



**P R I M E
M I N I S T E R**

**ADDRESS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER
KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO
AT THE g7+ HAITI MINISTERIAL RETREAT**

Port-au-Prince, Haiti
13 November 2012



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

Excellency, Prime Minister Lamothe
Excellencies, Madam Ministers of Finance
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be here in Haiti, for this g7+ Ministerial Retreat.

I thank the Government, and the people of Haiti, for hosting this meeting, and for their hospitality during this very difficult time.

It is testimony to the resilience and strength of the people of Haiti that we are able to meet here today, in the wake of the terrible loss of life and destruction caused by Hurricane Sandy.

We extend our deepest condolences, and affirm that the thoughts of people from around the world, including from our small, half island nation of Timor-Leste in the crossroad between Pacific and South East Asia, are with Haiti and its people.

The courage and dignity the people of Haiti have shown, in the face of devastating natural disasters, give us all faith in the promise of the human spirit.

Hurricane Sandy comes almost three years after the tragic earthquake that devastated Haiti.

These natural disasters also reinforce the need for a better and more effective international cooperation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is with great satisfaction to meet again with the g7+ family.

This retreat follows the first Ministerial Retreat in Juba, very soon after the birth of South Sudan as a nation, where we did enjoy the warm hospitality of our South Sudanese brothers and sisters.

The Juba Ministerial Retreat was a great success. It brought us together around the New Deal, and enabled us to develop the strategy to take to the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, South Korea.

Thanks to that Retreat, and our hard work in Busan, we have enjoyed widespread international recognition for the g7+ and its agenda, as well as broad endorsement of the New Deal.

And we must celebrate our wins.

This Retreat in Haiti also follows the g7+ High Level Side Event, that was held in New York, during the recent United Nations General Assembly.

That event, attended by many of us here today, as well as other world leaders, provided added momentum and promoted international understanding of the agenda of the g7+.

And so, I am pleased to offer my congratulations for the hard and determined work of the g7+, and to Haiti for hosting this important Ministerial Retreat.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The reason, we are here today, is because we are determined to make sure that our people have the ownership of the future of their respective nations. It means that it is our people who understand best the challenges that our nations face; it is our people who recognize what is needed to make progress; and it is our people who know best how to go about securing our future.

And that is why we say that development assistance must be “country owned and country led”.

This is the core principle of the New Deal.

Meeting in Haiti provides the g7+ with inspiration. The people of Haiti have a proud history of fighting for freedom and for self determination.

The people of Haiti, who dared to overthrow slave masters and became independent in 1804, has used its independence and membership of the United Nations to strongly support decolonization and the independence of African nations.

Being colonized for more than 450 years, on the 28 of this month, we will be celebrating 100 years of the last rebellion against the Portuguese rule. Yesterday, we celebrated the 21st anniversary of a massacre, perpetrated by Indonesian occupiers, against a peaceful youth demonstration demanding the end of the war.

It is with this same spirit of solidarity and resolve that we aspire to make progress in the g7+ agenda.

In 2000, we entered into the new millennium with great hope for a future, free of the mistakes and conflicts of the past – a future that reflects the better side of humanity and which recognizes that we all have a common cause in protecting our planet and its people.

We are here, at the time the international community recognizes its failure to accomplish Millennium Development Goals in 2015. Now that the United Nations is committed to review the action plan for the post-2015, we must all be part of this process.

I just came from Indonesia, after participating for the fifth consecutive year, in the Bali Democracy Forum promoted by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. In that Conference, we tried to raise cross-cutting issues, such as democracy, peace and stability, human rights and development.

And so, as the world decides on the development agenda beyond 2015, we must make sure that addressing fragility is at the forefront of discussions so that our countries can succeed.

As we all know here today, achieving national stability, peace and resilience is not easy.

We can see from international historical experience that national stability has not been the natural order of things.

And the world should start by focusing on the fragile nations of the world, including the nations represented by the G7+.

We all watched in disbelief as billions and billions of dollars were poured into bailouts for western countries that spent beyond their means.

And as billions of dollars were given to bail out the global financial industry – the same industry that was responsible for plunging the world into recession.

And yet, the people of many of our nations continue to face extreme poverty and deprivation.

We are doing our best for our countries, working hard to provide hope and promise for our people.

But more needs to be done, and the international development agenda must align with the real needs of the world's poor and vulnerable.

Later today Professor Paul Collier will address this Ministerial Retreat.

He has looked in detail at the terrible costs of fragility, and of extreme poverty, not only in the countries where the so called 'bottom billion' live, but also in surrounding nations and the world as a whole.

And he makes a strong case that by focusing on conflict affected, and post-conflict States, and making a strong concerted effort, we can break the cycle of fragility.

Importantly, and I think we all agree, he argues that international efforts should be concentrated in the most difficult environments – environments where it may not be easy, but where help is most needed.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

According to the World Bank, around one and a half billion people now live in areas affected by fragility, organised crime or conflict.

And from our own experience, it is obvious that you cannot achieve development, improve health and education and alleviate poverty, when you are living in a state of conflict.

This is why not one low-income fragile or conflict affected country has yet achieved a single Millennium Development Goal.

And in facing this challenge, the people of fragile nations must be at the forefront of this effort.

No one else can speak for us.

No one else can better understand the dreams our people have for their future.

The world has learnt the hard way that peace and stability cannot be imposed upon a country; and that to make progress in fragile nations there must be true local ownership and leadership.

But it can be difficult for a fragile nation to stand alone to fight for its interests in the global development agenda.

That is why we need the G7+.

We need a strong, collective voice so that we are heard when decisions are being made that affect our nations.

We can also learn from each other, and support each other as we move from fragility to resilience.

The experience and the expertise in finding solutions to national fragility reside not in London, or in Brussels, or in New York, but in Port-au-Prince, and in Juba and in the Solomon Islands.

And together, we can bring this experience and expertise.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I look forward to working together with you over the next day and a half.

Before I finish, I would like to make some comments on the issues that we have to grapple with during the Retreat.

We must work to reinforce our agenda, and the fact that the foundation of the New Deal is the interconnected approaches set out in the Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals, as the FOCUS and TRUST principles.

As we trial our fragility assessments, we must also recognise that it is more important to get our processes right, and get our indicators right, than to rush implementation and risk losing our voice.

As my friend Minister Kosti from South Sudan put it so well, the assessments cannot be “about us, without us”.

We must not be afraid of writing in our own voice, and in our own language, and from our own perspective.

We must also make sure that we get right our indicators on peace building and State building.

This will ensure that it is first necessary to address peace and stability before broader development goals can be achieved.

And we must continue to make our voice heard. We must make up for the fact that we had no voice for too long. And we must continue to participate in global forums and raise global recognition of our needs.

I hope that we can produce a collective statement at this Ministerial Retreat so that we can take the results of our discussions forward.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This Retreat gives us all the chance to meet again, as friends, to form new bonds across nations and to make sure that our people get a fair go from the global development agenda.

I would like to again thank our generous hosts for their support and for their hospitality.

Thank you very much.