



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

**LECTURE BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE
KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF JUBA ON “SHARING EXPERIENCES”**

Juba, South Sudan

5 December 2013

Rector of the University,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure and an honour to be here today at Juba University.

I am particularly pleased to address you – the future leaders of South Sudan.

While I have come from half way around the world to speak to you – my homeland is in many ways similar to your own. Timor-Leste is half of an island in Southeast Asia, with the other half belonging to Indonesia. In 2002, Timor-Leste became the youngest nation in the world – just as South Sudan is today.

On independence, Timor-Leste had also emerged from a long and difficult struggle for independence that had left our people traumatised and physically and emotionally scarred. The people of Timor-Leste maintained their resistance against Indonesian occupation for a quarter of a century. We fought a much larger enemy that was supported by some of the world's great powers. While these western nations espoused the universal values of human rights, freedom and democracy; their actions supported a dictator who was brutalising our people. We suffered trauma and heart break. I do not need to tell you of the costs of war.

Despite the cost, we held on to our dream of freedom. Our motto was “To Resist is to Win” and our occupiers were to learn that, despite terrible suffering, our spirit and our solidarity could not be broken. We were inspired by campaigns against colonial rule in Africa which showed us the way. And so, we fought a guerrilla war in the mountains and valleys of Timor.

Just as with South Sudan, Timor-Leste finally achieved self-determination through a referendum in which our people, despite a climate of violence, overwhelmingly voted for independence.

Between 1999 and 2002 our country was administered by the United Nations as we prepared for self-determination. In many ways this helped our country because it gave us time to form and grow political parties, to develop our civil society and to design a constitution that upholds democracy and human rights under the rule of law. In 2002 we became the newest country in the world.

However, after independence, like many post-conflict countries, we struggled to maintain national unity and a common sense of purpose. Our process of peace building

and reconciliation did not go deep enough and we failed to address unresolved conflicts. As a result, in our early years we suffered a cycle of conflict that flared up around every two years. It was not until 2008 that, as a nation, we finally said enough, and committed to say good bye to conflict and to welcome development. We accepted that our main priority was to move on from our brutal history and to build peace and a resilient State.

Like South Sudan, Timor-Leste is fortunate to have petroleum resources that can be exploited to fund the building of a State and to address the pressing needs of the people. And while both our nations are fragile, we also both enjoy the support of the international community and the benefit of development assistance.

We are also of course not the only nation to work on peace building and State building, after emerging from a long period of conflict. For example, like South Sudan, Timor-Leste is one of forty-nine countries the United Nations labels "Least Developed Countries". We are one of the thirty countries labelled by the World Bank as "Fragile States".

We are also one of eighteen countries that have come together to form a group - known as the 'g7+' - to monitor, report and draw attention to the specific challenges faced by fragile states, many of which are home to the 1.5 billion people around the world still living in extreme poverty.

And so, please allow me to touch upon some of the issues that Timor-Leste has faced that may also be of relevance to South Sudan. We all know that the process of State building is different for each country, and in each context, but we also know that we can still learn from each other, and that we can support each other on our path to development.

Ladies and gentlemen,
Students

When we achieved our independence we recognised that reconciliation was the first thing that we had to do so that we could heal our country.

First, Timor-Leste had to reconcile with our former occupiers, Indonesia. During the occupation Indonesia was a dictatorship but we understood that the Indonesian people also suffered during this time. To the great credit of the Timorese people, we were able to distinguish between the Indonesian people and the Indonesian regime.

Today Indonesia is one of the largest democracies in the world and has a great emerging free market economy. We recognise that Timor-Leste not only shares an island with Indonesia, we share a future, and we now walk together in friendship and solidarity. We view the strength of our relationship as an important model of how, with goodwill, a focus on the future and leadership, a history of bitterness and conflict can be overcome.

What we found, however, was that sometimes reconciliation between our own people has proved more difficult than with our former occupiers.

During the occupation, and in its aftermath, Timorese society was torn apart and our people committed terrible acts of violence against each other. While we tried to reconcile our past, tensions grew between different parts of our country, and this culminated in 2006 with major unrest forcing thousands of people to flee their homes.

And this led to the realisation that we had to come together and reconcile our differences. We had to reflect on the destructive path our people were taking and begin a dialogue with all Timorese people to address the root causes of our problems. As a nation we recognised that we could not build a State without building peace. And this meant that we needed to come to terms with, and then address, our fragility. And so, we started to pull together and began to honestly deal with our problems.

Ladies and gentlemen,
Students

An important part of the process of securing peace in Timor-Leste was to show our respect for our veterans, the former combatants that gave so much for the independence struggle. Our State has a strong obligation to address the needs of our former freedom fighters. In our transition to self-determination it was important that our veterans were given the support that they needed and were encouraged to make the transition to a new role of building a democratic society.

In October I travelled to Guinea-Bissau which is, like Timor-Leste, a former Portuguese colony. Guinea-Bissau inspired our struggle but, regrettably, it has been heading in the wrong direction with a leadership that has been more concerned with personal self-interest than the well-being of the people. Unfortunately, Guinea-Bissau has also not been able to deal properly with its veterans and has failed to establish a system, and a legal framework, for the State to properly recognise their historical contribution. The State has also not assumed the competence to demobilise the freedom fighters from the struggle. This situation has destabilised the country and contributed to a cycle of

instability and coups d'état. We hope that the leadership of Guinea-Bissau can develop a system to deal with these pressures and make clear the role of all parts of society, including the former combatants, to avoid instability and further violence. Because of sanctions, Timor-Leste is working almost alone in helping Guinea-Bissau prepare for its elections. Guinea-Bissau is also a member of the g7+, and a LCD and is a post- conflict country.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would also like to emphasise the importance of democracy. Last month I went to Indonesia for the Bali Democracy Forum. This is an important regional and global annual event that promotes democracy and freedom.

I participate in this forum every year and seek to raise important questions about democracy and what it means to be democratic in a situation of fragility. Regrettably, many democracies are heading in the wrong direction. They have been captured by a self-interested and powerful elite that is perpetuating and increased great inequality that is putting the very social cohesion of their nations at risk.

And so, we must do better. We must recognise that while democracy is important the democratic process of each country must reflect its values and its characteristics as well as its context.

As South Sudan reviews its constitution, and heads to elections in 2015, we trust that your nation will be successful in the challenging process of peace building and State building so that the government can continue to address the pressing issues your nation faces and realise the promise of its future.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As students of this prestigious university, it is you who will be responsible for the future of your nation. Just like in Timor-Leste, where the current generation of leadership must make way for the new generation, your time will soon come in South Sudan where you will have to step up and contribute to your nation's development.

South Sudan has enormous potential and if you show the same commitment and resolve to achieve independence as you do to nation building then you have a very positive future and a very bright future for your children.

One sector that you should look at is agriculture. South Sudan has a huge land area that has the potential to not only be a food bowl for the nation, but to also export. Oil is not a renewable resource, and while the money from oil can build the foundations of a State, you will need sustainable industries to create jobs and support your nation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Before I finish, let me mention another area our two nations have in common. We are both fortunate to have the assistance of a large number of generous development partners to support our process of State building.

While we have seen the benefits that international development assistance can bring, we have also experienced the disappointments. We have seen so much money being spent for so few outcomes in the name of international aid. Timor-Leste also wants to address the problems with development assistance and international engagement in fragile and developing countries. As small nation, Timor-Leste cannot do this alone. We need to build international solidarity to make sure that our interests are represented and our voices are heard. If we are not united, individually we will simply be too vulnerable to complex systems and entrenched attitudes that put the lives of our people last. . As I mentioned earlier, we are doing this through the g7+, which is an innovative new collaboration between 18 fragile States. The group was formed in 2010 to provide a united voice for fragile countries and to advocate for change in global development policies and we are very pleased that South Sudan is standing together with us in this mission

Ladies and gentlemen,
Students

I would also like to congratulate South Sudan for holding its 2013 Investment Conference which I addressed this morning. I was last in Juba in 2011, shortly after independence, and I can say that coming back I have seen great progress.

South Sudan has such promise across a number of key sectors including petroleum, agriculture, construction and hospitality. I know that the early investors in this emerging nation will be successful and South Sudan is fortunate to have a Government that understands and promotes the importance of investment, job creation and a diversified economy.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to finish today to speak of my experience yesterday travelling to the Malou in Jonglei State.

I travelled there yesterday with my Minister for Finance to celebrate the building of a school that the government of Timor-Leste funded.

The visit to Malou was a humbling and emotional experience for us. The true warmth and genuine friendship of the people, in such a remote area, reminded us of our common humanity and what we as people are when the distractions of material wants is stripped away.

It was a privilege for us to have such an authentic experience among your good people and it gave us hope in the promise of your nation under peace. The unrestrained joy and happiness of the villages as they sang and danced gave us pause to reflect on the meaning of our own lives and of the importance of human solidarity.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for inviting me to speak to you today; it has been an honour. Timor-Leste looks forward to our continuing friendship with South Sudan. We share such a similar history and feel an affinity with your people.

I wish you all the best in building your nation and I trust that with hard work your future, and South Sudan's future, will be bright.

Thank you very much.

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão

5 December 2013