



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

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE,
DR RUI MARIA DE ARAÚJO,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE NATIONAL SEMINAR ON PREVENTING AND
FIGHTING MONEY LAUNDERING AND TERRORISM FINANCING**

**Noble hall of the Ministry of Social Solidarity
29 April 2015**

Your Excellency the Prosecutor-General of the Republic

Illustrious Members of Parliament

Your Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and Your Excellency the Minister of Justice, Co-Presidents of the National Commission for the Implementation of Measures on the Fight against Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing

Fellow Government Members

Your Excellency the Governor of the Central Bank

Your Excellency the Executive Director of the Financial Intelligence Unit

Your Excellencies the Members of the PNTL

Your Excellencies the Commissioners and Members of the Anti-Corruption Commission

Distinguished invited lecturers

Ladies and gentlemen,

Illustrious guests,

I want to praise the Office of the Prosecutor-General of the Republic, the Central Bank of Timor-Leste and the Financial Intelligence Unit for promoting this National Seminar on “Preventing and Fighting Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing”. These meetings are indeed important, as they enable us to increase our knowledge on these subjects and to share the work that has been done and the challenges still ahead in our operational areas.

The prevention and fight against money laundering and terrorism financing is a current and extraordinarily complex issue that is becoming an increasingly greater concern to the international community. The repercussions of these phenomena to the States and their economies are absolutely devastating, while their transnational dynamic makes them a real threat to everyone’s security.

Timor-Leste is a young State, which means that it is still building and consolidating its institutions. Consequently we are in a particularly fragile position, since we are more vulnerable to practices that are orchestrated at a highly complex level. On the other hand, this also constitutes an opportunity, as we are creating from scratch a high quality

legal framework that is already adapted to international best practices and experiences in this area. This will enable us to fight more effectively against these crimes and other associated crimes, such as corruption and drug trafficking.

The creation of the National Commission for the Implementation of Measures on the Fight against Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing and the regulation of the Financial Intelligence Unit in February 2014 were two key steps and a clear sign of Timor-Leste's commitment to meeting the international agreements signed by the country in this area.

And today I want to say to you in a clear manner that our Government has a zero tolerance policy against these crimes, which unquestionably jeopardize core values of our society such as democracy, solidarity, justice and internal security. As such, I would like to reaffirm our commitment to continuing the efforts and initiatives started by the previous Governments and to making any necessary improvements in relation to the prevention, control and coordination mechanisms, so as to contribute to the protection of our country and our citizens, as well as to the protection of other nations. Indeed, this is a battle that cannot be won by fighting alone.

Ladies and gentlemen

Illustrious guests

Money laundering takes place in all parts of the world, in developed countries and in developing countries alike. And because its scope is transnational, its dangers are also of a global nature.

Let us have no doubts that the more fragile countries are preferential targets for this type of crime, as they more readily succumb to the main goal of its authors – profit – and because their systems are more vulnerable to these practices. We must also acknowledge that a country where money laundering is easy is a country that will attract corrupt people and other criminals.

That is precisely why the Government of Timor-Leste is deeply committed to pursuing a concerted policy that helps us to prevent and fight these threats. This will encompass the various fields of governing action, including legislation, security, defence, foreign policy and finance.

As I have said before, the State of Timor-Leste has been creating the necessary legal instruments for responding to these issues. We have a Penal Code that criminalises these practices, we are progressively ensuring compliance with the international rules on these crimes, particularly those issued by the Financial Action Task Force, and we are responding to the various recommendations made in 2012 by the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing. Here I would like to highlight the regulation of the Financial Intelligence Unit.

Because laws alone cannot win this battle, the Government has focused on capacity building the investigation and controlling agencies, such as the PNTL, the Scientific Criminal Investigation Unit and the Anti-Corruption Commission, with support from development partners. These agencies are vital for applying laws and investigating crimes, as well as for cooperating with law enforcement agencies from other countries. As such, they are a key component in the prevention and fight against money laundering and terrorism financing, as well as against related crimes.

Our foreign policy is also considering the threats that result from these crimes and is therefore watching the international scene in order to provide us with relevant intelligence and to strengthen the international cooperation network in which we are involved, so as to be able to respond to these phenomena.

Evidently, in order for policies on the Prevention and Fight against Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing to be successful, it is necessary that key agencies such as the Office of the Prosecutor-General of the Republic, which plays a vital role in this process, policies, financial agencies and other relevant entities work in close cooperation and articulation.

Ladies and gentlemen

Illustrious guests

As you know, money laundering is a means for hiding many other crimes. One of these crimes is corruption, which is a plight that affects our country. Consequently, the Government will make it a priority to fight against corruption and to unmask it, as well as to punish the parties involved. You can rely on the government to strengthen the mechanisms for fighting against corruption.

A country that aspires to fair, integrated and sustainable development is a country that cannot accept corruption and money laundering. In Timor-Leste we want to attract investors, not money launderers. Legitimate businesses and investments are the ones that contribute to generating employment, developing the productive sectors, improving the sustainability of welfare, generating wealth for the State and improving the prosperity of the country. This is what we want for our country.

Timor-Leste is a free and democratic society. We are truly proud of the values that strengthen our patriotic feeling with each passing day. This is why the Government takes on the responsibility and acknowledges its duty to implement an efficient system against money laundering and terrorism financing, in close and responsible coordination with the other entities. This is our commitment.

Thank you very much.

Dili, 29 April 2015

Dr Rui Maria de Araújo