



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

SPEECH BY
HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER
KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO
ON THE OCCASION OF THE SWEARING-IN OF THE NEW CIVIL
SERVANTS

1 July 2011
GMT Gymnasium
Dili

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today is an extremely important landmark for Public Administration in our young State. I will even dare to say it is the most significant one since we achieved Independence.

From the time it entered into office, this Government focused on making decisions to promptly ensure a professional and efficient Civil Service, with dignified and fair working conditions for everyone.

And so, we strived to correct a practice that started with the United Nations Administration, which was the coexistence of two categories of Public Administration workers: the Administration officers, commonly known as temporary workers, and the civil servants, who are the permanent workers.

Temporary workers have always performed the same tasks as their permanent colleagues who already have a fixed and safe connection with the State, however they lacked the recognition of their most basic rights as State workers, despite being fully dedicated at all times.

In addition to this situation being unfair to the workers in question, it is not healthy for the economy of the Country to have most of its civil servants as temporary workers. The State gives great importance to developing the economic and social fabric and it has pursued strong public investment, which is essential to ensure the conditions for attracting private investment.

And so, in November 2010 the Government approved Resolution no. 42/2010, setting the policy for converting Administration officers into permanent civil servants.

This policy, which sought to achieve a better balance between the rights of workers and the stable and sustainable development of the Civil Service in Timor-Leste, resulted from a proposal by the Civil Service Commission, whose work I would like to praise for its contribution to Public Administration and consequently to the consolidation of the rule of law in Timor-Leste.

All temporary workers who met the requirements set in this resolution underwent a process for determining their eligibility. This process started on 1 January 2011 and ends today, with the swearing-in of the new civil servants.

Today, 13,327 civil servants are sworn-in and consequently assured of a lasting stable employment, duly remunerated, with dignified working conditions and the possibility of moving up in an exciting professional career.

We estimate that this policy will benefit around 65,000 people, namely the households of these civil servants. As such, we must consider that the decision to permanently integrate these workers in our Public Administration is a measure of great social justice, since it gives stability and safety to those families and to the communities where they are live and work.

However, I want to make it very clear that these new civil servants still have to prove themselves worthy of the opportunity that they have been given. Their full integration in the civil service is dependent upon satisfactory performance of their tasks and from proving to possess the qualifications and skills required for those tasks.

Starting today, and for the next 12 months, you will be subjected to a probation period during which you will be assessed continuously. Only after these 12 months will the present appointment cease to be temporary and become permanent. Of course, during these 12 months you must perform your tasks well, but I have full confidence that all of you will be up to this challenge.

Public Administration has a vital and indispensable role to play in any country, particularly those that, like Timor-Leste, are still taking their first steps towards consolidation as a sovereign and independent nation.

The service provided to the population is absolutely fundamental to ensure their wellbeing and their daily lives. Therefore, it is necessary that civil servants are recognised for their competence, dedication, honesty, selflessness and spirit of sacrifice.

A Public Administration served by unmotivated and weak workers would only undermine the foundations of the State and contribute to a breakdown of society, thus rendering it impossible to build a democratic and fair society where the rights and safety of the people are assured.

In view of this, I urge all of you who are symbolically sworn-in today as civil servants, to commit yourselves fully to serving the Nation.

Be impartial in the decisions that you have to make, without being constrained by interests that are foreign to your offices or by your personal friendships.

Treat all those that come to you with politeness and consideration. Never forget that your mission is to serve them as best as you can.

Be punctual in your workplaces and never leave your duties except if authorised by a senior officer and for a justified reason.

Cooperate with one another: since the civil service can only be truly efficient and effective if all services work towards the same goal. This requires permanent cooperation between all civil servants.

Most of all: be honest. Never accept anything you are not entitled to. Never forget that the only entity responsible for paying your salary is the State.

Corruption is the worst vice of modern societies and the main cause for failed states.

We have fought for a quarter century to achieve the independence we always dreamed about. So many of our citizens gave their lives so that we could become an independent and sovereign Nation, we cannot throw everything away because of a few who only want to gain money and perks, at the expense of the State we are still building.

Corrupt civil servants are like parasites, they are good for nothing. Therefore, each and every one of you has the obligation to look after the interests of the State and to report and oppose any acts of corruption of which you become aware.

I am relying on you to do so. I would also like to wish you the best of luck at this new stage of your lives and I trust that you will meet with great professional success in the future.

Your professional success will also be the success of the State. May future generations look upon you as the ones that helped to build this great Nation of ours.

Thank you very much.

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão