



**Mission Report and Post Bangui Forum Action
Plan for g7+**
DOCUMENT FOR DISCUSSION ONLY

INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE STEERING GROUP MEETING
25 May 2015, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire





Goodbye Conflict Welcome Development.
Fini le conflit, place au développement.

Summary

Mission Report and Post Bangui Forum

Action Plan for g7+

8th – 12th May 2015

BANGUI FORUM ON NATIONAL RECONCILIATION

The Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation held during 4th to 11th May 2015. The prime objective of the Forum was to foster national cohesion and reconciliation, mobilize the Central African population, from all factions of society and all geographical provenances across the country, to come together in the capital, Bangui, and discuss a range of challenges affecting the nation, including recent crisis as well as issues sourcing back to the independence in 1960. The Forum also presented an inclusive platform for forgiveness for some, and redemption for others, as well as an opportunity for the voices of the “hard to reach” to be finally heard.

The forum counted 600 to 700 participants that included leaders from diverse groups within the CAR’s society such as the transitional government, national political parties, the involved armed groups (the Séléka and anti-balaka), the private sector, civil society, traditional chiefs, and religious groups. The forum was also attended by stakeholders from international community. The g7+ was represented by the g7+ secretariat in response to the kind invitation of the President of the Interim government to the former Prime Minister of Republic of Timor-Leste, Eminent g7+ Advisory Council..

There were also breakout discussions in four thematic areas namely; **(i)** Governance **(ii)** Socio-Economic Development **(iii)** Justice & Reconciliation **(iv)** Peace & Security. They debated the different elements of Peacebuilding and statebuilding and the challenges thereto to propose solution to overcome the same.

The outcome and recommendations proposed by the thematic groups were presented in the plenary where comments and feedbacks were provided to be incorporated in the final outcome document. As expected, emotions were running high during the time for feedback, which only reinforced the dedication of the participants to want to make this Forum count.

The forum was concluded on the last day, 11th of May by issuing the agreed outcome of the week-long forum including important agreements in the presence of the President of the Transitional Council, the Prime Minister, and the Chief of the Transitional State, leaders of the armed groups and the rest of the participants.

During the closing ceremony, the g7+ pronounced the speech on behalf of the Eminent Person, H.E Kay Rala Xanana , in front of the forum. The message was warmly received and generated a lot of traction within the audience as they all chanted our motto “Goodbye Conflict, Welcome Development” at the end of the speech.

While the detailed outcome document will be officially shared by the Interim government of CAR, below are the major take aways the forum:

1. Disarmament agreement between the Séléka and anti-balaka:

Factions of the Séléka and anti-balaka militias signed a Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) agreement, which called for all combatants to give up their weapons by the time of the national elections. According to the agreement, former combatants (who have not been charged with war crimes) will either be integrated into state security institutions or become beneficiaries of income generating community development projects.

2. The release of child soldiers:

Leaders of the two main armed groups have agreed to release all children under their control, estimated to number from 6,000 to 10,000 children (UNICEF). Once the children are released, they will receive medical treatment, psychosocial support, and then will be returned to their families and communities or placed in foster care.

3. A timeline for elections and extension of the current government's mandate:

The recommendations adopted by the forum called for the elections to be postponed. The date needs to be confirmed (tentative date is December 2015)

4. National and local mechanisms for justice and reconciliation:

Participants agreed on the structures for justice and reconciliation in the country, including a national truth and reconciliation commission, as well as broad-based, local peace and reconciliation committees under the traditional chiefs given their strong influence within communities

5. Social and economic development priorities:

Building inclusive economic institutions was regarded as extremely important for the country as a means of reducing the poverty and inequalities that have created the grievances and tensions between different social groups in the past. Opportunities for revitalizing the mining and agricultural sectors received the most attention from the forum's participants. The participants proposed that the sanctions imposed on diamonds in the CAR should be removed and that seeds, tools, and other agricultural inputs should be distributed to farmers to restart their production. The forum also emphasized and on the adaption of the principles of the New Deal by the government and donors.

g7+ BILATERAL MEETINGS AT THE MARGINS OF THE FORUM

While in Bangui, the delegation from the g7+ Secretariat had several bilateral discussions with the head of the Transition government, members of cabinet and other govt. and donors' officials. The objective of the meetings was to identify the ways in which the g7+ can mobilize support and help in making the National forum of Bangui a success. Below is the brief summary of the meetings

Meeting Prime Minister

The delegation gave a courtesy call to the H.E. Prime Minister to exchange the views and impressions. The Prime Minister expressed his gratitude for the continuation of the g7+ mission, since February and reiterated his thanks towards Hon Xanana Gusmao and the g7+ for the true engagement we have displayed at the Bangui Forum. He also expressed that he hopes to see Hon Gusmao back in Bangui in the near future. The g7+ delegation informed him about the bilateral meetings with the Ministers and other stakeholders and reiterated its cooperation.

Meeting Minister of Planning

H.E Minister Florence Limbo seemed very optimistic for the Bangui Forum and was very proud to see that her g7+ was so visible and instrumental during a crucial moment in CAR history.

When we asked her about the elections she expressed that at this stage that what is needed are resources, and elaborated that "any help, under any sort of form" is welcome at this stage. The top priority is to close the budget gap for the elections as the basic infrastructures and preliminary activities depend on it. She also took the opportunity to reinforce that since we have committed in front of the nation to support CAR, we will need to follow them through.

The delegation ensured her of its every possible support. And this was in this regard that the delegation proposed a mission by IFC to discuss and explore opportunities for PPP (Public Private Partnerships) mechanism since there was emphasize on the same during the forum. Madame Limbio welcomed the suggestion and further mentioned that PPP is a suitable mechanism for CAR due to huge infrastructures need but limited resources. IFC's intervention is the best opportunity in the spirit of our partnership with IFC. We therefore envisage to organize a mission in the near future to examine the contract and train the public servants.

Next steps:

- g7+ secretariat will facilitate organizing an IFC mission to Bangui to assist the government in building the necessary capacity in the area of PPP.
- Identify a PPP focal point from within the CAR government. Invite the PPP focal point to the IFC event in London, 16 June "PPP Days"

Meeting with Minister of Reconciliation

The Minister of Reconciliation expressed her strong level of enthusiasm to document the Bangui forum and its process in C.A.R, and has insisted on the urgency of keeping the momentum created by the Bangui Forum. The g7+ Secretariat ensured to help in sensitizing the outcome of the forum and thus recommended publishing a special edition on the Bangui Forum. The Minister welcomed the recommendation and dedicated a resource person to work with us in generating such report.

During our meeting, H.E underlined the importance of setting up a committee for justice and peace in the districts. Her vision for reconciliation is to tackle conflict into smaller community silos, throughout the territory. In this regard, she expressed the importance of integrating traditional legislative organisms already existing in the communities. The meeting was followed by doorstep press conference.

Next Steps:

- The g7+ Secretariat will publish a special edition on the Bangui Forum featuring the process, the outcome and the impression of the stakeholders.
- Prepare a preliminary two pager synthesis on the Forum to distribute in Abidjan
- Collect electronic version of all outcome documents
- Send brief questionnaires to assist the Minister of Reconciliation in collecting the impressions of: Head of State, PM, Minister of Planning, Minister of Reconciliation, Minister of Education and Higher learning, Minister of Justice, Minister of Social Affairs, Civil Society, Religious platform, Armed groups, youth etc....
- Mobilize former PM to be engaged in the Strategic Commission for Truth, Reparation, Justice and Reconciliation round-table, either as a member or as an observer
- Invite Minister of Reconciliation in next meeting with our DPs and Donors (Kabul?)
- Support setting up the Peace Committees in the districts to monitor the peace agreement (training and/or financial aid, depending on ToR for recruitment)

Meeting with President of National Authorities for the Elections (ANE)

The ANE president was very happy to meet us following our intervention during the closing ceremony of the Bangui Forum, as he expressed that it made him hopeful that we provided commitments rather than promises. This meeting was an opportunity for us to clarify the format of the support that we committed to provide, which is through our collective advocacy and our peer-learning pillar of cooperation.

The purpose of the meeting was for us to identify what support is needed for the election and to understand the gap in resources beyond the contextual pre-conditions. The president clearly explained to us that the government needs financial support, despite the fact that in normal circumstances, securing funds for the elections should be a sovereign responsibility. He then concluded that, the issue is that we are not dealing with a normal context and that the basic infrastructures are simply not there, which means that everything needs to be built from scratch. The government is currently still missing 40% of the funds required to conduct an election. For the aforementioned reason, the government is obligated to join together legislative and presidential elections.

Next Steps:

- Mobilize our member states to support the elections through:
 - In-kind donations
 - Peer-learning missions
 - Mapping exercise: Mobilize a mission to assist the training and/or the consolidation of data when results are sent back to Bangui
- Mobilize our DPs and Donors:

- Rally IDPS behind this:
 - Seek for Swedish Co-Chair for engagement to rally INCAF and DAC
 - Organize a meeting in Abidjan to draft a joint advocacy statement from the co-chairs of IDPS

Minister of Foreign Affairs

The purpose of the meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs was a courtesy call to ask for his impression on the Bangui Forum and also to seek for his commitment to the charter and to mobilizing the diplomatic mission in New York around the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

The Minister conveyed that he agrees in principle to sign the g7+ charter and committed to activate the diplomatic representations in New York. During the meeting he made it a point that he feels that supporting the g7+ is the least he could do as he was very moved by our presence and our sincere will to support C.A.R

Next Steps:

- Provide g7+ focal point with a two pager on the charter to follow up on the ratification
- Activate link with diplomatic mission in New York for the Post-2015 Dev Agenda: Follow up with the Minister Secretary
- Follow up with Timor-Leste MoFA to create diplomatic partnership with CAR, as per meeting with ASEAN and Middle East focal point.

Meeting with African Development Bank

The Bank has provided C.A.R with 750 000 USD in order to assist with the implementation of the New Deal Framework. The aim is to execute the fund through the Ministry of Planning, under the leadership of H.E Florence Limbio. During our meeting we have shared suggestions of how to strategically approach this initiative; **(i)** as a preliminary step a database of priorities and existing actors should be compiled **(ii)** based on this database, the Ministry will lead the effective coordination of existing stakeholders, and align them behind national priorities **(iii)** Combine, outcomes from preliminary assessment of fragility conducted by UNDP in 2014, with the results from the Bangui Forum. During the meeting the representative was very clear about wanting to support existing mechanisms and avoid duplication but he also stressed the importance of wanting to ensure AfDB visibility in the process.

- Set up a meeting in Abijan
 - Further discuss the New Deal support to CAR
 - Further strengthen their commitment to facilitate knowledge sharing amongst fragile states under the Pillar 3.
 - Set up a meeting with representatives from Somalia, South Sudan, Guinea Bissau

CONCLUSION

Overall the Bangui Forum successfully served its purpose, showcasing the strong will of the Central African people to partake in a historical national dialogue and ensuring that their voices were heard. Despite, some disagreements on some of the outcomes, there was a consensus on the selection of topics and thematic commissions, being in line with the real concerns and needs of the population. The high level of participation and relatively balanced representation of various provenances from within the country, presented a positive indicator of inclusiveness and appropriation from the people.

It is important to say that the Forum was not meant to be a space to solve the problems of the country in one week, but rather to offer a platform strengthening the sense of unity and dignity of the people of central Africa by collectively identifying the relevant issues affecting the people and to then produce a set of recommendations on how to tackle them.

During our bilateral meetings, there was a general consensus on the success of the Forum, but more importantly, on the support to be mobilized to help the government deliver on the commitments made such as DDR, returning of IDPs, conducting election and etc. Now that the recommendations are being published and disseminated to the whole population, what will really define the success or failure of the Forum, will be the ability to monitor, deliver and be accountable to the people.

In this regard, the g7+ has clearly defined its role to support this transition process through our (F2F) Fragile to Fragile Cooperation Framework and our collective voice in mobilizing our development partners to rally behind the national priorities identified during the Forum. Lastly, since the closed door meeting in March 2014 in Dubai where g7+ pledged its support to CAR, we have come a very long way. Following our first mission in February 2015 lead by the Eminent Person of the g7+ Advisory Council, which had a high level impact, this second mission was a true success in showcasing a continuous commitment from our g7+ family, reinforcing our traction at the national level, and lastly in operationalizing g7+ F2F cooperation.

