



**PRIME  
MINISTER**

**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE  
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE KAY RALA XANANA  
GUSMÃO AT THE g7+ MINISTERIAL MEETING IN TOGO**

**Togo**

**29 May 2013**

Your Excellency Kwesi Ahoomey-Zunu, the Prime Minister of Togo,

Your Excellencies Ministers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be here in Togo for this g7+ Ministerial meeting.

I would like to thank the Togolese Government for hosting this important meeting and for the warm welcome we have all received. It is wonderful to see so many Ministers here and such commitment to the goals of the g7+.

This is our third Ministerial Meeting since we established the g7+ in April 2010. We can all be proud of how far we have come since we met in a small room in Dili and decided that for too long our nations had walked alone, as others made decisions affecting our common future.

We now walk together. We have shared our stories and histories, from across Asia, Africa and the Pacific. And while each nation is unique, we are bound by similar challenges, and a shared desire to contribute the discussions on the global development agenda.

The g7+ is now a credible voice, and our vision has been accepted in international forums including, of course, the United Nations.

No one knows better than us what it means to experience internal conflict or to build peace and a State in a fragile environment.

We have seen exciting progress in some g7+ member nations. The Afghani people have again shown their resilience after holding a successful election - an important step in strengthening their State. In Guinea Bissau the leaders of this troubled nation have had the courage to recognise the errors of the past and jointly commit to a future in which national interests are put above personal interests. This recognition has led to successful national elections that we hope will see the country moving to fulfill its legitimate aspirations.

Regrettably, however, some of our members continue to experience great challenges.

The lives of people in the Central African Republic, South Sudan and Somalia are still threatened by daily conflict and violence.

When Timor-Leste lapsed into crisis several times after independence, I was saddened and surprised at how quickly we could lose our way.

Last December I was in South Sudan where I talked about how hard it is to build lasting peace and a strong State.

Again I was saddened and surprised when only few weeks later South Sudan faced its own crisis and debilitating outbreak of violence.

I commend the parties in South Sudan for discussing the establishment of a transitional government, and agreeing to put the pursuit of peace above retribution and division.

The situation is also distressing in the Central African Republic and Somalia. I am sure I speak on behalf of all G7+ nations when I say we will do all we can to help these nations get back on their feet. We have all survived conflict and know how bad it can get. We also know that, with reconciliation, dialogue and compromise, it is possible to build a sustainable peace.

Brothers and sisters,

While people in our fragile countries continue to suffer, the global elite and powerful continue to set the rules of global finance and governance.

We live in a world characterised by a broken and corrupt financial system where the sweat and the blood of our people benefits the international super wealthy. It is a world where the division in our countries helps the powerful drive down the conditions of the poor as they shift their money around to avoid paying tax and contributing to improved human wellbeing.

Regrettably, the global elites benefit from perpetuating division, intolerance and hatred.

The world today is facing a big crisis – the crisis of confidence! It comes from international financial institutions failure (and we can see in the result of the European Parliament elections) to the political behavior of the powerful (as we see in the disaster of the Arab so called Spring, to Syria and Ukraine)

In our underdeveloped world, the crisis is about leadership! Nowadays, leadership is not about a leader, but about a national understanding and compromise of men and women on the collective interests of the country and the aspirations of their people.

The world today needs change and we have to be active agents of this change!

I salute President Obama in his foreign policy review, saying that the U.S. military intervention should not be seen as the only way or the primary option for the U.S.

I also agree with President Obama that an active diplomacy with all stakeholders is what the world needs.

From our side, fragile and conflict affected countries, we have to participate with a more active engagement in solving our internal problems, to be able to be ourselves in an united effort to change the world.

And so, we must recognise that no one else will stand up for the interests of people from fragile and conflict affected countries except for ourselves. If we stand alone we have no voice and can be ignored, but together we can speak with legitimacy and credibility.

This is most important as the world decides on the post 2015 global development agenda.

We have learnt from our experience with the Millennium Development Goals that resilience and progress in fragile and conflict affected countries cannot be achieved with a development agenda based on general and standard assumptions.

There is no grand narrative of social progress that works in all countries regardless of their context, their history and their culture. There is no single solution, or perfect model or even a checklist of actions, which is transferable from one country to the next. Despite the focus of the development agenda continually changing, as each new failure is recognised, extreme poverty persists... while we see trillions of dollars spent in military interventions, to impose democracy.

It may not be convenient for global institutions, or high profile people or political movements to admit, but we cannot achieve global development goals unless we first achieve peace in fragile countries. And we cannot achieve peace in fragile countries unless the people of those countries lead and own the peace building process, as the only way to build the state and develop the Nation.

While this may all be self evident to all of us here it has also been proven by the results. Not one low-income fragile or conflict affected country has yet achieved a single Millennium Development Goal. And while over one and a half billion people live in areas affected by fragility, conflict or organised criminal violence, and with conflict causing human, social and economic costs that last for generations, the global development agenda is failing to properly address the challenges of our countries.

The Millennium Development Goals did not focus enough on reaching people in fragile countries – in our countries – and they failed to recognise the devastating consequences of conflict on development.

I was invited to participate, in the coming weeks, in an international gathering in London, to campaign against “sexual violence in conflicts”.

For me, while I support this campaign, I have to say that it will be a waste of time and money, because the real cause of the problem is the conflict itself, the war itself, the violence itself.

If the real issue is not addressed, we continue to see the international community pledging for billions of dollars to spend in humanitarian assistance, without solving the problem.

Last March, in a Defense Dialogue in Jakarta, I challenged the international community to produce a report on who or which country is being benefitted with the sale of sophisticated weapons to groups, militias and rebels.

This is a real problem to be addressed, not only the consequences of the conflict.

And this problem belongs to us – we have to play our role by influencing and helping all the stakeholders to seat at the same table and to discuss with openness, frankness, and honesty to safeguard the interests of our people.

We saw for ourselves in Timor-Leste how widespread conflict can wipe out years of development progress. And we learnt how important it was for peace building and State building efforts to be guided by the realities of our national context.

That is why I urge the g7+ family members to work together to make sure the post 2015 global development agenda does not again stay silent on the needs and importance of fragile and conflict affected nations.

We must make sure that we are not left behind and that our voices are heard as the world decides on the direction and focus of the international development agenda.

The new proposed Sustainable Development Goals, which are to set targets for the coming 15 years, will determine the allocation of hundreds of billions of dollars and the focus of global development efforts. It is vital that we push for targets that will actually make a difference for our people.

Brothers and sisters,

Please let me finish by stressing the importance of formalising the arrangements of the g7+.

We must make sure that we have the institutional strength and capacity to unite together and to properly pursue our agenda. We must be resilient.

The g7+ has brought us together in solidarity to speak with a common voice to the international community. It gives us the chance to actively participate in the global development dialogue, which has been largely controlled by the donor nations.

To continue to pursue, and advocate, an independent agenda, in an often hostile environment, we need the strength of an institutional backbone. It is only with a

standing organisational structure that we will have the capacity to properly and professionally advocate for change.

That is why I commend and support the initiative of developing a g7+ charter and working to institutionalise the g7+ secretariat.

It is in this way that we can fully develop and pursue a new vision of alternative possibilities for the international development agenda and for our countries.

Brothers and sisters,

I urge us all to work with dedication and purpose over the two days of this Ministerial Meeting. We must agree on a plan of action to guide the future agenda of the g7+ and ensure results for our peoples.

And I would like to give thanks again to the Togolese Government for hosting us and for their warm hospitality.

Thank you very much.

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão

29 May 2013