Draft Opening Remarks
H.E Francis M. Kai-Kai, Chair of g7+
The g7+ Senior Official Meeting
17 February 2023

Excellencies, General Secretary of g7+ Secretariat, Dr. Helder Da Costa, dear Focal points and representatives of g7+ member states, distinguished ladies and gentlemen.

Let me warmly welcome you to this Senior Officials meeting of the g7+ and to say a very good morning, good afternoon; good evening to you all depending on your time zone. Thank you for making time to participate in this meeting.

As the COVID-19 Pandemic seems to be behind us, thankfully, we look forward to the opportunity to meet you all in person in the near future. It is however important at this point that we meet virtually as family to discuss and agree on our 2023 work plan and how we can further consolidate the g7+. With the Observer Status at the United Nations, there are expectations that we need to meet especially at a time when the impact of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war is being felt disproportionately by our member states in the form high fuel and food prices and depreciating currencies, fuelling inflationary pressures in fragile and conflict affected countries.

Despite these challenges however, we continue to make modest achievements in our respective countries. It would therefore be useful to hear your updates on the successes and challenges.

I am extremely pleased as your Chair to be participating in this meeting and have the opportunity to hear your views on how enhance the work of the g7+. Indeed the achievements we have made through the years could not have been possible without the collective efforts of you our member countries and
the untiring efforts of the g7+ secretariat. Let me therefore thank Dr. Helder Da Costa and his team at the g7+ Secretariat, for all their hard work and for organizing this senior officials’ meeting.

I would like to particularly thank the Government and people of Timor-Leste for the continuous generous financial and moral support to the work and operations of the g7+. This support has been instrumental in the work we do as an intergovernmental organisation in the pursuit of reconciliation and dialogue and more effective and impactful engagement on issues of conflict and fragility.

On behalf of the Chair of the g7+, it is my honour to open today’s meeting. In so doing, I urge you all to remain committed to the work of g7+, pursue ways for the g7+ Charter to be ratified by member states yet to do so and to strengthen coordination among ourselves through increased political commitment. It also important that we make our Observer Status at the UN more impactful and to seize the opportunity that this provides to advocate for actions that can positively contribute to the attainment of peace and stability in our countries.

It is my hope that this Senior Officials’ meeting will agree on a workplan that will facilitate the operationalisation of our Observer Status as well as increase our global visibility and advocacy in favour of fragile and conflict affected states.

Thank you for your attention.