



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

ADDRESS

**BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND
SECURITY**

KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO

**AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE BUILDING OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND
F-FDTL HEADQUARTERS**

3 April 2012

Fatuhada, Dili

Your Excellency the President of the Republic, Dr. José Ramos-Horta
Your Excellency the Secretary of State for Defence, Mr Júlio Tomás Pinto,
Your Excellency the Chief of the Defence Force, Major-General Lere Anan Timur,

Your Excellency the Ambassador from the People's Republic of China, Mr. Tian Guangfeng

Illustrious guests,

About a year and a half ago, more precisely on 24 August 2010, we stood at this very location laying the first stone of this building, together with the former Chinese Ambassador to Timor-Leste, Dr. Fu Yuancong.

I said it back then and I repeat it now - we cannot expect that State agencies perform their roles with dedication and professionalism if we do not provide them with dignified and adequate working conditions.

Both the Secretariat of State for Defence and the F-FDTL have, from the start, been working in very small facilities which, particularly in the case of the F-FDTL's Headquarters, did not meet minimum requirements. As such, this ceremony is extremely important and makes me proud as Head of Government and Minister of Defence and Security.

Indeed, this Government has always strived to provide the various official departments and agencies with well-equipped, sizable and functional workplaces, so that all those who provide public services in them do so conscientiously with the desire to serve well and with care to fully meet the needs of the people requiring these services.

Starting today, a modern, imposing and functional building, in a favoured location, will house the Ministry of Defence and Security, the Secretariat of State of Defence and the F-FDTL Command, thereby enabling better and more accurate coordination between agencies with responsibilities in the area of national defence.

I urge all those who will work in these facilities to maintain them in their current condition. All men and women working here are obligated to take care of the condition of this building, preventing any actions that would degrade it.

I trust that whenever I return here, whether on official duty or just visiting, I will find a clean and tidy building where civilian and military personnel work together in harmony. This is your house, take good care of it.

Finally, I must seize this opportunity to once again thank the People's Republic of China, through its Ambassador, for providing these facilities for the Ministry of Defence and the F-FDTL Headquarters.

Without the goodwill and friendship of our Chinese friends we could not be here today at this ceremony. The effort by the People's Republic of China in terms of constructing State buildings has been remarkable.

I am very happy to see that the People's Republic of China is also offering to provide assistance in relation to other facilities, such as the Palace of the President of the Republic, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Military Quarters in Metinaro. This gesture of friendship is even more significant as there are no strings attached. Nothing has been requested or even hinted to us in exchange for the construction of these buildings.

Bilateral cooperation between our countries, which naturally is not limited to the construction of public buildings, has been extremely advantageous and results from an unquestionable willingness by both peoples to establish stronger ties of friendship.

We know that the People's Republic of China hasn't any ambition to seize our natural wealth or to make use of our geographic position to build bridges enabling any type of geostrategic expansionism - and that makes us comfortable to accept these gifts. This is why our feeling of gratitude is genuine.

Mr Ambassador,

Please convey to your Government my personal thanks, the thanks of my Government and all other sovereign bodies, as well as the thanks of all Timorese, not just for this magnificent building but also for everything your Government has done to assist the development and consolidation of our young State.

Lastly, and in view of the holiday season that is upon us, I want to wish all civilian and military personnel in the Ministry of Defence and Security, the Secretariat of State of Defence and the F-FDTL, happy Easter to you and your families.

Thank you very much

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão

3 April 2012