



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

ADDRESS

BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER
AND MINISTER OF DEFENCE
KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO
ON THE OCCASION OF THE CEREMONY FOR THE
DEDICATION AND DELIVERY OF THE PROJECT
CONCERNING THE CONSTRUCTION OF 100 HOUSES
FOR F-FDTL

26 August 2011

Metinaro

Your Excellency the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, Mr Fu Yuanchong,
Your Excellency the Secretary of State for Defence, Dr Júlio Tomás Pinto,
Your Excellency the Chief of the Defence Force, Major-General Taur Matan Ruak,
Distinguished guests,

Officers, NCOs and Privates of F-FDTL,

Our young Nation would never have become a sovereign and independent State without the effort and sacrifice of all those who took arms and fought against the occupier for a quarter century.

F-FDTL, the successor of FALINTIL, the armed resistance against the enemy, are today modern Armed Forces, characterized by a strong spirit of discipline, a high sense of duty and patriotic pride. Despite the human and logistic limitations that unfortunately still persist, F-FDTL have a remarkable operational capability, as they have shown in the missions in which they have been involved.

Armed Forces are the last resort for ensuring territorial integrity and preserving national independence, which is why the State must guarantee that they have the necessary conditions for maintaining internal cohesion and sprit de corps. This can only be achieved when troop morale and wellbeing are high.

Timor-Leste is geographically a small country, however the lack of roads enabling prompt and safe connection between all locations, as well as the poor condition of existing roads, make distances too large and makes it very difficult for those who have to travel far from the lands in which they were born and raised to maintain relationships with the relatives that stay behind.

F-FDTL, being still confined to restricted parts of the territory, have suffered considerably because of this. Many soldiers are far from their loved ones and lack the financial means to overcome this situation.

We cannot forget that this was precisely one of the reasons behind the so-called crisis of the petitioners, which culminated in the tragic events of 2006.

The discontentment felt by many soldiers resulted from the fact that they were far from their families, without having sufficient time to visit them, while their comrades from the areas where they were serving could stay close to their households.

It is precisely for mitigating this situation of great injustice towards many F-FDTL soldiers that the Government took the initiative to move forward with the construction of this compound, which will enable a considerable number of soldiers to live close to their spouses and children, while continuing to work in the career that they have chosen.

These houses meant for active soldiers, which will receive 100 families, were only possible thanks to the generosity of the People's Republic of China, which took the responsibility for their construction through Chinese company Chongqing International Construction Corporation and now formally delivers it to F-FDTL, without any costs to the Timorese State.

To our Chinese brothers and sisters and to the constructing company, in the person of Ambassador Fu Yuanchong, I hereby present my thanks and gratitude, as well as those of the entire Timorese People, for yet another selfless gesture of friendship and sympathy towards Timor-Leste, following all the ones you have made during the last few years.

The People's Republic of China has always been in the frontline of the countries that have contributed the most to the reconstruction of our Nation, without wanting anything in return.

We fully believe that this assistance is merely a result of the genuine solidarity by the Chinese People towards other Peoples in greater need, which is why we will never forget this offer and will always have true and honest friendship towards China.

We are committed to continuing to cooperate with the Chinese Government in indispensable areas for the economic and social development of our Country, without any fears and without giving ears to groundless criticisms.

Thank you very much, Mr Ambassador, for all that China has done for Timor-Leste.

Soldiers of F-FDTL,

The houses that you will now occupy belong to the Institution and not to each of you in particular. Later on, other comrades of yours, along with their families, will also live in them.

As such, you have the moral and disciplinary obligation of preserving this entire compound, maintaining the dignity that befits a military area.

This quarter must be a reason of pride for all those who live in it and particularly for the whole of the Military Institution. It is up to you to make it so.

The Timorese are looking at their Armed Forces. Therefore, Armed Forces must be role models and a source of inspiration to them.

I am convinced that this new residential area will shine through because of its organization, its cleanliness and the climate of peace and tranquillity among those who will reside in it. This in turn will lead other locations to emulate what they see here.

I wish all the best to the families that will live here.

Thank you very much.

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão

26 August 2011