



**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE**

**ADDRESS**

**BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER  
KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF THE  
CONGRESS TO LAUNCH THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
AND INDUSTRY OF TIMOR-LESTE**

Hotel Timor, Díli

16 April 2010

Excellencies

Members of Government

Distinguished guests

Businessmen and businesswomen

Ladies and gentlemen

It is a great pleasure to be here to open this National Congress to launch the new Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Timor-Leste.

This holding of this Congress is the end of a long process of discussion, argument and agreement.

Just over a year ago, on 14 March 2009, that we met at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and we started this process.

On that day, I asked you to work together to form a Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

I asked that you take up the national cause of developing our nation.

And I asked that you build the strength and capability of the private sector in Timor-Leste.

Today, after almost a year, I am pleased to be able to say that the private sector has taken up these challenges; and that you are ready to elect a President of Timor-Leste's first united Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

You have all done a lot of work to get to this point. You have put in your own time and your own money, for a common cause.

The establishment of the Comissao Instaladora, a group of 11 private sector leaders plus technical advisers, made a big difference to your work.

The Comissao Instaladora worked with patience and focus. It often did not agree on all issues, but it continued to work towards a shared goal.

It developed a Constitution and the Congressional regiment for the new Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

And importantly, it agreed on the founding, structure and future operation of the Chamber. This gives me great confidence not only in the future of this body, but also in the maturity of Timor-Leste's private sector.

I would like to thank the leaders of the Comissao Instaladora for what they have achieved and ask that they continue their dedicated service to make sure that the new Chamber is a success.

I would also like to thank the organisations that supported the Comissao Instaladora in its work – the Better Business Initiative of the International Finance Corporation, the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the International Labour Organisation and Dili's own CRA law firm.

These organisations have shared our vision and walked with us on our journey.

Today, I congratulate all the delegates to this Congress for coming this far and for establishing Timor-Leste's first united and independent Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This congress has delegates from every district and from across the private sector of Timor-Leste.

Delegates to this congress have a great responsibility. You must elect a President who can lead the Chamber with professionalism, ability and passion.

And you must act with dignity and integrity to accept and support the outcome.

The decisions you make at this Congress will be recognised by the Government – and supported by the Government.

I also urge you to appoint an independent Chief Executive Officer of the Chamber who can effectively run its day to day operations.

The Chamber should operate professionally so that it can provide services to its members and support the development of the private sector in Timor-Leste.

Through organising together under the Chamber of Commerce and Industry you will be able to speak with one voice, share experiences and knowledge and work together to build our country.

The Chamber will be fortunate to enjoy the financial support of the Governments of Germany and of Australia and I urge you to work in partnership with these donors to build your organisation.

And importantly, the Government of Timor-Leste will also provide financial assistance to the Chamber to support its establishment as an independent and effective body.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The private sector can be proud of its achievements over the last two years.

The economy is booming, with unprecedented levels of growth and economic activity throughout the country.

This is providing jobs for our People, infrastructure for our development and wealth for our nation.

The Government is playing its part to provide an environment that fosters private sector growth.

We are doing this because we know that the development of the private sector is critical to the development and economic growth of the country.

And we are in a fortunate position in Timor-Leste. The Asian region is the powerhouse of the world economy and includes the rapidly growing and great economy of China, as well as the emerging economy of Indonesia.

We must not miss the opportunity be part of the great Asian economic success story.

And the Government is determined to work with you to make sure that Timor-Leste provides the business and economic conditions that are needed for the private sector to continue growing.

This is why the Government is preparing a Strategic Development Plan – to guide and plan for the economic and social development of our nation.

On Monday I will begin a tour of every sub-district in Timor-Leste to discuss with our People the steps we should take to make the vision 2020 dreams of our people a reality.

I also look forward to discussing the Strategic Development Plan with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and with you all.

Ladies and gentlemen

I look forward to hearing the results of this Congress tomorrow.

But, while this Congress is the end of one process, it also signifies that start of a greater and longer mission.

This mission is to continue to work in solidarity to build a Chamber of Commerce and Industry that members can be proud of; and that the country can be proud of.

A mission to build a Chamber that plays a central role in developing our nation.

I wish you all the best success in this endeavour and ask that you embark on this mission with a great sense of purpose; and as a national cause.

Thank you very much!

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão  
16 April 2010