



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

**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER OF
THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE KAY RALA
XANANA GUSMÃOON THE OCCASION OF THE DINNER TO
WELCOME AND HONOUR HER ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCESS
MAHA CHAKRI SIRINDHORN OF THE KINGDOM OF
THAILAND**

Dili, Timor-Leste

7 January 2014

Her Royal Highness, Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn

Excellency, Dr. Noeleen Heyzer, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations;
Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for
Asia and the Pacific and Special Adviser to the United Nations Secretary
General for Timor-Leste

Distinguished Members of Parliament and Government

Ambassadors

Excellencies

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great honour and a privilege to welcome Her Royal Highness, Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn to Timor-Leste.

On behalf of the People and the Government of Timor-Leste, I thank Your Royal Highness for visiting our country. It is a special honour for us and it inspires confidence and happiness in our people.

Your visit strengthens the close and deep bonds of friendship and solidarity between the Kingdom of Thailand and Timor-Leste.

Last year I had the honour of visiting Thailand on an Official Visit. Under the leadership of the Prime Minister of Thailand, Her Excellency Yingluck Shinawatra, we agreed on enhanced cooperation across key areas important for Timor-Leste's development.

This includes cooperation and support in tourism, agriculture and petroleum as well as Thailand's support for the development of the south coast of our country.

During my Official Visit, I was also pleased that Thailand committed strong support to Timor-Leste's bid to join ASEAN.

Her Royal Highness is well known for her dedication and hard work in support of children, improved education and health care and the protection of the disadvantaged and the vulnerable. She leads by her example, and over her three days in Timor-Leste she will be busy visiting schools, health clinics, farms, community cooperatives and NGOs. We are honoured that she is interested in our country and our culture.

Ladies and gentlemen,

On Thursday we will be launching the Zero Hunger Challenge campaign in Timor-Leste with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Food and Agriculture Organisation.

The Zero Hunger Challenge is a campaign coordinated by the United Nations to eliminate hunger. Its goal is to make sure that every man, woman and child enjoys the Right to Adequate Food and that food systems are sustainable and resilient.

Her Royal Highness is visiting Timor-Leste for the launch of the Zero Hunger Challenge which reflects her strong commitment to alleviating hunger and eradicating poverty. We are pleased that she is joining together with our people in this challenge.

I attended the launch of the Zero Hunger Challenge for the Asia Pacific in Bangkok last year and I am very pleased that the Challenge is now being launched in Timor-Leste.

We thank the role of the United Nations in tackling this critical issue and, in particular, commend the dedication of Dr. Noeleen Heyzer in leading action to eradicate hunger in the Asia Pacific region.

Timor-Leste has been working hard to eradicate hunger and poverty. At the World Food Day celebration in 2010 we signed the Comoro Declaration to put an end to hunger and malnutrition. This led to the establishment of the Inter-Ministerial Task Force on Food and Nutrition Security and coordinated work to feed children and communities, promote effective seeds and grain storage and build our livestock and fisheries sectors. The following year we built on our efforts and supported livestock rearing, home and school gardening and the procurement of locally produced agriculture products.

In 2011 Timor-Leste released our 20 year Strategic Development Plan which includes strategies and actions to make sure that we achieve our goal of food security by 2020 and that we expand and improve our agriculture, livestock and fisheries industries.

Timor-Leste has invested significantly in agricultural infrastructure, machinery and the provision of seeds and fertiliser. We are releasing new high yielding varieties of maize, rice, cassava and sweet potato and we are improving storage facilities across the country.

Timor-Leste is also making significant investment in rehabilitating and extending irrigation systems and improving water storages. To help feed our children we operate an extensive school feeding program and are promoting school gardens. The

Government is also working hard to develop our fisheries industry through improved transport systems and fishing ports, piers and landing sites.

We know we have a lot more to do - eliminating stunting and hunger is a challenge for us. We also know that working with the assistance of the United Nations, and with the support of the Kingdom of Thailand, we can meet this challenge. I am pleased that the Zero Hunger Challenge will reinforce the work and the plans that Timor-Leste has to eradicate hunger, and I urge you all come together to make sure the challenge is a success in our country.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you all for coming tonight to welcome and honour Her Royal Highness, Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn.

Your Royal Highness, we are privileged by your visit and your support for our People. We all hope that you have a wonderful time in Timor-Leste and enjoy the beauty of our country and the friendship of our people.

Thank you very much.

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão
7 January 2014