



Annual Report 2023

Table of Contents

Contents

Table of Contents.....	1
Introductory Remark.....	3
Acknowledgement.....	4
1. Introduction	5
2. Strategic Priorities	7
2.1. Policy Advocacy	7
2.2. Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation	22
2.3. Organizational Strengthening.....	25
3. Challenges and Recommendations	28

List of acronyms

COP	: Conference of Parties
GPEDC	: Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation
HDP	: Humanitarian, Development and Peace
HWPL	: Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light
IMF	: International Monetary Fund
LDC	: Least Developed Countries
ODI	: Overseas Development Institute
SDG	: Sustainable Development Goals
UNESCAP	: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia
UNGA	: United Nations General Assembly
WHO	: World Health Organization
WFP	: World Food Programme

Introductory Remark



H.E. Mrs Kenyeh Barlay,
Minister of Planning and Economic Development of
Sierra Leone and Chair of g7+

I am humbled to step into the role of Chair of the group of Seven Plus (g7+) after my appointment as the Minister of Planning and Economic Development of the Republic of Sierra Leone in August 2023. I have had the privilege of leading the g7+ High-Level Summit that was held during the 78th UN General Assembly in New York. I thank my predecessor, H.E. Dr. Francis Kai-Kai for his inspiring leadership in providing guidance and political support to the work of g7+ in promoting international peace and effective development cooperation. On behalf of the group, I extend my sincere gratitude to the government and people of Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste for its continued financial support to the g7+ without which the g7+ would not be where it is now.

We are living through troubled times. Escalating conflicts, climate change, widening inequalities and a global pushback against human rights and gender equality have greatly impacted the g7+ member states. Halfway through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the world is far off track. This only proves that the role of the g7+ in advocating for effective cooperation on peacebuilding and statebuilding at the global level is dispensable. This has also greatly captivated my attention to contribute more to the noble work of the g7+ dedicate to help its members states to achieve peace, security, stability and sustainable development.

Since its establishment, the g7+ has achieved remarkable milestone. I am proud for the role of Sierra Leone that has chaired the g7+ since 2014. I am grateful to each member states that has contributed to the cause of peace and stability. I look forward to working with my fellow Ministers from the government of 20 Member States to promote our shared voice and vision in reforming the international interventions to achieve peace and prosperity through multilateralism. I hope we continue to share the spirit of solidarity and cooperation to bringing positive impacts to g7+ member countries.

I am pleased to present the g7+ 2023 Annual Report, showing the organization's progress over the past year against its three strategic priorities that aims to contribute to peace and stability in the g7+ countries through concerted advocacy for better engagement in conflict affected countries and sharing of experiences on peace and development.

Acknowledgement



Dr. Helder da Costa,
General Secretary of g7+

A year of impact and progress

We began the year of 2023 with a brightest hope as the WHO officially declared the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this good news has been in short supply. Instead, many significant events that occurred later have greatly shaped global peace and developments, in which challenging the way the g7+ operate.

The global democratic recession continues, with the war on Ukraine and Gaza don't show any sign of reducing, a series of coups, several armed conflicts and political crises broke out in various countries have pushed us to redouble our advocacy effort and engagement with member states and the international community at the global level. In response, we doubled our efforts to advocate for peaceful means of addressing these conflicts. We also deepened sharing of lessons in election management by officially launching the Election Observation Mission in Sierra Leone and successfully observed elections in Timor-Leste, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone and Liberia. Additionally, during our visit to Cote d'Ivoire, São Tome e Príncipe, and Sierra Leone, we witnessed a strong political support and commitment to the agenda of g7+. These commitments inspired the g7+ secretariat team to work harder to support our member states vision to end poverty and move towards resilience.

Our work is centered around peace. We believe that without peace, there can be no development and vice versa. Hence, the g7+ Secretariat has strengthened its engagement with the development partners, multilaterals and international organizations to advocate for sustainable peace as the precondition for development. These include reactivating our collaboration with the World Bank and IMF by organizing successful high-level meetings between g7+ Ministers of Finance and the IMF leadership during the World Bank and IMF, Spring and annual meetings. We actively engaged United Nations on various occasions to promote the voice of the g7+. Furthermore, many g7+ member countries have increasingly experienced severe impacts of the climate change. Therefore, we actively engaged at the COP28.

I would like to express our appreciation to H.E. Dr. Francis Kai Kai, the former Chair of the g7+, and to H.E. Kenyeh Barlay, the Minister of Planning and Economic Development of Sierra Leone and the current Chair of the g7+, for their country's leadership of this organization for a decade. We are grateful for Sierra Leone's strong commitment to this organization.

I also would like to acknowledge the continued support from the government of Timor-Leste to the g7+, which has been crucial for achieving the g7+'s objectives globally. Finally, to each of you, I offer my sincere appreciation, and I call on your continued trust and support. my heartfelt thanks to our team for their hard work and dedication to the g7+ and its cause. I hope we can continue to maintain this spirit and commitment.

1. Introduction

The year 2023 witnessed a three-decade high in the number of conflicts worldwide, political instability and coupled with the increase climate change impact felt stronger in many g7+ member countries. These challenges threaten to upset the significant hard-won gain that these countries made in recent years. The disrupt of agriculture productions, food and fuel prices soar, prolong drought, increase displaced people, leaving behind fragile and conflict-affected nations in a dire situation. Thus, g7+ countries are at a significant risk of falling behind in their post-pandemic recovery, but also in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

However, the g7+ Secretariat has made significant positive progress in 2023, through reengaging with international organizations, such as the World Bank and IMF, as well as contributing to the 28th UN Climate Change Conference (COP28), co-leading the Fighting Food Crises along the HDP Nexus Coalition and observing elections in four g7+ member countries.

This 2023 annual report highlights the g7+ achievements in three strategic priorities: policy advocacy, fragile-to-fragile cooperation, and organizational strengthening. The report also describes challenges and recommendations for member countries to collectively achieve peace, stability and Sustainable Development.

Highlights:

Policy Advocacy: The g7+ continues to promote its mission through various international forums and conferences, including the United Nations General Assembly, COP28 UN Climate Change Conference, and regional organizations' meetings, such as the African Resilience Forum and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia (UNESCAP) and the Pacific. Additionally, the g7+ has strengthened its collaboration with international financial institutions such as the World Bank and IMF and welcomed the IMF's effort to stepping up its engagement with countries affected by conflict and fragility by producing a focus and robust FCS Strategy, which provide a window for the g7+ to advocate for debt relief. Furthermore, the g7+ Secretariat also reengaged with the Global Partnership Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) to help strengthening the effective cooperation between member countries and its partners.

Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation: The g7+ organized a Ministerial Meeting on Justice, conducted election observations and co-hosted Women Forum, to promote peer learning and experience sharing. As part of consolidating its membership, the g7+ Secretariat visited three member countries to meet with the government, civil society, and other societal stakeholders to discuss the country's challenges, and how the g7+ Secretariat can better support the government in achieving its sustainable development and strengthen coordination to further consolidate membership particularly through Charter ratification.

Organizational Strengthening: The g7+ Secretariat held a virtual Senior Official Meeting, renewed its HQ agreement with the Government of Timor-Leste for the next five years, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations Country Representative in Timor-Leste and it organized various activities both at its headquarters and its European hub in Lisbon, Portugal.



2. Strategic Priorities

2.1. Policy Advocacy

Promote peace as the cornerstone of development at the International Forum

Advocacy for improved international cooperation policies tailored to the unique contexts of its member states is central to the g7+ mission. In 2023, the g7+ expanded its policy discourse and outreach, actively participating in global and regional platforms to amplify the voice of fragile and conflict-affected states. These engagements were focused on promoting peace, stability, and building resilience to future crises. Through these efforts, the g7+ continues to advocate for solutions that address the specific challenges faced by its member countries while fostering stronger cooperation on the international stage.

UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries

The g7+ participated in the 5th decennial *United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries* (LDC5) in March 2023 in Doha, Qatar. With more than half of the members of LDC comprising conflict affected countries that include 18 members of g7+, the g7+ realizes that lasting peace, stability and resilience are the minimum conditions for sustainable development. Conflict, wars, and geopolitical fragmentation are key drivers of extreme poverty, hunger, and fragility in g7+ countries. Addressing the root causes of conflict, including geopolitical divides that fuel proxy wars, requires prioritizing dialogue and diplomacy. Foreign aid remains critical for development in these conflict-affected states, but its fragmentation undermines its effectiveness. COVID-19 and the War in Ukraine have disproportionately

impacted g7+ nations, exacerbating social and economic challenges. Debt relief and trade reforms are crucial for unlocking resources, fostering development, and creating a more inclusive global trade system to support these vulnerable countries. The g7+ engagement in the LDC5 aimed at reinforcing these messages.



During the conference, Deputy General Secretary of g7+, Mr. Habib Mayar represented the g7+ as the co-lead of the fighting Food crises along the HDP nexus coalition, spoke at the side event, "Operationalizing the triple nexus approach in conflict and fragile setting: reinforcing National actors to advance collective outcomes that reduces risks and vulnerabilities".

In his intervention, Mr. Mayar introduced the work and principles of g7+ and emphasized that many of g7+ members are grappling with deteriorating food and humanitarian needs that include acute food insecurity. A common underlying reason of hunger in these countries has been lack of peace. Wars and unresolved grievances undermine the coping capacity of countries to manage natural crises. He emphasized that the HDP nexus in theory and practice means reasserting the fact that without peace there can be no development and without development, peace cannot be sustained. Operationalizing the HDP nexus would require a long-term approach of unleashing the inherited potential each country has gotten and hence should aim at ending the humanitarian needs. He called on the international community to recognize and strengthen the potential of members in achieving food resilience, by giving a serious consideration to building peace and stability.

During the LDC5 the g7+ also facilitated a bilateral meeting between, H.E. Julius Maada Bio, President of Sierra Leone and H.E. José Ramos-Horta, President of Timor-Leste. The two heads of states emphasized that the current global crises have disproportionately affected the already fragile and least developed countries. The interconnected global issues coupled by the diminishing attention span by international community to these countries has further created socio-economic distress. They agreed that the g7+ is the most relevant organization that has the potential to pursue peace and development in conflict affected countries through concerted advocacy, cooperation, and peer learning. The two presidents will spearhead establishing dedicated facility for fragile and conflict affected LDCs that can respond to the specific needs of each of the countries in line with the principles of country ownership. Additionally, the g7+ Secretariat engaged with



officials and representatives from member states to better understand the challenges and crises they face, planning future cooperation and working towards g7+ Charter ratification.

Engagement at regional forums

The g7+ has actively engaged in regional forums to promote its mission of advocating for peace, stability, and resilience in fragile and conflict-affected countries. Through these engagements, the group has emphasized the importance of inclusive dialogue, regional cooperation, and context-specific approaches to peacebuilding and development.

By participating in regional platforms, the g7+ has been able to amplify the voices of its member states, share experiences, and collaborate on initiatives aimed at addressing common challenges such as political instability, economic fragility, and the impacts of global crises. This engagement helps foster partnerships and strengthens the role of the g7+ in influencing regional and global policies that support sustainable peace and development.

In 2023, the g7+ participated in the *10th Asia Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development (APFSD)* in March 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand. Discussion included post-Covid-19 recovery and reviewing countries' progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDGs 6 (clean water and sanitation), 7 (affordable and clean energy), 9 (industry, innovation and



infrastructure), 11 (sustainable cities and communities), and 17 (strengthening partnership). The g7+ team contributed to the discussion at the panel related to SDG17 on partnership by reemphasizing the importance of country-owned and led implementation. During the conference, the g7+ also met with various actors to discuss potential collaboration.

In addition, the g7+ represented by the Deputy General Secretary Mr. Habib Mayar, participated in *the 5th African Resilience Forum* in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire in October 2023. The Chair of g7+ was also in attendance of the forum in her role as representative of Sierra Leone and the g7+. The African Development Bank has developed its Fragility Strategy which focuses on addressing the root causes of fragility in countries in Africa. It promotes resilience, stability, and sustainable development and aims to strengthen institutions, foster inclusive governance, and enhance economic opportunities in conflict-affected countries.



The collective experience of g7+ from across the regions provide inspiring lessons on how to promote resilience and stability. The subject forum was an opportunity to share perspectives of the g7+. Speaking at the session on “Strategic partnerships and effective financing in support of peace transition processes,” Mr. Mayar shared the importance of reconciliation and acknowledging the real historical past if there is to be genuine societal healing; otherwise, the wounds may fester into

future conflicts. He further added that development efforts need to focus on long-term goals rather than immediate project outcomes, and they must be respectful partnerships. During the forum, Mr. Mayar also met with representatives of g7+ countries and partners and discussed collaboration.

Promoting Aid Effectiveness in conflict affected contexts

The g7+ advocates for aid effectiveness by emphasizing the need for international assistance to align with the unique contexts of conflict-affected and fragile states. It calls for adherence to principles of country ownership, transparency, and mutual accountability to ensure that aid supports long-term self-reliance and stability. Since its inception, the g7+ has called on development partners to reduce aid fragmentation and



prioritize building resilient institutions for lasting peace and development in its member countries. The importance of aid effectiveness has grown, especially considering recent aid reductions.

The Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) which is now co-chaired by Minister of Planning of Democratic Republic of Congo, has served as the primary platform for the g7+ to collectively advocate for better aid practices, ensuring that aid aligns with the unique needs of fragile states. g7+, represented by the g7+ General Secretary, Dr. Helder da Costa participated in the annual meeting of *Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC)* in December 2023 in Seoul, South Korea. The theme of this year’s Busan Forum – “Delivering Better Together for Sustainable Development: Leveraging Effective

Development Cooperation” – underscored the link between effective cooperation and sustainable development in the face of growing political, economic, and environmental crises.

Dr. Helder da Costa spoke in the Panel Session on “Effective Development Cooperation in the context of global and emerging challenges”, and highlighted global challenges such as climate change, wars on Ukraine and Gaza and the geopolitical fragmentation that have disproportionately affected conflict affected states that have minimum resilience to cope with resultant shocks.



He emphasized that the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation needs to double its efforts on forging partnership, fostering trust and empowering country led-policy action to achieve more effective development cooperation. The annual meeting of Global Partnership for effective development cooperation was attended by senior-level development cooperation policy makers and practitioners, CSO, regional government Officials, parliamentarians and Academia.

The g7+ engagement in the United Nations

The g7+ group has successfully pursued to shape policy debates at the United Nations by spotlighting the unique challenges faced by fragile and conflict-affected states. Through its advocacy, the g7+ has pushed for a more nuanced understanding of peacebuilding and development, emphasizing the need for context-specific solutions and sustained international support. In 2023, the g7+ actively participated in discussions on conflict prevention, state-building, and sustainable development. With its observer status at the UN the g7+ has influenced discourse within the United Nations regarding addressing fragility. In 2023, the g7+ collectively engaged during the UN General Assembly (UNGA), High Level Political Forum (HLPF), and other forums. The g7+ also engaged with the UN agencies to pursue its collective advocacy. Below is brief overview of such engagement in 2023.

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)

SDG Summit: For the first time in its history, the g7+ group took the stage at the United Nations General Assembly, marking a significant milestone in the group's journey. On September 18th, during the SDG Summit, His Excellency the President of Sierra Leone, in his capacity as the head of delegation of the chairing country of the g7+ delivered an official statement on behalf of the group. This momentous address was crafted by the g7+ Secretariat and carefully agreed upon by its member states, symbolizing the unified voice of countries facing conflict and fragility.



The g7+ statement highlighted the current state of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in g7+ countries, emphasizing the particular challenges faced by nations grappling with conflict and instability. He outlined what needs to be done to accelerate the realization of Agenda 2030 in these regions, calling for greater international cooperation and support to address the unique obstacles encountered by g7+ member states.

As one of 10 distinguished speakers representing various intergovernmental groups, the President of Sierra Leone used this platform to amplify the concerns of conflict-affected nations, ensuring their voices were heard on the global stage. The g7+ statement not only shed light on the hurdles impeding SDG progress in conflict affected states but also offered practical solutions for fast-tracking development in these regions.

STATEMENT DELIVERED BY H.E. DR. JULIUS MAADA BIO, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEON, IN HIS CAPACITY AS CHAIR OF THE GROUP OF SEVEN PLUS (g7+) AT THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT HELD ON 18TH SEPTEMBER 2023

Mr. President

Mr. Secretary General

Your Excellencies

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the g7+ Member States at this High-Level Summit convened at the mid-point in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, a critical juncture characterized by recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, ongoing geopolitical tensions, and environmental threats.

The 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, the agreed global plan, adopted in 2015 was conceived with the objective of leaving no one behind in countries around the world and supporting global public goods as it relates to peace, environment and an inclusive economy.

The g7+, made up of countries affected by or recovering from conflict, were among the major advocates of the SDGs, with specific reference to SDG16. As a group of countries, we have collectively learned through our experiences that lasting peace, effective state institutions and access to justice are key pillars to stability, development and resilience.

However, since the start of the implementation of this global blueprint, fragile and conflict-affected states are the furthest behind in meeting the SDGs and this dilemma only worsened with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic and other global crisis.

Against this backdrop, the Member States of the g7+ hereby recommend the undermentioned as the possible pathway toward the realization of transforming our world and leaving no one behind in this decade of action:

- 1.** Firstly, the promotion of peace and stability should continue to be at the center of implementing the SDGs, as violence and insecurity undermine development gains. In advancing the development agenda, we must seek to promote and support peace efforts that address the root causes of conflicts and tackle economic and social inequalities and exclusion; especially in countries contending with high levels of threat and fragility that require heightened attention.
- 2.** Also, resilience founded as an inherent potential of every country should be one of the guiding principles to achieving the SDGs. In this age of complex crises, we must deliberately embrace resilience as it helps to ensure progress is not totally derailed or reversed in times of adversity. For instance, ending extreme poverty, and thriving in complex and adverse environments requires building capacities, mechanisms, and institutions that will promote a sustainable future for all. That's why we will continue to advocate for debt financing and relief, and technology transfer, for the Least Developed and Conflict-affected countries. The debt financing and relief of these countries would unleash the resources that could be used to realize the ambition of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.
- 3.** Lastly, we call for a joint commitment by partners to work through and support government-led country platforms in conflict-affected and fragile countries with the view to enhance development cooperation by addressing complex political, social and economic realities. While we acknowledge the trend of support for country platforms over the last five years, it is imperative to raise awareness for governments and partners to embrace this mechanism that is collaborative, risk-informed and flexible. It ensures development agendas are localized.

Let me conclude by stating that, meeting the SDGs in this decade of action could be challenging, but with sustained multilateral support to a holistic national ownership of the 17 SDGs, distinct global leadership, resource mobilization, capacity building and mutual accountability, certain progress is envisaged, no matter the scale.

I thank you.



The g7+ Summit: The g7+ held a high-level summit on the margins of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly, titled **"Increasing Global Solidarity, Sustaining Peace, and Building Resilience in Countries Affected by Conflict and Fragility"**. The summit was attended by key leaders, including the President of Timor-Leste, the Prime Minister of São Tomé and Príncipe, the Chief Minister of Sierra Leone (on behalf of the President), as well as Ministers from g7+ member countries and the ambassadors of some partner countries.

During the summit, members emphasized the importance of maintaining the g7+ presence in New York and expressed their commitment to further strengthening the group, including through the ratification of the g7+ Charter. Moreover, the attendees agreed on the necessity of establishing a coordination mechanism in New York among Permanent Representatives (PRs). With Sierra Leone set to assume its non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council, members viewed this as a pivotal moment for the g7+. Sierra Leone pledged to support the g7+ mission within the Security Council. The members adapted an outcome document highlighting the collective perspective of the g7+ countries.



In preparation for the summit, the g7+ Secretariat conducted bilateral meetings with the g7+ permanent missions and key partners. The objective was to gather their insights on the expected outcomes of the summit and explore ways to enhance coordination among the g7+ member countries in New York. All participants expressed their full support and welcomed the idea of a more established g7+ Secretariat presence in New York. Additionally, the g7+ secretariat had the opportunity to meet with the Prime Minister of Haiti and ministers from several member countries to discuss issues of mutual concern to the g7+, focusing on how to address these challenges more effectively through collective action.



DECLARATION

High Level Summit

"Increasing global solidarity, sustaining peace and building resilience in countries affected by conflict and fragility" **Friday, 22nd September 2023**

We, the members of group of seven plus (g7+) countries represented by Heads of states, governments, and Ministers met on 22nd of September 2023 on the margins of the high-level week of the 78th session of United Nations General Assembly in the presence of international partners, civil society and friendly countries hereby:

Express deep concern over the increasing global incidents of war, political instability, natural disaster, and social and economic distress; these concurrent crises disproportionately affect conflict affected and poor countries and are further intensified by the deteriorating geopolitical and geo-economic tensions among countries in general and developed nations in particular.

Realize the potential of inclusive, representative and democratic multilateralism founded on the vision of shared peace and prosperity to help addressing the above-mentioned global crises.

Congratulate Sierra Leone that will be assuming the non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council which is an excellent opportunity for the g7+ members to rally support for conflict affected countries.

Commend the spirit of solidarity among members of g7+ and believe in its potential to help catalyze improved international relations as a means to initiate, build and sustain peace and resilience among countries.

Recall that our countries bear disproportionate burdens and risks arising from climate change-related crises such as prolonged droughts, devastating floods, wildfires, and extreme weather conditions resulting in incidents of extreme hunger, displacement, loss of life, damages and poverty.

Take note of the fact that conflict is among the major causes of extreme hunger, poverty and emergencies and hence the impetus for nexus approaches between humanitarian, development and peace (HDP) communities.

Emphasize that all g7+ countries have the potential for resilience, conflict prevention, stability, lasting peace and socio-economic development in the g7+ countries.

Welcome the UN Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace and in particular its recommendations such as developing national prevention strategies to address drivers and enablers of all forms of violence, and for the United Nations to provide tailor-made support and expertise, including through a group of climate action, resilience and peacebuilding.

Emphasize that g7+ countries have the opportunity to promote collective wisdom and action in pursuing peace, stability and resilience through peer learning and fragile-to-fragile cooperation.

Reiterate our commitment to the principles of the New Deal for engagement in fragile states that underlies the principles of country ownership, its peacebuilding and statebuilding goals and effective development cooperation, including to identify the drivers of fragility and sources of resilience.

Recognize and welcome the growing support from the OECD, World Bank, United Nations and bilateral donors to support government-led country platforms in g7+ countries for more effective cooperation in peacebuilding, statebuilding and development.

Take note that we have only seven years to realize the Sustainable Development Goals and that we must redouble our efforts to this end, including to center our focus on realizing SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions.

We commit to:

Consolidate our membership of g7+ and strengthen our collaboration through ratification of g7+ charter, greater adherence to our collective cause of peace through advocacy, peer learning and cooperation.

Work to strengthen democracy, national cohesion through promoting reconciliation and dialogue to address our differences, and national resilience to cope with imminent and future challenges.

Promote our collective stance at the United Nations in areas of greater relevance to the mission of g7+ that includes exploring ways to inform the UN security council and relevant committees of the g7+ perspective.

Support democratic, representative and effective multilateral systems and policies that work for all including advocating for reforms in the UN Security Council to make it inclusive of the views of conflict affected countries.

We Call:

For more international cooperation rooted in humane solidarity and collective and shared peace to address the global challenges the world is facing.

On the developed and industrialized nations to assist conflict affected and poor countries in their pursuit of peace, stability, democracy and economic development including supporting the g7+'s peer learning and fragile-to-fragile cooperation.

On the multilateral development banks to increase concessional and flexible support to conflict-affected countries including through debt relief, access to existing climate financing where our countries face numerous obstacles in obtaining it and access to additional finance by conflict and fragility.

For considering the needs of conflict-affected and other poor countries that bear the brunt of climate change at the COP28 and recognizing the element of resilience and peace into the climate agenda.

International partners to engage with the g7+ through its secretariat in the creation of new advisory mechanism to properly design, engage in, support and evaluate the effectiveness of government-led country platforms.

We agree to:

Support the g7+ secretariat presence in New York to ensure coordination among members and optimize the use of observer status through increasing the visibility of g7+ in related discourse at the UN.

Support Sierra Leone in its role as the non-permanent member of the UN Security Council to share the collective perspective of the g7+.

Convene during the 79th UN General Assembly to review progress and agree on strategic priorities.

We thank:

The government and people of Timor-Leste for its continuous support to the g7+ secretariat and emphasize the need for all members to take part in sharing the financial cost of g7+ operations.

The government of Finland for its grant support to the g7+, the g7+ foundation for its assistance to the secretariat, the government of Portugal for hosting the hub of g7+ secretariat and other organizations for their contribution.

United Nations conference on Sustainable Development Goal 16

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development Goal 16 provide a valuable opportunity for the g7+ Secretariat to reflect on the progress and challenges faced by member countries in advancing SDG16. This platform enables in-depth discussions on promoting peace, justice, and strong institutions, allowing the g7+ to assess the effectiveness of current efforts and identify areas for further collaboration to achieve sustainable peace and resilience in conflict-affected regions.



In May 2023, the General Secretary g7+, Dr. Helder da Costa represented the g7+ and spoke at the *United Nations conference on Sustainable Development Goal 16 (peace and justice)* held in Rome. He shared the experiences and perspective of the g7+ emphasizing the inextricable relationship between peace and development, presenting the importance of national leadership and ownership in strengthening institutions, improving governance and sustaining peace.



The g7+ engagement with the World Bank and IMF.

Since its inception, the g7+ has actively engaged with the Bretton Woods institutions to advocate for more effective assistance for conflict-affected countries. The group has consistently highlighted the pivotal role that both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) can play in supporting these nations. The World Bank/IMF Annual and Spring Meetings have provided invaluable platforms for g7+ members to voice their collective ambitions and promote tailored support for peacebuilding, resilience, and sustainable development in conflict affected states.

During the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) meeting in April 2023 in Washington DC, United States, the g7+, in partnership with the IMF, organized a ministerial meeting, *“Addressing Fragility and Conflict amid New Challenges”* that brought together Ministers of Finance from g7+ nations and IMF Managing Director and its Senior Executives to discuss the challenges that fragile and conflict-affected states face and the needed support from the international community. They especially focused on efforts to mobilize funds for conflict-affected countries, to which the IMF has been paying additional attention recently, especially with its Strategy for Conflict Affected States (FCS). The meeting highlighted the importance of national ownership and timeliness for aid, as well as the relationship between debt and fragility. Participants affirmed that supporting conflict-affected states is of global importance because of conflict’s transnational nature.

The g7+ and IMF agreed to continue the discussion during the World Bank and IMF Annual Meeting in October 2023 in Marrakech, Morocco. Following that, the g7+ and IMF co-hosted another ministerial meeting with the title *“Addressing Fragility and Conflict: A Global Public Good”*. This meeting mobilized a great participation of ministers from g7+ countries and other countries in similar circumstances. In addition to the IMF Managing Director and other senior IMF officials, participants from partner organizations

included Director of the World Bank, the United Nations World Food Program (UN WFP) Executive Director, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Assistant Commissioner, representatives from the G7 and G20, and other partners. The conference's discussions focused on improving international cooperation regarding finance and resilience in fragile and conflict-affected states.



At the conference, the g7+ called for three major shifts from the current international aid approach. The first is a country-led resilience framework to guide cooperation between g7+ nations, international finance institutions, and other partners. The second is to innovate solutions to address debt crises in conflict affected countries. And the third is to deepen commitments to and recognition of the principle of national ownership and to renew efforts to improve aid efforts, which are often ineffective.

Overall, ministers at the conference recognized the problems of debt traps and the need to support more effective financial support as well as access to concessional resources and climate finance and resources that align effectively with national development strategies. The conference also explored future joint missions between the g7+ Secretariat and IMF to g7+ countries and continued the discussion to ensure the FCS Strategy can benefit countries needed the most.



Climate Action in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings.

Climate change has disproportionately impacted nations already vulnerable from decades of conflict and fragility. Lacking resilience, these countries are left to grapple with climate-induced disasters that inflict long-lasting effects on their social, economic, and environmental systems. Acknowledging the complex interplay between climate change and the prospects for peace and stability, the g7+ has intensified its advocacy for enhancing resilience through improved access to climate finance and actionable initiatives.

In this context, the g7+ has played an active role in engaging in crucial discussions surrounding climate finance and action. The g7+ Secretariat participated in the 28th UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) held in the United Arab Emirates. During this pivotal conference, the COP28 Presidency, in partnership with several nations, international financial institutions, and the g7+ Secretariat, officially launched the Climate, Relief, Recovery, and Peace Declaration on December 3, 2024.

This landmark initiative underscores the urgent need to weave climate action into broader strategies for recovery and peacebuilding in conflict-affected regions, promoting a holistic approach to addressing both climate challenges and the quest for sustainable development.

To discuss how to realize the ambition of the RRP declaration, the g7+ together with ODI, UNFCC, World Bank and ICRC co-organised a side event with title *“Building Resilience through scaling up climate action in fragile and conflict-affected settings”*. The event was attended by Ministers and representatives of g7+ and non-g7+ countries, international organizations and Civil Society representatives.



As countries in fragile situation that are least responsible for climate change; yet they are rapidly becoming warmer and are feeling the brunt of climate related stocks such as droughts, floods, extreme weather changes, hunger and displacement, H.E. Kenyeh Barlay, Minister of Planning and Economic Development of Sierra Leone and Chair of g7+ commended the leadership of the presidency in launching a day dedicated to Relief, Recovery and Peace. The declaration is crucial for the survival of conflict affected countries and their people.

She called for a strong political will and paradigm shift in policies to build resilience by ensuring integrated approach to ensure the climate finances reach those people who are most in need and policies in accessing them are relaxed for conflict affected countries that need special attention. During the discussion, participants agreed the call and express their commitment to work together to convert the declaration into action and support



locally led development to address climate change. Participants also discussed the possibility of establishing of a high-level taskforce to follow up on the commitments made in the declaration. The g7+ emphasized that its members “be given space in decision making in regard to climate finances and adaptation policy making at the global level”.

2.2. Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation (Peer learning)

Peer learning and cooperation in sharing tangible lessons among g7+ members have proven instrumental in advancing the group's mission. Despite the unique trajectories of each country, their respective experiences have remained highly relevant to one another, offering inspiration and practical guidance. A notable aspect of this exchange is the spirit of solidarity that characterizes these interactions, prioritizing mutual support over any vested interests.

These shared lessons have further strengthened the evidence base for the collective priorities of the g7+. In 2023, the g7+ has intensified and deepened its commitment to peer learning. This initiative has encompassed the sharing of lessons in key areas such as peacebuilding, reconciliation, and the promotion of democracy, all aimed at assisting member countries in their pursuit of stability. Through these collaborative efforts, the g7+ continues to foster an environment of shared knowledge and experience, enhancing the resilience and effectiveness of its members in addressing common challenges.

Access to Justice for all



The General Secretary of g7+, Dr. Helder da Costa represented the g7+ to the *Ministerial Meeting of the Justice Action Coalition*. The meeting involved discussion of Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16: Peace and Justice), the present global crises and their effects on fragile contexts, the role of justice in securing peace, and the importance of a people-centered approach to justice.

Election Observation Mission

Given the past experience of sporadic engagement in facilitating the sharing of lessons related to election management and assisting member countries in conducting elections, the g7+ has now institutionalized its election observation process. This initiative was launched in Freetown, Sierra Leone, during the g7+ Secretariat's mission to the country on March 22, 2024.



The launch event was attended by officials from the Election Commission of Sierra Leone, the Office of the Political Parties Regulatory Commission (PPRC), the Office of the Attorney General, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, as well as representatives from the media and civil society.

To enhance the effectiveness of this initiative, the g7+ Secretariat will prepare a comprehensive calendar of upcoming elections across member countries. This calendar will serve as a foundation for planning observation missions, ensuring that the g7+ can provide timely and relevant support to its members during their electoral processes. Through this structured approach, the g7+ aims to strengthen electoral integrity and promote democratic practices within its member states.

Pursuant to the initiative, the g7+ observed elections in four member countries in 2023, namely: Timor-Leste, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, and Liberia. The observation covered three main electoral activities: campaigning, voting, and the counting process. Following the observation, the g7+ team submitted its preliminary findings to each nations' electoral commission and later held a press conference to publicly release its findings.

United Nations Human Rights Council Inter-Sessional Event on Afghanistan



Since the fall of the republic in Afghanistan in August 2021, the g7+ has consistently advocated for inclusive political dialogue and a comprehensive process of truth and reconciliation to ensure lasting stability in the country. As part of these ongoing efforts, the g7+ Secretariat in partnership with the HWPL Switzerland co-organized an inter-sessional event titled “The Right to Education for All in Afghanistan” during the Human Rights Council to address the pressing issue of the ban on girls' education in Afghanistan.

This event took place on June 2, 2023, with the g7+ Secretariat, represented by Habib Mayar, serving as a co-sponsor. In his opening remarks, Mayar underscored the necessity of a political solution to the ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan, emphasizing the importance of pursuing national dialogue and reconciliation.

The event featured a diverse array of speakers, including the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Afghanistan, representatives from Afghan civil society, UN agencies, and various member countries. This gathering provided a platform for dialogue and reflection on the challenges facing Afghanistan, highlighting the g7+'s commitment to supporting the Afghan people in their pursuit of peace and stability.

Mission to Member Countries

Engaging member countries to evaluate the progress achieved while also securing political buy-in for the group's missions has been a crucial aspect of the g7+'s peer learning and fragile-to-fragile cooperation. This collaborative approach strengthens the collective commitment to shared goals. Three member countries were visited by the g7+ Secretariat in 2023 including Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone and Sao Tome e Principe.

During the mission *in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire*, the g7+ team met with national leaders and the Secretariat discussed coordinating future g7+ activities and ratifying the g7+ Charter. Cote d'Ivoire expressed its support for the g7+ and noted that the Charter ratification process will be underway soon. Because Cote d'Ivoire recently graduated from the list of Least Developed Countries, they also discussed Cote d'Ivoire sharing its experiences in overcoming fragility.



In the visit to *Freetown, Sierra Leone*, the team also met national leaders and discuss how to best realize the g7+ vision and solidify the partnership between the g7+ and Sierra Leone, the current Chair of the group. The g7+ additionally visited various public offices and presented its work at the Milton Margai Technical University.

During the visit to *São Tome and Principe*, the g7+ and Sao Tome and Principe reaffirmed their relationship and discussed economic development strategies and how the g7+, as an international organization with connections with the United Nations and World Bank, can contribute the country's development. The Secretariat additionally visited several public offices, coordinating future collaborations and events, such as the g7+ Women Forum.



5th Women Forum



The g7+ European Hub in partnership with the Instituto Camões held the 5th Women Forum virtually on December 12, 2023, with the theme “Women’s access to economic and financial resources in fragile countries,” seeking to overcome the challenges presented within the theme.

Tia Agostinha Soares was a special guest at the Forum, presenting about her entrepreneurship in Timor-Leste weaving “tais” and providing support for her family. The event also brought together different speakers

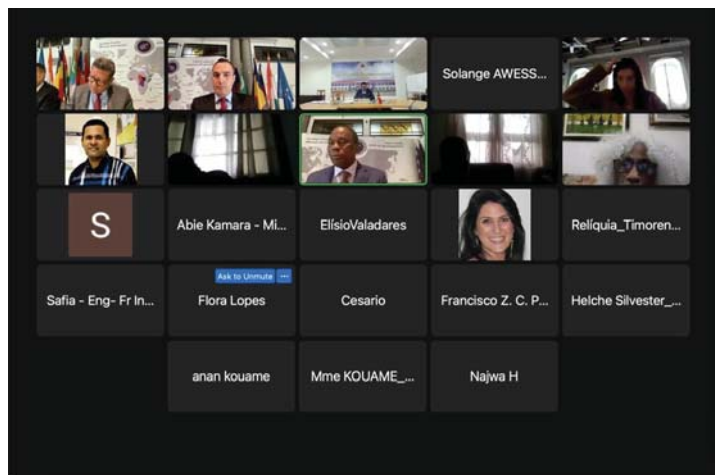
2.3. Organizational Strengthening

Strengthening the g7+ as a unified group has been a central focus of its activities. In the face of an ever-evolving global development landscape, the g7+ remains committed to enhancing its organizational capacity to further its mission. By continually adapting to new challenges and opportunities, the g7+ seeks to solidify its role as a key advocate for conflict-affected countries, ensuring that their voices are heard, and their priorities are advanced in international forums. This ongoing effort to reinforce the group's structure and influence is essential to achieving its long-term goals.

Senior Official Meeting

The g7+ Senior Official met virtually on 17 February 2023 to discuss and validate the g7+ workplan for 2023. The meeting was led by H.E. Francis Mustapha Kai-Kai, Minister of Planning and Economic Development of Sierra Leone and Chair of g7+ and attended by senior officials from member states.

In the opening, Chair of g7+ commended the collective achievement the group had while the world is facing multiple shocks and urged all the senior official to remain committed to the noble cause of the g7+ in promoting peacebuilding and state building. During the



meeting, the Secretariat shared update on its activities and milestone achieved in 2022 and presented the draft work plan for 2023 that highlight the g7+ engagement in country and at the global level.

During the meeting, member states agreed on activities outlining at the work plan and emphasized the need to advocate for addressing food and energy crises, strengthening local institutions and private sector development to help the country self-reliance while facing multifaceted challenges.

The g7+ Secretariat activities in Timor-Leste



In the beginning of 2023, the g7+ Secretariat met with the Bishop of Maliana, Dom Norberto Amaral and discussed about the g7+'s work and mission with him. The Secretariat and the Bishop shared ideas and considered potential opportunities to collaborate to reduce conflict and promote peace, especially in the Bobonaro region, which lies along the border between Timor-Leste and Indonesia.

The g7+ Secretariat continued promoting its book, *Fragile States in an Unequal World*, notably presenting it at the Book Fair organized for students. The event was organized by the Office of Timor-Leste's President, and it took place in the Timorese region of Manufahi. At the event, the g7+ secretariat presented its work on promoting peace and stability, and it also engaged with students and children in activities like quiz games and face painting the flags of g7+ member countries. In August, the Secretariat participated in another book fair that marked the 48th anniversary of F-FDTL Day (Timor-Leste Defence Force Day), a Timorese national holiday. The book fair was organized jointly by the Timor-Leste Defense Force, Timorese veterans, and the Office of the President. It took place in Oldelgomo Village in the Bobonaro region of Timor-Leste.



The g7+ Secretariat participated in Portuguese Day celebrations with the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP) in Dili, Timor-Leste, co-organized by the Timorese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the local Portuguese and Brazilian Embassies on May 2023. Many other local organizations attended the festivities. This year's holiday theme was "Realities, challenges, and opportunities of the Portuguese language, literacy, science, culture, and economy." The celebration included a variety of student performances, traditional cultural activities, sharing poems, and a book fair.

The g7+ Hub activities in Portugal

In partnership with the Timorese Embassy in Lisbon and ASET (Timorese Students Association), the g7+ European Hub in Portugal organized its annual football competition, coined the "Peace Cup," bringing in 10 different teams and representatives from several g7+ countries, including Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe, and Timor-Leste. The competition, which first started in 2021, took place in Evora, Portugal and served to promote peace and friendship and raise awareness among students and youth.



The Peace Cup's theme in 2023 was "sports for peace and development." In recognition of the importance of promoting peace at the grassroots level, the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, Xanana Gusmão, recorded a video message praising the effort and appreciating the students' participation in the competition and contributions to promoting peace.

3. Challenges and Recommendations

Challenges	Recommendations
<p>The g7+ attained Observer status at the United Nation in 2019.</p> <p>Despite the significant potential that Observer status offers for increased engagement and influence at the United Nations, the g7+ has yet to fully leverage these opportunities to advance its mission and advocate for the priorities of its member states due to limited resources.</p>	<p>The g7+ should actively engage with the United Nations and the permanent missions of its member countries in New York, participating in discussions on relevant issues.</p> <p>Establishing a physical presence for the g7+ Secretariat in New York will facilitate timely engagement and provide critical input during United Nations sessions.</p> <p>This presence will enable the g7+ to strengthen its role in shaping global dialogue and advancing the interests of fragile and conflict-affected states on the international stage.</p>
<p>Current global events, marked by heightened geopolitical tensions, have negatively impacted the peace and stability of g7+ countries.</p> <p>Increasingly, these nations find themselves drawn into proxy wars, further exacerbating their vulnerabilities.</p> <p>Moreover, these global conflicts have shifted the focus of the international community away from countries that have long struggled with instability and fragility, often as a result of decades of war and conflict, leaving them with insufficient support to address their ongoing challenges.</p>	<p>The g7+ needs to continue to advocate for dialogue and reconciliation as essential tools for fostering unity and cohesion in conflict affected countries. By building on the success of member states that have achieved relative stability, the group can inspire peace through shared experiences and lessons.</p> <p>These success stories provide valuable insights that can guide other member nations on their paths toward peace, demonstrating the importance of national ownership, resilience, and mutual support in overcoming conflict and fragility to forge unity and cohesion in these countries.</p>
<p>The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States was adopted in 2011 at the third high-level forum on aid effectiveness in Busan, South Korea. However, its implementation remains limited.</p>	<p>The g7+ should actively promote the principles of the New Deal on international platforms and across diverse contexts, as they remain highly relevant in addressing the pressing challenges that g7+ countries continue to face.</p> <p>These principles focused on peacebuilding, statebuilding, and country-led approaches are crucial</p>

	<p>for advancing stability, governance, and development in fragile and conflict-affected states.</p> <p>By advocating for these frameworks, the g7+ can help reshape global policies to better support countries in their journey toward resilience and sustainable development.</p>
<p>The g7+ Charter was adopted in 2014 at the Ministerial Meeting in Lome, Togo. However, after a decade, only five countries have ratified the charter.</p>	<p>The g7+ needs to continue engaging with member countries to ratify the Charter, supporting each individually as needed.</p>
<p>Despite global commitments to increase climate finance for developing countries, conflict-affected nations have struggled to access these much-needed resources due to the stringent conditions imposed by multilateral organizations.</p> <p>These conditions often fail to consider the unique challenges faced by fragile states, including weak institutions, instability, and limited capacity to meet complex bureaucratic requirements.</p> <p>As a result, these countries remain disproportionately vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, with limited means to build resilience or implement adaptation measures.</p>	<p>The g7+ needs to advocate for more accessible climate finance mechanisms tailored to the unique challenges of conflict-affected countries, emphasizing the need for simplified application processes and reduced conditionalities imposed by multilateral organizations.</p> <p>By actively engaging with international financial institutions and climate funds, the g7+ can work to ensure that resources are allocated based on need rather than bureaucratic hurdles, enabling its member countries to effectively address the impacts of climate change while promoting resilience and sustainable development.</p>