



## SPOKESPERSON V CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT



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### **Prime Minister and delegation return from visit to the Republic of Haiti**

Last week Prime Minister, His Excellency Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, visited Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti, to participate in the 2<sup>nd</sup> g7+ Ministerial Retreat and to engage in a series of bilateral meetings with the President, Prime Minister and Cabinet of the Republic of Haiti. Timor-Leste and Haiti have recently signed documents to formalize diplomatic relations between the two countries and an official invitation to visit had been extended by the Haitian Prime Minister, His Excellency Laurent Salvador Lamothe. Prime Minister Gusmão was accompanied in the bilateral meetings by the Minister of Finance and Chair of the g7+, Her Excellency Emília Pires and the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, His Excellency Constâncio Pinto.

Official meetings began with a breakfast briefing with Haiti's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Finance followed by a visit to the Museum of the Haitian National Pantheon. Haitian people share many cultural values with the Timorese people including the importance of ancestral respect and so the visit to the museum to lay a wreath honoring the Haitian fore fathers was appreciated by the hosts.

The delegation then met with representatives of the Parliament of Haiti; the Vice President of the Senate and the President of the Chamber of Deputies. These gentlemen spoke passionately about their country and expressed their enduring hope in the face of many challenges. An estimated 316,000 people were killed in Port-au-Prince as a result of the earthquake of January 2010 and rebuilding efforts continue. The Parliamentary representatives expressed their appreciation to the Timorese delegation for what they said was an "uplifting and friendly interaction."

Bilateral meetings then took place between the two Prime Ministers, covering a wide range of topics including Timor-Leste's transition as the UN Mission withdraws, the coordination of Development Partners, rebuilding efforts in Haiti and further opportunities to strengthen ties and cooperation.



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In response to a pre-visit request by Prime Minister Gusmão a round table discussion was then convened with Prime Minister Lamothe, the Timorese delegation and many senior Ministers of the Haitian Government. This meeting, broadcast on national television, was an animated discussion with themes including the g7+, justice, tourism, education, natural resources, agriculture and security.

After this round table discussion a nationally televised Press Conference was held with the two Prime Ministers. This was an opportunity to share with the Haitian people watching that Timor-Leste was to make a USD 1 million donation to the people of Haiti to assist in the efforts to recover and rebuild after Hurricane Sandy, which had caused so much devastation only weeks before the visit. Prime Minister Lamothe expressed that he had been greatly encouraged by the visit and that “the solidarity of the people of Timor-Leste was deeply felt and appreciated by the Haitian people.”

At an official reception following the Press Conference the Prime Minister met with the President of Haiti His Excellency Michel Martelly who also expressed his gratitude for the hand of friendship extended by the People of Timor-Leste, and warmly welcomed the delegation to Port-au-Prince.

Following the day of bilateral meetings Prime Minister Gusmão participated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ministerial Retreat of the g7+, a two-day set of working meetings with Ministers and focal points from the countries of the g7+. Ministers were in attendance from Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Haiti, South Sudan and Timor-Leste along with representatives from Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone and Somalia.

As a part of the g7+ opening ceremony, attended by members of the Haitian Parliament and national press, Prime Minister Gusmão along with his Haitian counterpart delivered a keynote address to the large crowd assembled.

The g7+ meetings were fruitful and at their conclusion a statement was produced outlining the outcomes achieved. This “Haiti Declaration” announced the official addition of the Union of the Comoros to the g7+ family. The participation of the Prime Minister in the 2<sup>nd</sup> g7+ Ministerial Retreat, following on from his contribution in the 1<sup>st</sup> Retreat in Juba, South Sudan in 2011, was deeply appreciated by the g7+ delegates assembled. **ENDS**



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