



**PRIME  
MINISTER**

**ADDRESS BY  
HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER  
KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 14<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE CHIEFS  
OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE CPLP COUNTRIES**

**18 August 2012  
Ministry of Defence and Security  
Fatuhada, Dili**



Palácio do Governo,  
Avenida Presidente Nicolau Lobato,  
Dili, Timor-Leste

Your Excellencies, the Chiefs of the Armed Forces of the CPLP  
Your Excellencies, the Ambassadors of Portugal and Brazil  
Your Excellency, the Representative of the Permanent Secretary for CPLP  
Defence Matters  
Your Excellency, the Director of the CPLP Strategic Review Centre  
Your Excellencies, Members of the Delegations  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all on behalf of our people, two days after a pleasant and positive visit by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Ban Ki-moon, and two days before the 37<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Glorious FALINTIL – the Armed Forces for the National Liberation of Timor-Leste.

One year ago, in Maputo, during the 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Chiefs of the Armed Forces of the CPLP Countries, it was decided that the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting would take place here, in Dili.

Our Armed Forces were represented by their Head, Major-General Taur Matan Ruak, who is currently the President of the Republic, after having been elected by the Timorese people. The arguments he presented at the time to justify choosing our country to host this meeting received the support of everyone, and for this we are grateful to you.

As it was, in a not so distant past, this option could only mean the recognition by our Portuguese-speaking brother countries of the progress our Nation has been making to consolidate itself as a democratic and pluralistic State under the rule of law, in which the most basic human rights are respected.

Today Timor-Leste lives in peace and the democratically elected institutions carry out their tasks with full respect for the constitutional rules. This was proven recently by the presidential and parliamentary elections, which showed once more the maturity and civility of the Timorese people.

It is common to say that there is no peace without democracy, but it is equally true that without development there is no democracy, and consequently there is no peace. This is why Timor-Leste is committed to implementing its 20-year Strategic Development Plan, which should transform us from an underdeveloped low income country into a medium-high income country by 2030, by making use of all our material and human potential.

As such, the opportunity to preside over the start of this meeting makes me proud as the Prime Minister of the Fifth Constitutional Government, which was sworn in only 10 days ago. As the Minister of Defence and Security, it is a great honour to host the higher representatives of the Armed Forces of the CPLP Countries.



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I regret the absences of Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau, which could not be here today for various reasons. Their precious collaboration is always missed.

From the times of hardship in the mountains, which sheltered our guerrilla fighters, up to the quieter days of present, we have always followed the events in Guinea-Bissau with pain. (I should say that I came down to Dili from the mountains, at the end of 1991 or possibly in 1992, just to watch the peace agreement between MPLA and UNITA on television).

Thus I hope, like everyone here today, that our brothers and sisters from Guinea-Bissau may quickly find a broad solution to their problems, so that they may start their journey on the path to lasting peace. Peace is the deepest aspiration people can hold and the most precious good that they can enjoy. I wish that the leaders of Guinea-Bissau may also move towards international recognition, which is indispensable for the affirmation of an independent and sovereign state.

Your Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since our small Country is located at the crossroads of Asia and the Pacific, the issue of Defence becomes even more complex.

We are witnessing a great and unstoppable economic growth in East Asia, with indications that China may become the leading economic power of the entire world. The growth of India, Indonesia and Vietnam are also important pieces to add to this mosaic, so as to consider a possible changing of strategy in terms of political, economic and military decisions in this part of the world.

Timor-Leste is currently in the process of joining the Association of Southeast Asian Nations – ASEAN, with all its challenges and opportunities.

We have taken part in several regional conferences on Defence and Security, both in Jakarta and in Singapore. We have registered the concern by all parties, within and outside the region, regarding increasingly greater conventional and non-conventional, national and transnational threats, including climate changes.

The unbalances in terms of preparation and ability to assess, plan and deploy responses are vital issues that force us to consider them with even greater care.

I recognise we are still making philosophical considerations that may affect us in a somewhat near future. Today, because we are no longer naive, the reordering of foreign forces in our region suggests either preventative deterrent measures or preparations according to previously set plans.

The insecurity resulting from territorial disputes throughout East Asia does not reassure anyone, least of all Timor-Leste. The unquenchable thirst for economic



Palácio do Governo,  
Avenida Presidente Nicolau Lobato,  
Dili, Timor-Leste

supremacy through the mastery of resources does not help the small peoples, some of which have to fight desperately for their very survival. This psychological instability can only bring uncertainty into our decision-making processes, for fear of confronting those that may be willing to ensure economic interests that are clearly not our own.

Finally, what I can say is that we Timorese must grow in terms of thinking, from reviewing to planning, from preparation to the capacity building of human resources, in all areas of our Armed Forces, so that they may respond to the current challenges ahead of us.

Your Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Defence Force of Timor-Leste, which is the natural heir of the heroic FALINTIL, is still growing. Consequently, its capacity building and development are political priorities for this Government.

The training and professionalisation process for our military could not have been possible without the support of several friendly countries, particularly the personnel from CPLP countries. As such, we want to strengthen the already sound ties of bilateral cooperation that we have.

I would like to highlight, in view of its importance, the technical and military cooperation with Portugal. Among other relevant activities, this cooperation has been responsible for providing military training to the new recruits that enter the ranks of the F-FDTL.

I believe that Timor-Leste will continue to enjoy the goodwill and the permanent availability of its brother countries in the CPLP. Following what Portugal let us do, by integrating F-FDTL personnel in its mission in Lebanon, we want to continue preparing our forces to take part in more such missions under the banner of the United Nations.

I trust that this meeting will be fruitful, so that its findings may reflect the prestige and the influence enjoyed by the CPLP throughout the world, particularly in an always sensitive area like defence.

I wish all delegation members in attendance here today a very pleasant stay in Timor-Leste. I hope that you will have the opportunity to enjoy all the good things we have to offer you, including the natural beauty around us, our culture, our food and particularly the warmth and hospitality of our People.

Thank you for your time.



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