



ITLOS REGIONAL WORKSHOP, BALI, 27-28 AUGUST 2015

**STATEMENT BY H.E. JOAQUIM DA FONSECA, AMBASSADOR
TO THE UK AND CHIEF NEGOTIATOR**

May I first thank the organisers of these three days of events, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, and the Korean Maritime Institute, and commend them for the excellent organisation and support.

We are grateful to have been invited to this Seminar and Workshop. The presentations and discussions during the last three days have been very useful for the participants from Timor-Leste.

As you all are aware, Timor-Leste is a coastal State. The maritime areas surrounding our country and the resources they contain are important for the livelihood of the people of Timor-Leste and support the economic development of our country.

As well as their economic importance, the maritime zones surrounding Timor-Leste also carry an important symbolic and political significance. The people of Timor-Leste attribute a great importance to the delimitation of permanent maritime boundaries as a step in securing our full sovereignty as an independent state.

As you heard yesterday from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Her Excellency Ms. Retno Marsudi, the President of the Republic of Indonesia and the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste have agreed to commence negotiations to delimit maritime boundaries between the two countries. We look forward to engaging with our Indonesian friends and counterparts in a spirit of cooperation and good faith to achieve an agreement that is positive for our countries.

We were encouraged by the words of the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Dr Hasan Wirayuda, at the opening of the seminar, when he said that Indonesia should approach negotiations

with a view to settle boundaries at a time when we enjoy the best of relationships.

Currently, the maritime boundaries between Timor-Leste and Australia in the Timor Sea have also not been delineated. Hydrocarbon resources in the Timor Sea are currently being exploited on the basis of temporary arrangements through several treaties.

Timor-Leste remains committed to honouring its international obligation to delimit the maritime boundaries, including with Australia in the Timor Sea. We hope to secure the same commitment from Australia. With Australia's withdrawal from the compulsory jurisdiction of ITLOS and ICJ on maritime boundary related disputes, the only option available to Timor-Leste to secure maritime boundaries with Australia is through negotiations.

Timor-Leste strongly believes that international law and the mechanisms for their application could provide an effective means for peaceful settlement of disputes, especially when parties are in an asymmetric relationship. We are committed to make the best use of such mechanisms to achieve the final delimitation of maritime boundaries with Australia.

We would also suggest that in future workshops that we would benefit from a simulation of the work and procedures undertaken by ITLOS in hearing international disputes. Thank you again for this excellent event and the good work of the organisers.

Thank you.