



SPOKESPERSON SIXTH CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT



MEDIA RELEASE

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Government organizes celebrations for the 15th Anniversary of the Restoration of Independence

As the clock hands lined up at midnight the official moment marking the restoration of Timor-Leste's Independence arrived; the 20th of May 2002. Around the globe people gathered to celebrate the end of Timor-Leste's long struggle for self-determination and to herald the restoration of independence, first proclaimed by Francisco Xavier do Amaral on the 28th of November 1975.

On the 20th of May 2002 the largest gathering took place in Tasi-Tolu in Dili where the official ceremony was held and international guests joined Timorese leaders and thousands upon thousands of jubilant citizens to celebrate and honor that historical occasion.

Tomorrow, fifteen years later, celebrations will again take place at Tasi-Tolu along with the inauguration of H.E. Francisco Guterres 'Lu-Olo', who at midnight will be sworn into office as fourth President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.

The Government through the Ministry of State Administration has organized a program of events spanning several days to commemorate the National Day. Events include a special Mass on the morning of the 18th of May, the program at Tasi-Tolu which runs continuously from 6:00pm on the 19th of May to 6:00am on the 20th of May, and the Flag Lowering Ceremony also at Tasi-Tolu on the 20th of May at 4:00pm. The Inauguration of the Statue of the Proclaimer, H.E. Francisco Xavier do Amaral, will take place near the entrance to the Dili Convention Centre, on the 20th of May between 3:30 and 7:00pm.

In addition to these celebrations a major International Conference is to be held at the Dili Convention Centre focusing on the United Nations 2030 Agenda and themed *A Roadmap for SDGs in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States* [22nd-23rd May]. Three associated side events are also being convened: *Economic Diversification in the SDGs Era* [21st May], *Health in the Era of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development* 'Programa Saúde na Família' [23rd May] and a *Side Event on SDG 14, Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development* [23rd May].

Spokesperson, Minister of State Agio Pereira, reflecting on this year's 15th anniversary noted "In fifteen years Timor-Leste has consolidated peace, established the institutions of the state, built functioning health and education systems, constructed essential infrastructure and significantly improved the wellbeing of our



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people. All of this in a post conflict country which literally had to 'start from scratch' and 'rise from the ashes' after 1999. In these next days' he said, 'we celebrate the liberation won by our older brothers and sisters, welcome our new President, reflect on our journey till today and commit ourselves to continue to build and serve our beloved, independent, Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.'"ENDS



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