



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

ADDRESS BY

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER

KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO

ON THE OCCASION OF THE GRADUATION

CEREMONY FOR SENIOR STUDENTS OF

UNIVERSIDADE NACIONAL TIMOR LOROSA'E (UNTL)

24 April 2012

Dili Convention Centre

Your Excellency the Rector of UNTL, Professor Aurélio Guterres
Your Excellency the Rector of the University of Minho, Professor António Cunha
Distinguished Teachers
Distinguished Guests
Dear students and families,

It is with satisfaction that I return to this University as the Prime Minister of this Country to witness the graduation of 188 students who have studied here, and who have now earned their degrees, as well as the graduation of 12 students who have just earned their Masters.

The courses that these new graduates have studied cover fundamental and indispensable areas for the economic and social development of Timor-Leste, such as law, engineering, science and technology, social science and education, arts and humanities, in addition to the Masters on education and information technologies.

This graduation could not have come at a better time: now more than ever, your Country needs your contribution and dedication to the noble cause of helping to build a democratic and pluralistic State under the rule of law, with which all Timorese can identify and to which they can all feel proud to belong.

We are still at the start of a long path, having taken the first steps precisely ten years ago – we will be celebrating that historical date within a few weeks – and there is much work ahead before we can be content and feel pride in having a State where all agencies work well.

Never forget the sacrifices made by our People, which enable us to live in freedom today. This is the only way to realise that nothing in life is easy and that everything requires sacrifice and much, much dedication.

It is time to look to the future and, with calm and conviction, to concentrate on a new challenge that will undoubtedly be more difficult than the one we faced ten years ago: building a State from scratch. This is a battle that cannot be fought only by a few; on the contrary, it is necessary that all Timorese citizens dedicate themselves fully to this goal, lest we fail and render useless the sacrifice made by our brothers and sisters who gave their lives so that Timor-Leste could be free and independent.

This is the role destined to you who have completed your higher education. We are aware that, unfortunately, Timor-Leste lacks skilled and experienced workers, and that this is something that hinders us and forces us to resort to external assistance for human resources.

The work being done so far by international officers, who have done their best and been indispensable in this first stage of construction of the Timorese State, must be gradually transferred to those of us who were born here and who are willing to spend our lives seeking to develop the Country and to create better living conditions for our People.

The capacity building of our human resources – a task that is given to the University and its various Faculties – is a top priority of the State, which must be assisted by all agents responsible in terms of Education, whether in the public or in the private sector.

I would like, here and now, in the presence of the Rector, Professor Aurélio Guterres, to highlight the importance that the Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e, UNTL, has had in this path we have been walking ever since we were allowed to freely express our desire to be independent. It is because of the UNTL that today we have graduate and skilled young workers performing the most varied tasks in public administration and in the private sector, which is also indispensable in order for Timor-Leste to affirm itself as a sovereign and respected nation among the international community.

Since this will probably be the last time I come here as the Head of the IV Constitutional Government, I would like to make use of this opportunity to acknowledge the extraordinary legacy of the previous Rector, Professor Benjamim Corte-Real, who is undoubtedly the main person responsible for the praiseworthy role that the UNTL rightfully plays in serving our Country.

Thank you, Professor, for everything that you have done and continue to do for Timor-Leste and for the Timorese. Of course this is not a farewell, as your path is not yet over, and we will continue to make use of all your wisdom and care in the many tasks that will be given to you.

I want to urge all young graduates to give it your best in the jobs that await you. The future of the Country is yours, and the feasibility of the affirmation of the Timorese State will depend considerably on your commitment and your ability to carry out the mission that is now given to you.

Please reflect on what I have told you: nothing in life is easy. Do not expect jobs to simply fall into your laps! The State and the private sector are responsible for creating jobs, but these will only go to those who possess the necessary knowledge and who apply it in conditions of transparency and equality.

My generation committed itself to a cause that demanded permanent dedication. No one forced us to fight for the values in which we believed, but we did so because we felt in our hearts it was the right thing to do. We did not expect others to show us the way and we certainly did not expect our battles to be easy.

As such, we had to rely on ourselves and had to set a course and follow it unwaveringly and with determination. This is exactly what we now expect you to do. Do not get comfortable because you have already got a diploma, but, rather, seek the positions that are available and once you obtain the job you crave, work with utmost commitment and dedication.

This is the only way in which Timor-Leste will be able to have its own skilled human resources, so as not to keep relying on foreign labour. Only in this way can we realise our dream of being truly independent.

I trust you will bear in mind that your studies have not ended. In modern societies living in constant change, where what is new today is considered old tomorrow, the only workers who have professional success are the ones who seek to continue improving every day. Knowledge is something that one acquires until the very last day, both through daily experience and through complementary studying.

I further urge you to continue improving your mastery of your Country's official languages. Most of you have had classes in Portuguese, and this language will be very useful

to you in the future. It will also be equally important to improve your mastery of Tetum, since in Timor-Leste both languages depend on each other and none can be considered more important than the other.

Finally, I would like to praise all of the teachers in this University, who have worked so hard to provide the best training to all of the students who have now graduated. I would like to highlight the Portuguese teachers from University of Minho, who have travelled to Timor-Leste in order to teach the two Masters courses. Thank you very much, Professor António Cunha, for yet another gesture of solidarity and brotherly friendship.

From the bottom of my heart I wish to all of those who have completed their university education the greatest happiness and professional success. I am sure that you will do our best to help build our State and that you will make the Timorese homeland proud of you.

Thank you very much.

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão
24 April 2012