ANNUAL REPORT 2017 & 2018

“Strengthening Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation, Transitioning from fragility to peace and stability”

Voluntarism, Solidarity and Cooperation
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Introduction from the Chair

H.E. Nabeela F. Tunis,
Chair of g7+
Minister of Planning and Economic Development
Sierra Leone

Since I takeover the role as Chair of g7+ in the mid of 2018, I have witnessed the g7+ has become one of the influential constituencies at the global stage. Although some of our member countries including South Sudan and Yemen continue to face conflict in their own country, we will stand together to provide our support to them.

Despite being new to the g7+ group, I have noticed the g7+ has made numerous of major achievement in the past years. Among those, the first achievement was some of international organizations begin to align their programs and activities with the New Deal Principles. This is a positive indication of how New Deal has being translated into development partner’s ways of engagement in our member countries.

The second achievement is that, majority of g7+ member states have aligned New Deal into their plan and priorities at the country level. Beginning with the fragility assessment to identify country’s situation, most of countries that have conducted this assessment, continue to promote more investment into areas of peacebuilding and statebuilding goals (PSG) that require more improvement.

Another milestone includes the opening of the g7+ Hub in Lisbon, Portugal, in 2017 - 2018, bringing the g7+ work greater visibility at the global level. Equally important is the fact that some of our bilateral donors have begun to engage and support the g7+ strategic priorities, for example, the Government of Sweden has provided financial support to the g7+ Secretariat and the g7+ fragile to fragile cooperation programme. Other countries such as Finland and South Korea have also approached the g7+ Secretariat to seek future collaboration. I am happy to present the 2017-2018 Annual Report of the g7+, highlighting the progress we have made in the international arena since the Ministerial Meeting in Kabul, Afghanistan in 2016.

I would like to thank the Government of Timor-Leste, as the main donor, for providing financial support to the g7+ group over the years in order to sustain the operationalization of the g7+ programme at the global level.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all Member States of the g7+ for displaying our collective effort in supporting the sustaining peace agenda. I would also like to express my thankfulness to our international partners, civil society groups, and in particular, to the g7+ Secretariat with the leadership of Dr. Helder da Costa, the General Secretary of g7+, for the tireless work in serving all g7+ members during the period of 2017 and 2018.
Acknowledgement from the General Secretary of the g7+

Dr. Helder da Costa,
General Secretary of the g7+

The past two years have enabled the entire team of the g7+ Secretariat to work hard and implement all the g7+ priorities during the period of 2017 and 2018, despite the formidable challenges we face in our global advocacy.

On behalf of the g7+ Secretariat, I would like to thank the Chair of g7+, H.E. Nabeela F. Tunis, and the Eminent Person of the g7+, H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, two of our political leaders, for their exemplary leadership in guiding us to achieve our key milestones over the past two years. These achievements are also attributed to the strong support from all constituencies, including the g7+ member states, development partners and civil society organizations.

The g7+ acknowledges the generous financial support from the Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste for having the Secretariat operating in Dili based on the MoU signed between the Government of Timor-Leste and the g7+ Secretariat in 2016. The funds approved by the National Parliament of Timor-Leste on an annual basis have enabled the g7+ to operate its programs at the global level, making the g7+ an increasingly influential global player.

As part of enhancing the visibility of the g7+ as an inter-governmental organisation, the g7+ has expanded its offices in Lisbon, Portugal in 2017. The Lisbon City Council generously provided the office premises for the g7+ to operate in the next 20 years. The Lisbon Hub (which was inaugurated by H.E. Teresa Ribeiro, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Portugal in 2018), has increased the g7+ visibility to its member states in the African region, development partners, academic institutions and civil society organisations in Europe and America. The g7+ Lisbon hub has since become a venue for convening important meetings.

Finally, I would like to express our heartfelt thanks to all our Focal Points and international partners for keeping the momentum alive, and to my entire team at the g7+ Secretariat for their collaboration and hard work to achieve the noble cause of the g7+, that is, achieving peaceful and resilient states in the years to come. Progress has been made, challenges remain to be tackled, and the work ahead still requires greater collaboration and partnerships. Let us continue to work together to achieve our dreams and vision in 2019 and beyond.
Executive Summary

This report presents an overview of the progress made by the g7+ in 2017 and 2018 against its five strategic priorities endorsed during the 4th Ministerial Meeting in Kabul, Afghanistan: (1) New Deal Implementation; (2) Policy Advocacy; (3) Peer Learning and Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation; (4) Implementation of the Global Agenda 2030 and (5) Strengthening the g7+.

The New Deal has continued to shape the policy discourse and to influence the policies of many national and international partners. The g7+ strives to uphold the relevance of the New Deal principles, which would otherwise be replaced with new principles and frameworks. The g7+ Secretariat, with the support of the g7+ Foundation and other partners, have sought to produce evidence to convince development partners on the importance and viability of the New Deal principles, organized side events on the margin of high-profile events, and conducted a comparative study entitled “Statebuilding in conflict affected & fragile states”. The g7+ also launched a g7+ Policy Note on the Use of Country Systems, and supported several member states in conducting fragility assessments.

On policy advocacy, the g7+ has continued to increase its engagement with international actors, including by influencing negotiations around the International Development Association allocation of the World Bank to fragile states. Its inputs to the discussion on the way aid is delivered in fragile countries have had an enormous impact in the policies of many international organizations, including bilateral donors. The g7+ organized also high-level side events on such topics as “The pursuit of Peace through Nationally owned mechanisms; Learning from countries experiences” and “The New Way of Working”, in addition to launching a study summarizing the lessons of reconciliation between Indonesia and Timor-Leste and participating in several other high-level roundtables. The key importance of the private sector for establishing economic foundations in fragility situations also led to a major focus of the g7+ on private sector development, which included the establishment of the g7+ WTO Accession group in 2017.
Since its introduction as a concept in 2013 by the g7+, Fragile to Fragile Cooperation (F2F) has included different modalities of cooperation and peer learning, and gotten tremendous traction globally. Given its importance, the g7+ has started to broaden its scope by engaging with non-g7+ countries and actors globally. In 2017, the g7+ and UNOSCC jointly launched a South-South in Action report on F2F Cooperation and signed a MoU that aims at facilitating cooperation in the areas of Peace and Statebuilding. The g7+ also organized several relevant F2F initiatives in the past two years, including a high-level roundtable discussion on “Managing UN transitions”, a g7+ Technical Meeting focusing on Justice in July 2017, a high-level side event on “promotion of Justice for all in countries affected by conflict and fragility” on the margin of UNGA 2017, and the commissioning of a study on “Host Nation Views on UN Peace and Security Reform Proposals”, which was launched in December 2017. The g7+ Secretariat also continued to engage with specialised institution such as think tanks, academia and civil society on getting support for the pursuit of access to justice.

Having been among the strongest advocates for the inclusion of stand-alone Goal 16 in the Agenda 2030, the g7+ members have reiterated their commitment to expedite the implementation of the SDGs. The g7+ Secretariat will continue to provide support to the g7+ member countries as they initiate the implementation of the SDGs, but has also continued to take steps to identify priority indicators that the g7+ will report on collectively. The g7+ organized a Global Conference on the 2030 Agenda in collaboration with the Government of Timor-Leste in May 2017, followed by a Technical Meeting in Lisbon in July 2017 to discuss the SDG monitoring by the g7+ at the country level. In addition, the g7+ has actively engaged at the High Level Political forums during 2017 and 2018 to raise the priorities and voice of the g7+ member countries.

When it comes to strengthening the g7+, the establishment of the g7+ European Hub in Lisbon in July 2017 constituted a major step. The Hub is geographically located in close proximity to a majority of member states and global actors, and has since become a venue for hosting important g7+ meetings and events. The g7+ has also continued to reach out and follow up with the member states on the ratification of the g7+ Charter, which remains an important priority. At the same time, the g7+ Secretariat has started consultations with the UN legal department on seeking UN observer status for the g7+,
and has been assured of its good chance of being accepted as observer at the UN General Assembly. Once granted, the observatory status of the g7+ by the UN will further consolidate the g7+ and hence can influence important debates at the UN that concern conflicts, fragility and Peacebuilding. The g7+ also discussed the lodging of the g7+ Charter at the UN Treaty Department and will continue to follow up on this matter with the permanent missions and the UN.

This report also provides information on the financial contributions which ensured the operations of the g7+ during the course of 2017-2018, as well as on country visits to member countries by the g7+ Secretariat with a view to seeking political buy-in and support in various areas. It concludes with a section on challenges and recommendations, which include the following:

1. The g7+ should scale up its work of promoting a culture of peace and reconciliation based on self-reliance and ownership.
2. The g7+ needs to double its efforts to steer the attention of the international community to addressing the root causes of conflicts and fragility.
3. The g7+ group and its members need to work harder to translate the principles of New Deal into reforms that can make aid more effective.
4. The g7+ members should fulfil their obligation to make regular financial contributions as established in the g7+ Charter. And finally,
5. The g7+ member countries should strive to increase the number of member countries that have ratified the g7+ Charter.
1. Introduction

The 4th g7+ Ministerial meeting hosted by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on 23 and 24 of March 2016, resulted in agreement on strategic priorities that set the direction for the group. The resultant Communiqué summarized number of important commitments by the g7+ members that includes promoting Peace through reconciliation and political dialogue. Building on the past experiences, the g7+ would mobilize influential personalities from around the world that can facilitate reconciliation toward peace and stability in countries that are affected by conflict. The g7+ members emphasized the collaboration with United Nations (UN) and other key actors to prevent conflict.

Given the importance of Economic resilience for sustaining Peace, the g7+ members emphasized on the role of the private sector development. Effective use of Development Aid as per the Principles of the New Deal is indispensable to that end given high dependency of g7+ member courtiers in the foreign aid. Being among the lead advocate for the Peace and Statebuilding to be included in the Agenda 2030, the g7+ committed to realizes the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in line with the National context and the New Deal Principles.

Peer learning under the Fragile to Fragile (F2F) cooperation of the g7+ has proved useful given the relevance of countries experiences for each other. The g7+ members recognized the important role of F2F cooperation and agreed to double the efforts to facilitate sharing of lessons amongst themselves.

The members endorsed to work along the five strategic priorities identified during the 3rd Ministerial Meeting in Lome, Togo, in 2014.

The five strategic priorities as previously agreed in the Ministerial Meeting as follows: (1) New Deal Implementation; (2) Policy Advocacy; (3) Peer learning and Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation; (4) Implementation of the global Agenda 2030 and (5) Strengthening the g7+.
This report presents a brief overview of the progress made since the 4th Ministerial meeting against the Strategic Priority in 2017 and 2018.

2. Progress against strategic priorities

2.1. New Deal Implementation

Since its adoption as new ways for engagement in conflict affected countries, the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile states has shaped the policy discourse recognizing Peace as foundation for development and the importance of country ownership to achieve it. The New Deal has influenced policies of many National and international partners.

The members of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS) renewed their commitment to the New Deal in Stockholm Declaration that was endorsed during global meeting of IDPS held in Stockholm on April 5, 2016. The IDPS members reiterated their commitments to use the New Deal principles to realize agenda 2030. During the negotiation of Stockholm Declaration, g7+ Secretariat emphasized on the realization of the New Deal as per the spirit with which it came into being. The New Deal principles have been important reference for the g7+ public discourse on policies related to engagement in conflict affected states. With the evolving conversation regarding addressing root causes of conflict, the principles of New Deal continue to prove its relevance. The joint study on Pathway for Peace by World Bank and United Nation marked an important evidence, for example, to support New Deal principles. During its launch at World Bank Spring Meeting in 2017, the g7+ was represented by H.E. Deqa Yasin, Somali Minister of Women and Human Rights Development and Mr. Habib Mayar the Deputy General Secretary shared g7+ perspective of the importance of the New Deal Principles that are reflective of the said report.

With the emerging understanding and disclosure of multiple factors that affect resilience and Peacebuilding in conflict affected countries, the global discourse thereon continues to evolve globally. Multiple narratives are being shaped around Fragility. The g7+ attempts to maintain the relevance of the New Deal principles which would otherwise be replaced with new principles and frameworks.
In particular, the TRUST principles of the New Deal have been the center of the g7+ global advocacy for effective aid management given the heavy reliance of member countries on foreign aid. The g7+ Secretariat with the support of g7+ foundation and other partners have attempted to produce evidence to convince Development Partners on the viability of the New Deal principles such as the Use of country system. The g7+ organized a high-level side event on “The Statebuilding Dilemma: Fragmented Budget = Unsustainable Development”, during the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) spring meeting in April 2017. The g7+ foundation conducted a comparative study, “Statebuilding In conflict affected & fragile states” that summarizes the country-led reforms undertaken in Afghanistan and Timor-Leste in the areas of Public Finance Management. The study was commissioned to ISE (Institute of State Effectiveness) and jointly funded by the g7+ Secretariat and foundation. Among others, the study found that, fragmented budgets caused by donors reluctance to channel funding through national systems leads to fragmented development. Such findings helped in providing evidence supporting the need for the use of country system. Using the same occasion, the g7+ introduced a draft of g7+ Policy Note on the Use of Country Systems. The note summarizes the g7+ position and need for more dialogue with development partners on the use of country system as indispensable part of Statebuilding. The same note was endorsed during the g7+ technical meeting in July 2017.

The realization of the New Deal principles at the country level is at the core of g7+ advocacy. The g7+ has always maintained its position on the needs for reforms in aid management and humanitarian and peacebuilding engagement in line with the New Deal principles. There has been measurable progress in some g7+ countries in that regards. Several of the member countries have conducted fragility assessment to identify country’s progress on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSG). The process has been inclusive, involving different actors including government officials, representatives from development partners and civil society organizations. Majority of countries progress on PSG were in stage 3 (transition) and stage 2 (rebuild and reform), only few were in stage 1 (crisis). The result has been mostly used to monitor country’s progress on PSG and as input for National Development Strategy. Some of g7+ countries have localized the New Deal through National Aid Management Policy.
2.2. Policy Advocacy

With the evolving global agenda on peace and statebuilding and development cooperation, the g7+ has increasingly been recognized as an influential platform to bargain and secure the specific needs and demands of the conflict-affected countries. Its engagement with international actors has become even more substantial. The rapid evolution in the international discourse such as that on conflict prevention, sustaining Peace, and the nexus between peace, and development has put even extra demand on the advocacy work of the g7+ to promote its perspectives. Building on its achievements such as securing SDG 16 in Agenda 2030, influencing negotiation on IDA (International Development Association) allocation of the World Bank to Fragile states, and etc, the g7+ maintained its engagement at the global to ensure that g7+ voice is heard. Its inputs to the discussion on the way aid is delivered in fragile countries have brought enormous impact in policy of many international organizations including bilateral donors. International actors such as development and humanitarian partners, think tank, civil society and academia have expressed their increasing willingness to engage with the g7+ group as an important interface for fragility-related conversation.

The advocacy work of the g7+ has centered, among others, on the following areas globally:

a) Promoting support for Country-led Dialogue and reconciliation for Peace
b) Aid effectiveness for resilience and stability
c) Economic resilience – Promoting Trade and Private Sector

a) Promoting support for Country-led Dialogue and reconciliation for Peace:

Learning from the experience of its members, the g7+ believe that promoting country-led reconciliation and dialogue is the only affordable means to end the ongoing conflicts around the world. The g7+ has used various forums to use its experiences and promote peace and reconciliation. The UN General Assemblies (UNGA) have been one of those forums where the High-Level events are organized to that end. During 2017 UNGA, the g7+ Secretariat in a collaboration with the Permanent Missions of the Republic of Sierra-Leone and the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste organised high
level side event on “The pursuit of Peace through Nationally owned mechanisms; Learning from countries experiences”. This event was attended by the President of the 72nd session of UNGA, Miroslav Lajčák, Eminent person of g7+, H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, the Chair of g7+, H.E. Momodu Lamin Kargbo, and Ministers and representative of permanent mission from g7+ and non-g7+ countries, international organisations and civil society. It had dual purpose; One to share experience of g7+ countries in attaining peace through National Dialogue and reconciliation and second to make a case for facilitation of reconciliation to form the base of the UN work on sustaining peace. A study summarizing the lessons of reconciliation between Indonesia and Timor-Leste was launched during the event. The study that was commissioned by the g7+ foundation to document the stories of the peace process between Indonesia and Timor-Leste, highlighted good lesson of reconciliation.

Ministers from Indonesia and Timor-Leste shared their experience on how leadership, political will, commitment to reconciliation, and forward-looking visions have become key contributors to the successful peace and reconciliation in these two countries. It was considered to be one of the good examples for other countries to learn on how to resolve injustice from past conflict. The former President Republic of Indonesia, H.E. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono shared his message about this success story as reference for other countries that experience active conflict.

“"In 2014, the last year of my Presidency, I went to see Xanana to say my farewell and gratitude to him. Rather unusually for an official bilateral meeting, Xanana cried. The tears were real. It was the tears of a true friend. I too felt the sadness in my heart because we gave everything, we had to remake our history. Secretary General, let Indonesia and Timor-Leste be a powerful example that former enemies can be partners for peace. That wounds can heal. That no enmity can last forever. That love and laughter can return to societies in conflict. This is a story that should be studied by Palestinians and Israelis, by Russians and Ukrainians."”

The g7+ believes that engagement in war affected countries is centered on reacting to the consequences of wars rather fostering peace and reconciliation. It has called upon major actors such as the UN to scale up its diplomacy and to address the ongoing conflicts. Given its continued engagement on the topic of Peace and reconciliation, the g7+ was considered to be represented at the High Level meeting in April 2018 that was convened by the president of the 72nd General Assembly at the United Nations to undertake consultation on sustaining Peace in reference to the UN resolutions 70/262 and 2282. The g7+ Eminent Person was invited to share g7+ perspective at the meeting.

“The g7+ has learnt the hard way that we need to support inclusive process of national dialogue and reconciliation. And true partnership with the international community must be based on respect, understanding and, most importantly, national ownership.”

Xanana Gusmão

During the high level lunch that was attended by the UN Secretary General, the President of the UNGA, Heads of States and Governments, Ministers and high level officials, the Eminent person shared a panel with Ms. Mary Robinson, former president of Ireland. H.E. Xanana Gusmão emphasized on fostering
partnership on promoting country-led peace and reconciliation while respecting country’s ownership. He urged for promotion the culture of dialogue and reconciliation in resolving conflict. While the use of military force is no longer the option, dialogue and reconciliation as the most affordable means for conflict resolution. During the same meeting, he represented the g7+ at High-Level Roundtable on Security Sector Reform and Sustaining Peace where he stressed the importance of strengthening the National security sector through inclusive engagement of all National actors during the transition period.

The division among the National stakeholders particularly the warring factions caused by prolonged conflict can be bridged only through National means of dialogue and reconciliation. The g7+ perspective at the high level meeting that was attended by hundreds of officials from around the world was highly welcome and appreciated as relevant inputs to the intended reforms within the UN.

b) Aid effectiveness for resilience stability

Given the heavy reliance of conflict affected countries on assistance from international development and humanitarian assistance, aid effectiveness has always been a matter of high importance for g7+. It has always held up the New Deal principles to advocate for better humanitarian and development engagement. Lack of alignment of aid with the National priorities and context has often led to fragmentation and undermined efforts to respond to root causes of fragility.

Since the Humanitarian Summit in 2016, majority of the global discourse has centered on the harmony between Humanitarian and development actors which is equally important and relevant. World Bank (WB) and United Nations (UN) have been on the forefront of debate on the nexus between Humanitarian and Development assistance. The g7+ has engaged with both to share its collective perspective and maintain the relevance of country ownership and context recognition as core to effective engagement.

The g7+ together the Word Bank, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) co-convened a high level meeting on the margin of the WB/IMF Spring meeting in April, 2017. Attended by Ministers from g7+, officials from World Bank, UN agencies,
international NGOs and donor countries, the meeting brought forward the role of Governments in the implementation of the New Way of Working (NWoW) across the humanitarian–development-peace communities. The g7+ maintained its position on the importance of country ownership and recognition of the role of the States as the ultimate provider of the basic services. Welcoming the NWoWas a multi-lateral approach, the participants committed to working with and supporting the leadership of Government and other National actors.

The g7+ member states called for the international community to change its way of working by better listening to the needs of national governments and affected people, and adapting to the specific contexts. Participants also recognized that principled humanitarian action is critical in certain situations, although national ownership is key. The participants agreed that the New Ways Of Working (NWOW) is a multi-stakeholder agenda. The NWOW is an agenda for all. This requires the international community to work with national governments and national and local stakeholders to articulate and advance collective outcomes across the humanitarian, development, and peace/security communities.

The agenda of aid effectiveness seems to have fallen out of fashion given the emergence of debates on new issues whereas it is a matter of resilience and stability for the countries in fragile situations. The g7+ has attempted to revive the commitments from international community to the principles of aid effectiveness. One of the global forums where the g7+ has engaged to pursue aid effectiveness is the Global Partnership for Effective Development cooperation (GPEDC). The g7+ has called for concerted efforts to translate the aid effectiveness principles into actionable reforms by donor countries and organizations. The Secretariat of the g7+ in its engagement with OECD-DAC donors and GPEDC has resulted in commitment by the later to focus its next round of monitoring on aid effectiveness in conflict affected countries.

c) Economic resilience – Promoting Trade and Private Sector

Experience from member countries have proved that Economic resilience is core to sustaining Peace and Stability. Recognizing that Economic foundation is crucial for sustaining Peace, the g7+ members in Kabul communiqué call upon the International

Kabul Communique

“As we remain convinced that sound economic foundations with a specific focus on job creation, women’s and youth empowerment and private sector development are essential to sustain peace and resilience, we call upon development partners to help g7+ countries in strengthening these foundations. This requires more investment in infrastructure and skills development as critical enablers for economic growth. We call upon multi-laterals and in particular the World Bank Group to enhance their support to private sector development in g7+ countries, through country specific reforms and effective implementation of existing policies.”
Development partners for their support to infrastructure, promoting private sector and trade. The G7+ group has engaged with multi-lateral organizations such as IFC (International Finance Corporation), MIGA (Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency), the UN and other relevant entities to attract more support for the promotion of private sector in conflict affected countries.

During the launch of the draft IFC report on the “Business, War and Peace Private Enterprise in Fragile and Conflict Situations”, on the margin of WB/IMF spring meeting in 2017, the then chair of the G7+, H.E. Momodu Kargbo shared the perspective of the G7+ countries on how the mismanagement of Natural resources and the wrong perception on part of investors undermine stability and economic resilience. He called upon the development partners to enhance and tailor their assistance to the needs of the countries affected by conflict and fragility.

On the margin of the 11th World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires, Ministers and heads of delegation from seven G7+ countries (Afghanistan, Comoros, Liberia, Somalia, South Sudan, Timor-Leste and Yemen) and WTO established the G7+ WTO Accession group. This group that is chaired by H.E Mohammad Qurban Haqjo, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to WTO aims at supporting G7+ members’ accession to WTO. This group also serves to facilitate peer learning and sharing of experience in the area of trade and investment among G7+ member countries.

Following on this initiative, the G7+ secretariat and WTO organized a Public Forum on “Trade for Peace: integration of fragile states into the global economy as a pathway towards peace and resilience” at WTO Headquarters in Geneva on October 2018. The Eminent person of G7+, H.E. Kay Rola Xanana Gusmão during his intervention, outlined lack of peace as the major obstacle to development in many G7+ countries despite being rich in natural resource. He mentioned that “trade war” is the current “buzz phrase” among the big economies but for G7+ countries, trade can help them to achieve peace. He called on the richer countries, such as the G20, to do more to help change the current state of affairs, not only by helping fragile states to increase their trading capacity but also by taking greater responsibility for monitoring and tackling illicit outflows and
international tax evasion. The high-level panel examined the link between peace and trade, focusing on the opportunities and challenges that conflict-affected states face in developing their capacities to trade. The high level panelists further stressed that these countries need to be integrated into the global economy, so that they can contribute to and benefit from economic growth. It is important for member countries to prepare and get ready before involving in the global market’s trade activities.

Economic resilience was on the agenda of the g7+ collective engagement at the UNGA in 2018. During a high level conversation in September 2017 at the UN, g7+ organized a side event on “Economic resilience and Sustaining peace; Learning from lessons of countries” The chair of g7+, H.E. Nabeela Tunis reminded the participants that despite the legacy of decades of wars and conflicts, the g7+ countries have demonstrated the potential of stability. Leadership and resilience of the people is important to stability. The international support is needed to nurture their trajectory toward resilience. The event was attended by Minister of international cooperation of Canada together with the president of KOICA, high-level officials of UN, ambassadors and delegates from g7+ countries. The participants agreed on the importance of tailored and targeted assistance and sharing of lessons among g7+ countries to pursue reforms in this regard.

2.3. Peer Learning and Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation

Since its inception as concept in 2013 by the g7+, Fragile to Fragile Cooperation (F2F) has included different modalities of cooperation and peer learning. F2F has included Goodwill missions to countries in active conflict, aimed at facilitating reconciliation for peace. The F2F exchange among the g7+ has gotten tremendous traction globally. Given its importance, the g7+ has started widening its scope of peer learning and has started engaging with non-g7+ countries and actors globally.

The g7+ has engaged with the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) to explore for collaboration with south-south actors. In 2017, UNOSSC and g7+ jointly launched South-South in Action report in the margin of Global South-South Cooperation Development Expo in Turkey in November 2017.
The report outlined overview of the areas of fragile to fragile cooperation and achievements so far and also highlighted the importance of including Peace and Statebuilding in the South-South cooperation framework. As a result of this engagement, g7+ and UNOSSC signed a Partnership MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) that aims at facilitating cooperation in the areas of Peace and Statebuilding among developing and least developed countries and those affected by conflict and fragility.

The partnership and collaboration with the UNOSSC has provided an important opportunity to engage with countries such as Rwanda, Columbia, Cambodia and other countries that have achieved record progress in stability and have some inspiring examples for the g7+ group. UNOSSC Director and Envoy of the Secretary-General on south-south cooperation, Mr. Jorge Chediek and officials from UN and g7+ underlined the F2F Cooperation as an important complimentary modality to North-South cooperation.

The fragile to fragile cooperation stands on the principles of voluntarism, cooperation and solidarity. So far the F2F cooperation has focused on number of thematic areas which include: (1) Peace and Reconciliation; (2) Natural Resource Management; (3) Public Financial Management and (4) Managing UN Transitions. In addition, the exchange has been demand driven where countries can express their interest and areas for cooperation. However, the increasing demand for promoting F2F cooperation and peer learning as one of the important pillars of the g7+ work, the g7+ Secretariat started to map the areas of cooperation and develop a holistic action plan. This aimed at attracting support from interested donor countries and organisations in addition to enhancing tangibility of such exchange and engagement with non-g7+ countries.

2.3.1. Managing UN Transition in g7+ countries
A High-level Roundtable Discussion on Managing UN transition was organized by the g7+ Secretariat at the g7+ European Hub in Lisbon on 19 October 2017. It aimed at sharing experience on post UN Peacekeeping and Political missions and gathering views from host countries that would later be consolidated to form collective views to serve as inputs to the reform agenda of the UN.
During the discussion, number of different participants including the g7+ Eminent Person, Parliamentary Minister of State of Guinea-Bissau, Chair of the Peace and Reconciliation Commission in South Sudan and focal point from Sierra Leon shared their experience on the challenges with the UN Mission in their countries. It was agreed to produce a unified and an in-depth analysis on how the UN missions have contributed to building and strengthening capacity of the National institutions.

As a follow up, the g7+ in collaboration with New York University (NYU) Centre on International Cooperation (CIC) shared “A Host Nation Views on UN Peace and Security Reform Proposals” in December 2017. The proposals included two key dimensions: i) restructuring the peace and security departments and offices at headquarters to avoid competition, duplication or lack of functional linkages; and ii) management reform measures to increase delegation to leadership in the field and speed up the processes. The report has been widely distributed to all relevant international development partners and also to g7+ countries. A second edition of the report with an even deeper analysis of the views of the host countries will be produced in 2019 in collaboration with the CIC and UNDP.

2.3.2. Justice Sector

Being an integral part of the SDG 16, Justice has increasingly been recognized as important determinant of sustaining peace. A g7+ technical meeting was conducted in the g7+ Lisbon Hub. The aim was to discuss how the g7+ needs to pursue sharing of experience in the areas of provision of Justice and to discuss challenges in access to justice, the relationship between formal and informal justice systems, the role of international assistance to the justice sector and the importance of justice for reconciliation and state legitimacy in post-conflict settings. The g7+ representatives and other participants recognized that access to justice is critical for peace building and statebuilding as well as for economic development. Participants called upon the international partners to work with the government to improve quality of justice, not against the local context.
In order to scale up engagement and sharing of experiences in the areas of provision of Justice, the g7+ Secretariat together with the Permanent Missions of the Republic of Sierra-Leone and the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste organised a high-level side event on “promotion of Justice for all in countries affected by conflict and fragility” on the margin of UNGA in 2017. The event attended by Ministers from g7+ countries, UN officials and donor countries, identified common priorities and principles in relation to access to quality Justice in g7+ countries. The event was concluded with agreement from g7+ countries to map out areas of collaboration that will assist member states to learn and share experiences in the pursuit of strong and quality justice systems. It was agreed to convene a Justice Ministerial level forum of the g7+ countries that will enhance collaboration and establish network for exchange of lessons.

The g7+ secretariat has also engaged with specialised institution such as think tank, academic and civil society on getting their support for the pursuit of access to justice. The secretariat signed an MoU with Coimbra University in Portugal in May 2017. The Coimbra University will provide trainings to official from Justice sectors in the g7+ countries.

The g7+ also collaborated with ILAC (International Legal Assistance Consortium) in 2017. ILAC in collaboration with g7+ will conduct an assessment of existing capacity gap in justice sector of g7+ countries. This will enable the g7+ countries to share experience and to lobby for support in strengthening the justice sector.

2.4. Implementation of the Global Agenda 2030

The g7+ group of countries were among the strongest advocates for the stand-alone goal 16 (on peace and justice, and strong institutions) in the Agenda 2030. The g7+ members reiterated their commitment during the 4th Ministerial meeting to expedite the implementation of SDGs.

We welcome the launch of the 2030 agenda and commit to contextual implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in our member countries. In particular, we commit to prioritize and jointly report on progress against the agreed list of SDG indicators through the portal established in the g7+ Secretariat and using the New Deal principles to achieve the SDGs. We will continue sharing experiences through “Fragile-to-Fragile” cooperation in peacebuilding and statebuilding under the spirit of voluntarism and solidarity.

The g7+ members agreed to identify priority indicators that the g7+ would report thereon collectively. Through various technical meetings, the group identified and agreed upon 20 SDG indicators and agreed to produce a joint report that would highlight shared progress.
and common challenges facing the g7+ countries. The selection of these 20 indicators does not preclude any of the member countries from tracking other indicators as they consider relevant.

In addition, the g7+ secretariat continue to provide support to g7+ member countries as they initiated the implementation of the SDGs. Together with UNDP as a partner, it has engaged in debates to harmonize the agenda 2030 with their National agenda and context. As part of assisting g7+ countries in the implementation of SDG, g7+ organised technical meeting in Lisbon in July 2017 to discuss the SDG monitoring by the g7+ at the country level. Data availability was one of the main challenges identified during the discussion in the meeting. Therefore, there is a need of more work to be done and support from development partners in the collection of data for the selected 20 indicators.

The g7+ in collaboration with the Government of Timor-Leste successfully conducted global conference on the 2030 agenda on a road map for SDGs in fragile and conflict-affected states in May 2017. During the conference, the government of Timor-Leste launched the Timor-Leste's roadmap for the implementation of the 2030 agenda and the SDGs.

In addition, the g7+ has actively engaged at the High Level Political forums during 2017 and 2018 to raise the priorities and voice of the g7+ member countries. The g7+ held a High-Level Side Event on “Towards Conflict Prevention: Supporting Societies through Sustaining Peace” during the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in New York in July 2017. Co-organised by the Permanent Missions of the Republic of Sierra-Leone, Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and the Republic of Korea (who was the Chair of the UN Peacebuilding Commission), the event aimed at show-casing the interconnection between peace, stability and development that needs to be realized in the realm of the Agenda 2030.
2.5. Strengthening the g7+

Strengthening the g7+ as a group through consolidating of the membership and further formalization has been the priority for the g7+. Equally important has been an equipped and capable secretariat which serves its member countries and carries the mandate.

2.5.1. Establishment of the g7+ European Hub in Lisbon

Based on MoU that was signed with Lisbon City Council, the g7+ officially inaugurated the European Hub in Lisbon, Portugal in May 2017. The office space was offered free of cost for ten years. The hub which is geographically located in close proximity to majority of member countries and major global actors such as EU and OECD, has since then served in convening important g7+ Meetings.

Prior to the inaugural of g7+ hub in Lisbon, Chair of g7+, Eminent Person and Minister of Finance from Timor-Leste met with the President of the Republic of Portugal, Prof. Dr. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa in April 2017 to thank the government Portugal for the support to g7+.

2.5.2. The g7+ Meeting

Since the establishment of the g7+ European Hub, g7+ has conducted a number of meetings that includes two g7+ technical meetings in July 2017, in December 2018. These are regular meetings that reviewed progress and identified priorities for the future.

2.5.3. Consolidation of g7+/Ratification of g7+ Charter

Following the endorsement of g7+ charter during the third Ministerial meeting in Togo, as of 2018, Afghanistan officially ratified the charter of the g7+. The National Parliament of Timor-Leste has endorsed the charter and is awaiting the promulgation by the President. Other member countries such as Sierra Leone, Sao Tome e Principe, and
Yemen are under the process of ratifying the charter. The g7+ has continuously reached out and followed with other members on the ratification of Charter.

At the same time, the g7+ Secretariat started consultation with the legal department of the UN on seeking observatory status for the g7+. During the initial consultation in November 2018, the g7+ Secretariat was assured of its good chance of being accepted as observer at the UN General Assembly. The ratification of the charter by few members will support the g7+ plan for obtaining the observatory status at the United Nations in New York.

The g7+ also discussed the lodging of the g7+ charter at the UN Treaty Department and will follow up with the permanent missions and the UN.

2.5.4. Missions to g7+ countries

The g7+ Secretariat organized various missions to some member countries. The objective was to seek political buy-in and also support the member countries in various areas through sharing of experience and advocacy at international forums.

The g7+ organised a mission to Sao Tome e Principe in January 2017. The delegation was comprised of the Minister of Finance of Timor-Leste, the General Secretary of g7+ and the Vice Minister of State Administration of Timor-Leste. The mission aimed at briefing the new Government of Sao Tome e Principe on the g7+. The new government expressed its appreciation for the assistance from Timor-Leste through the g7+ F2F initiative during their electoral registration for the 2016 Presidential Election.

A mission was mounted to the Union of Comoros from 29th January to 1st February 2017. It aimed at exploring how best g7+ can support Comoros in the implementation of New Deal and the Sustainable Development Goals as well as areas where Comoros would want to learn from other member countries. It was also an opportunity to brief relevant Government departments, development partners and civil society organisations on the mission of g7+. Government officials from Comoros considered g7+ as bridge to link them to development partners to ensure effective partnership in the economic development of their country.
The g7+ Secretariat represented by the Deputy General Secretary was invited by the Government of the Federal Republic of Somalia to attend the Somalia’s Partnership forum Conference on 5th December 2017. The Conference aimed at reviewing the progress made against the commitment in the New Partnership forum. During the visit, the Deputy General Secretary met with the Ministers of Planning and other officials from the Government to identify how Somalia can learn from the experience of other countries in the areas of PFM, aid coordination and Peace and stability.

**3. Financial Contribution**

The g7+ activities for both 2017 and 2018 have been mostly supported through financial contributions from the Government of Timor-Leste. The Government of Timor-Leste allocated USD 2,250,000 in 2017 and another USD 1,125,000 in 2018 for this purpose. The g7+ is very grateful for financial support from SIDA in 2018. Detail for the main sources of funding for 2017 and 2018 can be seen in the following graph.

![Source of Funding FY 2017 (%)](image)

![Source of Funding FY 2018 (%)](image)

Internal audit for 2017 expenses was completed however external audit by Delloite is currently underway and is expected to be completed by end of June 2019. For 2018 financial expenses, the internal audit is only scheduled to begin by July 2019 and the external audit will be sometime in August 2019. Detail on financial expenditure for 2017 can be seen in attachment while for 2018, will be shared after the completion of external audit.

The g7+ Secretariat is grateful for the generous support from the Government of Timor-Leste, including in kind support from other member states and international partners.
4. Challenges and Recommendations:

Fragility has been reinforcing itself in various forms and continues mounting challenges. The g7+, as the only inter-governmental group that is recognized as the voice of conflict affected countries face opportunities and challenges concurrently. The section below summarises some of the key challenges and offers some recommendations to address them.

I. The world in general is less peaceful than it was in the last decade with increasing number of violent incidents in countries. The international politics is being even more polarized, puts strain peace and stability in countries that are already in conflict or had been affected by one in their recent past. Conflict affected countries are becoming battle ground for international conflicts and results in the suffering of innocent people. Violent extremism and terrorism are an addition that undermines the stability in countries in fragile situation.

Countries such as those in the g7+ needs to take the charge of their own destiny and pursue unity, reconciliation and Peace instead of letting themselves fall in the mercy of external actors. The g7+ needs to scale up its work of promoting the culture of peace and reconciliation and self-reliance introspective approach. Its Fragile to Fragile cooperation has already evolved as a unique modality which is based merely on solidarity. Through this forum, the g7+ members have the opportunity to make a global case for promoting peace and reconciliation and sharing its lessons among each other.

II. The anticipation that more than 80% of the poorest will be in living in fragile and conflict affected countries by the year 2030 has been a wakeup call to addressing the root causes of fragility. However, there is still lack of global consensus on the way holistic resilience in these countries has to be pursued. In addition, the international community can often be overwhelmed by reaction to the consequences in the form of humanitarian, peace keeping and emergency responses.

The g7+ needs to double its efforts to divert the attention of the international community to addressing the root causes of conflicts and fragility and produce evidence and lessons that can support the intended reforms in the international cooperation framework. In addition, the g7+ should strengthen its coordination at diplomatic level at the United Nation to speak with one voice for the pursuit of their collective priorities in the areas of conflict prevention and sustaining Peace agenda including realization of the SDGs.
III. The adoption of the New Deal was a major milestone, particularly in recognition of the nexus between peacebuilding and development and effective engagement in conflict affected countries. It created a lot of aspiration on the part of g7+ countries as well. However, it seems like the New Deal is fading away due to the tendency of development and peacebuilding actors to get carried away by new frameworks. The full realization of the New Deal principles at the country level has been hindered by the disappointment of National actors due to the slow progress in changing the way aid is delivered in their countries which was at the core of the New Deal agenda. There has been some progress on the technical aspect without a needed attention at the political level that would drive change of behavior.

The g7+ group and its members need to revitalize the vigor that is needed to translate the principles of New Deal into reforms that would make aid more effective. The National leadership and political will of member countries are needed to achieve progress in this regard. A collective commitment from the g7+ member countries to pursue reforms will convince their development partners to align their support with the New Deal principles.

IV. The g7+ has become an influential constituency at the global stage and provides a unique platform to address the common challenges conflict affected countries are facing. Thanks to the leadership and member countries whose support has contributed to the progress of the group. In particular the political and financial support of the Government and People of Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste has been indispensable. However, relying on the sole contribution from Timor-Leste has proved challenging. The g7+ charter requires the member countries for making certain amount of financial contribution so as to ensure sustainability of the g7+ work.

The g7+ members should fulfil their obligation and share the burden through making regular financial contribution to the g7+ Secretariat so that it can carry out its activities. This will ensure the sustainability of the g7+ operation. With a minimum contribution from all member countries, the g7+ can attain sustainability in terms of continuity of its operation.
Initially established as an informal association, the g7+ achieved a major milestone towards formalization of the group when all the members unanimously agreed upon and endorsed the g7+ charter in 2014 during the 3rd Ministerial meeting. However, so far only Afghanistan has formally ratified the charter while 3 member countries (Timor-Leste, Sierra-Leone, Yemen) are in process of formal radiation of the g7+ Charter. The ratification of the g7+ charter is a crucial phase in consolidation and formalizing the g7+ group.

The g7+ is currently seeking observatory status at the UN and ratification of charter by member countries is a pre-condition to attaining observatory status at the United Nations. If the g7+ gets the said status at the UN, it will consolidate the voice of the g7+ at UN on related matters. It will further enable better coordination among the Permanent missions of g7+ at the UN. The g7+ Secretariat has continuously followed up member countries and offered its assistance in the ratification of the charter in line with the National laws of respective countries.
Detail of 2017 and 2018 Financial expenditure, will be shared after the completion of external audit.