



**P R I M E
M I N I S T E R**

**KEY NOTE ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER OF
THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE
KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO
AT THE HIGH-LEVEL MINISTERIAL LUNCH MEETING ON PEACE AND
CAPABLE INSTITUTIONS AS STAND-ALONE GOALS IN THE POST-2015
DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**

New York

22 September 2014

Distinguished guests
Ladies and gentlemen,

We are all here because we are committed to advancing human development, eradicating poverty and securing a sustainable future.

The world took a great step forward in 2000 when the United Nations agreed on the Millennium Development Goals.

The MDGs focused the global development effort on achieving eight goals that addressed poverty, education, gender, child mortality, maternal health, disease, environmental sustainability and development funding. Since the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals we have experienced unprecedented human progress.

We have seen hundreds of millions of people lifted from poverty, and improved health and education outcomes across many countries of the world.

However, it is important to note, that much of this progress is not because of the global development effort, but because of the rise of Asia and, in particular, of China.

It is even more important to note, that there are still 2.2 billion people living in poverty in fragile and conflict affected nations - nations that will not achieve even a single Millennium Development Goal by 2015.

The common factor in many of the nations left behind, despite the MDG initiative, is conflict. Sometimes a truth is so obvious that it is easily overlooked. The truth we have learned through bitter experience in Timor-Leste is that you must have peace - before you can even begin to rebuild a state.

Ladies and gentlemen, there was not a Millennium Development Goal that addressed this fundamental truth.

We must ensure we do not ignore the obvious, as we work together to formulate the post 2015 development agenda.

I am very pleased to see that a peace related goal is one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals suggested by the Open Working Group.

Sustainable Development Goal 16 is to: "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels."

This is a very welcome move, but I believe it should be Sustainable Development Goal number 1, as none of the other 16 goals will be achievable without peace and effective state institutions.

Let me share with you some hard 'truths' we learned in Timor-Leste to explain what I mean.

Firstly, while we have made remarkable progress in many areas, we are not on track to reach the targets set under even one of the Millennium Development Goals. This is perhaps in part, because we are a very young nation. We are younger even than the Millennium

Development Goals, having only achieved our independence in 2002 after a war of resistance that lasted nearly a quarter of a century.

But it is also because following independence, and despite extensive assistance from the international community, we found ourselves trapped in a cycle of violence and unrest. In 2006, we faced our greatest crisis as sections of our police and army resorted to armed conflict and took us to the brink of civil war. The crisis wiped out years of development progress and we realised that our problem was not that we were poor but that our institutions were weak

Children stopped going to school, health clinics were deserted because people were too scared to make the journey to the clinic, our economy was stagnating because the government went into shut down and international investors fled. We had 150,000 people living as displaced people in their own country because they were too scared to go back to their villages.

After much national reflection, we decided we had to make our number one priority the peaceful resolution of our differences. We realised that there can be no development if there is chaos. We realised that without peace, we would betray the dreams of all those who died in our quest for independence. And we realised that without peace, we would be failing our children.

So we started a dialogue. We convinced our rebel soldiers in the mountains to surrender peacefully. Our friends here at the United Nations said it would take a decade but within two years, the tents were gone and our people had all returned home to their villages.

And we began to rebuild our State institutions. We still have a long way to go. But you only have to compare Dili of eight years ago with the Díli of today to know we are on the right track and that we have made remarkable progress.

Ladies and gentlemen

As we embarked upon the process of consolidating peace and building our institutions we discovered that our experience was not unique. There were other nations around the world which were fragile, or affected by conflict, that were not on track to achieve a single Millennium Development Goal.

We came together to speak with one voice as the g7+ group of fragile and conflict affected nations. The g7+ now represents 20 nations that have learnt, through bitter experience that a global development framework will not work without a focus on peace building and State building.

Sadly, the crisis in South Sudan is the most recent example of the hope of development progress being destroyed by conflict, and the failure of state institutions.

And then there is the Ebola crisis gripping West African nations that highlights the critical need for capable institutions to address what could become a global health crisis.

I want to state here that Timor-Leste will contribute \$1 million to assist the West African g7+ member nations dealing with the Ebola crisis.

And we see disturbing events in the Middle East unfold which prove the need for peace and properly functioning governments.

We also have to ask the question – who profits from conflict in developing nations? The answer of course, is ultimately those corporations that manufacture and sells the arms. We need some collective action in the United Nations to properly monitor and investigate who profits from conflict.

Ladies and gentlemen,

If we are serious about having sustainable development goals that will have a transformative impact on human development and global peace and security, then we need a stand-alone goal that addresses peace building and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions.

I urge the international community to embrace this goal so we can ensure that no nations, and no people, are left behind by the global development agenda.

And so, as we look into the future, I hope that securing global, regional and national peace will be our consuming agenda.

Because there can be no sustainable development without peace.

Thank you very much.

22 September 2014
Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão