



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

**SPEECH BY
HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER
DR RUI MARIA DE ARAÚJO
ON THE OPENING SESSION OF THE EIGHTH MEETING OF
THE CPLP MINISTERS OF TOURISM**

“Tourism and Globalization”

**Dili Convention Centre
17 July 2015**



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

Your Excellencies

The Ministers, Vice-Ministers and Secretaries of State for Tourism from the CPLP Member States

The Illustrious Members of Parliament and Fellow Members of Government

Your Excellencies

The Members from the CPLP Member State Delegations

The Members from the Diplomatic Corps

The Representatives from the World Tourism Organization

The Representatives from the CPLP Executive Secretariat

The Representatives from Civil Society

Illustrious guests

Ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to Timor-Leste! It is a great pleasure to receive you in our country and we hope that you will feel entirely at home here. It is also a fortunate coincidence for Timor-Leste to be hosting our brothers and sisters from the CPLP on the day when our Community turns 19 years old. As one of the youngest members of this family, Timor-Leste is very happy to receive each and every one of you. This is the best way in which we can celebrate another year of existence.

It is a great honour for me to take part in the opening of this ministerial meeting bringing the CPLP representatives from the tourism sector together in Dili, so that we may discuss and share ideas and experiences on the best practices to be implemented in this strategic sector that is so important to the economic development we all seek.

Presently, talking about tourism implies talking about globalization. The globalization process has opened borders and consequently led to various transformations within countries and societies. It has provided a series of interactions across borders and nations leading to the opening of markets, the increase of economic and financial transactions, the enhancement of information and communication technologies, new political dynamics and the expansion of contacts and relationships between peoples.

While it entails challenges, globalization also creates development opportunities. Greater human mobility, the strengthening of relationships between citizens and a greater exchange of products, goods and services has enabled economic development, which, in turn, has made a great contribution towards improving the living situation of all people. Globalization has also resulted in increased international tourism and in the reduction of cultural barriers between the persons visiting and the persons being visited.

Tourism today is nothing like it was a few years ago, and this is thanks, in good part, to these more porous borders. In today's globalized world, tourism has become more competitive. We all know that this is a social activity that generates revenue, employment and investment opportunities, growing local economies and lowering poverty levels.

However, in order for this sector to grow a country must complement its attractions with a good dose of investment in companies, infrastructure and human resources. This is particularly important in emerging countries where tourism is considered a key economic activity. States need to meet the requirements of market supply and demand, and the therefore States must formulate policies to create conditions that enable development, as well as attracting national and international investors that care about the wellbeing and the living quality of the people.

Nevertheless, one must not lose sight of the importance of distributing economic and social development and of promoting tourism as a social phenomenon. The population has to be the first concern, so as to nurture inclusive and responsible tourism that does not create inequalities. Thus, we need to think about sustainable models such as ecotourism and community tourism, without losing sight of environmental issues and climate change, which are a true threat against this sector and against everyone's way of life.

We need to nurture the unique geographic and cultural characteristics of peoples and locations, because in today's globalized world tourists crave knowledge and cultural enrichment. As such, it is essential to value local features, providing tourists with a real daily experience of the populations and the places that they visit.

Evidently, in order for tourism to continue being a factor of economic growth and development, it is necessary to invest – particularly in people!

Your Excellencies

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030 seeks to develop a diversified economy, with tourism being one of the three key areas. We believe that development in this sector will create more employment and more investment opportunities, while preserving and promoting our identity.

Supported by our history, our traditional culture and the way our rural communities express themselves through handicraft and music, we want to expand our cultural tourism so as to provide those visiting us with unique and unforgettable opportunities, within a true spirit of sharing. As such, we are promoting initiatives that seek to develop community tourism and ecotourism.

We are fortunate and privileged to enjoy a natural scenery, between the sea and the mountains, which is our calling card as can be seen across social media. This natural scenery has been drawing attention and curiosity towards our country.

We are still at a very early stage of developing our country's tourism potential. We know that in order to support growth in this sector we need to continue rehabilitating infrastructure such as the Dili airport, the main tourism routes and even telecommunications. These will be the first steps to be taken in making Timor-Leste an

attractive destination for those who enjoy ecological, marine, historical and adventure tourism.

For several years now we have been holding internationally acclaimed sporting and cultural events, with growing numbers of participants. We intend to continue nurturing these initiatives, which in addition to attracting tourists to our country, also contribute to drawing attention to Timor-Leste. We want to expand our participation and our activities promoting Timor-Leste as a tourism destination internationally. Since May we have been present at the Milan World Expo.

The Government will also be drafting the “Tourism Masterplan”, which will feature the physical, infrastructure recovery and work execution projects that will correspond to the eastern, central and western tourism areas. These areas include pristine beaches, Portuguese architecture and cultural constructions, historical places, natural parks coffee plantations where we produce our famous “Timor Coffee”, etc.

Timor-Leste has been increasing the number of visitors entering our country, and consequently we have been investing in the capacity-building of our human resources and other important stakeholders in the tourism industry, including within the communities. We still have many challenges ahead of us, but we are committed to breathing new life into this sector so as to improve the socio-economic standard of our people.

Your Excellencies
Ladies and gentlemen,

Timor-Leste chose “CPLP and Globalization” as the theme for its Presidency precisely because we wanted to create more robust economic and business dynamics within our Community, so as to enable more development and better living conditions for our peoples.

The international landscape is presently characterized, on one hand, by a globalized, multipolar and increasingly interdependent world, and by the increase of Asia’s gravitational weight on the other. Both these factors contribute towards our reflection on our position within the region and the world.

Two of the world’s three largest economies are located in Asia. Their growth has boosted the economy and contributed to the reduction of poverty throughout the world. We must make use of the economic potential of Asia, where the population seeks greater tourism opportunities and attractions, enabling us to nurture strategies and partnerships likely to provide us with economic and social advantages. We must make use of our positioning and catapult the CPLP as a platform for attracting tourists and tourism investments.

According to a study by the World Tourism Organization, from 2015, the countries with emerging economies will become a preferred destinations more so than countries in more developed economies. This same study, which makes predictions up until 2030, shows that the Asia-Pacific region will have the largest increase in the number of tourists. In 2014, the Asia-Pacific ranked second in terms of growth and revenue generation.

As such, we have the opportunity to position our CPLP family within the competitive international market. If there is one thing that CPLP countries have in common, it is the wealth of natural beauty, culture, history, hospitality of our peoples, beaches, handicraft, music and dance. Tourists are increasingly seeking cultural enrichment and closer contact with local populations. This gives us the opportunity to develop community tourism and ecotourism.

Additionally we have our language and our common values. Although these are not luxury resorts, they are equally as rich in effect, as a reflection of the strong cross-cultural bonds between our peoples and those who visit us. And if there is one thing we should make use of, it is the characteristics of our peoples – their authenticity and simplicity - which fosters a natural empathy with other peoples and cultures, enticing them to visit us again. In a fortunate coalescence of factors, the Portuguese language and our historical and natural characteristics should be the factors that will catapult tourism within the CPLP.

Your Excellencies
Ladies and gentlemen,

The work ahead of you today, namely concerning the Action Plan 2015-2017 and the Dili Declaration, will continue to define actions contributing to the development of beneficial cooperation between our States, so as to promote our common agenda and interests.

Our efforts should be channelled into promoting CLPL countries as a common tourism space, in order to boost economic and social development for our peoples. CPLP tourism should be promoted both within our countries and internationally, so as to strengthen not just this sector, but also the Community itself as a whole.

The spirit of cooperation that characterizes us will also enable Timor-Leste to benefit from the knowledge and experience of countries like Angola and Portugal, with which we will be signing bilateral Memorandums of Understanding in the areas of training, capacity building and technical assistance.

I would also like to highlight the first CPLP Tourism Fair, whose Terms of Reference will also be discussed. I trust that this fair will continue being promoted, together with the meetings of the Ministers of Tourism, as a prime event for promoting CPLP tourism destinations.

Lastly, I want to thank the World Tourism Organization for the support it has provided the CPLP in this sector. I also want to thank Mozambique for the effort and the work done during the time it held the Tourism brief and wish the Minister of Tourism, Art and Culture, who will be receiving this brief shortly, great success in leading this sector.

I wish you all a safe return home!

Dr Rui Maria de Araújo
17 July 2015