



PRIME  
MINISTER

**ADDRESS BY  
HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER  
KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE BALI DEMOCRACY FORUM V**

**“Advancing democracy principles at the global setting”**

Bali  
8 November 2012



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

Your Excellency, the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono

Your Excellencies the Co-Chairs,  
Your Majesty,  
Excellencies, Heads of State and Government

Excellencies, Heads of Delegations  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great satisfaction that, for the fifth consecutive year, I take part in this important annual meeting.

I am pleased to see a growing number of participants every year, which reflects the importance of our common agenda of Peace and Democracy and which is the central theme of the Bali Democracy Forum.

Once again, I must commend my dear friend, and President of the Republic of Indonesia, Dr Susilo Yudhoyono, for his initiative in starting this Forum in December 2008. Since its inception, the President has been steadfastly dedicated to giving this event energy and leadership, which has ensured that people from many countries around the region, and around the world, come together in an inclusive way to work on a project of dignity, of democracy and of development.

This is the true spirit of the Asian Century which has been fostered right here by this great nation of Indonesia.

Indonesia is not only the third largest democracy in the world; it is also an example of pluralism and tolerance.

Indonesia inspires us to work towards a model of sustainable development that does not neglect the aspirations of the people or the importance of cooperation and friendship with other countries in the region.

As an emerging power, Indonesia has undergone a dynamic transition which has been so important to this region of which Timor-Leste is a part. This change occurred in a manner which respected the culture and the tradition of the people of Indonesia and which has enabled the transformation of the Indonesian economy. Most importantly, it has promoted peace and national stability.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We cannot meet this year, on this island, without remembering the terrible events of ten years ago that had a devastating impact on Bali. The terrorist attacks of 12 October had a deep impact on Indonesia as well as the countries of the region – having brought home to us the shocking cruelty of indiscriminate violence – and around the world.

Ten years later, however, Bali continues to be a prime tourism destination and the best place for international events. This is not only because of its rich natural beauty and its culture but because of the strength of its people who have shown great courage and compassion in the face of terrible setbacks.

We continue to condemn, with all our hearts, attacks of terror that have harmed so many people around the world, causing generalised fear and mistrust and hindering our liberty and our human dignity. Ultimately, these attacks represent attempts to destroy the tradition of religious tolerance and cultural freedom.

However, the damaging association often made between Islam and terrorism, should also be firmly rejected.

The Muslim community has contributed so much to develop humanity itself, living side-by-side with other religions and sharing its knowledge and wisdom in an open and constructive manner.

Indonesia, the country with the largest Muslim community in the world, has been a shining example of this reality.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world is facing serious problems and is sliding over to an increasingly dangerous lack of control.

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

In some regions, we see many people expressing their despair at being subject to autocracies that have no regard for human rights or common decency.

Europeans are also experiencing an uncertain future, within a setting of growing unemployment, economic crisis and the setback of the welfare state.

In other countries, those who have always been poor continue to live in miserable conditions, striving to survive everlasting hunger while continuing to depend on charitable aid to deal with drought or torrential rains.

Across the world, we have witnessed devastating natural disasters that have taken so many lives and caused incalculable damage.

In the Pacific region, for instance, the very survival of some countries is at risk because of climate change, including the paradisiacal Maldives in the Indian Ocean. But the problem is that the climate change also threatens global food security, which requires an urgent and united world strategy.

In view of this, responding to the situations of fragility that multiply around the world should be the main challenge of current democracies.

Democracy – with its principles and universal values – continues to be a safe haven as well as a starting point to address the challenges that are ahead for humankind.

This Forum, which assembles the representatives of democracies from around the world, in all their different forms, will contribute to addressing these global challenges.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we have been discussing at the Bali Democracy Forum for the last several years, democracy cannot be imposed on a country, ignoring its entire historical, cultural and economic context. Instead, it is a process that must be nurtured continuously, and which must respect the timings and the idiosyncrasies of each society.

Dialogue is the essence of democracy. Dialogue enables us to move forward as a community of nations, as a nation, as a people and as citizens.

Removing the component of dialogue and the stages and processes that are inherent to the very concept of democracy is to deny its substance and to lose faith in humankind.

As such, we are sad to see that world leaders are not working harder to replace intransigent political positions with mechanisms of dialogue, to look for solutions to the world's economic, environmental and security problems.

In addition to this, we cannot accept being misled when noble democratic ideals are used thoughtlessly to feed and reinforce dominant political and economic interests, while disguised as social and humanitarian concerns.

By using this Forum to discuss sector-crossing issues such as the promotion of international peace, security and stability, along with the promotion of human rights, good governance and the fight against poverty, we can promote democracy and ensure it serves us well in transforming our societies.

Your Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The people of Timor-Leste have had intense experience of the various nuances of the democratic process, with some successes as well as some setbacks.

In our still short existence as a State, we have made several mistakes and endured cyclical periods of instability. Notwithstanding our setbacks, as apprentices of a true democratic experience, we have tried to learn from the errors of our past and move forward from the difficult circumstances that will always face a post-conflict country, or more particularly, a country with a recent and long past of conflict and violence.

This year, living already in an atmosphere of peace and stability, we held two rounds of presidential elections, in the months of March and April. Both election rounds were judged to be free and fair by the international community.

On 7 July this year the Timorese People were once again called to vote in elections for our legislature, and our new Parliament was sworn in on 30 July.

As a result of this election, three parties were chosen to lead Timor-Leste from 2012 to 2017. Consequently, the new Constitutional Government was sworn in and given the task to consolidate the key institutions of a peaceful and democratic nation and to ensure the continuation of our economic growth.

Today, we face a new stage in the history of Timor-Leste, in which we become the sole masters of our fate. By the end of the year both UNMIT (United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste) and the ISF (International Stabilisation Forces) will have withdrawn from our nation, thereby ending peacekeeping operations in Timor-Leste.

We could not be more grateful for the solidarity and readiness of four friendly countries, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Portugal, which did not hesitate in sending their military and security forces to Timor-Leste when we were going through the hardest of difficulties, as well as the international community through the UN Security Council.

I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate Prime Minister Julia Gillard on Australia's membership to the UN Security Council, and I hope that it will not only bring 'an Australian accent' to this important body but could also add a Pacific and Asian flavour to it.

Last September at the UN General Assembly, I defended the need to reform the Security Council to enable better representation so as to allow for more democratic resolutions.

Now, more than ever, we are ready to continue to ensure the ownership of the national development process, by implementing our Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030.

For this, we will continue to invest in the development of social capital, so as to build the capacity and skills of the Timorese and to maximise access to health, education, professional training, information, social justice and culture.

We will be investing in basic infrastructure and developing our economy to create employment. And we will nurture our potential and encourage both national and international private sector investment in Timor-Leste.

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

Your Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At a time when we are witnessing a historic shift in global economic and strategic weight to Asia, and in which Asia continues to drive economic growth despite the global downturn, it is up to Timor-Leste to make sure that it benefits from its place in this region.

We are seeing the rise in Asia of future dominant economies of the world, including China, India, South Korea and Indonesia as well as the enduring strength of Japan.

It is expected that this growth will allow countries in the region to lift millions of people from poverty in coming years.

On the other hand, taking into account a possible strategic change in terms of decision making regarding politics, economy and even defence and security in this corner of the world, it is now more important than ever to build trust, dialogue and cooperation between the countries in the region.

This transition must also not neglect the development of the smallest and poorest countries. They must also benefit from this progress, which in turn will contribute to stability in the region.

Timor-Leste is on the verge of joining the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which entails both challenges and opportunities. Once we are accepted as a fully fledged member of ASEAN, we will become a closer part of this global economic transition and be able to engage more actively in the strategic agenda of regional development.

Timor-Leste is committed to seizing the opportunities of the Asian Century which will see increased economic demand in the region. We will do this by developing our industries, our fisheries and our agriculture, by expanding our markets and by developing our tourism sector.

The fight against poverty in our country is a pressing priority, a challenge we share with over one billion people in the world.

By 2015, Timor-Leste will not meet the Millennium Development Goals and around 20% of the world population still live in conditions of extreme poverty.

As such, we have been focusing increasingly on participating in regional and international bodies, contributing with our experience to debates on constructive solutions for building peace and development.

We feel a mix of pride and responsibility that our Minister of Finance, Emília Pires, has been chosen to be part of the United Nations High-Level Panel which will draft the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

We believe that progress that we have been making over the last several years in peace building and stability, along with economic growth, has made us more capable of contributing to this agenda.

Our active leadership of the g7+ also reflects our internal strength and enthusiasm to pursue sustainable development for our nation. But this contribution is part of a larger movement to leverage all fragile States who face similar obstacles but, based on democratic principles, know they can overcome the trap of poverty and instability.

This is also why we are advocating for the New Deal, which seeks to ensure that international assistance is better coordinated and owned by recipient countries, so that it may truly have an impact on the people that need it the most.

The New Deal gives new hope to the sustainable development of fragile countries and to the actual fulfilment of democratic principles.

Next week, and in addition to an Official Visit, I will be participating in the g7+ Ministerial Retreat, which will take place in Port-au-Prince. Haiti has been particularly affected by devastating natural disasters that have hit the region of Central America and the Caribbean.

While the repercussions of the earthquake of January 2010 still impact the daily lives of the Haitians, despite the large amount of aid, the recent passing of Hurricane Sandy again devastated the country, with direct and terrible implications for its infrastructure, housing, health and the food security of families.

My visit to Haiti will also serve to express the heartfelt sympathy and friendship of the Timorese people towards the Haitian people, who have displayed remarkable survival skills in the face of disaster.

This is consistent with the common sense of solidarity and mutual support within the g7+, as well as with the true democratic spirit.

Your Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Besides the recent climate of regional instability, environmental threats continue to be on the rise, hindering the legitimate perspectives of emerging and developing countries concerning the use of their own natural resources.

The destructive impact of Hurricane Sandy in the United States of America is a perfect example of how developed countries are also affected by natural disasters. We express solidarity and distress with the American people who also suffered greatly. We also know that the United States needs to make significant changes in their response to environmental problems.

The truth is that developed economies cannot continue to ignore their responsibility for environmental degradation when even their own societies are clearly suffering from the tragic impact of this degradation.

Taking the opportunity to congratulate President Barack Obama for his outstanding election victory as well as to commend the American people for their unshakable

commitment to democracy, we trust that climate change will be a key agenda item for the new administration, which in turn may encourage other developed countries to pay more attention to this matter.

The United States of America is a great democracy that has inspired many countries all over the world. We know that they will overcome this tragedy with dignity and renewed energy to create new mechanisms of prevention and response to such crisis. In this and in other humanitarian crisis, the intervention of developed countries, with their experience, capabilities, human and financial resources, is crucial.

In the universalism of the democratic spirit, the vision of progress belongs to all people, not only to those with more resources to overcome crisis.

Further, the problems of poverty and instability are not exclusive to the countries that experience them, because their consequences are threats for their close neighbours, for the region, and have an impact on the whole world.

That is why, ladies and gentlemen, in a scenario of challenges that know no borders, responses must also be global.

The dialogue between world leaders and the permanent collaboration in search of integrated solutions to protect our people should focus on enhanced adaptability and on a changing of mindsets.

In the face of today's uncertainty, democracy is what will enable us to move beyond the rigidity of unilateral decisions and to find joint, connected and creative responses for the challenges that we face together.

Thank you very much!

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão  
8 November 2012