

MINISTER OF STATE AND PRESIDENCY OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

AGIO PEREIRA



CLOSING REMARKS

2019 16 + FORUM ANNUAL SHOWCASE  
RECONCILIATION, STRONG INSTITUTIONS AND INCLUSION  
DILI, TIMOR-LESTE

11 - 14 November 2019

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

On behalf of H.E. the Prime-Minister, Taur Matan Ruak, I thank you all for your participation; also our appreciation for the hard work done by the organizing team, as well as the support of the sponsors of this conference, making this important event possible and productive.

Timor-Leste appreciates your availability to join us in our attempt to deal with complex topics that are intrinsic part of the international agenda.

In planning this Forum Showcase, Timor-Leste had a paramount objective – to allow space for discussion about SDG 16+, to discuss real, effective and inclusive action plans, with no prosaic words of speech.

Ladies and Gentleman,

Distinguished Guests,

On this 2019 Annual Showcase, intensive work undertaking during the four-day gathering. With an average of three plenary sessions per day, more than seventy speakers from different countries, representing international and regional organizations, the outcome has to be very encouraging with a strong sense of moving forward.

Therefore, our government welcomes the outcome of the 16+ Forum Showcase – a Global Gathering of SDG 16+ policy makers, practitioners and leaders - which has contributed to the strengthening of our comprehensive, firm and beneficial global relationship, to maximise the potential for joint action between our nations and institutions.

Open under the theme *Reconciliation, Strong Institutions and Inclusion*, this Third Forum Showcase count on individuals, organizations and institutions, working towards the promotion and protection of human rights, including human rights defenders, who delivered coherent and effective statements about the importance of the SDG16, towards the achievement of Agenda 2030.

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Distinguished Guests,

The SDG goal 16 on Justice, Peace and Strong Institutions includes the need for capable and inclusive institutions to promote the participation of all citizens in the democratic process and the inclusionary policy of “to leave no one behind”.

As a small and young insular State, seventeen years since the restoration of Independence, Timor-Leste acknowledges the challenges of sustainable development. The principles which have guided our Strategic Development Plan and our national policies were defined bearing in mind the much-needed sustainability to achieve stability, development, peace and welfare, to enable our future generations to live healthy and fulfilling lives.

Optimistic key economic indicators and development benchmarks reflect the progress of our political landscape and institutions – moving long way, in a relatively short time, away from the burning ruins of two decades ago.

Our first Voluntary National Review (VNR), undertaken at the 2019 UN High-Level Political Forum, takes stock of the policies we have enacted since independence and assesses the contribution of these policies towards Timor-Leste’s sustainable development, within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The VNR also examines areas where our policies may be lacking and how we could overcome them to better achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), under the principles of accountability and transparency such as our forward-looking, long-term approach to sustainable development, and our resolve to make tough decisions that are necessary for national development.

On the basis of the foregoing considerations, and with reference to legal instruments, I would like to express the appreciation of our government for the work of civil society organisations, especially in presenting a qualitative report that simplifies the SDGs indicators.

Our National Parliament approved in 2015 a resolution supporting the SDG's implementation and endorsing the planning and budgeting alignment to the SDG's.

Our Government is considering the establishment of an integrated mechanism, to enable the engagement of all interested parties, all sections of the society, in a more intensive, productive dialogue. The aim is to enhance the involvement of civil society in the decision-making processes regarding the commitment to ensure the viability of Agenda 2030.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Distinguished guests,

In recent days, important issues have been debated in plenary, including:

1. Ending violence against children and reducing poverty;
2. Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and to ensure and increase access to justice for all; and
3. Strengthening the institutions;

And the main conclusion converges on the necessary efforts to move towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 16, for the delivery of public services and broader economic development, equal rights and opportunities and to promote more extensive and inclusive action.

Governance issues addressed in an inclusive nature; and the institutions to work towards providing proper legal protection for those launching medium-risk start-up ventures and to help entrepreneurs understand and comply with legislative changes - are very important undertakings.

Partnering with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Timor-Leste (CCITL) offers the possibility of strengthening the existing network. Developing local networks involving universities, associations, financial institutions and the media, will also foster the necessary spirit of entrepreneurship.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Distinguished guests,

After 24 years of struggle of national liberation, Timor-Leste and Indonesia, through the Commission of Truth and Friendship, built an honest and meaningful process of truth and reconciliation, to look at the future and to work together for national development.

The friendly and brotherly political relation between the two countries set an unprecedented example throughout the region and the world. This has come to the political and social prominence because of the good will shared between the two sovereign States and the spirit of our two Peoples, with a commitment between leaders to set the strong vision to look beyond the past.

As neighbors, Timor-Leste and Indonesia will continue to explore avenues to further strengthen the bilateral relations and deal with issues of national interest. Reconciliation and national stability continue to influence relations and constitute major policy priorities.

Personally, and on behalf of the Government of Timor-Leste, we truly believe that the spirit of friendship and forward looking will continue to inspire Timor-Leste and Indonesia in the long journey of complex bilateral relations, bearing in mind that ultimately, this must be for the benefit of the two countries and people.

Just as reconciliation and justice have entered into the neo-liberal discourse on Human Rights, in line with the globalization of the human rights norms, Timor-Leste joins a select group of countries where United Nations has taken the leading role of Nation Building and Peace Building, emphasizing the National Unity.

I recall how the commission established by Timor-Leste and Indonesia – Truth and Friendship - particularly focused on the disclosure of facts. We acknowledge, however, that much hard work remains to be done.

Ladies and Gentleman,

Distinguished guests,

There are various interpretations by academia and activists of the different narratives of reconciliation.

In Timor-Leste these narratives tend to be presented as “two narratives of reconciliation”. Reconciliation as being the “narrative of the politicians”, which is alluded to as the “project”; and the other is the important “narrative of the victims”, which is described as the “process”.

Without getting into the complexity of the issues and in-depth analysis, one may walk away with the wrong perception because Timor-Leste cannot forget the narrative of collective suffering, which has not spared any Timorese, and which politicians have also been subjected to.

The leaders and politicians of Timor-Leste have also been subjected to severe deprivation. Their role is to lead with due responsibility, taking into account multiple and often opposing factors. The interests of institutions, including the State itself, as well as those of the People and, particularly the victims, all demand that the political leadership adopts a balanced and sustained approach.

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Distinguished Guests,

Timor-Leste will continue to build on our progress in this journey towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and beyond.

The last four days of meetings are also a snapshot of Timor-Leste's progress so far, a process that must be a powerful reminder that sustainable development is a journey that requires continuous commitment from all of us.

Allow me to quote what UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Roy Trivedy, said in this Forum:

"In Timor-Leste, in the next phase of the country's development, we need to ensure that the progress that has been made in strengthening peace, security and electoral systems over the past 20 years now needs to be enhanced by greater emphasis on strengthening institutional and individual capacities of all citizens (women and men, young and old)".

It is in this context that Timor-Leste will make all the efforts to develop the systems of good governance, as also the transparency and accountability of public services, promoting gender equality and enhance inclusion of all citizens without any form of discrimination, to guarantee social cohesion and harmony, to avoid conflicts and to move forward.

In this way, I share the vision of our Peace Nobel Laureate Dr. José Ramos-Horta that “In 2030 Timor-Leste will be a high income country, prosperous, free and in peace. The rule of law state will be consolidated.”

Thank you for all your attention.