



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE

ADDRESS

BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER

KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE RECEPTION HOSTED
JOINTLY BY THE EMBASSIES OF TIMOR-LESTE AND
INDONESIA**

Indonesian Embassy, Washington D.C.

23 February 2011

Excellencies
Distinguished guests
Ladies and gentlemen

It is a great pleasure to be here at this reception, which is jointly hosted by the Embassies of Timor-Leste and Indonesia.

I would like to start by thanking the Indonesian Embassy for hosting this reception with us.

Indonesia offered this impressive Embassy to us as a venue because our Embassy would not have been able to accommodate you all.

But, offering to co-host this event at the Indonesian Embassy, means a lot more to us than a friendly gesture from a close neighbour.

For us, having Indonesia host this event is a symbol of the profound affinity and solidarity between our nations.

It is a display not only of how far our People have come, and the priority Timor-Leste has given to our relationship with Indonesia, but the genuine sense of affection and friendship that we share.

We are here in a friend's house.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would also like to say a few words about my friend, Ambassador Dino Patijalal.

Ambassador Dino Patijalal is a man of compassion and of character. He was, of course, a senior adviser to the Indonesian President, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, and I can understand well why the President would want such an accomplished person to represent his country in the United States.

I would also like to convey my respect and admiration for President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. Under his leadership, the largest Muslim country in the world is taking steady steps towards consolidating democracy and to becoming one of the great emerging economies of the world.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Tonight, we are among good friends.

As I look around the room I am reminded of the international community that has shown us such good will.

I am pleased that the Ambassadors of ASEAN are here this evening.

Next month we will be making our formal application to join ASEAN. We will be making our application in a year in which Indonesia is the chair of this important regional body.

We consider that taking this step at this time, during Indonesia's mandate, has profound meaning not only for our two nations, but for the countries of our region.

I am pleased to see people here from the American administration and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the United States for its welcome and hospitality during this visit.

Friends from the CPLP group of nations are also here. Our Portuguese speaking colleagues share bonds of culture, history and kinship that cross continents. It is a pleasure to come together here in Washington D.C.

It is also good to have so many representatives of the European Union, a grouping of nations that is so supportive of our development.

I am also pleased to welcome our neighbours from the Asia Pacific community. The Asia Pacific is one of the most dynamic regions of the world and Timor-Leste is pleased to have countries including China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand as our good friends.

We all share concern, sympathy and solidarity with the people of New Zealand after the tragic earthquake that has brought such devastation and loss in Christchurch.

After this important visit to the United States, I will also be travelling to Cuba, where over 700 Timorese are studying medicine, as well as to Brazil, a country that has also supported us in so many ways.

And this evening I am also pleased to welcome many of the friends of Timor-Leste that have supported our People through difficult times and continue to support us in solidarity.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I will briefly speak about why we have come to the United States.

Yesterday, I addressed the United Nations Security Council and discussed the progress that we are making as a nation. I was pleased that our fellow CPLP nation, Brazil, is now chair of the Security Council.

I am very pleased to say that Timor-Leste has now experienced several years of peace and calm.

There is a new great sense of confidence and promise on our streets and in our villages. People are reveling in this atmosphere of goodwill and safety and Dili must now be one of the safest capital cities in the world.

This stability and peace has also laid the foundation for a strong national economy. Timor-Leste is now one of the fastest growing economies in the world.

In July of this year, I will be launching Timor-Leste's Strategic Development Plan which will signal the commencement of our multi-billion dollar infrastructure program. On conclusion of this program, we believe Timor-Leste would have created the foundations of a diversified economy.

The Strategic Development Plan will be built on three pillars: oil and gas; agriculture and fisheries; and tourism, in particular eco-tourism. An oil industry will be established in the South Coast with a supply base, a refinery and an LNG plant. And we will also focus our investments in agriculture and fisheries and put a special focus on tourism, particularly eco-tourism, because of our Country's raw beauty.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With the achievement of peace and stability, we are now looking at how we can contribute to the international community.

Last year we were honoured to host the International Dialogue on Peace Building and State Building in April.

This event was possible thanks to the participation of the "g7+" which is now chaired by Timor-Leste. The g7+ allows fragile and conflict affected nations to come together in solidarity to speak with a common voice, learn from and share experiences and create new possibilities for peace and development.

It now has 17 member nations, covering 350 million people, and Timor-Leste is fully committed to this group in a spirit of commitment to the global community of nations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for coming this evening and welcome. I hope you have a good night and I look forward to chatting to you throughout the evening.

It is special for me, and for the delegation, to see representatives from nations from across the globe attend this reception.

I would, of course, be pleased to have the opportunity to also welcome you, one day, to our beautiful nation of Timor-Leste.

Thank you very much.

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão

23 February 2011