



**ADDRESS BY**  
**HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER**  
**KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO**

**ON THE OCCASION OF**

**THE OFFICIAL START OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**  
**ON THE LAUNCH OF THE PROJECT REGARDING THE**  
**ACADEMY OF CREATIVE ARTS AND INDUSTRIES OF TIMOR-**  
**LESTE**

**Díli Convention Centre**

**15 July 2011**

Your Excellencies

Illustrious guests

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First and foremost I would like to welcome all those who have travelled a long way to take part in this international event and to enrich, through their experience, this national interest project regarding the creation of an Academy of Creative Arts and Industries.

In fact, this Conference could not have come at a better time. This week we had the honour to launch the Strategic Development Plan for 2011-2030, and obviously this Plan could not be consistent with our development goals for the Country if it did not include strategies and actions seeking to promote our incredibly rich and diverse cultural legacy.

This ideal is present in the vision of the Timorese People, who have stated that it is necessary to celebrate and socialize our unique culture. We also want to promote Timorese identity through the development of our traditional arts, which include weaving, pottery, music, dance, painting, sculpting, jewel making, etc.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I believe in the need to invest in the intellectual and professional training of young Timorese boys and girls who show to have merit and calling. Because they lack resources to expand their potential and an education facility where they can develop their artistic knowledge, many of these young people end up turning away from a career that could be promising and that could bring many benefits for their families and for the Country itself.

As such, the creation of a National Academy of Creative Arts and Industries is vital to safeguard traditional Timorese arts, our national legacy, while giving a touch of modernity and innovation that will enable us to project our cultural and artistic wealth in the future.

The creation of such an Academy will also have the advantage of promoting specific areas of the creative industry that are still underdeveloped in Timor-Leste, such as plastic arts, multimedia, cinema, design e architecture. These are already well established in today's world; however they are yet to be discovered and nurtured in Timor-Leste.

Therefore the future Academy of Creative Arts and Industries will be critical as a space for artistic knowledge and skills, as a space for learning and researching, as a space where creativity can bloom and where Timorese imagination can “spread its wings and fly”!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This project covers three essential factors for national development:

**First – Promoting arts and culture in Timor-Leste is promoting peace!**

One of the cornerstones of our Nation’s progress has been the dialogue based on the respect and dignity of the human person. The history of our people has many pages of struggle and losses, but through dialogue and mutual respect we have been working together towards a better future for our population. Arts and culture, in their many forms, are very important for nurturing this spirit.

**Second – Investing in the creation of an Academy of Arts is investing in the training and education of our young!**

The Academy should also be a space for training future arts teachers in the various levels of teaching, as well as an incentive so that, in the future, it will be possible to conduct higher education in the specific areas of traditional and contemporaneous artistic knowledge.

**Third – Encouraging the development of Culture and Creative Industries in Timor-Leste is encouraging economic development.**

It is a fact that creative industries throughout the world generate income, create employment and project countries in the international stage.

This is a vital aspect for Timor-Leste and for its economic development, since it enables creating employment opportunities, particularly at community level, in a country with many young people.

Additionally, promoting the cultural legacy of the Nation also means creating opportunities for other sectors to develop, such as tourism and other small and medium industries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In our post-conflict Nation, preserving culture is essential for reconciliation and development. Culture is vital to strengthen national unity and cohesion; therefore it must be safeguarded and cherished.

In view of this, I trust that this Conference will be fruitful and creative and that the National Academy may be implemented soon.

Before I conclude, I would like to thank the major “sponsors” of this event and all those who have been involved in its organization. My special appreciation goes to His Excellency the Secretary of State for Culture, for all his commitment and dedication to this subject, to the Griffith University, represented here by Professor Tony Fry, and to the Australian cooperation.

These are days that the Timorese will never forget, as for the first time they will benefit from an initiative that will highlight their culture in its many aspects. Furthermore, the Timorese will also have the opportunity to see a little of what is being done abroad.

Thank you very much.

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão

15 July 2011