



**SPEECH BY H.E. MR. KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO**

**PRIME MINISTER OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-  
LESTE**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF THE MELBOURNE BUSINESS SCHOOL'S  
ASIA PACIFIC CENTRE FOR LEADERSHIP FOR SOCIAL IMPACT**

**Melbourne, Wednesday 27 August 2008**

**Melbourne Business School, University of Melbourne**

Your Excellencies  
Chancellor  
Honorable Ministers  
Dear Friends

Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge members of my delegation:

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Zacarias da Costa;  
Minister for Finance, Ms Emilia Pires;  
Minister for Justice, Lúcia Lobato;  
Minister for Education, Mr João Cândio Freitas;  
Ambassador to Australia, Mr Hernani Coelho;  
Secretary of State for Professional Training and Employment, Mr Bendito Freitas;  
Secretary of State for Security, Mr Francisco da Costa;  
Our Honorary Consul here in Melbourne, Mr Kevin Bailey

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to speak to you here today at the launch of the Melbourne Business School's Asia Pacific Centre for Leadership for Social Impact.

Unlike many world leaders, I did not get the chance to go to university.

I had to leave school at 16 for financial reasons.

And then my attempts to study at night school were interrupted by national service with the Portuguese Army, and then by the Indonesian invasion.

I had limited access to information for the many years we lived in the mountains during the struggle for independence. We were very isolated.

Years later, I ended up doing most of my learning not at an open university but at the University of Cipinang Prison – where one of the few benefits was having access to the wider world of books.

I would have loved to have gone to university to have enjoyed the opportunities for a quality education afforded to my wife Kirsty, a graduate of this University.

But now I put my dreams to the next generation.

I want the young people of Timor-Leste to have that opportunity – to have access to a world class education – to have choices that Timorese of my generation were denied.

So for me to be here at one of Australia's most prestigious universities to launch the the Melbourne Business School's new Asia Pacific Centre for Leadership for Social Impact, is truly humbling.

I am pleased that Melbourne Business School recognised the importance of social responsibility in the development of civil society.

It reflects an understanding that business does not operate in isolation from the community and that the health of the economy is fundamentally linked to the health of the community.

Timor-Leste proved this theory with the crisis in 2006, we faced an immobilized economy caused by the failures of Government – the people were hungry, angry and sought violence as the answer to vent their dissatisfaction.

But most of these problems from the 2006 conflict have been resolved, greatly due to the will of the people and the Government in pursuit of a united vision.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I was asked to talk about leadership here this afternoon. It is a question that preoccupies many thinkers including, I am sure, the teachers at the Melbourne Business School and this new Centre for Leadership.

I do not propose to attempt to define leadership.

I will leave that to the academics.

Our recent history is one of struggle.

And I know too well what leadership has meant in the Timorese context. One thing that the 24 year struggle for liberation taught us is that for a leader to be effective he or she requires a good team, a cohesive coalition and a collective vision.

It is only through such unity that great things can be achieved.

And so it was such, that a nation of a little over a million people was able to achieve its freedom against all odds.

Now we face another challenge for our leadership – nearly as difficult as our struggle for freedom – the challenge to achieve peace and prosperity so that our people can be truly free.

And by true freedom, I mean released from poverty.

There can be few greater challenges in leadership than nation building – especially when that nation is one of the poorest in the world, is a post conflict state, with limited human resources and infrastructure.

But I lead a coalition Government, made up of educated, professional and talented men and women who are transforming our nation.

For our country, this coalition Government could be considered one of our greatest achievements this year.

It was formed at a time when we needed to give voice to political inclusion where the diversity of ideas was valued as an integral part of nation building. This is when leadership and collective vision is the most important.

We knew that this coalition could foster a climate through our own leadership, that would spread through our institutions, our private sector, our public service and most importantly, to civil society.

But it is not just our Government that has contributed to stability and progress.

Our many friends in Australia – in Federal, State and local Government, in schools and universities, in community groups and in the business community, have all helped.

Leadership is about having the humility to say when you need help and the courage to adapt when circumstances demand. So, we seek your continued support as there are still enormous challenges ahead of us.

It will take time to reconstruct our country and achieve long lasting peace and prosperity.

Timor-Leste is an emerging multi-billion Asian economy with one of the highest growth rates in the region of about 8 percent per year.

We have an accountable and democratic government with a large forward program of State investment.

And we have some of the lowest taxes in the region.  
Our country is ready for investment.

The economic opportunities in Timor-Leste are being recognised by many in our region – by those who see a “first mover advantage”.

We want to continue to work with you and with Australia’s quality education institutions.

We need to train our people in all the areas a growing economy demands – in management, accounting and finance, trades, medicine and business – and this is why during this visit to Australia we are seeking scholarships for our people.

That is why we want Timorese to learn in your great country and bring their skills back to Timor.

I am thrilled with the scholarships that the Melbourne Business School has announced today.

To provide this training to Timorese in one of the world’s most prestigious business schools is a great investment in the future of our country.

And a true reflection of leadership - knowing when to lend a hand.

Thank you very much