



United Nations  
Office for South-South Cooperation



# South-South in Action

## Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation:

Voluntarism, Cooperation  
and Solidarity

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# **South-South in Action**

## **Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation:**

### **Voluntarism, Cooperation and Solidarity**



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# Foreword

The g7+ is an intergovernmental association of countries affected by conflict and fragility, which have come together to support each other in the transition to resilience and to the next stages of development. We do this by coordinating our positions in international forums, by functioning as a platform and focal point for conflict-related matters and by cooperating in an increasing number of ways.

This cooperation between countries experiencing conflict or emerging from crisis, known as Fragile-to-Fragile cooperation (F2F), was inspired by the rich and successful history of South-South cooperation. It is a version of South-South cooperation which specifically draws upon the resources and solidarity of countries affected by conflict and fragility, voluntarily supporting each other.

The g7+ was proud to work with the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation in the creation of this South-South in Action report. The report brings to you an overview of F2F cooperation, its principles and aims, and some of its achievements to date. Inside this publication, you will find examples of F2F cooperation in domains as varied as the promotion of peace and reconciliation, support to elections, natural resource management or dealing with emergencies. In their diversity, these examples show that in spite of the difficulties that these countries face, they have a lot to offer to each other.

As the world takes on the challenge of meeting the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, the countries most at risk of being left behind are those experiencing conflict and fragility. Ensuring that these countries make steady progress towards peace and development must be a global priority and a joint responsibility of all. North-South, South-South and Fragile-to-Fragile cooperation all have important roles to play in achieving this aim.



**Momudu Lamin Kargbo**

Minister of Finance and Economic Development of  
Republic of Sierra Leone and

Chair of the g7+

# Foreword

Launched in 2016, South-South in Action (SSiA) is one of the flagship series of reports of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC). It is a space for our partners such as Member States, United Nations entities, intergovernmental organizations, and civil society, to share their successful South-South and triangular cooperation activities. Through the SSiA series, UNOSSC encourages developing countries and partners to publish and promote the successful policies, initiatives and activities that have led to the achievement of development goals. Through this series, we are creating a repository of best practices, case studies, and lessons learned that can be shared across the global South.

We are pleased to present this fourth edition of SSiA in partnership with the g7+ group of countries. The g7+ is a voluntary association of countries that are or have been affected by conflict and are now in transition to the next stage of development. It is a unique intergovernmental organization that brings together 20 member States from diverse regions, cultures, traditions and historical contexts in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

The focus of this edition is Fragile-to-Fragile (F2F) cooperation. Developed by the g7+, F2F cooperation describes the support that g7+ member States provide to each other as they transition from fragility and conflict to peace and stability. Its principles and activities are inspired by, and closely aligned with, South-South cooperation. It is an important complementary modality to North-South cooperation

As evidenced in this publication, F2F cooperation has much to contribute to peacebuilding and State-building. Through activities including sharing experiences, engaging in knowledge exchange, and providing financial assistance, F2F activities are directly contributing to national development objectives, and the creation of a more peaceful world.

UNOSSC has a stream of work dedicated to the vitally important tasks of peacebuilding and State-building. I

look forward to working more closely with the g7+, and other stakeholders, as we continue to build this line of work.

Those living in situations of fragility and conflict are amongst the most vulnerable populations worldwide. In order to meet the commitments of the 2030 Agenda – and to leave no one behind – we must pay special attention to these people. F2F cooperation, as a new and complementary modality of cooperation, undoubtedly has the potential to contribute to the development of a stable and peaceful world. I am excited to watch this modality mature and scale-up in the years to come.

I wish to thank our colleagues at the g7+ for their hard work and dedication, and congratulate them on this most interesting publication.



A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized, overlapping loops and lines.

**Jorge Chediek**

Envoy of the Secretary-General  
on South-South Cooperation  
and Director, United Nations Office  
for South-South Cooperation

# Executive Summary

Fragile-to-Fragile (or F2F) cooperation is the support that countries experiencing conflict or emerging from crisis provide to each other, including through peer learning, capacity building, mobilization of third-party support, financial assistance or knowledge generation. A flagship program of the g7+ group of countries, F2F cooperation emerged from the sharing of experiences between and among its member countries. The members of the g7+ realized that despite their differences, they shared important commonalities that made it possible to learn from each other's experiences and trajectories. Having faced similar challenges, they understood each other's difficulties better.

The key driving principles of F2F cooperation are voluntarism, cooperation and solidarity. It is non-conditional and free from vested interests, whether political or economic. It also refrains from advancing or promoting any specific ideology or approach to development, or one-size-fits-all solutions. Rather, it emphasizes context specificity and country ownership, and believes in supporting the organic evolution of local responses in order to meet local challenges.

The primary aim of F2F cooperation is to help countries make progress towards peacefulness, resilience and development through the provision of mutual support. At the same time, it serves to promote a shared vision amongst the g7+ group of countries of a better and safer world for all, and it informs the global lobbying and advocacy work of the g7+ in the areas of development assistance, peacebuilding and State-building.

Since its inception as a concept and programme in 2013, F2F cooperation has expanded to include many forms and modalities. Experts and officials from across the g7+ have travelled to other member countries to

assist the process of the implementation of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States (the New Deal). Round tables and cross-country knowledge-generation exercises have been organized on such issues as the management of natural resources or the challenges of the justice sector in conflict-affected countries. Goodwill missions aimed at facilitating reconciliation for peace have been organized to countries like the Central African Republic and South Sudan. Critical support was provided to the presidential election in Guinea-Bissau in 2014 and in the Central African Republic in 2015. Financial assistance, delivered through the beneficiary countries' systems, was committed to Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone to help address the Ebola crisis, as well as to the Central African Republic to help resettle thousands of internally displaced persons.

Having been inspired by South-South cooperation, F2F cooperation is closely aligned with it. This means that F2F cooperation can learn from the experience of South-South cooperation. At the same time, F2F cooperation has its own lessons to share with the world of global development cooperation, especially concerning the importance of country-owned and country-led approaches to peacebuilding and State-building. It is only by nurturing the State and each country's institutions – not by bypassing or replacing them – that resilience and development can be sustainably pursued.

The significance of F2F cooperation goes beyond its immediate impacts, and is also about the values and principles that it affirms, and how they relate to the global development agenda. The global development landscape has seen important developments over the last few years, including the adoption of the overarching 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sustaining Peace Agenda and the New Way of Working.

F2F cooperation is not only consistent with these developments, to a certain extent it has anticipated and contributed to them.

The F2F cooperation program is still in its infancy, but may already be considered a success. In addition to the direct beneficial impacts, it has led to the accumulation of considerable knowledge and experience. Among the strategic lessons that have been learned is the fact that F2F cooperation exerts its most powerful impact through its demonstration effect: when it raises global awareness around the needs of fragile and conflict-affected countries, when it contributes to changing the

discourse around peacebuilding and State-building, and when it applies the New Deal principles by promoting a country-owned and country-led approach.

Going forward, some of the challenges facing F2F cooperation include: better exploring the potential for triangular cooperation arrangements; reaching out to non-g7+ countries to explore avenues for collaboration; exploring the synergies between F2F and South-South cooperation; identifying additional “peace champions” from across the g7+ to facilitate mediation and reconciliation for peace in countries in conflict; and increasing the scope and impact of F2F activities.





# Chapter I

Origins and Principles of  
Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation

## Origins and Principles of Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has estimated that more than 1.5 billion people currently live in countries affected by conflict and fragility. These countries are faced with some of the most complex development challenges, as well as some of the most pressing needs. The failure to fully achieve the Millennium Development Goals was disproportionately concentrated in these countries, and the same is increasingly the case with extreme poverty: according to the World Bank, by 2030 the share of the extreme poor living in conflict-affected situations will be more than 50 per cent of the total. War and conflict destroy lives, infrastructure and livelihoods, effectively reversing development gains. Building and sustaining peace in these countries through the promotion of security, justice, inclusive politics and economic development is therefore a global development concern of paramount importance.

While their development needs require special attention, these countries are not mere passive victims or aid recipients. Over the course of the last decade, they have become an increasingly vocal constituency on the global stage, coming together in international forums to call for country-owned and country-led pathways from fragility to resilience. They have played an important role in shaping the current development landscape, including the 2030 Agenda. And they have increasingly discovered that in the commonality of their circumstances lies significant potential for cooperation: facing or having faced challenges of a similar character, countries affected by conflict and fragility can share lessons and provide various forms of support to each other, driven by solidarity and non-conditionality, in ways that are innovative and well-suited to each other's needs and circumstances.

Fragile-to-Fragile cooperation (or F2F cooperation for short) is the support that countries experiencing conflict or emerging from crisis provide to each other, including through peer learning, capacity building, financial assistance and knowledge generation. It was formally launched as a concept, and as a flagship programme of the g7+ group of countries affected by fragility and conflict, in 2013. However, the roots of F2F cooperation lie further in the past, having been influenced by the increasing prominence of South-South cooperation as a complement to North-South cooperation over the last few decades as well as, decisively, by the increasing coordination among countries affected by conflict and fragility in the context of the g7+.

### The g7+ and Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation

The g7+ was established in 2010 as an intergovernmental organization of countries affected by conflict and fragility. Its inaugural meeting took place in 2010 in Dili, Timor-Leste, and led to the establishment of the permanent headquarters of the g7+ Secretariat in that city. The creation of the g7+ arose out of the perceived need by a group of countries experiencing conflict or transitioning to resilience for an intergovernmental platform in which to share experiences and for a means to speak with one voice in international forums on issues of peacebuilding, State-building and aid effectiveness. This took place against the background of several landmark initiatives on aid effectiveness and State-building which had taken place since the early 2000s, including the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of 2005, the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations of 2007, the Accra Agenda for Action of 2008 and the creation of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and State-building, also in 2008.

## The g7+: Membership and Structure

The membership of the g7+ is currently comprised of 20 States: Afghanistan, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Liberia, Papua New Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Sudan, Timor-Leste, Togo and Yemen. Membership is voluntary, subject to no objection from the existing members.

The highest decision-making body of the g7+ is the Ministerial Forum, which meets at least once a year. The Chair of the Ministerial Forum rotates among the members and is currently held by H.E. Momodu Lamin Kargbo, Minister of Finance and Economic Development of Sierra Leone.

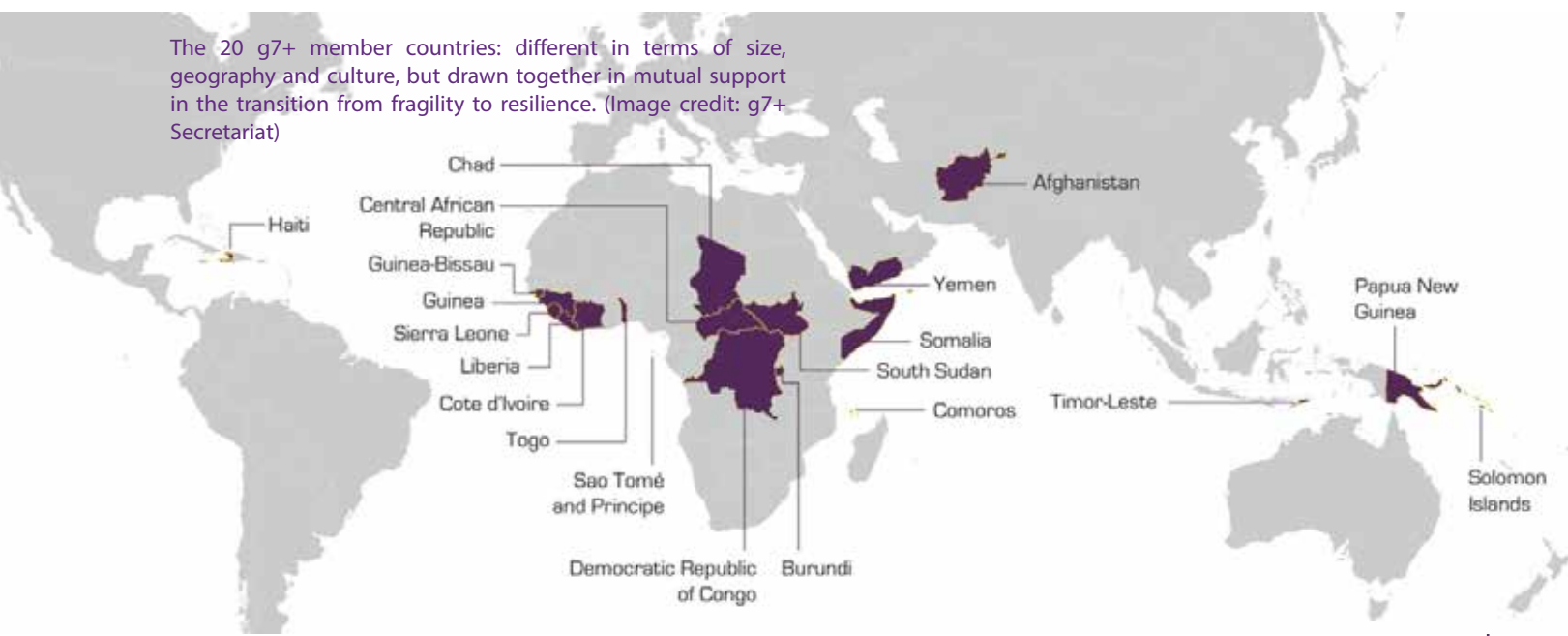
The g7+ Secretariat, whose headquarters are located in Dili, Timor-Leste, provides assistance and support to the Ministerial Forum and the Chair, and coordinates the activities of the member States. The Advisory Council, or Council of Eminent Persons, provides advice and counsel to the Ministerial Forum, and is comprised of persons with suitable experience and qualifications who are appointed by the Ministerial Forum.

The mission of the g7+ is to support its members in transitioning to resilience by engaging with actors at both the national and international level, in keeping with the motto "nothing about us without us", which stresses country-owned and country-led processes of peacebuilding and State-building. Over the years, the g7+ has pursued this mission through a range of activities along four main pillars:

- i) Supporting the implementation of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States (see box below) at the country level;
- ii) Functioning as an intergovernmental forum and focal point for discussions on peace and conflict-related matters;
- iii) Global lobbying and advocacy aimed at reforming development policy and practice; and
- iv) Cooperation between and among its member States, i.e. Fragile-to-Fragile cooperation.

While F2F cooperation only arose as a term and as a program a couple of years after the formal establishment of the g7+, its content – peer learning and mutual support among the g7+ countries – was present from the beginning. It emerged organically out of the sharing of experiences between and among political

The 20 g7+ member countries: different in terms of size, geography and culture, but drawn together in mutual support in the transition from fragility to resilience. (Image credit: g7+ Secretariat)



### The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States

The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States (the New Deal) was endorsed by more than 40 countries and organisations as of the Forth High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, held in in Busan, Republic of Korea, in 2011. It committed its signatories to improving development policy and practice in fragile situations in order to better support peacebuilding and State-building. The g7+ played a key role in bringing the New Deal into existence, and has been engaged in implementing it at the country level since that time.

leaders and government officials from these countries in each successive meeting. The members of the g7+ quickly realized that despite their differences (for example in terms of size, population, culture or geography), they shared important commonalities that made it possible to learn from each other's experiences and trajectories. They understand each other's difficulties better, having faced similar challenges. The knowledge that they have acquired first-hand, while context-specific, is often especially relevant for other member countries affected by similar situations.

### The Widening Scope of Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation

From this original exchange of lessons in abstract form, F2F cooperation evolved over time to include various forms of tangible support and the sharing of first-hand experiences. Experts and officials with prior experience of different aspects of New Deal implementation, such as undertaking fragility assessments, travelled to other g7+ countries to assist them in doing the same. High-level round tables and cross-country knowledge-generation exercises were organized on such issues as the management of natural resources or the challenges of the justice sector in conflict-affected countries.



H.E. Momodu Lamin Kargbo

“We feel for each other, we know each other's problems, we can talk to each other, we understand each other, since we are going through the same experiences.”

H.E. Momodu Lamin Kargbo, Minister of Finance and Economic Development of Sierra Leone (2016-) and g7+ Chair (2016-)

Then, in late 2013 and 2014, as several member countries faced particularly acute crises, the solidarity of the g7+ group came to the fore once again and F2F cooperation came to encompass yet another pillar: assistance in dealing with acute and emerging crises. Following a coup d'état, which had plunged Guinea-Bissau into instability in 2012 and led traditional donors to turn away, financial and technical assistance was provided to enable elections to go ahead in 2014. High-level missions were organized to the Central African Republic and South Sudan to promote peace and reconciliation, in response to the intensification of the conflict in these two countries. And as the West Africa Ebola epidemic became a major international emergency with its epicenter in three g7+ member countries (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone), Timor-Leste donated US \$2 million through the g7+ to strengthen the national systems in these countries, giving a tangible expression to the group's solidarity while upholding the State-building principle of

giving priority to the use of country systems.

Over time, the concept of F2F cooperation has thus evolved and coalesced around four main areas. These are:

1. Implementing the New Deal;
2. Peer learning and knowledge sharing;
3. Facilitating dialogue and reconciliation; and
4. Mobilizing support to deal with acute and emerging crises.

Ultimately, however, there is no inherent limit to the forms that F2F cooperation can take, or to the circumstances in which it may be brought to bear. Whether it takes the form of round tables, study tours, financial support, capacity-building initiatives, joint knowledge generation exercises or high-level missions aimed at promoting peace and reconciliation, its key defining features are the actors involved and the driving principles.

“Countries affected by conflict and fragility are lagging behind, therefore we need to be able to empower ourselves, to promote exchange of information and peer learning amongst ourselves.”

Dr. Helder da Costa, General Secretary of the g7+ (2010-)

Dr. Helder da Costa



## The Principles and Aims of Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation

The key driving principles of F2F cooperation are voluntarism, cooperation and solidarity. That is to say, F2F cooperation relies on participant countries voluntarily assisting each other depending on ability and need; it is a relationship between equals, working together towards the common end of transitioning towards resilience; and it is driven by empathy and community of interest.

From its inception, F2F cooperation has been strictly non-conditional and free from vested interests, whether political or economic. It also refrains from advancing or promoting any specific ideology or approach to development, or any one-size-fits-all solutions. Rather, it emphasizes context specificity and country ownership, and believes in supporting local responses that evolve organically to meet local challenges. While the dominant discourse on many of these countries has often emphasized

“Driven by the principle of solidarity, g7+ members are proving that assistance can come from many sources, even from the so-called fragile States. We understand each other’s struggles in a way that no one else does. And we support each other as trusted peers.”

H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, g7+ Eminent Person (2010-)

H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão



countries make progress towards resilience and development through the provision of mutual support. This encourages collective self-reliance within the group of countries affected by conflict and fragility, whose knowledge, experience and resources are often more potentially valuable to each other than is usually recognized. At the same time, F2F cooperation also serves to promote and consolidate a shared vision amongst the g7+ group of countries of a better and safer world for all. It constitutes a framework for channeling support from development partners, whenever F2F cooperation partnerships are supported by third party countries or organizations in the context of triangular cooperation arrangements. Finally, it informs the global lobbying and advocacy work of the g7+ and provides inputs to reforms to the global development system, particularly in the areas of development assistance, peacebuilding and State-building.

### **Fragile-to-Fragile, South-South and North-South Cooperation: Alignment and Complementarity**

There is a very high degree of alignment between the principles and history of South-South cooperation and F2F cooperation. This is made clear through a close reading of the Nairobi outcome document of the High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation of 2009:

- Like F2F cooperation, South-South cooperation is characterized as “a manifestation of solidarity among peoples and countries...that contributes to their national well-being, their national and collective self-reliance and the attainment of internationally agreed development goals”;
- Both F2F and South-South cooperation are guided by “the principles of national sovereignty, national ownership and

independence, equality, non-conditionality, non-interference in domestic affairs and mutual benefit”;

- Like F2F cooperation, “South-South cooperation takes different and evolving forms, including the sharing of knowledge and experience, training, technology transfer, financial and monetary cooperation and in-kind contributions”.

This alignment is not a coincidence. The emergence of South-South cooperation as a complement to North-South cooperation over the last few decades has been driven by a recognition of the specific value of the global South’s capacity, knowledge and resources. This recognition also applies, and has been applied, to countries affected by conflict and fragility. The g7+ countries are a part of the global South and the F2F programme was inspired by the model of South-South cooperation. The main distinguishing factor is that F2F cooperation recognizes and affirms the specific added value of cooperation between and among countries affected by fragility and conflict on the basis of their shared trajectories and aspirations.

This also means that F2F cooperation can learn considerably from the experience of South-South cooperation, including on such aspects as:

- Designing and managing capacity-building and knowledge exchange initiatives;
- Mobilizing support from developed countries and/or multilateral organizations in the context of triangular cooperation initiatives; or
- Making use of the vastly expanding opportunities for global connectivity to enhance cooperation.

In its turn, F2F cooperation has its own lessons to share with the world of global development cooperation. These especially concern the



H.E. Virginie Baikoua

importance of country-owned and country-led approaches to development for peacebuilding and State-building. It is only by nurturing the State and each country's institutions – rather than bypassing or replacing them – that resilience and development can be sustainably pursued.

F2F cooperation does not in any way purport to replace North-South or South-South cooperation. North-South, South-South and Fragile-to-Fragile cooperation initiatives can usefully coexist and reinforce each other in contexts affected by conflict and fragility, coordinated in such a way as to maximize complementarity, avoid redundancy and inefficiency, and strengthen local institutions.

“It is a very good thing to bring together all the people who have undergone similar experiences and who do not want them to happen again, and who therefore work together for a better future. Now we must carry on and make sure that many people will adhere to this concept so that the idea of a better world can be turned into reality.”

H.E. Virginie Baikoua, Minister of Social Affairs and National Reconciliation of the Central African Republic (2016-)



## Chapter II

### Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation in Practice

## Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation in Practice

Since the inception of Fragile-to-Fragile cooperation as a concept and g7+ program, F2F initiatives have kept increasing in number and scope, in such areas as supporting peace and reconciliation, knowledge generation, and dealing with acute and emerging crises. These initiatives have involved a variety of countries experiencing or emerging from conflict or crisis, from Afghanistan to Timor-Leste and from Guinea-Bissau to South Sudan. This section tells the story of a few of these initiatives.

### Supporting the Democratic Process in Guinea-Bissau

Since gaining its independence in 1974, Guinea-Bissau has experienced conflict and political upheaval on several occasions. In April 2012, a coup d'état by members of the armed forces overthrew the President and Prime Minister, and led to the formation of a

**When:** October 2013 to May 2014

**Where:** Guinea-Bissau

**What:** Financial support in the amount of \$6 million and technical assistance from the Government of Timor-Leste to the organisation of legislative and presidential organization elections.

**Why it is remarkable:** At a time of acute donor fatigue amongst traditional development partners, the Government of Timor-Leste came forward and helped organise an election which was conducted peacefully and successfully for a fraction of the original estimated cost.



(From left:) H.E. Jöran Bjällerstedt, Ambassador-at-large for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, Sweden; H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, g7+ Eminent Person; and H.E. Virginie Baikoua, Minister of Social Affairs and National Reconciliation, Central African Republic, during a F2F mission to the Central African Republic. (Photo credit: g7+ Secretariat)

transitional government whose legitimacy was disputed domestically and internationally. After more than a year, holding fresh elections was a condition to bring the country back to constitutional normalcy. However, the estimated cost (as much as \$40 million) was prohibitive, especially in a context of acute donor fatigue and international sanctions. Guinea-Bissau's traditional development partners insisted that elections be held by the end of 2013, but were unwilling to contribute the necessary funds.

Against this background, an official delegation from Guinea-Bissau visited Timor-Leste in September 2013 and met with Timorese political leaders and officials from different ministries. This included the Ministry of State Administration, with whom the delegation from Guinea-Bissau discussed Timor-Leste's experience of organizing elections. It became apparent that with assistance from Timor-Leste, Guinea-Bissau might be able to hold its own elections for a fraction of the cost that

had previously been estimated. An official request for assistance followed from the transitional government of Guinea-Bissau to the government of Timor-Leste, after which the latter initiated the process of establishing a mission to support the electoral process in Guinea-Bissau.

The mandate of the support mission was to provide technical support to the organization of free and fair elections in Guinea-Bissau in order to help bring the country back to constitutional legality. The first step consisted of an exploratory mission led by the Secretary of State for Administrative Decentralization of Timor-Leste, H.E. Tomas Cabral, which confirmed the need to update the electoral record. The mission prepared its own revised total cost estimate, in the amount of \$6 million, which was several times less than the original estimates prepared by international experts – but in the end, would prove feasible. A few weeks later, a joint g7+/Timor-Leste delegation which included the g7+ Eminent



Person and then Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, along with the former Prime Minister, H.E. Mari Alkatiri, visited Guinea-Bissau, met with the country's political and military authorities, and reiterated the political commitment to supporting the holding of elections in early 2014.

The 17-person support office team arrived in Bissau in early October 2013 and was soon followed by a specially-chartered cargo plane filled with materials and equipment to support the electoral registration process, including IT servers, computers, power generators and registration kits. Over the following weeks, the support mission assisted the National

“The support provided by our brothers, the people of Timor-Leste, was truly decisive. They knew the process well and successfully addressed the problems which arose on several occasions during the electoral census. The Government and the people of Guinea-Bissau are grateful to the Timorese people and Government for their solidarity and assistance to the electoral process, which began in December 2013 and was completed successfully.”

H.E. Rui Duarte Barros, Prime Minister of the Transitional Government of Guinea-Bissau (2012-2014)

Elections Commission of Guinea-Bissau with the training of 12,000 elections officials and facilitators, after which the process of voter registration was rolled out across the entire country and diaspora over nine weeks.

The support mission was formally extended for a second phase in February 2014 for two months. This phase included holding civic education campaigns to encourage citizens to register and vote; continuing IT and logistical support to the Elections Commission; organizing public debates among the candidates; financial assistance to cover the costs of the electoral administration; and the donation of two pick-up trucks to Guinea-Bissau's defense and security forces in order to help maintain law and order during the elections.

The legislative and presidential elections took place on 13 April 2014 across a total of 2,839 polling booths throughout the country. A second round of voting for the presidential election was held on 18 May 2014. The support mission assisted the national authorities with monitoring voting as well as

publishing results. On both occasions, voting took place peacefully and without incident. The new President and Cabinet took office



H.E. Tomas Cabral, Head of Timor-Leste's support mission (right), is awarded the Order of Merit, Cooperation and Development by the Prime Minister of the Transitional Government of Guinea-Bissau, H.E. Rui Duarte Barros (left), in recognition of the support provided to the electoral process in Guinea-Bissau. (Photo credit: Ministry of State Administration of Timor-Leste)

a few weeks later, reinstating constitutional normalcy and inaugurating a new phase for the country which would see vastly improved relations between the national authorities and the international community, including the pledging of upwards of €1 billion in financial support at a donors' round table in Brussels in March 2015.

In recognition of the critical support provided by the Government of Timor-Leste, the Government of Guinea-Bissau awarded the Head of the support mission, H.E. Tomas Cabral, with its Order of Merit, Cooperation and Development. Similarly, all the members of the support office were awarded a Certificate of Merit and Appreciation by the transitional President of Guinea-Bissau, H.E. Serifo Nhamadjo, and the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General in Guinea-Bissau, Dr. José Ramos-Horta.

### Supporting Reconciliation in the Central African Republic

The Central African Republic is one of the founding members of the g7+ and was one of the first countries to pilot the implementation of the New Deal. However, it has been in conflict since 2012 and is considered by some an aid orphan, in the sense of being forgotten or neglected by bilateral and multilateral donors.

In 2014, concerned with the escalation of the conflict, the g7+ organized a meeting in Dubai between a delegation from the Central African Republic, the g7+ Chair and Secretariat, and focal points from several g7+ countries. The delegation from the Central African Republic was comprised of government officials, religious and community leaders and representatives of civil society. The intention of the meeting was to gain a better understanding of the situation in the Central African Republic and to discuss ways for the other g7+ countries to help the country and express their solidarity.

This initial meeting paved the way for the first high-level visit by a g7+ delegation to the



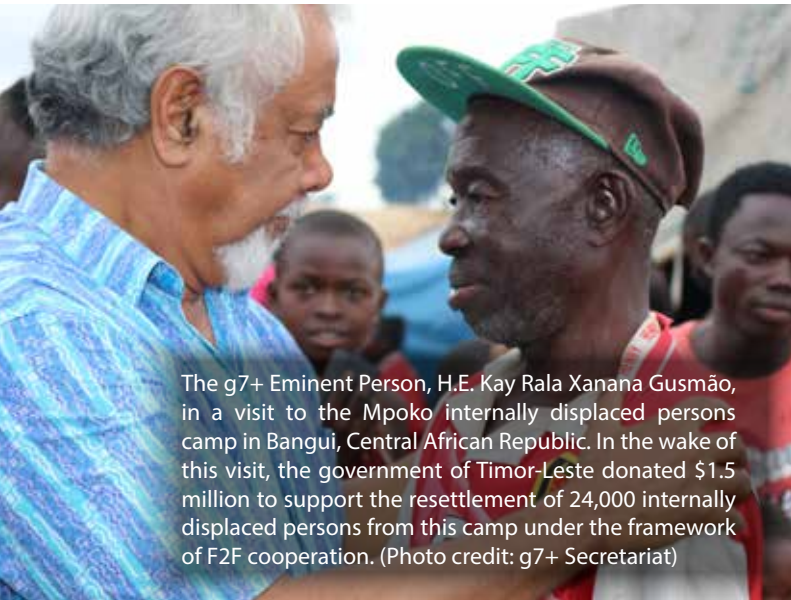
H.E. Virginie Baikoua, Minister of Social Affairs and National Reconciliation of the Central African Republic, during a visit to a foster home in Ermera, Timor-Leste. Minister Baikoua travelled to Timor-Leste under the F2F cooperation program to learn about Timor-Leste's social policy and its experience with resettling internally displaced persons following the 2006 crisis. (Photo credit: g7+ Secretariat)

**When:** 2014 to 2016

**Where:** Central African Republic

**What:** Three high-level visits by g7+ delegations to promote peace and reconciliation. Financial assistance in the amount of \$2.5 million to support the 2015 and 2016 presidential elections and the resettlement of 24,000 internally displaced persons.

**Why it is remarkable:** It showed the potential for "peace champions" from other g7+ countries to bring a message which resonates amongst the parties to a conflict. The donation from the Government of Timor-Leste was an expression of solidarity barely ten years after Timor-Leste experienced an internally displaced persons crisis of its own.



The g7+ Eminent Person, H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, in a visit to the Mpoko internally displaced persons camp in Bangui, Central African Republic. In the wake of this visit, the government of Timor-Leste donated \$1.5 million to support the resettlement of 24,000 internally displaced persons from this camp under the framework of F2F cooperation. (Photo credit: g7+ Secretariat)

Central African Republic, which was led by the g7+ Eminent Person H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão in February 2015. The mission took place following an official invitation from the Transitional Prime Minister, H.E. Mahamat Kamoun, and met with members of the transitional government, leaders of armed groups (anti-Balaka and ex-Séléka), members of parliament and religious leaders, with the aim of sharing a message of peace and exploring ways to support reconciliation.

The success of H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão in getting his message across to the various parties by drawing on his own experience as an independence leader and promoter of reconciliation in his own country showed the potential for g7+ “champions of peace” to make a positive contribution to reconciliation across other fragile and conflict-affected contexts. In view of the impact of the meetings, the visit was eventually extended for four days so that H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão could accept an invitation from the transitional parliament, called the National Transition Council, to

address its plenary on 3 March 2015. In that speech, H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão recalled Timor-Leste’s experience of promoting reconciliation externally with Indonesia and internally with pro-Indonesia militias, and offered to continue to mediate future meetings between the anti-Balaka and ex-Séléka.

Following this high-level visit, the g7+ remained engaged with the peace and reconciliation process in the Central African Republic. In May 2015, a delegation led by the Deputy General Secretary of the g7+, Mr. Habib Mayar, attended the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation and delivered a speech on behalf of the g7+ Eminent Person. A few months later, the Secretariat facilitated the channeling of \$1 million in financial assistance from the Government of Timor-Leste to the Government of the Central African Republic, aimed at supporting the general and presidential elections that took place in late 2015 and early 2016.



H.E. Catherine Samba-Panza

“We must continue to help each other, we must continue to support each other, just like the g7+ supported the Central African Republic when my country needed the most.”

H.E. Catherine Samba-Panza, Interim President of the Central African Republic (2014-2016)

During a third high-level visit to the country in September 2016, aimed at assessing the progresses made since the Bangui Forum, the g7+ delegation again met with political, religious and military leaders, but also spent time at an internally displaced persons camp near the Bangui airport and discussed the situation there with community elders. Touched by the human suffering, and recalling their own internal displacement crisis ten years earlier, the members of the Government of Timor-Leste that were a part of the g7+ delegation pledged a further \$1.5 million to support the resettlement of these persons. This pledge was subsequently ratified by the Council of Ministers of Timor-Leste. The funds were transferred through the g7+ Secretariat to the Government of the Central African Republic and, a few months later, all 24,000 persons had been successfully resettled. The g7+ has remained involved as an active advocate on behalf of the Central African Republic in the global stage ever since. This has included efforts to mobilize international

support to the country during the Brussels Conference for the Central African Republic, which took place in November 2016.

### Knowledge Generation on Natural Resource Management

While the g7+ countries struggle with issues of conflict and poverty, most are also endowed

**When:** 2013 to 2014

**Where:** Across the g7+

**What:** The preparation and publication of a booklet which compiles lessons learned on natural resource management from the g7+ countries

**Why it is remarkable:** It demonstrates the wealth of knowledge that the g7+ countries possess on key domains and the relevance that this knowledge has within the group.

“The g7+ was the very first intergovernmental organization to take an interest in the crisis in the Central African Republic.”

H.E. Florence Limbio, Minister of the Economy, Planning and Cooperation of the Central African Republic (2014-2016)

H.E. Florence Limbio



with vast natural resources of high economic and strategic value to the global economy. If developed and managed appropriately, these resources can make a major contribution to financing public services and boost economic development. However, it is also well known that extractive industries present challenges at a variety of levels (economic, social, political and environmental) and that avoiding the “natural resource curse” is a difficult endeavor for most of these countries. Fortunately, they are not alone and can learn from each other’s experiences.

That was the intention that underlay the decision by the g7+ Ministerial Forum in its meeting of November 2012 in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, to conduct a survey on natural resource management in g7+ countries in order to codify and consolidate existing knowledge amongst the group and support peer learning. The survey was undertaken in 2013 as a collaboration between the g7+ Secretariat, the Overseas Development Institute and two independent consultants. The survey drew on interviews with government officials, civil society and representatives of multilateral organizations across the various g7+ countries, in addition to desk analysis of secondary sources. Interim drafts were discussed at g7+ technical meetings in Addis Ababa in July 2013 and Kinshasa in November 2013, while the final report was launched as a booklet at the g7+ Ministerial Meeting of May 2014 in Lomé, Togo.

The booklet contains 18 country profiles and a summary of emerging lessons, shared challenges and opportunities. It concludes that poorly managed extractive industries have caused grievances and fueled conflict, but also points out that external parties, including

foreign corporations, have often reinforced mismanagement of natural resources in different ways. Severing the link between resource extraction and conflict requires better risk identification, improved monitoring



H.E. Kaifala Marah

“Many of the issues and lessons are common across fragile States, which underscores the role that information sharing and peer learning can play in supporting countries to achieve progress and take greater ownership of developing their natural resource potentials.”

H.E. Kaifala Marah, Minister of Finance and Economic Development of Sierra Leone (2012-2016) and g7+ Chair (2014-2016)

and safeguarding measures such as wealth-sharing agreements, sovereign wealth funds and efforts at greater transparency.

In the future, the g7+ Secretariat plans to organize additional peer learning events and study tours on this topic, potentially involving relevant multilateral actors such as the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. A revised and expanded edition of the booklet, with updated in-depth information on each of the g7+ member countries, is also being planned.

### Tackling the West Africa Ebola Crisis

The West Africa Ebola epidemic began in Guinea in December 2013 and quickly spread to neighbouring countries. It was declared a public health emergency of international concern in mid-2014 and eventually infected almost 30,000 people, killing more than 11,000. While a total of ten countries were affected, the crisis was largely concentrated in three g7+ member States: Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The epidemic dealt a major blow to the transition to resilience in these countries and had a particularly severe impact upon their health systems, which were struggling to meet public health needs even before the crisis. Realizing that the international character of the emergency called for a coordinated response, the three governments elaborated their Ebola response and recovery plans in the context of the Mano River Union, a sub-regional cooperation organization comprised of these three countries along with Cote d'Ivoire. However, broader international support, which was urgently needed, was not materializing sufficiently quickly.

**When:** 2014

**Where:** Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone

**What:** Coordinated response to the emergency by Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Donation from the Government of Timor-Leste in the amount of \$2 million. Global advocacy efforts by the other g7+ member countries.

**Why it is remarkable:** Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone quickly mounted a coordinated response to an inherently international emergency. The contribution from Timor-Leste expressed the solidarity of the g7+ at a time of acute need and was channelled through the national systems of these three countries.



H.E. Amara Kone

“During the Ebola epidemic we received support from the g7+ member countries to help us deal with the crisis. The money was channelled through our national systems, our budget, to address issues that we were confronting at the time regarding our response to the crisis.”

H.E. Amara Konneh, Minister of Finance and Development Planning of Liberia (2012-2016)

Against this background, in September 2014 the government of Timor-Leste pledged a donation in the amount of \$2 million to help the three countries address the unfolding crisis, as an important complement to other international efforts. The donation was used to pay for medical supplies, medical equipment for clinics and hospitals, food for quarantined homes, protective equipment, payment of doctors and nurses, and training. Crucially, the funds were entirely channeled through the national systems of the countries in question in order to help strengthen them at a time of acute need. This constituted a practical application of the very important New Deal principle of using country systems in the delivery of external aid. In addition to this, all the other g7+ member countries participated in the international advocacy efforts aimed at raising awareness and mobilizing support from the international community.

### Peer Learning Initiatives

Peer learning has been a central pillar of F2F cooperation since the inception of the g7+. It is based on the recognition of the value of the g7+ countries' knowledge and experience for fellow countries experiencing similar challenges on the transition to resilience. The g7+ F2F program has seen the implementation of a variety of peer learning

**When:** Since 2010

**Where:** Across the g7+

**What:** Round tables, study tours, reports and peer learning notes

**Why it is remarkable:** Countries experiencing crisis or transitioning to resilience are the holders of much knowledge of great relevance to other countries in similar situations.

modalities, including round tables, study tours and the elaboration and dissemination of peer learning notes.

Access to justice is one of the areas in which countries affected by conflict and fragility have more to learn from each other. Justice is a universal human aspiration, but its application needs to be contextually grounded. In countries recovering from conflict, there are often tensions as well as complementarities between restorative and retributive justice, and between formal and traditional justice systems. Exchanging experiences on how to address the challenges of ensuring access to justice for all has been the object of two g7+ high-level round tables, in Monrovia in 2014 and at the g7+ European office in Lisbon in 2017. These



g7+ Technical Meeting on access to justice in Lisbon, Portugal, in July 2017. Ministers and Focal Points from across the g7+ member countries exchanged views and experiences on the challenges of ensuring access to justice for all in fragile and conflict-affected situations. (Photo credit: g7+ Secretariat)



A delegation from Afghanistan attends a peer learning session on public finance management delivered by colleagues from the Ministry of Finance of Timor-Leste. (Photo credit: g7+ Secretariat)

other's experience and knowledge. When the government of Afghanistan found out about Timor-Leste's successful experience with setting up and using a particular public finance management software, the two Governments, with assistance from the g7+ Secretariat, organized a study tour to Dili by a team from Afghanistan, during which Ministry of Finance officials from the two countries sat down together to explore and discuss the contextual implementation of this IT solution. In addition, a report on the implementation of reforms in the area of public finance management in Afghanistan and Timor-Leste was compiled.

Most recently, the g7+ expanded its peer-learning program to include the management of peacekeeping transitions. Several member countries, including Cote d'Ivoire, Solomon Islands, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste, have over the years experienced the phasing out of peacekeeping missions and the political,

round tables brought together ministers of justice from various g7+ countries to discuss how to address the capacity, financial, IT and other constraints that beset the justice sector in countries in fragile situations, and how best to make use of international assistance to the justice sector. In order to support the g7+ call for contextual international assistance to the justice sector, the participants in the latter round table also agreed to undertake a process of mapping lessons from across the g7+ in the area of access to justice, which is due to begin in the near future.

A second major area of peer learning is public finance management. Establishing robust public finance management systems is essential for efficiency, accountability and mutual trust between the g7+ countries and development partners. While the g7+ countries have made significant progress in this domain over the last few years, there is always room for improvement based on each



H.E. Eklil Hakimi

"I believe we can learn through peer-to-peer learning using the g7+ platform and in solidarity with each other. We can make development cooperation fit for purpose and context-specific."

H.E. Eklil Hakimi, Minister of Finance of Afghanistan (2015-)

social, economic and security challenges that come with these transitions. The lessons learned from this experience can be especially valuable to other countries, across the g7+ and elsewhere, which have their own peacekeeping missions and will at some point experience similar transitions. In order to begin the process of exchanging these lessons, the g7+ brought together ministers, focal points and officials from different g7+ countries to a round table in Lisbon in October 2017, and a report is being commissioned to consolidate the perspectives of host countries and disseminate this knowledge.

### Bringing Solidarity to South Sudan

After a decades-long conflict, South Sudan became an independent country in 2011 and joined the g7+ shortly after. To express the group's commitment to supporting the newly-born country in the challenging path that lay ahead, the g7+ decided to hold its first ever Ministerial Meeting, just one year after the Inaugural Meeting, in Juba, South Sudan, in October 2011. Besides debating and deliberating on g7+ strategic matters, this constituted an opportunity for the more than

**When:** 2011 to 2013

**Where:** South Sudan

**What:** g7+ Ministerial Meeting held in Juba 100 days after the country's independence. Donation from the Government of Timor-Leste to fund the building of a primary school.

**Why it is remarkable:** As a token of g7+ solidarity in the immediate aftermath of independence, which is a critical time for peacebuilding and State-building.

40 delegates from 13 g7+ countries to become acquainted with the challenges and difficulties facing South Sudan.

At the time, a ministerial delegation from Timor-Leste, which at the time chaired the g7+, held additional bilateral meetings and travelled around the country, eventually reaching the remote village of Bor, in Jonglei State. As a token of solidarity, the Timorese delegation committed to helping to build



a new primary school of the village. The funds were subsequently transferred and, in 2013, the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste and g7+ Eminent Person H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão returned to South Sudan for the groundbreaking ceremony of the new school, taking the opportunity to address an investor's conference in Juba and meet with veterans of the Sudan People's Liberation Army. Unfortunately, South Sudan slid back into conflict shortly after and has experienced many setbacks on its path to lasting peace. However, its fellow g7+ member countries remain committed to supporting country-led initiatives to restore peace in this country, and the g7+ is exploring options to facilitate dialogue in South Sudan with a view to avoiding further suffering.

### Election Monitoring and Observation

Following Timor-Leste's highly successful experience in supporting the 2014 presidential and general elections in Guinea-Bissau, the g7+ Secretariat has been engaged in developing an electoral observation program whereby observers from different member countries are mobilized to monitor and certify the holding of free and fair elections in other member countries. This reflects the centrality of "inclusive politics" as a peacebuilding and State-building goal, and is meant as a

complement, not a substitute, to the existing election observation missions of other international organizations.

A trial run was held during Timor-Leste's presidential elections of 20 March 2017, in the context of which the g7+ Secretariat organized an electoral observation mission led by Mr. Mohamed Farouk Ali from the Comoros, another g7+ member country. Mr. Farouk Ali, who is the President of the Electoral Commission and a member of the Ethics Commission in his home country, has vast experience as an international electoral observer. The mission monitored the electoral process prior to and during the election day, including the polling process in two different districts. The elections took place peacefully and successfully, and the g7+ electoral observation mission prepared a report detailing its findings and issuing recommendations for further improvement. Following the success of this trial run, the g7+ Secretariat is planning to continue to roll out its electoral observation program in other member countries.

**When:** March 2017

**Where:** Timor-Leste

**What:** g7+ electoral observation mission led by a specialist from the Comoros

**Why it is remarkable:** As a demonstration of the g7+ countries' commitment to supporting each other in the pursuit of peacebuilding and State-building



People queue outside a polling station in Dili, Timor-Leste, waiting for their turn to vote in the presidential election of 20 March 2017. Under its F2F cooperation program, the g7+ Secretariat organised an Electoral Observation Mission to monitor this election, led by a chief observer from the Comoros. (Photo credit: g7+ Secretariat)





## Chapter III

Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation and the  
Global Peace and Development Agenda

## Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation and the Global Peace and Development Agenda

The Fragile-to-Fragile initiatives described in the previous section have had many concrete impacts, but the significance of F2F cooperation exceeds those impacts, and is also about how the values and principles which it affirms relate to the global peace and development agenda. The global development landscape has seen important developments over the last few years, with the adoption of the overarching 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and some relevant changes to how peace is conceptualized and promoted. The g7+ has been involved in many of these changes as the recognized voice of the constituency of countries affected by conflict and fragility. In this context, F2F cooperation has served as a practical illustration of the principles that the g7+ has been calling for in development cooperation – country ownership, national leadership, the primacy of peacebuilding and State-building. To a certain extent, it has anticipated and helped bring about some of the elements of such landmark developments as the 2030 Agenda, the Sustaining Peace Agenda, and the New Way of Working.

### Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation and the 2030 Agenda

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the globally agreed plan for action to bring about sustainable prosperity to all. Along with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it was adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit of September 2015 and will serve as the main reference framework for global development efforts and initiatives until 2030.

The g7+ group of countries played a very active role in the debates leading up to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, especially through their global advocacy efforts in favor of the inclusion of a Goal on peace and justice, which eventually became SDG 16. Now that the 2030 Agenda has been adopted, the g7+ is strongly

committed to its implementation. Initiatives to localize the SDGs are already underway across member countries, and the g7+ has committed to jointly monitoring progress as a group along the various SDG dimensions.

While the 17 Sustainable Development Goals are regarded as inseparable and equally important, there is widespread recognition that peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16) constitute a condition for progress along the other dimensions in the case of countries experiencing crisis or recovering from conflict. It is for this reason that the focus of the F2F cooperation program is squarely on peacebuilding and State-building, even when efforts are also made to address priorities related to the other SDGs, such as helping to tackle a health emergency (SDG 3) or building a school (SDG 4).

This emphasis of F2F cooperation on peacebuilding, State-building and SDG 16 has both a product and a process dimension. The product dimension relates to what initiatives and activities are undertaken and supported (peace and reconciliation processes, elections, peer learning on justice or public finance management), which are mostly about achieving and consolidating peace, and about strengthening the capacity of the State and the country's institutions. The process dimension relates to how the delivery of aid and the implementation of cooperation are achieved: by using the recipient countries' systems and by promoting country-led and country-owned solutions, which are considered essential from a peacebuilding and State-building perspective.

Leaving no one behind, as called for in the 2030 Agenda, also means leaving no country behind, including countries experiencing or transitioning from conflict and crisis. F2F cooperation is not only consistent with the 2030 Agenda – it proactively contributes to its implementation.

## Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation and the Sustaining Peace Agenda

Another element of the global development landscape with which F2F cooperation is closely aligned is the United Nations' Sustaining Peace Agenda. "Sustaining Peace" was the object of twin resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council in April 2016. The resolutions call for the understanding of peacebuilding to be broadened beyond mere short-term interventions aimed at the cessation of hostilities. They emphasize comprehensive, sustainable and inclusive processes aimed at building a shared vision of society and at preventing the outbreak, escalation, recurrence or continuation of conflict. In order to achieve this the resolutions call for, among other things, improved coordination and enhanced consistency between the actions of national, regional and global actors.

This approach is very much welcomed by the g7+ group of countries, which have long taken an integrated view of the linkages between peace, security and development, and which have advocated for reforms to the global aid architecture in order to maximize

its contribution to peacebuilding and State-building. It is also consistent with the g7+ view of peace as an endogenous process that requires country ownership and national leadership.

The g7+ countries have a first-hand understanding that peace is not the mere absence of conflict. Conflict and peace, like fragility and resilience, is best viewed as a multidimensional continuum along which countries find themselves in different positions at different times. Building and sustaining peace in the sense of an absence of overt conflict requires many small and consistent steps over a long period of time aimed at consolidating the "everyday peace" of strengthening institutions, building trust, creating mechanisms for addressing grievances and providing services and economic opportunities to people.

F2F cooperation constitutes an expression of the g7+ group's approach to these problems. The main intention of F2F initiatives that deal with acute and emerging crises is to raise the global profile of those crises and mobilize international support. In turn, peer learning and those other F2F cooperation initiatives which focus mostly on State-building take



a longer-run approach to sustaining peace by contributing to nurturing the various countries' institutions and strengthening their social fabric. In both cases, sustaining peace and promoting resilience are the foremost objectives.

In a meeting with the United Nations Secretary General H.E. António Guterres in May 2017,

the g7+ Eminent Person H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão expressed the support of the g7+ group to the Secretary-General's reform plans and its willingness to contribute actively to the Sustaining Peace Agenda through the mediation efforts of the g7+. This offer was well received by the Secretary General, and will be explored further in future meetings between the two organizations.

"Peace is not just the absence of war, it is about peace of mind. When everyone feels secure to go to school, access public services, go about their business, that is peace."

H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, g7+ Eminent Person (2010-)

"Embarking on the solidarity and empathy our countries have with each other, the g7+ supports the facilitation of dialogue and reconciliation to promote peace. That is the essence of F2F cooperation."

Habib Ur Rehman Mayar, Deputy General Secretary of the g7+ (2013-)

### **Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation and the New Way of Working**

The New Way of Working is a novel approach to humanitarian and development policy and practice laid out in a Commitment to Action that was signed and endorsed by the United Nations Secretary-General, heads of United Nations agencies and the World Bank during the 2006 World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul. It commits its signatories to overcoming the long-standing divide between humanitarian action and development cooperation, by working together to simultaneously address immediate needs while also seeking to reduce vulnerability and eliminate need in the medium- and long-term. In order to achieve this, enhanced partnerships are called for between the actors of the humanitarian and development communities, with an emphasis on "collective outcomes", understood as positive results in terms of the reduction of vulnerability and risk over a period of 3 to 5 years.

The g7+ sees the New Way of Working as entirely consistent with its own way of working. For the g7+, peace and development issues must not be seen as separable matters, and neither should action to address immediate needs overlook or compromise the middle- and long-term impacts upon peacebuilding and State-building. Achieving collective outcomes in terms of the reduction of risk and vulnerability in the medium term is another way of conceptualizing the transition from fragility to resilience, which is at the core of the g7+. In this sense, the New Way of Working is another element of the evolving development landscape that is consistent with, and has even been somewhat anticipated by, the policy and practice positions of the g7+.

The examples of F2F cooperation in the previous section illustrate this. They tend to focus on "crossroads" moments for countries, like the immediate aftermath of independence in South Sudan, the Ebola crisis in West Africa or the post-coup elections of 2014 in Guinea-

Bissau. These are times when international solidarity can make a decisive difference as to whether progress towards resilience continues to be made or, on the contrary, a slide back into fragility and conflict will occur. That not all of these countries were finally able to navigate these crossroads successfully does not diminish the importance of expressing solidarity at those times and of seeking to raise the profile of those issues.

Moreover, consistent with the New Way of Working, F2F cooperation is about supporting homegrown peacebuilding and State-building over the medium- and long-term, through capacity-building and institutional strengthening. For example, for the g7+ it is of paramount importance that any financial assistance under F2F cooperation be delivered using the beneficiary country's systems, instead of through donors' parallel systems or in ad hoc fashion. This serves to emphasize the

fundamental point that addressing immediate needs should never be made at the expense of strengthening those systems and mechanisms which will ultimately reduce need and vulnerability over the long haul.

### Lessons Learned and the Challenges Ahead

Conceived barely four years ago, the Fragile-to-Fragile cooperation program is still in its infancy. However, it can already be considered a success. Study tours and round tables have been held, financial assistance donated, technical assistance provided and high-level missions organized to promote peace and reconciliation. Many g7+ member countries have been involved in one capacity or another.

The implementation of these initiatives has led to the build-up of experience and knowledge around F2F cooperation: what it takes, in terms

The g7+ Secretariat has been engaging with other multilateral organisations and Northern donors with a view to exploring avenues for triangular cooperation involving F2F cooperation. The challenge ahead is to ensure agility and responsiveness on all sides. (Photo credit: g7+ Secret)

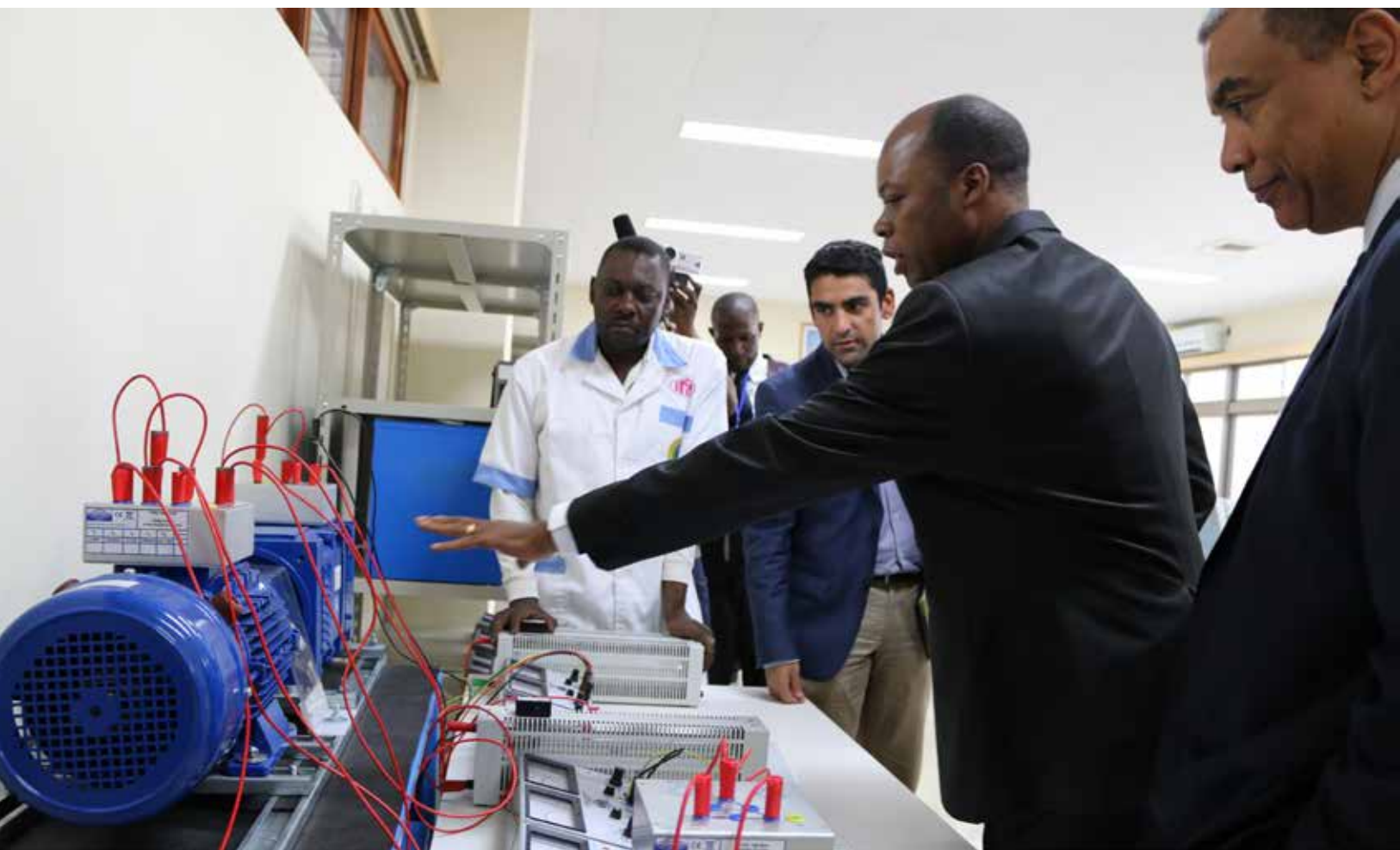


of human, financial and logistical resources, to support an election process in another country; which arguments for reconciliation resonate the most with the parties to a conflict situation; whether producing and disseminating reports or organizing study tours work best for different kinds of capacity building. The g7+ is keen to ensure that this knowledge, whether codified in written publications or tacitly accumulated by the actors of F2F cooperation, will continue to be put to good use, both in future F2F cooperation initiatives and by continuing to feed into the global advocacy activities of the g7+.

Perhaps the main strategic lesson that has been learned over the years is that F2F cooperation exerts its most powerful impact through its demonstration effect. The \$2 million in financial assistance that was donated to Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone to help address the Ebola crisis may have been limited compared to the total needs and to the overall amounts that were eventually committed, but its impact

was multiplied several times over through the global awareness effect that arose from the fact that it came from a fellow g7+ country and was deliberately channeled through the recipient countries' systems. More generally, F2F cooperation is at its most effective when it raises global awareness around the needs of fragile and conflict-affected countries, when it contributes to changing the discourse around peacebuilding and State-building, and when it applies the New Deal principles by emphasizing country-owned and country-led approaches.

Recently, the g7+ has started involving some multilateral organizations and Northern donors in F2F cooperation initiatives through triangular cooperation arrangements. These have great potential. Supporting F2F initiatives is a way to put development finance from the global North to a very efficient and effective use, which minimizes leakages and exerts a positive impact on all sides of the F2F cooperation relationship. However, the results



are yet to live up to the potential. In particular, it has proven a challenge to ensure agility and responsiveness on all sides: in some cases, there has been insufficient follow-through from the initial commitments; in other cases the delays and administrative requirements associated with releasing funds and providing support have proven too cumbersome. This is an area in need of improvement and closer collaboration.

The g7+ is also keen to reach out to other non-g7+ countries to explore venues for future collaboration. This applies to non-g7+ countries affected by conflict and fragility that have relevant experience and knowledge to share, as well as, more broadly, to other countries of the global South. Certainly there is great potential in exploring synergies between Fragile-to-Fragile and South-South cooperation, which may involve integrating F2F components in existing platforms and mechanisms of South-South cooperation. A comprehensive approach to this would ideally involve the development and implementation of an integrated South-South framework for engagement in fragile situations, akin to the existing New Deal but specifically aimed at articulating South-South and Fragile-to-Fragile cooperation.

Moving forward, the g7+ will also seek to identify additional “peace champions” from across the g7+ countries to join the Council of Eminent Persons. These must be persons with a specific profile: they must have the life history and the moral authority to ensure that their calls for peace and reconciliation are credible and command attention. Identifying these peace champions depends on the member States, but it is an important future priority for the g7+.

Another challenge is to increase the scope of F2F activities and enhance the impact of the program. This is partly about insufficient funding and resources: the g7+ countries face inherent financial and material constraints, while support from donors has not yet been sufficiently forthcoming. One of the reasons for this is the reluctance on the part of many donors to engage in countries experiencing conflict or just emerging from it. In accordance with the spirit of the New Deal, overcoming this reluctance in order to mobilize sufficient resources requires mutual trust and a focus on the right priorities.

However, increasing the scope of F2F activities also requires identifying additional opportunities for cooperation, which in turn depends on members articulating their needs and sharing their strengths. In order to support this matching of needs and strengths, the g7+ Secretariat has undertaken an ongoing mapping exercise involving the g7+ focal points in the various member countries. Some of the areas identified as having significant future potential include DDR (disarmament, demobilization and reintegration) processes, contract drafting and negotiation around natural resource extraction and various aspects of public finance management. The g7+ will consider implementing future cooperation initiatives in these and other domains, and will continue to encourage its members’ proactive offers and requests for cooperation.

The challenges are numerous, but all worthwhile endeavors involve difficulties. In just a few years, F2F cooperation has asserted itself as a valuable new element of the global development landscape. In the years ahead, the aim is to remain innovative and exert an even greater impact.





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