



**MESSAGE BY
HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER
KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO
ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF THE
NIGHT OF CULTURAL PRESENTATION**

**COMMEMORATION OF THE 10th ANNIVERSARY OF THE
POPULAR CONSULTATION**

Government Palace, Díli

30 August 2009

Excellencies

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with great pleasure and emotion that I speak to you all on the 10th Anniversary of the Popular Consultation – and at this Night of Cultural Performances.

I also welcome our many friends from the international community who are with us here to commemorate and celebrate this anniversary with us. The 30 of August of 1999 is one of the most important dates for the Timorese, the day we realised our hopes and our dreams as a People, and as a Nation.

It is also, however, remembered with pain and with sorrow for those that struggled and suffered to make this day a reality, but who can not be here with us to celebrate today.

They are in our hearts. Today and always!

In these celebrations we pay homage, and we give gratitude, to the sacrifices of our parents, our brothers and sisters, our sons and daughters...without who we would not be here celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Popular Consultation and so the Independence and the emergence of our Nation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and recognise the efforts of our friends in the International Community, who provided hope to our People during times of need and contributed towards making our dream become reality.

Our nation is fortunate to have such good friends from around the world and from so many different cultures.

It is from my heart that I thank you for joining our People in celebration tonight.

Ladies and gentlemen,

There is no better way to celebrate this occasion than with performances that showcase Timorese culture and our Timorese identity.

Our cultural heritage is deep, and reflects the soul of our People, and the richness of our land.

Tonight we will celebrate with a central part of our uniquely Timorese culture - our traditional song and dance, that has an important position in Timorese society, and in the shared experience and history of our communities.

It plays a fundamental role in our expressions of meaning, as well as in our healing, and of course in our celebrations. Our song and dance promotes our shared values, and nurtures a culture of tolerance, dignity and peace.

Peace and stability is what we have sought after for so long – and now we can take great pride that the events of today also represent a landmark for our future.

We have overcome another difficult chapter in our history, we are saying good-bye to conflict, to instability and to uncertainty; and with determination we have embraced peace and development to improve the lives of our People.

This is the shared aspiration of all Timorese, and we as a People have proved that when we work together, with unity, solidarity and common purpose, we can achieve our dreams.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Tonight we celebrate!

In a spirit of warmth, peace and goodwill, we gather here in our thousands to enjoy our solidarity and our bonds of friendship.

Tonight we celebrate our freedom, our culture and importantly, we celebrate our shared and positive future.

I encourage you to join with the spirit of this occasion and enjoy the cultural performances which reflect the heart and the soul of our homeland.

I encourage you to feel the musical expressions of our People, including importantly of our young people.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour for us to be joined by our friends that never stop believing in us, and who took up our cause as their own.

Thank you very much!

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão

30 August 2009