



PRIME
MINISTER

**ADDRESS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER
KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO
AT THE CORAL TRIANGLE INITIATIVE CELEBRATION
HONOURING THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
INDONESIA, H.E. SUSILO BAMBANG YUDHOYONO**

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

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to acknowledge Andrew Steer of WRI, Mark Tercek of TNC, Carter Roberts of the WWF and Alex Feldman of US ABC, for organizing this event of particular importance.

I would also like to acknowledge my friend, Jeffrey Sachs, the guru of developing countries searching for sustainable solutions for this unsustainable world.

And it is this dichotomy that brings us together here.

It is therefore, indeed, a special pleasure to be able to speak at this event, to honour His Excellency, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, for his leadership of the Coral Triangle Initiative.

It was President Yudhoyono who inspired the leaders of our region to launch the Coral Triangle Initiative - to take swift collective action to protect our coral reefs and fisheries and ensure their sustainability for future generations. In May 2009 in Manado, the then President of the Republic, Dr. José Ramos-Horta, representing Timor-Leste, signed together with five other leaders the declaration that officially launched the CTI.

Since then, Timor-Leste has participated regularly and acquired a broader understanding on this issue.

The tropical waters of Timor-Leste and of our neighbours, Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, and the Solomon Islands are of global importance for their environmental, biological and cultural diversity value and resources.

These waters have the highest biological diversity amongst the world's coral reefs. Regrettably, our coral reefs and tropical fisheries are at risk.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Through that vision of President Susilo's, my Government, in its 5 year program, places special attention to this subject and literally prescribes that Timor-Leste will work with other countries that are signatory to the CTI declaration to protect our coral reefs and fisheries.

We really need to work together to protect our environment, from our mountains to the depths of our waters, in order to achieve and maintain strong economic growth. It is also in this context, and with the support of the CSTP, that we established the Local

Early Action Plans for the Nino Konis Santana National Park community, in the eastern part of the country, covering the entire protected area to the beaches from Kom to Jaku island.

As we all know, the growth of East Asia is powering the global economy. And Indonesia is one of the great emerging economies, with almost 250 million people building a modern and advanced nation, under the leadership of President Susilo.

But the success of the East Asian region, and of the emerging economies, raises a global environmental challenge.

How do we accommodate the legitimate demands of emerging, and developing nations, for better living conditions when the world's resources are limited – this is the question.

Therefore, in our 5 year program, my government will formalise a national aquaculture strategy. By the same measure, the marine management mentoring program has begun and, in August, we sent ten community members to Indonesia to learn about co-management of marine resources. All these programs are also being supported by the CSTP.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Timor-Leste is a half island nation. We share our island with Indonesia.

The progress of our young nation would not have been possible, without our reconciliation and deep friendship with Indonesia. The relationship of our two nations has grown to be diverse and multi faceted.

On 20 May, when President Susilo joined us in our celebrations, a MOU between the two countries was signed on a “Joint Approach on Regional Development”, that covers Timor-Leste and the neighbouring Indonesian islands. This approach will benefit the common goals as set out in the CTI.

And for this, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of a great man, His Excellency, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who has guided and steered this very important initiative.

While tonight we honour the President's leadership of the Coral Triangle Initiative, I would also like to acknowledge his leadership of the world's largest Muslim nation, the third largest democracy in the world.

Your Excellency, your aspiration for a more just, more peaceful, more prosperous and more democratic Indonesia has been realized.

This achievement inspires us in Timor-Leste, and I am sure in other countries, to strive to fulfill our own aspirations.

Mr. President I would like to commend you for your personal commitment to building our regional relationship and to preserving our beautiful marine resources.

It is an honour to count you as a friend.

Saya salut Anda, kami semua salut Anda, Bapak Presiden. (I salute you, we salute you, Mr. President).

Tuhan memberkati kita semua! (May God bless us all!)