



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

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER OF  
THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE KAY RALA XANANA  
GUSMÃO AT THE OPENING SESSION OF THE 10<sup>TH</sup> WORLD ISLAMIC  
ECONOMIC FORUM**

**Dubai  
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Palácio do Governo,  
Avenida Presidente Nicolau Lobato,  
Dili, Timor-Leste

The Honourable Dato' Sri Najib Tun Abdul Razak, Prime Minister of Malaysia and Patron of the World Islamic Economic Forum Foundation

His Highness Sheikh Mohammad, Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai

His Excellency Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of Kazakhstan

His Excellency Md Abdul Hamid, President, People's Republic of Bangladesh

His Excellency Danny Faure, Vice President, Republic of Seychelles

His Excellency Xavier Bettel, Prime Minister, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

His Excellency Dr. Ahmad Mohamed Ali, President, Islamic Development Bank

The Honourable Tun Musa Hitam, Chairman, WIEF Foundation

Excellencies

Distinguished participants

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamu'alaikum. May peace be upon you.

First of all, I would like to express my sincere thanks to His Highness, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai, for inviting me to participate in this international event and for the warm hospitality given to me and to my delegation.

I also commend my Southeast Asian good friend, the Honourable Dato' Sri Najib Tun Abdul Razak, Prime Minister of Malaysia, for his ongoing support of this important Forum and my respect to the former Prime Minister of Malaysia and Founder of the WIEF, the Honourable Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

It is indeed a great honour and privilege to address this esteemed audience, today, at the 10th World Islamic Economic Forum.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Timor-Leste is a small and very young nation, in the crossroad of Asia and the Pacific. The Portuguese came to my country 500 years ago, in search of sandalwood and spices. As a result, today we are a predominantly Catholic country with strong cultural ties to Portugal.

My country is half of an island, with the other half belonging to Indonesia, a country with the largest Muslim population in the world. In 1975, following Portugal's decision to withdraw from all its colonies, our country was invaded by Indonesia, with military support from western countries. A difficult 24 year struggle began as we fought for our independence and our freedom.

We fought a war across our land, but, even with a loss of more than 200 thousand lives in a population of less than 1 million, never once did we use religion or ethnicity or culture, as a tool to provoke fear or preach hatred.

In 1999, after the fall of the Indonesian military regime, our people voted for independence. And in 2002, we became the newest nation of the world. Our first

Government was led by Prime Minister Dr. Mari bin Ahmude Alkatiri, a Muslim Timorese who campaigned tirelessly, during decades of exile, for our rights to self-determination.

When we achieved our freedom, even though we were desperately poor and without infrastructure or social services, we made reconciliation with Indonesia our number one priority. It wasn't easy as we had to embrace forgiveness; but both nations decided to purposefully look forward, rather than back.

I have come today, at a time of global upheaval and conflict, to share with you our story of reconciliation and friendship. It is a story of hope, and the promise of partnership between the Muslim and the non-Muslim world.

As parts of the world are torn apart by intolerance and vengeance, Indonesia and Timor-Leste stand out as a shining example of reconciliation and peace building, and as model for partnerships between Muslim and non-Muslim nations. We have proved that while it may be easier to exploit differences and to feed fear and provoke hostility, real courage is to forgive and to forge relationships of friendship and cooperation.

Excellencies  
Distinguished participants  
Ladies and gentlemen

Timor-Leste is also fortunate, like many countries in this region, to be rich in petroleum resources.

Being 12 years old, we face many challenges and are still one of the poorest countries in our region, which is why we are determined to manage our petroleum resources, prudently and transparently, to develop our country and to save for future generations.

This transparency has not been a barrier to growing our economy. Since I came to office in 2007, Timor-Leste has enjoyed, on average, double digit economic growth rates. In 2005, we created a sovereign wealth fund, the Petroleum Fund, with an opening balance of \$205 million. Timor-Leste was the third in the world and the first in the whole of Asia to fully comply with the EITI (Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative). From 2012, we began diversifying the investment and, in three years to last August, we achieved a return of 2.7 billion dollars. Our Petroleum Fund is now valued at around \$17 billion dollars and is growing every day.

I learnt that Dubai started to develop, back in the late 70s. In 2011, we established our Strategic Development Plan and we envisage that, in 2030, Timor-Leste will have an educated, healthy and prosperous population, transforming the current low income country, dependent on oil, to a medium-high income nation with a diversified economy.

Although being the opposition leader, Dr. Mari Alkatiri, representing our State, is in charge of a very new, complex and challenging process, which is to establish a Special Economic Zone in one of our regions, so as to push forward the development of the country for a less oil-dependent economy.

We are using the interest from the Petroleum Fund to address the urgent needs in social services and we are investing in major infrastructure projects including a national port, airport and a road network. Our most exciting project, and the one where we hope to forge partnerships with many of you here today, is the development of our south coast into a regional petroleum sector hub.

This development includes building a Supply Base, with new port facilities and an airport, a refinery with related oil and gas industries and a Liquefied Natural Gas plant. In all these three areas, there will be also modern cities to respond to the business demand. We are looking for international partners and we need international expertise. We have already reached out to our close neighbours, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia and Malaysia, and now we reach out to you.

Many of the nations represented at this Forum have had decades of experience in the petroleum sector, and like you, we believe that business partnerships can become genuine bridges towards peace and prosperity between the Muslim and non-Muslim world, as we understood is one of the World Islamic Economic Forum's guiding principles.

Excellencies  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Regrettably, we are here at a time of rising of racism, intolerance, extremism and conflict in many other parts of the world, where, for poor and forcibly displaced populations, peace is but a violent nightmare.

Dozens of millions are suffering from the horrors of the war, from the absolute cruelty and killings, from exclusion and from the countless abuses perpetrated, in this century of globalization alone.

This brings me to an issue of business that I want to raise – peace, as a pre-condition for global economic prosperity. Only, in periods of peace, can the world make great progress.

Across the globe, we see fragile and conflict affected nations struggling to maintain order and improve the lives of their people. Not only are these nations a drag on international economic growth but the despair and marginalisation, of their people, contribute to intolerance and extremism.

That is why Timor-Leste is engaged in partnership with countries that are, or have been, affected by conflict and are facing the transition to the stage of Statebuilding and development. From Haiti (in the Caribbean) to the Democratic Republic of Congo, from the Solomon Islands (in the Pacific) to Sierra Leone, from Yemen to Liberia, from the Central African Republic to South Sudan, from Afghanistan to Timor-Leste, we are a group of 20 nations, called the 'g7+', and we are working to make sure our voices are heard in the UN debates on the post-2015 development agenda.

The 'g7+' is advocating, for the new set of Sustainable Development Goals, to include a stand-alone goal on 'peaceful and inclusive societies, rule of law and capable institutions.' This is because we know, from bitter experience, that no country can have development, unless it reaches and enjoys peace and stability.

And, without peace and stability, there can be no true and fair business partnerships or sustained economic progress, because it is already the policy of the big multinationals, with full support of developed countries, to take advantage of the situation of instability in poor nations, to put pressure to make dishonest deals and to commit fraud towards the underdeveloped societies.

Excellencies  
Distinguished participants  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Dubai is proud for its reputation of being the 'gateway between the east and west'. And the important shift of the World Islamic Economic Forum is to open up the Forum to include Muslim communities beyond OIC countries and other non-Muslim communities across the globe.

Unfortunately, we continue to witness that, after the impunity of the greed and corruption of the international financial system, which caused the Global Financial Crisis, the faltering economic recovery is only benefiting the very perpetrators of the financial meltdown. And what we can see is also the inexorable economic decay of Europe, with high unemployment and crushing sovereign debts. This week's reaction by the United Kingdom's Prime Minister in refusing to pay an extra €2.1 billion to the European Union budget, and demanding EU reform, is a very symptomatic one.

Despite all of this economic turmoil, the tendency of world politics today is to immediately stigmatize individuals, groups and countries, as the enemy of the free world, measured against the weight of their own national interests. The world leaders, ideologically hostage to their false doctrine, are keen to promote war, outside their countries, and to impose their military and economic hegemony.

These misguided approaches have resulted in unsuccessful waste of money, which have not addressed the core political and social grievances in so many countries in the world, but, instead, have helped to increase mistrust, exclusion, exasperation and intolerance.

These misguided approaches are unable to respect the sentiment of people, or groups or tribes and it has already proved to inevitably create enemies and fuel radicalism that leads to extremism.

The real problem is that nobody is able to stop the conflicts and the world decision makers are unwilling to do so. What we are witnessing is the decay of morals, the decay of values and the total lack of humanism.

Excellencies  
Ladies and gentlemen,

This Forum plays a critical role in encouraging dialogue and trust between people, and nations, in the interests of our shared prosperity. It recognises that, through business dialogue, we transcend religious and political differences and build bridges between different cultures, religions and peoples.

This great city of Dubai provides the best example of what can be achieved with an inspired vision and bringing people together in business and in friendship.

I trust that during this Forum, as we discuss financial and economic trends and ideas, we remember that international fragility denies us all the opportunities of new global prosperity through international business cooperation.

I had the pleasure to chair, in a one year term, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia-Pacific (ESCAP), in Bangkok. It is said that we are entering the Asian Century, but the big problem identified, in the Asia-Pacific spectrum, was inequalities within countries and between countries, all of them in desperate need of infrastructure, power and telecommunications, as well as agriculture, water, education and health.

The issue is that the well-known international financial institutions are not able to help the Least Developed Countries, either because of lack of funds or because of the difficult and unreasonable criteria that LDCs cannot comply with.

Last July, we all heard, from Brazil, about BRICS and, I should say, it opened a mindset of opportunities to many poor countries. But, last week, 21 countries signed a memorandum to establish the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), which is being led by China.

I believe this created an important momentum, which many LDCs were waiting so long for. I hope it can bring hope, to the hopeless. When I look at the GDPs of successful countries, when I open the pages of FORBES to admire the daring of the entrepreneurs, when I read how people are striving to improve their capital gains, when I see figures of the net profits, I cannot avoid thinking that millions of people, like us, die of hunger, misery, disease and deprivation.

The international standards are not, anymore, trusted as they should be, mainly because the wealthy and developed countries have violated their values. Some scream at others to respect international law, while dishonestly turning their own back to that principle, when they deal with fragile and weak countries.

I hope this 10<sup>th</sup> World Islamic Economic Forum can address also the issue of South-South cooperation, in a way that reduces conflicts and inspires hope among the vulnerable and poor countries and their populations.

International leaders and national leaders, from any political faith and all religious beliefs, from civil society to academia, must change their way of looking at the problems in the developing world, which is the necessary condition to build trust and to minimize hostilities.

And, I believe, the business sector must start thinking of its role in this global insecurity and in this world's abject inequality, by joining hands to find a common ground between countries and between diverse ethnicities and religious groups.

The world needs more humanism, conviction, dedication and courage, from all parts of society, to promote a true alliance of civilizations and recognition of a shared humanity and a common future.

And I urge you all to keep in mind the great benefits of cooperation between the Muslim and the non-Muslim world and the experience of Timor-Leste and Indonesia in pursuing reconciliation and partnership to realise our shared prosperity and solidarity.

Humanity needs you all, here, to project and promote innovative mechanisms of dialogue and reconciliation, to build peace. The World needs you all, here, to establish a gateway of true partnership and cooperation, towards an inclusive development for all human beings.

Thank you very much.

28 October 2014

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão  
Prime Minister of Timor-Leste