COVID-19 is a global threat to humanity which can only be addressed through global solidarity, cooperation, and coordination.

We the members of the g7+ group join our partners to express our profound solidarity with nations affected by COVID-19 and sympathy for the victims of this pandemic. The g7+ group is committed to curb the pandemic and contribute to international efforts to strengthen social and economic resilience globally, including through a range of partnerships and solidarity with affected countries and populations.

We express our gratitude to the healthcare professionals for their relentless services and sacrifices in treating and taking care of patients under extremely difficult conditions. We commend the efforts of the World Health Organization (WHO) and other national and international organizations for their robust efforts to tackle the pandemic.

g7+ countries have experienced adverse social, political and economic impacts of decades-long conflicts, terrorism, disasters and extreme poverty. These countries are the most vulnerable to the pandemic as they have some of the weakest institutions, finances and human capital to cope with this crisis and its social and economic aftermath. At the same time, some of the g7+ member states have practical experiences in managing multidimensional crises, which could be brought to bear in the fight against COVID-19.

Together with our partners, we call for the following immediate steps to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on children, families and societies in the most vulnerable communities.

1. Support the UN Secretary General’s Call for Global Ceasefire;
COVID-19 is a challenge that tests our care for humanity, and we support the UN Secretary General’s call for a global ceasefire. This is a time to fight the common enemy, the pandemic, and save precious lives. We call upon all warring factions and parties to lay down their arms and work with governments, communities, civil society organizations and healthcare organizations to tackle the rapid spread of the disease.
2. Invest in Public Healthcare and Strengthen Institutions:
COVID-19 is putting a strain on public health systems worldwide. The Public Health Systems in fragile and conflict-affected countries are already constrained due to lack of basic equipment and inadequate personnel to address their current situation. The COVID-19 pandemic will overwhelm public health systems in g7+ countries, if the pandemic reaches a tipping point in these countries. Support from international humanitarian and development organizations to strengthen health systems in poor countries will help to save millions of lives. Noting current support, we call upon donor countries and organizations to scale up their assistance in line with the principles of New Deal For engagement in fragile countries to help these countries with more resilient health systems and responses to prevent, contain and recover from the pandemic.

Sharing of experiences, knowledge, good practices, and cooperation in scientific innovations, social mobilization and adaptive leadership are critical to addressing this pandemic in a diverse range of crisis-affected contexts. Therefore, we commit to serving as a platform for governments, partners, civil society and the private sector to share experiences, including “Fragile-to-Fragile cooperation” among fragile and conflict-affected countries, and as part of broader efforts for South-South and Triangular cooperation to curb the pandemic and strengthen institutions. We reiterate our commitment to Agenda 2030 and its implementation, especially for Goals 3 and 16.

3. Care for Displaced People stranded due to Border Closures:
We commend the hospitality of societies and countries hosting displaced people and migrants who are forced to embark on difficult journeys due to wars and natural disasters. The COVID-19 induced border closures are affecting the lives and safety of countless refugees and displaced people. We call upon governments and international organizations to care for their needs and safety, as they would for their own citizens, as a gesture of human solidarity and consistent with international obligations.

4. Support for Economic Recovery, Self-reliance and the Sustaining Peace Agenda:
Fragile and conflict-affected countries are increasingly home to the world’s poorest and are in critical stages of their political and development transition. These countries are already being hit the hardest by the economic downturn resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak. This has adversely affected the prospects for revenue generation in these countries, which will have a significant impact on their self-reliance. The trade and private sector are likely to be badly affected by this
pandemic as experienced by the three g7+ countries during the 2014 Ebola outbreak. We welcome the announcement by the World Bank of a $12 billion response package and by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to activate $50 billion through its rapid-disbursing emergency financing facilities. We also commend similar support by other regional Development Banks and other donors.

We call on development partners to provide sufficient resources to support the most fragile countries in their effort to contain the virus and recover from its impact.

We support the call for debt relief through waiving interest payments and using the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) mechanisms for these countries as sustained peace and stability in conflict affected countries remain the insurance for global peace and prosperity.

Social distancing and lockdowns will be very difficult to sustain due to the lack of viable economic safety nets, underdeveloped infrastructure, and the need for citizens to sustain themselves, especially in conflict zones. Landlocked Least Developed Countries (LDCs) that depend on the uninterrupted transit of goods will be particularly affected by the closure of borders. Therefore, we urge donors and nations in those regions to address the needs of these countries through targeted investments in food security, regional cooperation, technological innovation and alternative sources of financing.

We the members of g7+ will regularly follow up and review progress on the above statement.