



**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE**  
**OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER**

**“ORATIO SAPIENTIAE”**  
**BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER**  
**KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO**  
**ON THE GRADUATION DAY FOR FACULTY OF**  
**MEDICINE STUDENTS**

**“STATE BUILDING AND NATION BUILDING: NATIONAL**  
**DEVELOPMENT AND VALORISATION OF HUMAN**  
**RESOURCES”**

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Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e  
GMT, Dili

(Check against delivery in Portuguese)

Your Excellencies  
Distinguished guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen  
Dear Graduates,

As a Timorese citizen who never received a University education, it is a great honour for me to speak for the first time in a ceremony such as this. I thank you for the privilege that you have given me.

Today we are fortunate to witness the graduation of medical students – 18 children of Timor-Leste who have chosen to dedicate their lives to providing our People with health care.

Here I must express my heartfelt thanks to Commander Fidel Castro and to the Cuban Government and People, for the great generosity and fraternal solidarity they have shown us by receiving hundreds of young Timorese and educating them in an area that is so important for the development of the Country.

It was proposed that I should talk about '*National Development and Valorisation of Human Resources*'. However, as a Timorese citizen who is involved in the process, I could not resist the temptation to invite all of you to reflect on the present situation of the Country, which is still defined as '**State Building and Nation Building**'.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Tomorrow, 4 September, will also be a day that will live forever in the history of the emancipation of our People – a history that is written with blood, sweat and tears.

In the ancestral struggles and in the lengthy resistance of the recent past, the People gave all they had – they gave the lives of their finest children and they lost their material, moral and cultural assets. Never in any moment, for centuries, did our People feel defeated. Their tenacious determination not to be subjugated by difficulties and the sacrifices were tested once more eleven years ago. They did so not only by choosing home rule on 30 August, but also through their resolute courage in accepting the hardships they knew that would follow, before and particularly after 4 September.

Therefore, it is a vital question to understand the State Building and Nation Building process. Who created our State, this independent and

sovereign State that we enjoy today? I say that it was the dead bodies, scattered through the centuries and throughout the territory, which are now shared with the humus of our fertile soil. I say that it was the blood spilt, the tears cried by mothers and orphans, the wealth stolen from us, the uncountable sacrifices of many generations.

It was these valiant and heroic People that created our State. Our People gave everything they had so that this State might become a reality!

The Constitution of the Republic merely drafted a legal framework that would regulate the existence and operation of this State, the State of Timor-Leste.

I think it is extremely important that society understands this, lest we distort the context of our obligations in regard to Nation Building and State Building.

What obligations and context can or should we consider?

Ladies and Gentlemen

Young graduates and students,

In 2000 I learned to say: ‘ask not what your State can do for you – ask what you can do for your State. I must say that this sentence immediately made a strong impression on my mind, but little by little I realised that it had no meaning and no contextual perspective, thus rendering it unusable in realities such as ours, of State Building and Nation Building.

Allow me then to speak to you about our present reality. I will try, as doctors do, to use an analytical scalpel on the social, economic and perhaps political fabric of our still short existence as an Independent Country.

With the arrival of UNTAET, we entered a stage of transition, where along with the international community we laid the bases for the institutional building of the State. When we received, on 20 May 2002, the reigns of our destiny, finally as an independent and sovereign State, the expectations were that we, the Timorese, could decide by ourselves the future of our Nation. For all that happened, all the progress and setbacks during those first five years, let us never forget some vital factors that were determinative in that transitional political situation:

- the fact that State agencies were still in the early stages of their establishment
- the clear lack of human capital

- the political inexperience in terms of governance, within a system that was completely new to our society
- and most of all, the Country's clear lack of financial resources.

And, like happens in other liberation wars, the Timorese society emerged slowly from the mantle of pain, and after recovering psychologically began the fight for a new life, for the better conditions it dreamed about. This resulted in a demanding society, both individually and in regard to social groups, hoping for immediate results that it thought it would see simply as a logical outcome of emancipation.

Democracy, which was present in our State Building and Nation Building, focused on rights rather than duties. And within this process to create a new society that might gradually aspire to a more balanced and fair spirit, there appeared groups from various sectors (social, political and economic) expressing a would-be privilege to control society... in the name of democracy, in the name of freedom and in the name of the defence of rights.

There could be only one conclusion to this sequence of events, and it was not long in coming. In December 2004, April 2005 and April 2006 to February 2008, smoke rose again in Dili. The horror of hatred and the chaos of vengeance and violence jeopardised a process that was already fragile to begin with.

We lived those first 5 years with achievements we considered to be democratic, and we nurtured civic education in which rights would be all but national obligations, whether for individuals, groups, sectors or the entire society. The result was that we were forced to ask once more for the assistance of the international community to help us rule our country, to teach us to solve our problems, since we were not prepared to do it. This led us to an illusion that without permanent international support we could not live as an independent and sovereign country.

Our State is a democratic State with the rule of law, where all share universal principles and values. However, we cannot forget that democratic living cannot replace the duty each citizen has towards the Country.

Democracy cannot be an excuse for instilling a culture of intolerance. Law cannot create a culture of non-dialogue, which is inadequate for the Timorese reality and to the tradition of mutual respect and understanding. Democracy should never allow fear or nurture hatred and vengeance.

Society must commit to something more positive to this suffering People, because it is time to start working to serve its People.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today we have a society with different goals, fuelled by the frenzy of globalization, which imposes so-called values on us, often covered by interests that are not those of the Timorese. On the other hand, we have a society that is yet to realise the loss or inexistence of national values that could at least make people aware and motivate minds in the search for a loftier and deeper purpose.

There is still a long path ahead of us, like the one we had during the 24 years of the resistance, when no one could tell for sure when the war would end. However, the Timorese People have already shown that, if well guided in their strategic goals, they will respond without hesitation.

It is necessary to reacquire our values to guide us in State Building; we must restore the moral strength that our People once had, so as to give due importance to national interests. In order to safeguard the country from anarchy, systematic instability and confrontation unbecoming of the search for power, society must know the process of Nation Building, which has aspects that are specific to Timor-Leste. Society, in the various walks of life, should be able to understand this process, which requires a great deal of thought, great democratic tolerance and new national pride. Everyone must be asked to respect the People and not to influence them towards actions that might damage our own sovereign existence.

In the new millennium, where universal concepts cannot cover cynicism when transparency is demanded from others, cannot hide the lies when one claims to say the truth to others and cannot cover arrogance when defending economic interests that are not those of the poor, Timor-Leste must seek its own path.

Throughout the world there are dozens of countries that, like us, are classified as LDCs. Among these countries there are those larger than us and those smaller than us; those richer and those poorer; and some countries with over fifty years of independence. In most of these countries, conflict is the main social and political constraint that prevents or reduces any effort towards a determined future.

Our recent experience has proven precisely this. As such, the values of democratic tolerance and of mutual respect and dialogue must now prevail over misleading perceptions of rights and democracy that would cause social and political upheavals that would, conscientiously or unconscientiously, make us

slide in to a permanent dependence on the international community. To do so would be to apply for a permanent classification as 'failed State'.

History is also full of experiences of countries that came from liberation wars and where only small elites, who hold the political and economic power, live in conditions that are completely opposite to the misery in which most people live. And if we do nothing to change the situation in Timor-Leste, this too shall be the fate of the majority of the population in the independent and sovereign country that is the RDTL.

Timor-Leste should follow its process and be able to know its own conditions for evolving and developing. A small country that has survived many struggles, a small population that managed to resist alone for over two decades, and a potential in terms of resources that must be well applied and better managed – three extremely important factors that may inspire confidence towards efficient, methodical and persistent action to change the country. And I believe that these three factors will make Timor-Leste go from a 'low income country' to a 'middle income country'.

I would also like to add another vital factor for the success of this new journey towards national development: **the conscientious participation of the People.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

If the Timorese People gave everything they had, including the lives of its finest children, along with the irreparable loss of its goods, to build the State of Timor-Leste... does the State not have obligations towards the People?

In this stage of Nation Building, the State has the obligation to invest what is needed and due to improve the basic living conditions of the entire population. This is necessary to make independence meaningful, to reward everyone for the sacrifices they made.

And what is the Nation? The Nation, in a simple definition, should be the whole, made up by the various social, political and economic sectors, which are linked in a dynamic of society evolution, stagnation or regression.

What then, is the State? The State is all legal components with the power to make decisions on the destiny of the Nation.

As such, the State must be able to see far away, and all components of the Nation must be able to measure the impact of their policies. The State must look after its children, and all political and social groups in the Nation must be

able to guide them, the children of this country, so that they may assume a new commitment towards work and a social behaviour with increased solidarity.

The State has its obligations towards the People. The State must help the People to help themselves! If the State exists, it is because of the People.

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Young graduates and students,

The Country has been experiencing a climate of stability. The State had to invest a great deal to make it so. There are voices who disagree with the concept of 'buying peace', but that is what the State has done, under its obligation to protect the citizens, to protect the Nation.

The Country is also breathing a new atmosphere of confidence. The State had to focus on public investment to achieve immediate results. As such, with only 8 years of existence, the State should not be constricted by standardized concepts that can only be applied in developed countries, which is not our case, since we are a LDC. In many LDCs, processes do not evolve... either by '**doing much**' or by '**doing little**', while in some countries, both things happen.

**'Doing much'** means drafting many rules, many regulations, much legislation, which leads to a culture of law-worshipping, causing inflexibility in thought and in action, and making the people glued to the concepts.

**'Doing little'** means that there is indecision in public investment, by macroeconomic reasons of "sustainability" and "non-sustainability", without taking into account that, without public investment, the outcome is apathy, which little by little nurtures discontentment and encourages intolerance and social tensions – things that are indeed unsustainable.

Thus there are major challenges in building our young Nation, and the State must invest heavily to provide the most appropriate response. When we speak of Human Resources, we are speaking of this Country's Human Capital. And this Country's Human Capital is the People. The People are the greatest asset of the Nation.

1 – In view of this, and for ethical reasons, the State must continue to recognise the national liberation fighters, who today live in situations of great economic vulnerability, without a shaft of light to shine on the futures of their children, who have no access to education. The State must continue to do this with greater efficiency and a sense of justice.

For moral reasons, the State must also continue to support the elderly, the vulnerable, the widows and the orphans, who have suffered tremendously with the lengthy struggle.

2 – Also for the same reasons, in the field of human dignity the State must not forget that in September 2000 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Millennium Development Goals, which included reducing poverty in the world by half by 2015.

When we speak of the ‘world’, we think first of the LDCs, in which we are included. A 2001 survey concluded that 36% of the Country’s population lived below the poverty line, of below 1 dollar per day. In 2007 this segment of the population had increased to 49%. Although the latest survey, carried out in 2009 also by international agencies, reported a drop to 41%, this is still far from being a success.

Despite positive increments in various areas related to the protection of human lives, I think that we should all define the concept of ‘poverty’ within a Timorese perspective. Eleven years after the Referendum, there are still thousands of families throughout the country living in conditions that are simply inhumane.

And the State must not allow this; it cannot turn a blind eye to the fact that there are still families, in this Country, living in inhumane conditions, without drinkable water or hygiene. Something must be done... by 2015. By 2015, Timor-Leste has the obligation to announce to the world that in this young Country there is not a single family living in misery, and that all persons have access to drinkable water, sanitation, electricity and rural roads.

The State must invest, without hesitation, in this project of the Millennium Development Goals in the Sucos, giving the responsibility for its execution to the community leaders, within a better framework of accountability with the communities that elected them.

3 – The political meaning of ‘ukun rasik an’ is the capability to determine the outcome of any process, the capability to make decisions on the future of the Country. What we must consider here is: what levels may hold the power to make decisions, and what should be the scope of these decisions?

The current stage of State institutional building requires a continuous review of the applicability of systems, as well as eventual revisions, within the basic principle that no social and political process is static, much less embryonic economic processes such as ours.



This is why we must always take into consideration the gradual and constant evolution of our process, at least in this crucial period of State Building. This process is also closely linked to Nation Building.

Society acts and reacts depending on the actions of the State and it responds to the requirements of circumstance, but always with a clear vision of the longer term goals. Whether considering longer or medium term goals, or more immediate needs, the main challenge is the state of human resources.

And we can look to the political and administrative decentralisation process, which cannot be rushed, as it will require careful preparation at every level. Furthermore, in regard to defining clear partnerships with the national private sector, one needs to give the necessary time for this component of the Nation to obtain greater capability in terms of execution, professionalism and honesty.

In this objective review of our reality, the conclusion is that the lack of human resources will continue for another 5-10 years, meaning that the State must invest correctly in this area.

Ladies and Gentlemen  
Young graduates and students

Let us study the age brackets of our population. According to the preliminary data of the 2010 census, there are a total of 1,149,028 people in Timor-Leste, divided as such:

- over 60 years old	5.0 %	56,946
- 45-59 years old	9.6 %	110,717
- 30-44 years old	14.6 %	168,268
- 25-29 years old	6.8 %	78,263
- 15-24 years old	19.1 %	219,631
- below 15 years old	44.8 %	515,203

If we must think strategically in terms of human resources, this data will assist us for many years in foreseeing the obligations of the State regarding investment in human capital to meet national development needs.

We could draft the following indicators, as more or less ambitious forecasts:

- By 2030, all Sucos should have kindergartens to receive all children aged 3-5, so as to provide them with the means to understand things visually, orally and mentally, in order to prepare them for the first grade.

- By 2030 there will not be a single 6-year old in Timor-Leste without access to nine years of compulsive and free schooling.

- Within 15-20 years, Timor-Leste should have specialists in several areas with vital importance to the Country.

- Within 7-15 years, Timor-Leste should have highly skilled professionals in the areas of economics, law, architecture, geology, agriculture and other technical fields, so as to provide for the general needs of the Country.

- Within 5-10 years, the State should ensure broad capacity building for the youth, in the vocational areas necessary to respond to the Country's development needs.

- Within 5-7 years, provision of intensive and accelerated training for public administration in the areas of administration, management and especially finance, in view of the decentralisation to the municipalities.

- Within 5-7 years, the State should accelerate intensive training for nurses and midwives, so as to ensure sufficient coverage for the entire Country.

- Within 5-7 years, the State should invest seriously in accelerated and intensive training for basic education teachers, in order to revert as soon as possible the situation of some schools with 600 students and 10 teachers, who teach all classes and every subject, every day.

The basis for successful completion of higher education is qualified training since the early grades. As such, the State must draft an action plan, promoting better cooperation between UNTL and the Church, under the coordination of the Ministry of Education, so that after the 3 years required for training it may be possible to ensure a steady annual number, able to give the necessary response to the primary and secondary education sectors.

The State must also invest in the necessary material and equipment to enable hands-on learning in the various areas of training.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On the other hand, the State must give serious attention to the quality of higher education.

The State acknowledges the effort and praises the initiatives by private parties in the establishment of various higher education institutions in the

Country. These initiatives are very worthy and show concern for the future of our youth. However, today's situation requires the utmost attention by the State.

- Firstly, all the higher education institutions are located in the Capital, which makes it difficult for families with less economic capability to send their children to study in Dili.

- Secondly, higher training is not directed to the Country's medium term needs. It is necessary to correct this situation, and this requires an effort by the State, as well as by higher education institutions in our Country, so that we may have open and honest discussions that enable us to redirect training.

- Thirdly, similar to what happens in primary and secondary education, higher education also has shortages of teaching staff.

In view of these problems requiring different solutions, which will not make everyone happy, the State cannot remain idle. As such, the State is starting discussions with the Diocese of Dili to draft an adequate plan for participation in higher education. Therefore, within the next 5 years the State should invest in infrastructure covering the Country, thereby facilitating access by students. The infrastructure, faculties or technical higher institutes should include housing for teachers and students, laboratories and equipment such as mess halls, sporting facilities, etc.

We hope that society will have collective awareness as to the magnitude of this problem. The main goal of the State should be to ensure proper professional training for our youth, so that it may continue to develop the country and to protect national sovereignty and independence.

The only way a country can achieve sustainable development is with educated people, with children technically and professionally able to actively participate in the social and economic progress of the Nation.

Regarding the '*Valorisation of Human Resources*', the conclusion to make is that we need a **TARGETED PROFESSIONAL TRAINING POLICY!**

That is all.

Thank you very much.

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão  
3 September 2010