



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

**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE,
DR. RUI MARIA DE ARAÚJO,
ON THE LAUNCH OF THE BOOK OF
THE 3rd NATIONAL CONGRESS ON EDUCATION**

**Díli
7th August 2017**

Excellencies

Minister of State, Coordinator of Social Affairs and Minister of Education

Vice-Ministers for Education

Members of the National Parliament and dear colleagues, Members of the Government.

Distinguished Gentlemen and Ladies

Representatives of the Diplomatic Corps and development partners

Representatives of Religious Confessions and Civil Society

Magnificent Rectors of the Universities of Timor-Leste

Teachers, parents, education professionals, reflection groups and students

Ladies and Gentleman, honoured guests,

I do not have a keynote speech, but the reason that brings us here today leaves me quite satisfied. Talking about Education is always a topic of great importance, in whichever country in the world. In our case, for Timorese and for Timor-Leste, it is a national priority and it is particularly important that we speak, listen and read about this issue.

Today we have not really come here to discuss education in Timor-Leste. As the Minister has pointed out, we have done so just over two months ago, at the 3rd National Congress on Education. Several distinguished persons met on that occasion, namely former heads of sovereign bodies such as Dr. José Ramos-Horta and Dr. Mari Alkatiri; former Ministers for Education, both national and international; the former Governor of Timor-Leste and major promoter of educating our human resources, Eng. Mario Viegas Carrascalão, who, unfortunately, is no longer among us; Representatives of the church, to whom - and where I also include myself - we owe our education; and technical experts in this area.

We had not heard talking about Education in this way for almost 10 years. Gathering the voices of diverse political factions around a national interest, in the same room, was long overdue. I reaffirm, as I did at the time, the importance of such an event. Education was talked about, ideas were discussed and concerns were raised for a sector that, as the title of the Congress stated, "is the pillar for consolidation of the identity and development of the nation."

And as I said earlier, at the beginning of this speech, it is fundamental to read about what was discussed, not only for those who have had the opportunity to hear it, but above all, for those who did not.

The edition of a book that compiles:

- not only political speeches but the vision of some of our leaders;

- the presentation and analysis of the education sector diagnosis carried out by our civil servants;
- recommendations of those who were once responsible for this portfolio;
- the Final Declaration of this Congress, which lists a series of recommendations for six key areas. These are: curriculum; teacher training; school administration; infrastructures; public and private higher education; and the participation of parents and the community, among others.

All the above makes it a good initiative from the Government, from the Ministry of Education.

It is important to think about the future and it is equally important that this future is aware of the past and its motivations. Institutional memory is important to maintain consistency in strategies, to define a path that is sustainable and that allows for the development of education for our children and youngsters and consequently of our country's development plan.

This publication does not contain within itself the vast contents of an area such as education. On the contrary, it opens the way, provides opportunity for more debates, awareness and opinion or decision-making regarding the implementation of the education policy.

It is, therefore, a contribution of the Sixth Constitutional Government to the next Executive. I also recall that, at the close of the 3rd National Congress on Education, I mentioned that it was our intention to disseminate the Final Declaration at the national level.

Disseminating this book demonstrates the responsible manner in which we have undertaken our commitments. Our commitments guide our path, and the path is made by walking it.

Before I finish, I would like to make a few notes. Firstly, my personal thanks, as Head of Government, to the Ministry of Education, through the Minister and the Vice-Ministers, senior officials of the Ministry of Education and all who work in this great Ministry, for all that effort you have given to Education. We have advanced a little more, but there is still much to do.

My second note is a form of alert to the entire Ministry of Education: if the debates on education policy, on educational programs had a cross-party nature, then the implementation of these policies must necessarily be nonpartisan. We cannot partisan health, we cannot partisan the public administration and we cannot partisan Education. In this phase of political transition that the country is facing, I appeal to senior officials

of the Ministry of Education to be alert and remain nonpartisan and work in Education towards a better future in Timor-Leste.

Finally, I would like to finish by thanking the entire team involved in this project, and all the commitment and dedication in implementing the education policy, at the service of the Sixth Constitutional Government, where, as the Minister has rightly said, we have shown we are "One for All and All for One" and that "Failure is not an option". I hope this continues to be, if not the official motto, at least a form of action for all Timorese.

Thank you very much.

Dr. Rui Maria de Araújo
7th August 2017