

*Speech*

*by Mr. J. Ramos-Horta*

*Minister of State*

*and National Security Adviser*

*Office of the Prime Minister*

*On the occasion of the National Day*

*of the People's Republic of China*

Dili, 29th September 2017

Excellency Amb Liu Hongyang,

Ministers,

Members of the National Parliament,

Members of the Diplomatic Corp,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Prime Minister Dr. Mari Alkatiri tasked me to represent him here tonight and it is my honor and pleasure to do so.

As Your Excellencies know TIMOR-Leste had peaceful and transparent Presidential elections in March/April and legislative elections in July.

Once all the Constitutional and legal steps were walked through, the President of the Republic invited Dr. Mari ALKATIRI, Secretary-General of the most voted party, FRETILIN, to form Government. On 15th September Dr. Mari Alkatiri and 11 cabinet members were sworn in. Additional cabinet members will be sworn in early next week, thus completing the formation of the VII Constitutional Government.

It is known to all that as no party secured an absolute majority there have been intense negotiations to form a broad-based Government and this is what Dr. Alkatiri has been striving to do.

I believe we have now the broadest possible Government and one with rich accumulated academic, political and professional experience, thus ensuring that it will be a Government that will deliver on its program, a program that is not only a FRETILIN program. It will be one that by necessity reflects precisely the broad-based nature of the VII Constitutional Government.

We count on all our friends and partners, our immediate neighbors and beyond, on all who have walked with us, side by side, in good and bad times, to this day, to expand further our friendship and cooperation. I personally will call on all of you, Excellencies, to explore ways to further our relationship.

Mr. Ambassador,

As we join you tonight to celebrate the National Day of the People's Republic Of China, I must begin by thanking the Government and People of China for the steadfast support you have provided us through the years, support in many fields, from much needed infrastructure offices to human capacity development, in addition to grants and technical assistance to rural development.

Our relationship is not a one way street whereby TIMOR-Leste only stands at the receiver's end. Major infrastructure projects budgeted at hundreds of millions of dollars entirely financed by TL were awarded to Chinese companies and hundreds of Chinese skilled and semi skilled workers dwell alongside Timorese workers. Thousands of Chinese new arrivals are visible in Dili and around the country trading goods produced in China, imported to our country, and bought by our citizens. In this global and interconnected economy, TIMOR-Leste also plays a part, admittedly a small one, in Chinese economic growth.

From the inception of our Petroleum Fund in 2004/5, we have invested billions of dollars in the US economy through our purchase of US Treasury bonds. It is to be recalled, the Petroleum Law and Sovereign Fund were major signature initiatives of the Prime Minister of the I Constitutional Govt, Dr. Mari ALKATIRI.

For the past several years throughout the country intense infrastructure work has been visible to all. This will continue under Dr. Alkatiri's leadership who is assembling a first class team of advisers drawn from the previous Government and others to review all projects, continue those that are sound, finesse those that require adjustments, launch new ones.

Prime Minister Alkatiri, consistent with his personality and vision, will impose rigor and integrity in management and fiscal prudence, reigning on public expenditure, controlling waste and corruption.

The ZEEMS concept as executed so far is an indication of the transparency, rigor and integrity that will be the hallmark of the VII Constitutional Govt.

As all know, TIMOR-Leste and Australia are in the final stages of the negotiations towards an agreement on a permanent maritime boundary. Prime Minister Dr. Alkatiri and the whole cabinet pay tribute to the TL Chief Negotiator, former President and PM Xanana Gusmao, and has asked him and his very able team to continue to lead this process from our side.

Likewise the Govt pays tribute to the Australian Govt, in particular PM Malcolm Turnbull and FM Julie Bishop for their political courage and wisdom in acceding to negotiations under UNCLOS to resolve our differences bearing in mind the just, fair and legitimated interests of both sides. But because often in a dispute not all sides are equal, special attention should always be paid to the interests of the weakest and the aggrieved party.

China has come a long way since the return to leadership of the venerable Deng Xiaoping, the architect of China's modernization. From the extreme poverty of the past to being the second largest economy of the world, a truly mind boggling leap forward took place.

China is inexorably emerging as a global power, a power that all hope and China's friends believe will be a benign one, one that will always strive to reassure and show that it will always pursue a peaceful path in its global economic development; it will always seek peaceful resolutions of differences and disputes.

TIMOR-Leste being a small and fragile country share with our brothers and sisters in the developing world deep interest in preventing conflicts in order to preserve the hard won peace we are living in now. Poor and fragile countries are always the most vulnerable and suffer the most in any man made calamity or in any natural calamity.

TL and China share the view on the importance of pursuing and enhancing peace, stability and the global order; cooperation over confrontation on addressing regional and global issues; most importantly our two countries pursue partnership and cooperation on the basis of mutual trust, respect, international best practices, principles, rules and regulation.

TL-PRC support the UN central role in the maintenance of world peace and order, premised on the belief that in this globalized world and the complexity of the challenges facing all, the indispensability of the UN is even more evident.

TL firmly believes in the importance of the multilateral system, in dialogue and peaceful resolution of disputes, in the primacy of international law.

Likewise, the centrality of the UN depends on its capacity to reform and adapt to the changing international security conditions. Hence, TL and China believe in meaningful and substantive reforms in the existing multilateral security architecture anchored on the UN.

In this context we are particularly encouraged by the special session convened by the Security Council on the Report of the High Level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations which I had the privileged of chairing. The very high level attendance - the Secretary-General, Heads of States and Governments, Foreign Ministers - was a telling illustration of the importance attached to our recommendations.

With Antonio Guterres the UN is in very good hands: we believe he will inspire and guide all the Nations and peoples of good will to return the UN to relevance for the peoples it was created to serve.

The VIIth Constitutional Govt presided by HE Prime Minister Dr. Alkatiri congratulate and salute the Government and Peoples of China.

*J. Ramos-Horta*

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