



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

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE
DR. RUI MARIA DE ARAÚJO
ON THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION**

Dili, Timor-Leste

20 February 2015

Commissioner of the Anti-Corruption Commission

Deputy Commissioners of the Anti-Corruption Commission

Excellencies

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to be able to speak on this special occasion of the fifth anniversary of the Anti-Corruption Commission in my first week as Prime Minister.

This anniversary is significant not only to celebrate the achievements of the Anti-Corruption Commission but to affirm the importance to our country of its future as a robust institution with strong powers to fight corruption.

The Anti-Corruption Commission is one of the key institutions of the State that supports good governance. It is a body independent of government that reports to the National Parliament.

This is only my fourth day as Prime Minister. One of the first tasks of the new Government will be to lodge declarations of assets with the Court and the Anti-Corruption Commission. I intend to personally deliver these on behalf of all members of government.

When I leave this office, I will lodge another declaration of assets that I promise will show I have not profited from my position.

And when I leave this office, I want Timor-Leste to be recognised as a world leader in open, transparent, accountable and ethical government.

We are already on that pathway thanks to the good work of the Anti-Corruption Commission.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The establishment of the Anti-Corruption Commission was a significant achievement of the Fourth Constitutional Government.

Passage of the legislation followed an extensive period of public consultation throughout Timor-Leste, comprehensive discussions with civil society, the release of a discussion paper and a number of conferences and workshops.

From the public consultations it was clear that not only was corruption a big concern of the Timorese people but that there was overwhelming support for an Anti-Corruption Commission.

I can confirm that this strong support remains today.

But it was only five years ago that the Anti-Corruption Commission was nothing but words on paper. While legislation had passed the National Parliament there was no building, no staff, no resources and no investigators.

Like all Timorese institutions, the Anti-Corruption Commission had to be built from scratch.

I would like to take this opportunity to give credit to the first Commissioner of the Anti-Corruption Commission, Adérito Soares, who brought this institution to life with his commitment, his intellect and his strength of character. He deserves much

credit for his service to the nation and for the landmark reached today.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Corruption has a terrible impact on society. It hurts the poor by increasing the cost of living and reducing the standard of living conditions. It involves the theft of public money that should be spent on improving public services including health and education.

Corruption also impedes economic development. Businesses will avoid investing where there is corruption and this means a loss of jobs and a loss of shared wealth.

And importantly, corruption destroys trust in the State which makes peace building and State building so much more difficult to achieve.

Our people did not suffer so much, and sacrifice so much, to gain independence only to watch our country slip away in the corruption of our State.

That is why we must make sure that corruption does not pay in Timor-Leste. We must let it be known that those that engage in corrupt behaviour are at risk.

We cannot take half measures or excuse or accept corruption. We cannot let corruption take root in our society.

And so, we need a strong Anti-Corruption Commission that can take firm measures and that has the power to keep Government honest and accountable.

This Government welcomes the Anti-Corruption Commission and its work and I commit that we will provide it with the support and cooperation that it needs to effectively fight corruption in our country.

I urge the Commission to continue its good work not only in investigating corruption but also in taking action to prevent corruption through education campaigns and the targeting of vulnerable service areas.

And I say to all civil servants, and to all Timorese people, that corruption will not be tolerated by our legal system or by our country.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today's event gives me the opportunity to mention the importance of good governance. That is the importance of government that is honest, accountable, open and transparent and has ethical leadership.

We must understand that the demands of good governance are not a hindrance to development but rather result in better performance and better results.

All of us want this government to be focussed on better service delivery and a better quality of works from a responsive and accountable administration.

That is why I will demand integrity in the government and why we need independent bodies with the power to fight corruption.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank Commissioner Adérito Antonio Pinto Tilman for inviting me to speak today on this important occasion for the Commission.

I commend his dedication and service to the nation in leading the Anti-Corruption Commission with great skill, knowledge and integrity.

I know that under his leadership the Commission is well placed to provide another five years of service to the Timorese people.

I would also like to thank the Deputy Commissioners and the staff of the Anti-Corruption Commission for their commitment and urge you to keep working hard for your country.

The Anti-Corruption Commission has made a significant contribution to better governance in our country. I expect this good work to continue so that we can build a nation recognised as a world leader in open, transparent, accountable and ethical government.

Thank you very much.