take forward the necessary steps identified in the call and engage in negotiation with global actors.

The G7+ has the potential to be an agent of sustained peace. The members’ experience in pursuing peace through national dialogue and reconciliation in particular are very relevant to help pursuing peace in G7+ member countries and beyond. Therefore, the G7+ needs to be even more proactive and firm in facilitating national dialogue and reconciliation in countries experiencing conflict and instability. The Group needs to continue advocating for promoting country-led and country-owned processes of inclusive dialogue.

The G7+ should step up its collective efforts to work with the United Nations to advance peaceful means of conflict resolution. In particular, there is a need of insisting on national dialogue and reconciliation to be embedded in the UN peacekeeping operations. The G7+ collective lessons and voice can help in pursuing reforms within the UN to that end. Now that the G7+ has attained observer status at the UN, the group should strive to share its collective perspective at the UN Security Council.
The observer status at the UN has the potential to enhance the visibility of g7+ cause and its impact on global policies. However, the g7+ has been constrained by limited resources to realize this potential.

Member countries have benefited from each other experiences and lessons. However, the outbreak of COVID-19 and the lack of resources really challenged the Group’s ambition to deepen peer-learning among member countries. The g7+ secretariat has established partnership frameworks with several entities, as the UN office of South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), to facilitate sharing of first-hand experiences. However, the actual potential of those partnership frameworks has yet to be realized.

The g7+ was established as a result of discussions among member countries on the aid effectiveness forum. The New Deal was premised on the ambition to enhance the effectiveness of the development and peacebuilding engagement. However, realizing the New Deal principles and translating them into policy reforms has been challenging.

The g7+ has evolved into a more formal group with a Charter. It has grown in its impact, which will require even more resources and political commitment to maintain that impact. In addition, the g7+ has financially been supported by Timor-Leste without much contribution from member countries.

Even more political commitment from member countries is needed to achieve the aspirations of the Group, as their active role determines the success of the Group in pursuing its mission.

The g7+ Charter that is registered at the UN treaty section needs to be ratified by all the member countries. This will ensure even further political buy-in from member countries.

Member countries should contribute in accordance with their ability to fund the operation of the g7+ secretariat activities. This will help in further strengthening the membership in terms of ownership.

The g7+ should also engage with the civil society organizations in member countries. This should focus on how best to advance constructive engagement of civil society in promoting peacefulness and stability.

The g7+ should strive to make the most out of the observer status at the UN. For that, the g7+ members need to enhance coordination at the UN and should convene more regularly to define their collective priorities. The Group should also meet at the Heads of States/Government level once a year during the UN General Assembly to enhance the political profile of its agenda.

To facilitate timely coordination among member countries and enhance the g7+ visibility in the UN, the g7+ secretariat needs to establish physical presence in New York. This will enable the members to provide timely and collective inputs to the relevant discourse and debates at the UN.

Furthermore, the g7+ should represent the Group’s perspective and views on peacebuilding, humanitarian actions and development cooperation on related forums such as the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), among others. This will enable sharing of lessons and also informing the agenda of the Group into those discussions.

The g7+ needs to strengthen peer-to-peer exchange and sharing of tangible experiences in related areas. The members should convene to identity and map areas in which they can benefit from each other, and from non-g7+ countries.

Under the established partnerships through MoUs (Memorandums of Understanding) signed with different partners, the g7+ needs to identify concrete activities and plan them in a way that can be presented to donors and partners to get support.

The g7+ should be assertive in sharing those lessons on different forums at global level to inform the policy discourse.

The g7+ has the potential in inspiring processes of national dialogue and reconciliation in countries that are experiencing conflict. Therefore, the g7+ needs to step up its role in mediation and facilitating national dialogues to peacefully resolve those conflicts.

The g7+ should engage collectively with the donor countries and multilateral organizations at the political level to realize the principles of effectiveness cooperation.

The g7+ should continue engaging as group with the World Bank and IMF leadership during the Spring and Annual meetings to share its collective priorities. In the past such engagements have proved instrumental.

The g7+ should strive to participate as observer in relevant meetings such as G7 and G20 meetings. This will help in raising the profile of the Group’s collective perspective, while the members of G7 and G20 can also benefit from its perspective.

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Promoting Peace and Stability through times of uncertainty

Publisher
The g7+

Date
August 2022

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Language
English

Photos
The g7+, UN Photo Library, ICRC, Shutterstock, Unsplash

Layout and Printing
A COR LARANJA ~ Projetos Gráficos, Lda.