Contents

I. Introduction ........................................................................................................................................... 1

II. Progress against Strategic Priorities ................................................................................................. 3
    II.I Advocacy to promote g7+ mission and create Policy Impact ......................................................... 3
        g7+ perspective in implementing of Sustaining Development Goals .............................................. 3
        Establish international partnership to advance the g7+ cause ....................................................... 4
    II.II Strengthen Peer learning under Fragile to Fragile Cooperation .................................................. 5
        Access to Justice for all .................................................................................................................... 5
        Natural Resource Management ..................................................................................................... 6
        Peace and Reconciliation ................................................................................................................ 7
        UN Peacekeeping Operation ........................................................................................................... 8
        Expanding partnership with non-g7+ countries (Rwanda and Cambodia) ..................................... 8
    II.III Strengthening g7+ ..................................................................................................................... 10
        Ministerial Meeting ....................................................................................................................... 10
        Seeking of Observer Status ........................................................................................................... 11
        Public Outreach ............................................................................................................................ 11

III. Financial Contribution ........................................................................................................................ 13

IV. Challenges and Recommendation ................................................................................................... 14
    Global landscape and perilous pathway to Peace and stability .......................................................... 14
    International engagement .................................................................................................................. 15
    The optimal use of the observer status at the United Nations .......................................................... 15
    Resources to implement for g7+ priorities ......................................................................................... 16
    Ratification of g7+ Charter ................................................................................................................ 16
Introduction from the Chair

H.E. Francis M. Kai-Kai
Chair of g7+, Minister of Planning and Economic Development
Sierra Leone

I assumed the responsibility of Chair of g7+ during the 5th Ministerial meeting in Lisbon, Portugal from 26-27 June 2019. The g7+ member states unanimously agreed for Sierra Leone to continue as the chair of g7+ for another mandated two-year term from 2019-2021.

Under my leadership, the group has made some major achievements. One notable achievement is the attainment of Observer Status at the United Nations General Assembly on 18 December 2019. This signifies recognition of g7+ as an intergovernmental organisation by the United Nations (UN). We now need to leverage this opportunity wisely to support and improve the UN agenda on peace building.

Another encouraging development is the g7+ establishing relationships with two non-g7+ countries, Rwanda and Cambodia that are willing to share their experiences with g7+ member countries, on how they have transformed their countries, moved out of conflict into more sustainable development. We commenced discussions on organising a high level peer learning mission to Rwanda in 2020. The outbreak of the COVID-19 has put this plan on hold for the time being, but hope to pursue this as soon as it is safe to do so.

Furthermore, five g7+ countries submitted Voluntary National Review (VNR) reports in which their progress and challenges on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly on SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, were highlighted. We are encouraging more g7+ countries to initiate their reviews and g7+ stands ready to support them in mobilising the necessary support.

Another key milestone has been the recognition of "the g7+ Fragile-to-Fragile (F2F) cooperation structure that encourages experience-sharing between fragile countries" by the G7 during their Development Forum in Biarritz, France in July 2019.

With this, I am happy to present our annual report for 2019, highlighting progress we made in 2019 against the three strategic priorities agreed during the 5th Ministerial meeting in Lisbon, Portugal.

I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank the Government of Timor-Leste for the continued financial support that facilitates the work of g7+ both at the global and the country levels. I also extend my deepest appreciation to all g7+ Member States for the joint commitment to promote our agenda of peacebuilding and statebuilding, including support from our international partners.

Let me end by thanking the g7+ Eminent Person, H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão and g7+ Special Envoy, H.E. Jose Ramos-Horta, for their special support and guidance. My special thanks and appreciation of the hard work of the g7+ Secretariat based in Dili and Lisbon, led by General Secretary, Dr. Helder da Costa, and Deputy General Secretary, Mr. Habib U. Mayar.

Acknowledgment from the General Secretary

Dr. Helder da Costa
General Secretary of g7+

The year 2019 marked important milestones achieved by the g7+. This included attaining Observer Status at the United Nations, an important step in the consolidation of the group.

On behalf of g7+ secretariat, I would like to thank the leadership and member countries for their support and active engagement to pursue the collective mission of the group. We acknowledge with great admiration the former Chair of g7+, H.E. Nabeela F. Tunis, who spearheaded g7+ during the first six months of 2019. We welcome H.E. Dr. Francis M. Kai-Kai with gratitude for assuming the chairmanship of the group as entrusted to him by the members during the fifth Ministerial meeting in June 2019. We are also grateful to H.E. Naheed Sarabi for representing Afghanistan as the Deputy Chair of the g7+, and H.E. Jose Ramos-Horta for assuming the role of Special Envoy. We are thankful to the Eminent Person of g7+, H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, for his continued support and guidance.

The g7+ Secretariat is grateful to the government of Timor-Leste for its continued financial support of the work of g7+, which has remained indispensable. We also thank the governments of Sweden and Finland for providing grants to support g7+ activities. I extend my gratitude to all focal points from 20 member countries that have actively engaged to support the collective vision of the g7+ group, advancing g7+ principles in their respective countries.

Finally, I am obliged to acknowledge and thank my team at the g7+ Secretariat who work beyond the call of duty in operationalizing the work of g7+. I hope that we continue with commitment, pursuing the noble cause of g7+. 
2019 represents a number of significant milestones achieved by the g7+. This includes the attainment of Observer Status at the UN, a critical step reflecting broad recognition of the work of g7+. This will not only enhance the profile of g7+ principles but will also provide opportunity to pursue our collective priorities with greater impact. Fragile-to-Fragile cooperation is gaining more traction and the g7+ has forged new partnerships with non-member countries and entities to learn from diverse experiences in the areas of Peacebuilding and development. The g7+ Secretariat finalized a Partnership MoU with the Rwanda Cooperation Initiatives (RCI), to allow for the exchange of tangible experiences between Rwanda and the g7+. Advocacy efforts have resulted in the elevation and broad recognition of g7+ principles. The Group of Seven (G7), including Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States, recognized the importance of peer learning and the g7+ Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation in a declaration on “tackling fragilities and preventing crises in developing countries” during its 45th summit.

With increasing recognition of the importance of access to justice in conflict affected countries, the g7+ held a Justice Ministerial Meeting in the Hague, that resulted in collective commitments expressed in a joint action plan. The action plan will guide group discourse at the regional and global level. The action plan includes the enhancement of peer learning to strengthen the provision of quick justice.

In recognition and review of the progress the group has made, the Fifth g7+ Ministerial Meeting in Lisbon, Portugal resulted in agreement on the strategic direction for the g7+. The Lisbon Communiqué includes a collective call for peace through dialogue and reconciliation in a number of g7+ countries including Afghanistan, Central African Republic, South Sudan and Yemen. Affirming the importance of self-reliance for sustaining peace and stability, the members agreed to establish a platform addressing the effective management of natural resources in member countries with abundant natural resources.

This report provides a brief overview of the progress made in 2019 toward the three strategic priorities; (1) Advocacy to promote the g7+ mission and create Policy Impact; (2) Strengthen Peer learning under Fragile to Fragile Cooperation and (3) Strengthening g7+ to serve as a platform in advancing the mission of peace and stability.

1. Introduction
In pursuit of influencing and expanding public discourse, the g7+ established partnerships with academia, think tanks, media and other institutions in 2019. During the Fifth Ministerial Meeting in Lisbon, the g7+ signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Faculdades Católicas, sponsor of Pontifícia Universidade Católica (PUC) do Rio de Janeiro, based in the BRICS policy center. This will allow for engagement with members of BRICS to elevate and expand recognition of the work of g7+. In addition, PUC will add significant value in knowledge generation through policy analysis, data collection, and recommendations for peer learning between g7+ and Latin American countries.

Establishing partnership with external partners to advance the g7+ mission

In pursuit of influencing and expanding public discourse, the g7+ established partnerships with academia, think tanks, media and other institutions in 2019. During the Fifth Ministerial Meeting in Lisbon, the g7+ signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Faculdades Católicas, sponsor of Pontifícia Universidade Católica (PUC) do Rio de Janeiro, based in the BRICS policy center. This will allow for engagement with members of BRICS to elevate and expand recognition of the work of g7+. In addition, PUC will add significant value in knowledge generation through policy analysis, data collection, and recommendations for peer learning between g7+ and Latin American countries.

The g7+ secretariat also signed an MoU with National Radio and Television of Timor-Leste (RTTL) and Centro Nacional Chega (CNC) of Timor-Leste. CNC aims at promoting and sharing the experiences and reconciliation model between Timor-Leste and Indonesia to other g7+ and non-g7+ countries. The partnership with RTTL will help in the dissemination of g7+ work to further engage with the public in Timor-Leste, the host country of g7+ and a leader in peacebuilding and statebuilding discourse globally. The first TV talk show on Timor-Leste’s local television network launched in the last quarter of 2019 to share the work of g7+, including lessons learned and best practices. The Eminent Person of g7+, H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, was featured on the first show to share his experience during the struggle for independence and the story behind the establishment of g7+ in 2010. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, H.E. Dionisio Babo Soares, and Margaret William, a representative from WFUNA, were featured in the second show to share outcomes from the SGD16+ forum that took place in Dili in November 2019.

During the year 2019, the g7+ Secretariat extended its outreach to non-g7+ countries whose experiences are inspiring and reflective of perspectives of those in the g7+ group. In addition, the Secretariat also connected with institutions and organizations to advocate and amplify the work of g7+ on peace and stability at the global level including the sharing of experiences.

The g7+ conducted two missions to Rwanda, a non-g7+ country whose experience on peace and stability has been inspiring. During the first mission, the delegation had an opportunity to meet with high level officials including the Minister of Finance, the President of the National Unity and Reconciliation, the Minister of Environment, the State Minister of Foreign Affairs, officials of Ministry of Justice and Rwanda Cooperation Initiative (RCI), the primary host of the mission. The meetings resulted in the identification of common priorities on matters ranging from international engagement to peace and stability. It was agreed that an MoU between RCI and g7+ Secretariat will be signed with the aim of facilitating the sharing of Rwanda’s experience with g7+ member countries. The MoU is expected to be signed during a high level mission of g7+ to Kigali in 2020.
As follow up the g7+ in partnership with the Rule of Law Collaborative (ROLC) at the University of South Carolina organized a regional meeting on Justice in Dili, Timor-Leste on 15 November 2019 in the margin of SDG16+ forum. The meeting was attended by H.E. Makario Tagini, the Minister of Justice from The Solomon Islands, and H.E. Manuel Carceres, the Minister of Justice from Timor-Leste. Representatives from Sierra Leone and Togo as well as development partners and civil society organizations were also in attendance. Attendees exchanged views and experiences on reforms made in The Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste. The participants also agreed to enhance regional cooperation among The Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea.

Under the MoU with Coimbra University, a training for g7+ justice officials was conducted at the University. The three day workshop focused on aspects of constitution building and Statebuilding. It also included conversations on financial law and taxation. The training was attended by 10 justice officials from five g7+ countries (Cote d’Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Sao Tome e Principe, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste).

The g7+ in partnership with the Club of Lisbon organized a conference on “Natural Resources for Resilience and Development” in Lisbon, Portugal in June 2019. Under the theme of State and Fragility, this conference brought together senior officials from g7+ countries and international partners, including the Chair of the g7+ (Minister of Planning and Economic Development of Sierra Leone), the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Timor-Leste and the Deputy Minister of Mines and Petroleum of Afghanistan to share experiences from their respective countries on the critical importance of natural resources in supporting stability and self-reliance.

In addition, Dr. Jose Ramos-Horta, Special Envoy of g7+ and Dr. Paul Collier, renowned scholar and economist, shared their views on natural resources management. The conference was also attended by academics and representatives of international organizations, civil society and the private sector. It was agreed that with support from the g7+ foundation, the g7+ will launch a flagship publication followed by a meeting among relevant Ministers from g7+ countries, to enhance sharing of tangible lessons and collectively advocate for reform in sustainable and effective management of natural resources.
UN Peacekeeping Operation

Following the first "Host Nation Views on UN Peace and Security Reform Proposals" conducted in April 2018 and presented to the UN Secretary-General, the g7+ in collaboration with the Center on International Cooperation (CIC), and the UN Transitions Project, began a second phase of the study in Timor-Leste in the fall of 2019. The study will provide g7+ perspective to UN reforms and highlight the sharing of experiences with other countries.

Expanding partnership with non-g7+ countries (Rwanda and Cambodia)

A series of in-depth interviews were conducted to document lessons learned by Timor-Leste during the UNMIT transition in 2012, and examine its impact on the economy, delivery of justice and security and government’s capacities to sustaining peace after the mission withdrawal. The g7+ has a plan to conduct similar studies in other g7+ countries that have hosted UN peacekeeping operations.

During the celebration to mark the 20th anniversary of Timor-Leste’s Referendum, the g7+ secretariat in Dili in collaboration with the government of Timor-Leste and the Indonesian Embassy, invited representatives from g7+ countries to participate in the national commemoration to gain insight into the experience of peace and reconciliation between Timor-Leste and Indonesia. The g7+ delegation visited the land border between the two countries to witness peaceful existence of people from both countries.

Peace and Reconciliation

In collaboration with the National Center for CHEGA (under the MoU signed as mentioned above) and the Initiative for International Dialogue (IID) based in the Philippines, the g7+ hosted ten senior officials from the new Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in the Philippines. The visit was designed to share Timor-Leste’s experience in the areas of peace and reconciliation, transitional justice and the role of civil society organizations. The delegation had an opportunity to meet with national leaders and visit institutions and was given briefings on different aspects of Timor-Leste’s trajectory of peace and stability.

Following the g7+ mission to Rwanda in January 2019, as mentioned above, the g7+ secretariat and RCI held several consultations to identify potential areas of collaboration for fragile-to-fragile cooperation. The g7+ conducted its second mission in December 2019, where an agreement was reached to plan for a high level peer learning mission. There was also an agreement to explore the possibility of a high level summit to be hosted by the President of Rwanda and attended by members of g7+ and Prime Minister of Cambodia.
Ministerial Meeting

The Fifth Ministerial Meeting was held in Lisbon from 26-27 June 2019 to review and discuss progress, challenges and identify strategic priorities for the next two years. The meeting was attended by Ministers and delegates from the 20 g7+ member countries and the Eminent Person of g7+, H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão. Representatives of donor countries and civil society organizations were also in attendance. The Secretary of State for Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Portugal, H.E. Teresa Ribeiro was among the guest speakers.

The outcomes of the meeting, as summarized in the Lisbon Communique, included an agreement that Sierra Leone will continue to chair the group until the next meeting. The members also appointed Afghanistan as Deputy Chair until the next Ministerial meeting and Dr. Jose Ramos Horta, Nobel Peace Laureate and former President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, as Special Envoy of the g7+. The members endorsed the strategic plan, including the decision to seek observer status at the United Nations.
Seeking of Observer Status

Based on the agreement among the members of g7+, an application for seeking observer status was submitted to the United Nations in July 2019 by the Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone. The UN general assembly agreed to include the application in the agenda item of the upcoming session. Mr. Habib Mayar, Deputy General Secretary of the g7+ Secretariat was assigned to advocate in New York to help the chairing and member missions seek support of the application from the members of the United Nations. After an intensive consultation, lobbying and iteration at the 6th committee the United Nation General Assembly (UNGA) granted observer status to g7+ on 19 December 2019 through its resolution A/RES/74/196.

The g7+ secretariat, represented by Mr. Habib Mayar, is also working with the UN protocol office on the logistics and the UN treaty office on the registration of the g7+ charter.

Public Outreach

The g7+ Secretariat established a good rapport with International Development Research Center (IDRC), and will explore the possibility of collaboration to support research in the g7+ countries during their participation in a conference on Research in Fragile Contexts in Amman. The conference was convened by Research Councils and Funders including IDRC Canada, NRC Norway, SRC Sweden and UKRI & DFID UK, and brought together researchers, policy makers and practitioners from across the globe to develop guidance and support to research funders and councils for investing in fragile contexts, to enhance efficiency and impact.

As part of its engagement with host Government and its development partners, the g7+ secretariat was invited to deliver a presentation highlighting the work of the g7+ at the global level during Timor-Leste Development Partners Meeting (TLDPM), a regular annual meeting that was organized by the government of Timor-Leste. Similarly, a meeting between the g7+ Secretariat and the Chief of Political, Economic and Consular Section from the US Embassy in Timor-Leste was held to discuss the possibility of collaboration between g7+ and the United States of America. One of the potential areas for collaboration included facilitating a session, possibly held in the USA, to allow sharing of experiences regarding natural resources management.

An outreach program was conducted in coordination with different local organizations and local authorities to share the work of g7+ more broadly to new audiences in Timor-Leste. The program has covered six (6) municipalities out of thirteen (13) and will continue to reach out to other municipalities in 2020.

Professor Paul Collier, delivered keynote speech at the g7+ Conference on Natural Resources for Resilience and Development.
The government of Timor-Leste continued to play an important role in providing financial support to the g7+ activities in 2019. The g7+ received $1.5 million from the government of Timor-Leste and €250,000 from the government of Finland.

The financial audit for 2017 was completed by Deloitte in October 2019, and the audit for 2018 was completed in June 2020. The financial audit report for 2017 and 2018 have been shared with the government of Timor-Leste and g7+ leadership. A copy of the 2019 external audit report is now available and is enclosed in this report.

The g7+ secretariat is thankful to the generous support from Timor-Leste and the government of Finland in 2019, in addition to in-kind support from other g7+ member states and international partners.

Global landscape and perilous pathway to Peace and stability

Despite an increase in global peacefulness in the world in 2019 as measured by Global Peace index, the g7+ countries of Afghanistan, Yemen and South Sudan are still classified as three out of the five least peaceful countries identified. The peace process in these countries has been ongoing but remains challenging. Increased insurgency, violent conflict and humanitarian crises remain a threat to stability.

The increasing division of global politics has directly impacted peace and stability in many conflict affected countries such as those in the g7+ group. The g7+ must continue to facilitate and pursue nationally led dialogue and reconciliation. In particular, the g7+ has a unique platform since attaining observer status at the UN to facilitate sharing of lessons that can be inspiring. There is increasing demand and relevance of fragile to fragile cooperation in the areas of peace and reconciliation. Many members of the UN sympathize with the cause of the g7+, particularly the pursuit of peace through National dialogue and reconciliation. This is a huge opportunity for the g7+ to influence the discourse on addressing conflict and fragility.
The g7+ attained observer status during the 74th session of UNGA, signaling one of the most important milestones the group has had since its inception. The status affirms the relevance of the group and its key priorities and agenda, recognizing that status is granted to organizations that contribute to the overarching goals of the UN. In order to fully optimize this opportunity, we must work collectively to advance the common mission at the UN. The g7+ does not have a permanent mission in NY. The chairing mission coordinates g7+ related matters at the UN among members. To strengthen coordination, it remains imperative that the group consolidates its membership and agrees on the modality to represent our collective voice which will be crucial in the relevant discourse at the UN.

The optimal use of the observer status at the United Nations:

Despite wider recognition of the New Deal principles globally, foreign aid continues to be less effective and misaligned to the vision of g7+ members. This is further exacerbated by the decrease in development and humanitarian aid due to dynamic circumstances in donor countries. Considerable portions of aid are channeled outside the government system. The national budget continues to undermine accountability both between States and citizens and between donors and recipient countries. While registered in the name and people of the recipient countries, the state and their citizens do not necessarily control its management and its spending. The g7+ must increase efforts to pursue reform which will require advocacy and the development of an evidence base. The agenda of effective partnership needs to be uplifted to a higher political level. The International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, as the avenue for such discourse, needs to work with the g7+ to elevate the profile of the New Deal Principles.

Resources to implement for g7+ priorities:

Since the establishment of the g7+ Secretariat in 2010, Timor-Leste has remained the largest major donor. There is increasing demand for g7+ to deliver on key priorities, some of which are outlined above. Therefore, it remains critical that other member countries share the burden and contribute financially to support the continued work of the g7+. We must also recognize the crucial role key partners have played in assisting the Secretariat. Specifically, we extend our sincere gratitude to Sweden and Finland for awarding a financial grant, and to The Netherlands for their assistance in the convening of the Ministerial-level meeting on Access to Justice for All in Conflict-Affected Countries.

Article X of the g7+ Charter states that “each Member State shall be encouraged to make financial contributions to g7+ to fund its activities and in particular to permit the proper functioning of the Secretariat”. Therefore, members are encouraged to provide financial contribution to sustain the operationalization of g7+ activities.

Ratification of g7+ Charter

The g7+ Charter was formally endorsed by member states during the 3rd Ministerial Meeting in Lome in 2014. Afghanistan and Sao Tome and Principe are the only g7+ countries to formally ratify the Charter as of 2019. Timor-Leste and Sierra Leone are in the process of ratification.

Article XII states that the Charter shall be open for signature by all of g7+ member countries and shall be ratified in accordance with their respective national laws. Therefore, member countries are encouraged to expedite the ratification process in accordance with their respective national laws.