



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

ADDRESS BY

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE

KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO

AT THE THIRD BALI DEMOCRACY FORUM

“Democracy and Promotion of Peace and Stability”

NUSA DUA, BALI

9 DECEMBER 2010

Your Excellency the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Dr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono

Your Excellency, the Co-Chair, the President of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Lee Myung-bak

Your Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia,

Your Excellencies the Heads of State and Government,

Honourable Delegation Members,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with renewed pleasure that I take part, once again, in this Bali Democracy Forum, which I am attending for the third year in a row. I believe that meetings such as this stimulate reflection and encourage the dialogue we need to have on the development of democracy in Asia.

Mr. President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, I thank you for the honour of inviting me here and I congratulate you for hosting this well organised event on such an important matter.

This Forum gives voice to our entire region. It is a region in which nations achieved and practice democracy in sometimes very different ways, but where we all share the common ideal of democratisation and development.

By hosting these annual meetings, the charming island of Bali becomes a stage for the projection of the values of peace, non-violence, tolerance and democracy by a community of nations. The impact of this transcends the countries here today, and Asia itself, to take on a global significance.

And this, ladies and gentlemen, could not be achieved without the commitment and vision of the leaders of Indonesia.

At this time, I also wish to take the opportunity to give my condolences to the Indonesian People for the suffering and loss of life caused by the recent earthquakes, tsunami and, even worse, the eruptions of Mount Merapi. Such natural disasters are a recurrent concern for our neighbour and friend – and they shock and sadden the Timorese People who feel great solidarity in these times of sorrow and difficulties.

Your Excellencies,

We all know that Timor-Leste is the youngest Country represented here today and also the youngest democracy.

Since we achieved Independence eight years ago, we have embarked upon a path common to modern democracies and held regular elections, implemented checks and balances, established anti-corruption mechanisms and adopted policies of good governance.

Two days ago all the organs of sovereignty, along with our Anti-Corruption Commission, civil society, the civil service, the police, the military and religious representatives participated in a seminar to undertake a shared reflection regarding the role of each part of society in fighting corruption.

We have also been encouraging civil society and all our citizens to actively participate in politics and State decision making. And we have been building the capacity of our media and encouraging it to take a strong, but responsible, role in our society.

And yet, we cannot be satisfied with what we have achieved as our People do not yet enjoy the real and concrete benefits of democracy. This is because without true economic and social development - for many - democracy remains an abstract concept that is not felt in daily life. And when there is no economic development, there is no peace because social imbalances will provoke tension, sometimes violent, which destabilises the country and distorts the democracy.

And in Timor-Leste, our development has been constrained by episodes of instability and conflict which have consumed our energy – energy we needed to build our nation. These episodes, some of which were very recent, cost us time, as well as the human and financial resources, so essential to invest in productive sectors of the country.

Regrettably, this is not an experience unique to Timor-Leste. Indeed, it is an experience shared by many countries across various continents; where widespread extreme poverty, latent conflict, trauma and post-conflict circumstances are common denominators.

These nations, like Timor-Leste, are still designated LDCs, which means that they are still on the “threshold of being fragile States” and are still subject to the challenging paradigms of “peace building” and “State building”.

These are States that have to deal with difficult problems such as corruption, social injustice, insecurity and political, economic and social instability.

Your Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I mentioned at this Forum last year, Timor-Leste was honoured to host the International Dialogue on Peace Building and State Building in April this year. This event also included the participation of what we call our “g7 plus”. This is a group of countries that include Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Chad, Southern Sudan, Nepal and the Solomon Islands.

As well as the invaluable experience of learning from our shared experiences, the “g7 plus” allows us to be heard as one voice by the international community. And this is important as our individual experiences have often involved international assistance that has not proved appropriate to our actual circumstances and national context.

The Díli Declaration, which resulted from the International Dialogue on Peace Building and State Building, promised stronger support to institutionalise the “g7 plus” group as a permanent forum to unite fragile States in a spirit of solidarity and friendship and to enable better preparation for international discussions with development partners so as to improve the principles of good international engagement in fragile States and situations.

And, ladies and gentlemen, finding solutions to overcome the problems faced by these countries, which remain in fragile circumstances, is central to the promotion of world peace and stability.

Timor-Leste is proud to be part of this process and of having been chosen to lead the “g7 plus” and co-chair the International Dialogue on Peace Building and State Building.

Timor-Leste has been participating in several meetings, in Africa and Europe, to discuss issues related to LDCs.

I should inform you, with pride, that in September, in the corridors of New York during the General Assembly of the United Nations, our President of the Republic, Dr Jose Ramos-Horta, presided over the meetings of this group, where the “g7 plus” extended to

over 17 countries. At this time, our President announced financial support by Timor-Leste for the establishment of a Secretariat for the Group.

Your Excellency the President of the Republic of Indonesia

Your Excellency the Co-Chair

Your Excellencies,

State building is a process that is interrelated with Peace building.

Peace building can only be sound when State building is strong.

We all know that such a thing as a perfect democracy does not exist, even in developed countries. Still, in LDCs the challenge of democracy is even greater; we can even say that wanting democracy is not enough, it is necessary to be able to live in democracy!

The complexity of transferring authority to a People that never knew what it was like to have the privilege of deciding their own destiny, is far greater than what one might initially consider.

To build a democratic State, with participation by all, in societies that do not know what it is to be free from misery, hunger or ignorance; and in societies where conflict may arise over issues as simply as access to water, food, land, education or basic health care; is a tremendous challenge!

In order to successfully establish democratic systems and processes, so as to end periods of instability, it is necessary first and foremost to change the mindsets of people.

It is necessary to educate the people: to prepare and to teach what it means to truly take part in the ruling of a Nation.

If the people are not ready, then there is a risk that the leaders, or those who are fortunate enough to have access to more knowledge or to better resources, may take the power for and lead to despotic rules.

It is, therefore, absolutely critical to respect the circumstances that are specific to each society, as well as the time necessary to absorb democratic values. This is our true common challenge, since there are no two identical cultures or circumstances.

Your Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Fortunately we have examples of Asian countries successfully undergoing transition. And it is with humility and admiration that Timor-Leste looks to our Asian neighbours and friends.

Indonesia has been a reference of success to Timor-Leste. Its institutional and political reforms, its adoption of a culture of tolerance and unity - particularly in such a diverse country - and its ongoing process of economic growth and democratisation is a model for us. And it can be a model not just for us, but for other countries both in Asia and throughout the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Also in our region, one cannot help but be amazed by the success of China, an important development partner of ours. This emerging economic giant is playing a central role in the world economy and proving to be the engine of growth for the world during the global financial crisis and beyond.

The fact that China is willing to invest in major projects in developing countries, not only in Asia but throughout the world, can in the future be an alternative for general economic growth. I mentioned 'alternative' because the criteria set by the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) that must be met has been unachievable for developing countries. The pre-conditions that this support is subject to means it fails to assist poor countries with social problems much more serious than donors can imagine. And when assistance is delivered, sometimes less than 20% actually results in real impact on the ground.

There is another stunning example, in the region that Timor-Leste is proud to be part, which fills us with immense hope that a better future, free from war and violence, is possible. The great nation of Japan, which has established a strong democracy characterised by incredible prosperity and a respect for our common humanity that is promoting a culture of world peace, is a donor that knows how to assume the responsibility of investment in economic infrastructure in poor countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is also pleasing to witness the progress in Myanmar, which has led to the release of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Ms Aung Sang Suu Kyi. This is a decisive step towards democracy and we all urge constructive dialogue towards peace in this country.

The Republic of Korea has been a great friend of Timor-Leste, helping us in the building of our Nation, but the tension in the Korean Peninsula is a concern for us all. This situation threatens stability in our region and we must urge all the responsible members of the international community to work towards denuclearisation of our neighbouring peninsula. With persistent dialogue, international efforts and goodwill we believe, however, that a lasting and peaceful solution can be achieved.

Your Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Regrettably - and as many of us know - it is much easier to start a conflict than to end it. It can be much easier to wage war than to make Peace.

War focuses all our energies and efforts into a single goal: to destroy the enemy. On the other hand, Peace requires consensus and reconciliation. It requires joining the aspirations of many to develop and implement a common long term vision.

Peace also requires sacrifice, putting collective interests ahead of individual ones. Peace and stability requires patience, trust and the ability to forgive. And, importantly, Peace and stability require strong and compassionate leadership.

Timor-Leste is truly committed to taking part in the regional dialogue and cooperation to promote greater investment in peace and stability.

Currently, Timor-Leste is living in times of great stability, security and economic growth. This gives us the motivation, as well as the necessary conditions, to undertake more active participation in the development of the nation.

Without focusing on our geographical, cultural, historical and ideological differences, and by meeting in Bali for the third time, we have been building our capacity and our ability to serve the interests of each of our Peoples.

It is also because of this vision that Timor-Leste seeks to join ASEAN. We recognise, with humility, that, in several aspects we are not yet ready to become a fully effective member of ASEAN.

It would, however, be cause for great satisfaction for all Timorese if the official request for joining ASEAN occurred during its Indonesian presidency in 2011.

I believe that taking the steps to admission during this mandate would represent great symbolism and provide profound meaning not only for Timor-Leste and Indonesia, but also for all members of this regional association.

We are also aware, in both geopolitical and geostrategic terms, that our admission to ASEAN will contribute to regional security and stability. In other words, more than providing economic benefits, membership of ASEAN represents for Timor-Leste an opportunity to be an active agent in the promotion of regional Peace and Stability.

We wish to join in the common spirit that led to the creation of ASEAN and hope that future generations of Timorese contribute to a better world of widespread prosperity, in which democracy provides a voice to the weak and vulnerable, and where conflict and discord is replaced with dialogue.

In this Asian Century, the Asian region - which has made the world richer through its traditions and knowledge - is now responsible for demanding and building a future of ongoing dialogue towards peace and stability.

And this is why we are here today for the third year in a row!

Thank you very much!

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmao

9 December 2010