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Secretary of State of the United States of America, Her Excellency Hillary Rodham Clinton, visits Timor-Leste.

The visit of Her Excellency Hillary Rodham Clinton last week marks the first time a Secretary of State of the United States of America has visited Timor-Leste. During her short stay in Dili the Secretary of State met with the President, His Excellency Taur Matan Ruak and the Prime Minister, His Excellency Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão. She also met with US Embassy staff, USAID and visited the Timor Coffee Cooperative.

Prime Minister Gusmão described the bilateral discussions held with the Secretary of State as “wide ranging and reflective.” The areas covered included the challenges of Timor-Leste, the implementation of the Strategic Development Plan, the US Timor-Leste development partnership, the role of the G7+ and, more broadly, regional and global plans in international relations. Mr. Gusmão also took the opportunity to express concern about the situation in Syria and commended the efforts of the United States in seeking to achieve a resolution to this conflict.

The Prime Minister last met with the Secretary of State in Washington DC in February of 2011. It was on this occasion that he invited Secretary Clinton to visit Timor-Leste in the year of the 10th Anniversary of the Restoration of Independence.

In her remarks at the Press Conference that followed the bilateral meeting Secretary of State Clinton explained “I told the Prime Minister when we met in February that I was determined to get there before the (anniversary) year was out as a very visible sign of our support for all that has been accomplished by the government and the people of this nation.”

The Secretary of State congratulated the leaders and people of Timor-Leste on the three sets of free and fair elections conducted this year noting that “there are many nations much older than this one who cannot credibly say they have conducted elections that are as free, fair and credible as yours.” She also noted Timor-Leste’s growing role in the international community pointing the development of the New Deal where “Timor-Leste is helping create a model for country-led development” and the “commendable accomplishment” of full compliance with the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).

The Prime Minister closed his own remarks emphasising the contribution the visit had made “to strengthen the bonds of friendship between our nations.” **ENDS**



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