



**OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER**

**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER  
KAY RALA XANANA GUSMAO  
AT THE BOOK LAUNCH OF STRATEGIES FOR THE FUTURE**

**Sydney, Australia**

**20 February 2012**

Her Excellency, Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO, Governor of New South Wales  
Major General (Retd) Michael Smith AO  
Mr David Longfield  
Excellencies  
Ladies and gentlemen

I am honoured to be here today.

Firstly I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to Her Excellency, Professor Marie Bashir, the Governor of New South Wales, for launching this book.

I have had the privilege of spending time with the Governor and have been moved by her compassion, her great intellect and her vision.

The Governor is a true friend of Timor-Leste.

I also acknowledge Major-General Mike Smith.

I have known the Major-General since in his time in Timor-Leste with INTERFET.

Mike has very kindly contributed an introduction to the book.

I want to thank him for his generous words about me that I do not believe I deserve.

Mike Smith is a very professional military officer with a very good heart.

He has shown great compassion towards our people since his retirement.

Since retiring from the military, he has worked to improve the lives of families in Bobonaro – a great example of solidarity in practice.

Thank you Mike.

I would also like to thank David Longfield for his kind words, and for all his hard work in publishing this book.

And I would like to thank my good friend, and Secretary of State for the Council of Ministers, Agio Pereira, for his dedicated work behind the scenes.

It was Agio who turned the idea of this book into a reality.

He is a man of deep intelligence and a distinguished leader in our nation.

Finally – I want to thank you all for coming today.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Although my name appears on the cover, the speeches contained within belong to my ministerial colleagues, to the members of our Parliament and ultimately to the people of Timor-Leste.

There have been many challenges since we achieved our long cherished dream of independence ten years ago.

It is one thing to dream of freedom and independence but when that dream becomes a reality there is a whole new set of challenges.

How could we make our new dream of Timor-Leste a reality - a dream of a strong nation with a culture of transparency, accountability and democratic processes that ensured a tolerant, compassionate and peaceful society.

We knew we had an obligation to honour the sacrifice of the people that fought so hard for the freedom of our nation.

They deserved our commitment to these ideals so that their struggle, and their sacrifice, was not for nothing.

But in 2006 we tripped and fell.

We became caught up in a terrible internal conflict, with widespread civil unrest, that tore at the fabric of our young nation.

The 2006 crisis made us all reflect – it was a wakeup call.

We were determined to learn from the experience.

We had to make sure that the newly independent nation of Timor-Leste did not join the list of 'failed' states.

We examined the strengths and weaknesses of our State, and its institutions, with honesty and with purpose.

It became clear that we were not fragile because we were poor - we were fragile because our institutions were weak.

And so we needed to engage in a long and difficult process of State building and peace building.

That is why, in 2007, we started a process of major reform.

This included:

- Reforming our State institutions to ensure accountability
- Establishing independent institutions to promote and protect good governance
- Reforming and professionalising our police and defence forces
- Undertaking administrative reforms and overhauling our Public Financial Management system.

These reforms have built a foundation for the continuing future of our State, and our nation.

We also realised that since 2002 we had relied too heavily on annual plans – and that we needed to start thinking about the longer term – about our vision for our country’s future.

Which is why we travelled around the country, visiting all 65 sub districts in three months, to consult with the people of Timor-Leste about our future.

The result was the Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030.

The Plan sets out our vision for the next two decades to lift our people out of poverty and, most importantly, its sets out a practical pathway to achieve that vision.

Ladies and gentleman,

As a nation, it was also important that we gave thought to our place in the region and beyond.

And so we considered our relationships with our neighbours and our place in the world.

We thought about how Timor-Leste, having undertaken the difficult journey to independence, could make a contribution to peace and to the world.

Our story was a path from struggle and loss, to reconciliation and forgiveness – it was a path from violence and fragility, to peace and stability.

We have learnt many lessons - and we wish to share these lessons, not only with those nations that are fragile, but with those parts of the world in which peace is allusive, and in which dialogue and tolerance are so badly needed.

So as we build our nation we are also finding our place in our region and in the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we celebrate our 10<sup>th</sup> year of independence we can now move forward with confidence, with hope and in peace.

I urge you to continue with us as we build a democratic nation of good governance, tolerance and strength.

Thank you very much.