



Statement – overview of agenda

for Dr. Helder Da Costa

The g7+ senior Officials Meeting

Radisson Blu Mammy Yoko Hotel, Sierra Leone, 30 April – 01 May 2024

Honorable Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh, Vice President of the Republic of Sierra Leone,

Excellency Madam Kenyeh Barlay, Minister of Planning and Economic

Development of Sierra Leone and Chair of g7+,

Distinguished senior officials from the g7+ member countries,

Excellencies, ladies, and gentlemen,

A very good morning to all of you.

I am deeply honored to extend a warm welcome to each of you as we gather here in Freetown, Sierra Leone, for the g7+ Senior Official Meeting. Hosted by the Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation of the Republic of Sierra Leone, this two-day gathering holds immense significance as the first in-

person meeting of our esteemed group since 2019, when the COVID-19 pandemic altered the course of our lives.

I also have the privilege of conveying the greetings of His Excellency Xanana Gusmão, the Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and the eminent person of the g7+, who has always championed the values and aspirations of our group with unwavering dedication.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

As we convene today we commemorate the 14th anniversary of the g7+. What began as an informal association of countries has blossomed into a global actor. I am filled with a deep sense of gratitude and appreciation for each and every member of our esteemed group. It is through your unwavering support and tireless efforts that the g7+ has emerged as a powerful advocate for peace, stability, and development in conflict-affected and fragile contexts.

I would also like to thank Sierra Leone for its exemplary leadership in chairing the group since 2014. Under different ministers who have assumed this role, Sierra Leone has played a pivotal role in guiding the g7+ and steering its agenda towards greater impact and relevance.

Furthermore, I must express our profound gratitude to the government and people of Timor-Leste for their invaluable support in hosting the secretariat and funding its operations. Without their generosity and unwavering commitment, the g7+ would not have been able to sustain its existence and grow into the influential force that it is today.

Distinguished colleagues,

As we convene today, we find ourselves amidst a world that has been irrevocably transformed by unprecedented challenges. The aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic has not ushered in the anticipated return to normalcy but rather unveiled a new reality fraught with wars, conflicts, and natural crises. As one crisis subsides, another emerges, leaving us grappling with uncertainty and upheaval.

It is not only global and geopolitical events such as the devastating conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine that cast a shadow over our member countries but also the unforeseen changes within our own borders, including regime transitions, natural disasters, and economic shocks. Peace and stability, once within reach, now seem like distant aspirations as we navigate the complexities of fragility.

In light of these recent global events and the increasing fragmentation in the international community, the g7+ finds itself at a crossroads, faced with both renewed challenges and opportunities. Our meeting today represents a critical juncture for reaffirming our unwavering commitment to promoting peace, stability, and sustainable development in conflict-affected and fragile contexts.

In this turbulent world, the g7+ has steadfastly ensured that our voices are heard and our priorities are acknowledged. We have been vocal advocates for peace, reconciliation, and dialogue as essential tools for conflict resolution. As the pressure on available aid resources mounts, we have actively advocated on global platforms to safeguard the rights and interests of conflict-affected countries.

Therefore, this meeting serves as an important opportunity for us to update one another, solicit your invaluable insights, and collectively chart a course forward over the next two days.

Allow me to briefly outline the objectives and expected outcomes of our deliberations:

Our first objective is to evaluate the progress made by the g7+ in recent years and collectively discern the most effective strategies to position our group within the dynamic global landscape. Amidst profound shifts in international politics and the enduring impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative that we critically assess our achievements and chart a course forward that reflects our shared vision and aspirations.

A central focus of our discussions will be to agree upon a strategic direction that will guide our actions and initiatives in the coming years. By enhancing the collective impact of the g7+ through greater consolidation, we aim to amplify our capacity to advocate for the interests of conflict-affected and fragile countries on the global stage.

Sierra Leone stands as a testament to resilience and determination in the pursuit of peace and state-building efforts. As we gather in this beautiful city, we have the invaluable opportunity to exchange experiences and glean insights from Sierra Leone's remarkable journey. These lessons, rooted in the lived experiences of our fellow member country, can inform and inspire our collective efforts towards promoting peace, stability, and sustainable development.

In closing, I am confident that through constructive dialogue, collaborative engagement, and unwavering dedication, we will emerge from this meeting with a renewed sense of purpose and determination to realize our strategic priorities that we agreed last time we met virtually; namely, promoting peace and stability,

pursuing collective advocacy for better engagement and strengthening g7+ as a group. Let us embark on this journey with optimism and resolve, mindful of the profound impact our collective efforts can have on the lives of millions around the world.

With that, I wish us all a productive and fruitful deliberation and have the honor to invite Honorable Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh, Vice President of Republic of Sierra Leone for a keynote statement.

Thank you.