



PRIME  
MINISTER

**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER  
DR RUI MARIA DE ARAÚJO  
AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE NEW FACILITIES OF THE  
“ESCOLA AMIGOS DE JESUS”**

Dili  
04 February 2017

Your Excellencies,

The Speaker of Parliament

The Former Holders of Sovereignty Bodies

The Members of Parliament and Fellow Government Members

The Most Reverend Bishops of Dili, Baucau and Maliana

The Representatives of the Diplomatic Corps

The Most Reverend Father João Felgueiras

The Most Reverend Fathers and Reverend Mothers

The Representatives of Churches and of the Civil Society

Dear parents, teachers, education professionals and students

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am very pleased to join you all in inaugurating the new facilities of the “Escola Amigos de Jesus”.

It is always a joyous occasion when, as a Portuguese poet once said, “God wills, man dreams, the work is born”. And it was because a man dreamed that the “Escola Amigos de Jesus” is (re)born. This man is our cherished friend, Jesuit Priest João Felgueiras, better known to everyone as Father Felgueiras, and for whom I ask a warm round of applause.

Along with his fellow Jesuit Priest José Alves Martins, Father Felgueiras has been a great friend to every Timorese and the People of Timor-Leste and, more importantly, a great “chaplain” in affirming the identity of the Timorese People and Nation. If memory does not fail me, it has been 46 years since Father Felgueiras began to dedicate and commit to serving the Timorese People and Nation, particularly in the area of teaching and training.

Indeed, the School whose new facilities we are inaugurating today is the legacy of the unbreakable will and the persistent educational action by Father Felgueiras, from the Our Lady of Fatima seminary in Dare, to the São José Day School, where I had the undeserved fortune of learning under those two illustrious Jesuits, up to the “embryo” of the “Escola Amigos de Jesus” in 1997, in which many Timorese citizens studied and improved their intellectual capacity.

The educational project of Father Felgueiras never lost momentum. The proof is this very School, which deservedly pays homage to his dedication and his focus on education in our country.

Education is the cornerstone of the development of any society, which is why the education sector continues to be a Government priority. Education is the single most important factor that enables individuals to progress within an inclusive environment of peace, freedom, social justice and democracy. It also makes an ongoing contribution to the reduction of poverty, social exclusion, feelings of injustice, misunderstandings and conflicts.

The Civil Society Support Unit has been working in close collaboration with civil society organisations and churches in order to strengthen their partnerships with the Government. We believe that every civil society representative plays a very important role in monitoring Government policies, thus contributing to improve the living situation of the people.

As such, and in compliance with its goal of supporting education and ensuring teaching and learning conditions and quality, the Civil Society Support Unit has provided financial support to the Friends of Jesus Community Foundation for the expansion of the “Escola Amigos de Jesus”.

This new building, containing laboratories, a library, rooms dedicated to the development of creative arts, a nurse’s office, drinkable water and a recreational area, provides better conditions for students and teachers, which will surely contribute to greater acquisition of knowledge.

The expansion of the “Escola Amigos de Jesus” guarantees the wellbeing of all those who attend it and enables interactive learning. It is also adapted to the new information and communication technologies, thus promoting good pedagogic practices and providing a safe and inclusive environment.

Since the State of Timor-Leste is still young, our civil society organisations play a vital role in terms of educational policies and practises, including as providers of education services.

This School now becomes a centre of excellence; a quality project that is sustainable and whose environmental and functional solutions enable it to lower management and maintenance costs.

It is also a centre of excellence that promotes compulsive school education and that the Government is quite proud of having funded. Let these educational projects of excellence not become castles of exclusiveness for a select few, but rather an oasis among the educational problems faced by the country. Let them be an example for education in our country – education that trains and prepares future Timorese men and women dedicated to serving the People and the Nation, following the example of Father Felgueiras.

I would like to finish by praising and thanking all those who assisted Father Felgueiras in this project. One such man is Father Martins, whom we also hold very dear in our hearts. I want to thank him and all others who, directly or indirectly, contributed to the work we are inaugurating here today and whose legacy will last for generations to come.

I congratulate you all and wish you great success!

Thank you very much.

04 February 2017  
Dr Rui Maria de Araújo