



PRIME  
MINISTER

**ADDRESS BY  
HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER  
KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO  
AT THE HIGH LEVEL EVENT ON “PEACEBUILDING: WAY TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE  
PEACE AND SECURITY”**

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

His Excellency, Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the United Nations  
The Honourable, Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
The Honourable, Julia Gillard, Prime Minister of Australia  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to speak at this High Level Event on peace building, and ways towards sustainable peace and security.

I commend the People's Republic of Bangladesh for hosting this event and for their efforts and leadership in chairing the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, and its mission to address the root causes of conflict and enable the fulfillment of lasting peace and the promotion of development.

Let me also take this opportunity to highlight the contribution of peacekeepers from Bangladesh to the peace and stability of Timor-Leste, and as they are a large contributor of peacekeepers, to many other countries as well.

I have been invited to share my country's experiences of peace building with you today.

In May this year, Timor-Leste celebrated the 10 year anniversary of the restoration of our independence, after the Popular Consultation in August 1999.

We also celebrated the fact that Timor-Leste now enjoys stability and security, better living conditions, and some of the highest economic growth rates in the world.

But our path to peace has not been an easy one.

Until 2008, there were times when we were fearful that violence and civil unrest would undo our dream, which sustained us during the 24 year long struggle, of a peaceful and safe nation.

Around every two years, since independence, Timor-Leste experienced trouble. It was as if we were trapped in a vicious cycle of conflict.

The worst outbreak of civil unrest was in 2006 in which people were killed and which resulted in around 150,000 internally displaced people.

And so, as a government and as a people, we set about addressing our fragility.

We undertook a genuine inclusive dialogue, between State institutions, as well as with civil society.

We recognised that we were fragile because we were unable to leave behind the traumatized past of conflict and because our institutions were still weak – so we understood that peace building and state building go hand in hand.

We also recognised that we had to address the root causes of our problems to achieve permanent solutions.

Despite being told that we would need ten years to fix all these problems we were facing, by raising a collective accountability and building cooperation and tolerance, we worked hard and could resolve the issues by 2008.

In 2009, we launched a national motto “Goodbye Conflict, Welcome Development”.

For this to be effective, there needed to be local ownership and leadership, to make sure everyone became an agent of our peace and development.

While we started critical reforms in the security sector, we established new institutions, including an independent Civil Service Commission and an Anti-Corruption Commission and reinforced the justice sector, to promote good governance and the rule of law.

In 2011, we set up a 20 year Strategic Development Plan, aiming to turn a low income country into a medium high income by 2030, with a safe and democratic nation. And from there, we started to get our economy working to create more jobs for our young people.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our initiatives had strong local ownership and the support of our development partners.

Part of our success was our long term partnership with the UN, our neighbours, and the international community.

With this support, our success also became the success of our international partners. At the end of this year, we will put an end to the UN peace operation mission and to the International Stabilisation Forces as well.

Now we look forward to establishing a new framework of cooperation with the UN and our development partners.

Ladies and gentlemen,

One and a half billion people live in areas affected by fragility, organised crime or conflict.

Not one low income fragile country will achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

This is why addressing fragility is the world's primary development challenge.

This Event, and the UN Peacebuilding Commission, will help address this challenge.

The g7+ group of 17 fragile nations, with more than 300 million people, is also working to build sustainable peace in its member countries.

This group seeks to improve international understanding and shape global dialogue and action to ensure it is relevant to the experiences and priorities of fragile nations.

Tomorrow morning, the g7+ is hosting a High Level Event and I invite you all to attend.

Thank you for allowing me to speak today about Timor-Leste's peace building experience.

I have hope that by working together, and learning from each other, all nations can achieve peace and stability, and start to embrace the commitment to the well-being of their people and the sustainable development of their country.

Thank you very much.