



**PRIMEIRO  
MINISTRO**

**SPEECH GIVEN BY HIS EXCELLENCY, THE PRIME MINISTER  
OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE  
DR. RUI MARIA DE ARAÚJO,  
AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE REGARDING THE  
"20 YEARS AFTER THE AWARD OF THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE TO TWO  
TIMORESE SONS"**

**"CITIZENSHIP, PEACE AND WELFARE"**

**MNEC, Díli  
October 7th, 2016**



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

## Excellencies

The Nobel Peace Prizes, His Excellency the Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo and His Excellency Mr José Ramos-Horta, also former President of the Republic  
Nobel Peace, Physics, Economy and Medicine Prizes

## Distinguished

Representatives of the Diplomatic Corps and International Agencies  
Representatives of Religious Denominations  
Representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations  
Speakers and moderators

## Ladies and Gentleman

First of all, I would like to thank the invitation and express the honour to address such a distinguished audience.

I would also like to thank the organizing committee, and Her Excellency, the First Lady, and His Excellency, Mr José Ramos-Horta, for this international conference with the purpose of celebrating the 20 years from the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to two Timorese sons, paying due tribute to His Excellency the Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo and His Excellency the former President of the Republic Mr José Ramos-Horta, which assembled here today - since the formal inaugural sitting until the discussion panel - distinguished guests to talk about "Citizenship, Peace and Welfare".

I take this opportunity to wish a speedy recovery to His Excellency, the Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo who, due to health reasons, could not be here today. I also welcome the guests who have come to our country from afar and wish them a pleasant stay in Timor-Leste.

Today's event, precisely on the same day where the Nobel Peace Prize for 2016 will be announced in Oslo, could not have been held in a more appropriate occasion. I recall with satisfaction the year of 1996, where the Norway Nobel Committee has awarded His Excellency, the Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo and His Excellency, the former President of the Republic Mr José Ramos-Horta with the Nobel Peace Prize.

To receive a Nobel Prize, whatever area it might be, shall always be a source of pride. But to have two brothers, two Timorese sons, awarded with the Nobel Peace Prize, was a twofold source of pride and hope. These two brothers worked tirelessly to find a fair and peaceful settlement of the conflict lived by us all.

The Bishop Ximenes Belo was always a strong advocate of our inalienable rights as a people, and always defended human rights, freedom and values such as solidarity and conflict resolution through dialogue. Never turned away from the principles he believed in, even when his own life was at risk, on several occasions.

Mr José Ramos-Horta brought to the world's attention the acts of cruelty committed against us. He was relentless in defending our right to self-determination. Our voice, our cause, started to reflect in the international community.

The award of this Prize, apart from representing the international recognition of the exceptional work done by these two leading figures, had an invaluable impact for us, Timorese people, and in our self-determination struggle. It has allowed us to start negotiations, which gave us the opportunity to conduct a Popular Consultation and, in 2002, to restore our independence.

## Excellencies

After our independence, we have come a long way in terms of State-building and Peace-building. It was crucial for our country and our people to be able to re-establish peace and stability and, at the same time, to create and develop the State and its institutions. To move forward, our people needed a safe and peaceful environment, along with a guaranteed access to services such as education, health and justice, for example, in order to be able to build trust among the population and to fulfil the commitment to respect the human rights and democratic values defended by us.

Everyday, we keep our path towards the consolidation, strengthening and sustainability of peace, but also regarding an inclusive economic development, including sustainable means of life, effective use and management of natural resources, which lead to improved living conditions of the population.

One of the first important steps we gave was towards reconciliation with Indonesia. We established the Commission for Friendship, Truth and Reconciliation as the necessary starting point, deemed as key to build peace and currently, in order to continue it, we are starting preparations to establish an institute, so to implement one of the recommendations listed in the CAVR Report.

We strongly believe that peace, justice and sound institutions are essential for a sustainable development and that is why we highlighted the Sixteenth Sustainable Development Goal, approved last year by the United Nations. Economic growth is highly hampered if they are not ensured.

Therefore, peace, development, human rights and democracy have a strong connection between them. I have already stated this in other occasions, but I shall state it again "without peace and stability, we cannot think about development and vice versa". And without these the respect for human rights and democratic values cannot prevail.

We are aware that the lack of respect for fundamental rights, extreme poverty, discrimination, intolerance and social exclusion give rise to instability and can undermine security, stability and peace. We remain committed to prevent them and we shall work tirelessly to preserve and respect the citizens' rights, freedoms and guarantees.

So, we must keep providing to the people a better access to education and training, to justice and health care, to create conditions that maximise economic growth and development, with more jobs and higher economic power and welfare regarding families. And for the development we aim for to become sustainable, it must be inclusive and based on the joint work by us all.

## Excellencies

It was with an eye on the improvement of living conditions, peace and welfare of the people that the Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030 was drafted and the policies included in the Government Program were set out. Our strategy to improve social welfare, create basic infrastructures, maximize economic development and a better provision of services in order to enable Timor-Leste as a medium-high income country and to "eradicate extreme poverty" until 2030, has begun to have an effect.

Very recent studies regarding economic growth, health and poverty have shown a better position of Timor-Leste, either in national or international terms.

The 2016 Sustainable Economic Development Assessment has ranked Timor-Leste as one of the ten best countries that, between 2006 and 2014, transformed economic growth in welfare of its population, comprising health, education, employment, infrastructures, income, economic stability, civil society, environment and governance.

According to "The Lancet" medical magazine, the peace and stability felt in the country and the strong emphasis in health policies, allowed Timor-Leste to be the country that made further progress regarding the health targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, between 2000 and 2015.

To give you just another example, last week the Ministry of Finance did present the report "Poverty in Timor-Leste 2014". Regarding the national poverty line - associated with the costs to ensure basic needs such as food, housing and non-food items - the percentage of the population living in poverty decreased from 50.4% (in 2007) to 41.8% (in 2014).

This Report also shows that the number of families with access to electricity, sanitation and drinking water increased, as well as the figures regarding children education and health results. Housing quality also improved a great deal, as well as the percentage of population with access to consumable goods.

These are reassuring figures for both the country and the people, which reveal that the implemented policies have led to a true improvement of the living conditions of the people. But we cannot slow down yet and, like the Spanish poet (António Machado) would say, "paths are made by walking".

For all these reasons, to improve living conditions and quality of life, world peace is searched permanently by all people and nations. We as well, from a very early stage and taking into account our own history, were totally aware that peace is a *prerequisite* for

development. And today, as a peaceful country, we also want other countries to enjoy freedom, giving our best contribute, through our experience, to the fragile states of the g7+ Group, and undertaking our commitment with world peace.

## Excellencies

In the current world context, we are faced with a series of world and cross-sectional challenges that give rise to economic instability, maximize inequality and undermine environmental protection, threatening peace and stability.

We want to ensure a sustainable development and future based on democratic principles, where each one of us is called to take part. The transparency of our actions and a more participative democracy are a key contribution. The people have to be an active part and play a role, exercising their citizenship, in terms of decision-making regarding national development, always with peace, development and welfare of the population in mind.

I, therefore, call on young people, as agents of change, as future leaders of our country, that they take part of our national development, that they express themselves through conscious attitudes and behaviours that make a positive difference in the society and the country

The 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, regarding which Timor-Leste is strongly committed, are a good example of what deserves an active and conscious participation. The targets of this Sustainable Development Agenda were established to benefit all world populations, our planet and sustainability, in order to strengthen world peace and the welfare of all people. And I take this opportunity to, in name of the Government, congratulate the great friend, advocate and fighter for the self-determination of the people of Timor-Leste, Mr António Guterres that, for his professional merit and human qualities, was unanimously chosen to lead the organization that has the primary task, among others, to push forward 2030 Agenda and restore peace and stability in many parts of this Planet.

To contribute to the growth and strengthening of these values in our country, can also be seen as our contribute to the world.

The participation of all stakeholders in implementing our growth and development plans not only represents the exercise of their right and duty of citizenship, but is also critical to their success.

## Excellencies

I cannot close this session without congratulating the Timorese people for the conquered peace, surely our most precious asset. Peace, also daily influenced by our attitudes, actions and words, cannot be overlooked in any circumstance, otherwise everything achieved until today, which leads us to a prosperous future, shall be undermined.

I thank the other laureates with the Nobel Peace, Physics, Economy and Medicine Prizes, who, due to the merit of their action and investigation in several areas, did contribute in a major way to the advancements of knowledge, which also serves peace and welfare of the people. Thank you for sharing it with us during these two days! A special greeting and thanks to Former President Joaquim Chissano, a leading figure of the fellow Mozambican nation, which always stood alongside the suffering and self-determination of the Timorese nation.

I would also like to take this opportunity to publicly pay my highest tribute to the selfless fight carried out by our brothers awarded with the Nobel Peace Prize, His Excellency, the Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo and His Eminence, Mr José Ramos-Horta, in name of our cause and that allowed us to be here today.

May they continue to be a source of inspiration and an example to us all!

Many thanks.

October 7th, 2016

Dr. Rui Maria de Araújo