



PRIME
MINISTER

**ADDRESS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER
KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 67TH SESSION OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

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Excellency, the President of the General Assembly
Excellency, the Secretary General of the United Nations
Excellencies, the Heads of State and Government
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure for me to address this great General Assembly of the United Nations for the second year in a row.

Last September, I tried to convey to you a message of progress and hope. Today I bring from the People of Timor-Leste a message of both joy and thankfulness.

The United Nations has been in Timor-Leste since the difficult times of our emancipation, having led the Popular Consultation of 1999.

Since then, it has been an enormous challenge to build from scratch the foundations of a new State under the rule of law, based on democratic governance and respect for human rights. As such, after UNAMET we have had missions like UNTAET, UNMISSET, UNOTIL and UNMIT accompanying us in this crucial journey of Statebuilding, as well as in the creation of an atmosphere of reconciliation and harmony, in view of enabling peace and stability.

In our still short existence as a State, we have been trying to learn from the errors of the past. Today I can say that we have decidedly moved away from the difficult circumstances that characterize post-conflict countries or, in other words, countries with recent histories of conflict and violence.

We have come to understand (along with several countries) that peace and stability are essential prerequisites for State building. The current year, 2012, therefore marks not exactly the end of a chapter in our history of peace building – but, more particularly, the start of a new one – a chapter of ongoing institutional strengthening, seeking to boost national development.

After two rounds of presidential elections, which took place in March and April, our People elected as the 3rd President of the Republic, Major-General Taur Matan Ruak, a historical figure of the Struggle for Liberation, who has been serving the motherland since 1975. Taur Matan Ruak has led the Armed Resistance and became Chief of Defence Force in 1999.

In May, we had the pleasure of hosting five Heads of State and many delegations from friendly countries to celebrate with us the 10th Anniversary of the Restoration of our Independence. This took place within an atmosphere of peace, stability and confidence in the future.

The landmark moment of the celebrations was the constitutional transfer of power from the then President of the Republic, Dr José Ramos-Horta, to the new Head of State, in a highly dignified manner for our young democracy.

On 7th July, the Timorese People were called to vote, once again, and on the 30th of the same month, the new Parliament entered into office.

As a result of those elections, three parties were chosen to ensure the governance of Timor-Leste from 2012 to 2017. Consequently, on 8 August the Fifth Constitutional Government was sworn-in and given the mission of continuing to consolidate the vital institutions of a peaceful and democratic Nation. In this way, we will also be continuing the work done by the previous Government, which consisted of a 5-party coalition, and had undoubtedly sown the seeds for national peace and stability, in addition to boosting our economy.

During this year we have also been honoured with visits by several personalities, from which I would highlight two high level dignitaries:

In August, the Secretary General of the United Nations, His Excellency Ban Ki-moon, decided to see by himself the changes that had taken place in our country since his last visit 5 years ago. The visit of the Secretary General was a magnificent gesture of support by a man with a broad vision on peace and development – a vision that is shared by the Timorese people. The Secretary General acknowledged the progress made and left words of encouragement regarding the strengthening of the cooperation ties between the United Nations and Timor-Leste in an area that is no less important, which is 'Education First' – in his Global Education Initiative.

More recently, we have also had the pleasure of hosting the U.S. Secretary of State, Madam Hillary Clinton. This was the first time that a senior representative from the US Government visited our young country. Mrs Clinton also conveyed an important message of confidence and solidarity, praising the strong commitment by Timor-Leste in relation to the values and principles of democracy and good governance.

These events are even more important as UNMIT (United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste) and ISF (International Stabilization Force) will withdraw by the end of the present year. This will mark the end of peacekeeping operations in Timor-Leste.

All of this has instilled in the hearts of the Timorese a very special feeling of accomplishment and national pride.

As such, I would like to convey this feeling of joy and thankfulness to all United Nations member countries and to the various international Organizations that have provided us with ongoing support in terms of consolidating peace, democracy and human rights.

The President of the Republic, Taur Matan Ruak, has asked me to make public that, on 20 May 2013, the Timorese State will be honouring, with the highest insignia of Timor-Leste, all countries that have taken part in missions in Timor-Leste, starting with the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council.

For our people, these will be an act of profound recognition, wishing that from now on the United Nations could pay more attention to our fellow brothers and sisters in need.

The success of Timor-Leste belongs to everyone – to the international community, for their dedicated support and solidarity, and to the Timorese people, for the courage to acknowledge their mistakes and their firmness and determination to correct them.

Throughout the last four years our people have clearly said “no” to conflict, in order to fully embrace the aspirations of their own development.

The Timorese people were also able to display a high degree of political maturity by expressing, in a peaceful and constructive manner, renewed confidence in the elected leaders and in the State institutions. All of this is essential for reaffirming here today that, more than ever, we are ready to continue leading the national development process, including the full establishment of our democratic State under the rule of law and the gradual implementation of the Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030.

However, we want to maintain strong ties with the United Nations and other partners under a new cooperation framework, taking as a starting point the current and actual needs of the country either in the area of institutional strengthening or in development sectors.

Based on the principles of the New Deal, which are advocated by the ‘g7+’, we hope to see relationships of cooperation being established in an innovative, dynamic and effective manner.

Mr President
Mr Secretary General
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

After overcoming the main obstacles in terms of State building, Timor-Leste is now looking to the future with optimism. Consequently, the Government’s programme for the 2012-2017 mandate, which has already been endorsed by Parliament, establishes short term (5 years) activities, lists sectors where activities can be started to have impacts in the medium term (5-10 years) and includes long term (10-20 years) objectives, implemented according to priorities and execution time.

We will continue to invest in social capital with the aim to build the capacity and to dignify the Timorese citizens by maximising the quality of and access to health, education, professional training, information, social justice and culture.

We will invest in basic infrastructures, which will be the driving force of the country’s development.

We will develop the economic sector to make better use of our potential and to create employment. We will encourage the growth of the private sector, for both local and foreign.

We will continue our efforts to consolidate the institutional framework to improve the function, management and implementation of programmes. This includes a strong public sector, good governance and a credible system of justice.

Meanwhile, we will improve our social programmes that cater to our most vulnerable citizens, including the disabled, the elderly, and women and children at risk, in order to ensure that no Timorese citizen is marginalized or socially left out. We will also continue to dignify our veterans.

Today we have a plan, a vision, a goal – to transform Timor-Leste from a low income country to a medium-high income country by 2030. We want to be a prosperous and safe Nation, with a healthy and educated population with skilled employment for all.

However, in the short term, by 2015, Timor-Leste will not meet the Millennium Development Goals. The current major challenge for Timor-Leste is the fight against poverty – a challenge that we share with over one billion people in our planet.

Regrettably, around 20% of the world's population live in conditions of extreme poverty. Hunger and the lack of access to water sources will remain insurmountable challenges. Mothers and children throughout the world will continue to die tragically due to lack of access to the most basic needs.

Unfortunately, these are the current projections for 2015.

As such, it was very timely of the United Nations Secretary General to create a High Level Panel to help establish new guidelines for beyond 2015. Here, I must confess, that we were proud to see a Timorese woman, our Minister of Finance, Emília Pires, been deservedly chosen as a Panel member.

Timor-Leste wants to contribute, in a clear and constructive manner, to the debate on this issue. It is urgent to address the structural factors that have hindered the efforts that so many good willed people have made without obtaining tangible results.

We have a historical opportunity to try to change things. We can learn from the lessons of the Millennium Development Goals process, analysing what worked and what did not, so that we can do better in the future.

Strengthening the role of the United Nations is essential; however it will require the courage to break with the old way of handling things. We need new action paradigms and new coordination mechanisms, so that programmes may truly benefit the people of the more affected countries.

The 'g7+' was created in April 2010 in Dili, during the preparation for the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, which took place in Timor-Leste.

Prior to the creation of the 'g7+', there was no mechanism where fragile States with common concerns in terms of peace and development, could discuss these matters in a less subservient way in their relationships with donors and development agencies.

It is quite common for the recipient countries to consider that the international assistance was not the most appropriate to meet their real needs. Countries complain of the lack of an accountability system in relation to the money that is actually spent on the poor, in comparison with the amounts spent to improve the wellbeing of those who manage the projects and those who manage the reports on the projects, in long documents that are irrelevant because they are out of touch with the reality on the ground.

Thus, within a true spirit of openness and sharing, with a common desire to improve the living conditions of their people, as well as to contribute to sustainable peace and development, fragile countries created this international group to be able to speak with one voice. Yes, we say one voice! Speaking as one, we will be able to demand responsibility from the leaders of beneficiary countries and also accountability to the taxpayers of the donor countries.

This is also the reason why we are advocating the New Deal, which seeks to ensure better coordination and ownership of international assistance by recipient countries. We want to make actual impacts on the people and to correspond better to the true needs of the beneficiary populations.

Timor-Leste is fully committed to leading the 'g7+', the same way it was committed when moving from a situation of conflict and fragility to a situation of social and political peace and stability. We want to contribute in a way that is sound and based on actual experiences from the 'g7+' itself. We are a small country that is still fragile in some aspects, but we share the same huge concerns of the 17 Nations that make up our group, with a total population of more than 300 million people.

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We have seen how intolerance causes irreparable destruction in several parts of the world, particularly in the daily lives of innocent people. The brunt of the impact is borne by women, mothers, children and the elderly, making them even more vulnerable.

Intolerance breeds hatred and the desire for vengeance. The world is not changing as much as it is destroying itself.

Consolidating the gains of the Arab Spring is proving to be difficult. Syria is a terrible example of internal conflict. Iraq and Afghanistan do not present better perspectives of being able to solve their internal differences that are becoming deeper.

My good friend, Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhiono, the President of the Republic of Indonesia, has been hosting the Bali Democracy Forum, which has been registering greater interest each year, along with an increasing number of participating countries. We have always defended in that forum that democracy cannot be imposed upon the people, the same way as we cannot impose solar panels on homes without food, and therefore, without any perspectives of sustainability.

Democracy must be an internal process. This process is sometimes long, but it is vital for a lasting solution. The most recent, dynamic and inspirational example comes from Myanmar. Here I would like to commend Aung San Suu Kyi, a woman with an unshakable character, a born leader, a resolute democrat, defender of peaceful solutions and who is today, an advocate for internal reconciliation.

I would also like to commend the leaders of Myanmar for their courage to make changes in the country.

On behalf of the people of Timor-Leste, I would like to salute the people of Myanmar and wish them prosperity with an appeal for dialogue, reconciliation and tolerance.

Today's world faces very serious problems and is sliding over to an increasingly dangerous lack of control.

In addition to a recent atmosphere of regional instabilities, environmental threats continue to grow and hinder the legitimate perspectives of emerging and developing countries in relation to their natural resources. In the Pacific region, some Island States see their very natural survival at risk.

Food security is also coming to the foreground as also a result of climate changes, requiring careful thought, undelayable and broad strategy. In several parts of the world we see an immoral increase in inequality, with a rich and powerful elite dominating the globe with impunity, while the poor become even poorer and eternally dependent on wasteful assistance. What is more, it is difficult to know from where this assistance will come.

In order to meet these challenges, we need a strong and efficient United Nations that cooperates more effectively with International and Regional Organizations, and that operates with great respect for the sovereignty of each State.

The United Nations, which consists of all of us here today, has a duty to humanity. We should all acknowledge that we are the privileged agents of the necessary collective change into a better and safer world. Our collective efforts to preserve peace, security

and human dignity must be translated from the altruistic idealism plan to a more interventive one, which in turn means replacing a reactive agenda with a proactive one.

It also means reducing the dominance of political and economic interests in favour of social and humanitarian interests. This requires the mobilization of the public opinion in the entire world concerning the values of peace and harmony between civilizations and cultures, mutual respect between societies and tolerance between groups, through dialogue.

It can also start with the reform of the Security Council, which should be more representative. There is an imperative need to renew mindsets, by the incorporation of new members, so as to energise new commitments and new responsibilities that reflect the current situations of today's world.

Timor-Leste has been walking the corridors of the United Nations for 38 years. In the beginning we wanted to mobilize public opinion in favour of our cause and to warn the world that our fundamental rights were being violated. Today, we have been informing the international community of our setbacks and our achievements in the construction of a sovereign State.

While as guerrilla fighters in the mountains, we heard about a new world order. Today, many people are still oppressed because they suffer in one way or another. We are here to speak in favour of dialogue and fair decision-making. Human dignity must be at the core of decisions on problems affecting our planet. We must have an overall sense of the existence, the fears, the suffering, the despair and the fight for survival of men and women around the world.

Today we are here to ask for honest, constructive and incessant dialogue to solve the problems that trouble the world – for the small and large problems, for small and large conflicts, and for small and large Nations.

Thank you very much.

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão

25 September 2012