



REPÚBLICA DEMOCRÁTICA DE TIMOR-LESTE

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY
THE PRIME MINISTER**

**STRENGTHENING PROPERTY RIGHTS IN
TIMOR-LESTE**

**LAUNCHING CEREMONY FOR THE PROJECT OF SYSTEMATIC
GATHERING OF CADASTRE INFORMATION IN TIMOR-LESTE**

Dili, 28 July 2008

**Representative of the US Embassy,
Representative of the USAID,
Other diplomatic representations,
Government members,
National Director of Lands and Properties and his team,
Members of the ARD, Inc,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We are gathered here today to celebrate two events: project “Ita Nia Rai”, which seeks to strengthen property rights in Timor-Leste, and the start of the gathering of cadastre information through the Country, the most relevant component of project “Ita Nia Rai”.

Therefore I would like to start this brief address by thanking the US Government and its Agency for International Development (USAID) for their effort during the last few months in order to allow the implementation of the project for the gathering of cadastre information in Timor-Leste, at the same time as the necessary legal tools for stabilizing property rights in this Country are developed.

The United States has always been present in the attempt to develop this project, and the IV Constitutional Government has taken on the responsibility of solving definitively the issue of cadastre and property in Timor-Leste. Through the General Agreement of Technical Cooperation signed between Timor-Leste and the United States in 2003 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between USAID and the Ministry of Justice, according to which, by the end of this Government’s mandate, the land parcels in Timor-Leste should be duly registered. This agreement also foresees the development of legal studies enabling the drafting of a Special Regime for the Attribution of Property, so as to cover the complex situations that took place in the past, and foresees support in the drafting of the future Property Registry.

With this project and its coordination with the various services of the Ministry of Justice, I am sure that we will be able to meet the goal of Strengthening Property Rights in Timor-Leste and contribute definitively towards the social and economic progress of the Country.

In view of this great commitment, please allow me to thank the entire ARD technical team, the representatives of the US Government and USAID, and the Ministry of Justice, as well as to convey you my utmost confidence in your success, which will also be our success.

I would also like to speak briefly on the strategic planning that is currently being prepared by the Ministry of Justice. This planning, which will set the goals for the Justice sector until 2012, reflects the honest concern by the Timorese Government in showing its People and the Development Partners that Timor-Leste is able to set its priorities and is ready to assume scheduled commitments concerning program implementation, contributing decisively towards a better definition of Annual Budgets and enabling greater control over its execution.

I have mentioned here the drafting of a strategic document for the Justice sector because it will contain this Government's strong effort regarding the improvement of the services allocated to the National Directorate of Lands, Properties and Cadastre Services. Together with the gathering of cadastre information and the drafting of relevant legislation in terms of property rights, this Government believes that it must assume the responsibility for ensuring the provision of a good public service, allocating sums from the next Annual Budget to improve the State Patrimony Administration services, the public attendance services and the computerization of the National Directorate.

I am pleased to see that we are all coordinated and that Timor-Leste is responding to the appeal by its international partners in terms of assuming responsibilities, planning and defining its needs and through creating control mechanisms that will enable it to correctly perform the set tasks.

Legal Security and Legal Trade yearn for a solution that enables the economic and social progress of Timor-Leste. We will protect Timorese citizens by promoting limits to property rights and developing mechanisms for attracting and promoting foreign investment. We will seek national consensus for the solutions that we are about to present concerning property rights in Timor-Leste. But we will always promote those solutions that are the fairest and that ensure the most social and economic equity among all Timorese.

Thank you very much.