



**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,
AT THE LAUNCHING CEREMONY OF THE
“PROCESSING WASTE INTO ENERGY” PROJECT**

**Tibar
22 May 2015**

Your Excellency the Minister of Planning and Strategic Investment
Your Excellency the Minister of Trade, Industry and Environment
Your Excellency the Administrator of the Municipality of Liquiçá
Your Excellency the CEO of Shun Hsin Lda
Fellow Members of Government
Dear community of Tibar,

Today we take another important step towards the sustainable development of our country. The launching of the “Processing waste into energy” project meets one of the key concerns of our century, which is environmental sustainability. This project also contributes to improving one of our country’s priority areas, namely that of public health.

Environmental sustainability implies that we make decisions and carry out actions that protect nature and create an environment that is favourable to the development of human beings, in harmony with other living creatures.

Indeed, this was always a concern of our forefathers. Our tradition is to have a harmonious relationship with the environment, using it in a manner that is balanced and respectful of nature. Continuing this relationship is both our desire and our need.

We are currently at a crucial moment. The decisions we now make will determine whether our goal of sustainable development succeeds or fails. The planet is increasingly affected by pollution, which damages both human health and the climate.

The amount of waste produced by human beings is increasing, without any sign of slowing down. It is estimated that in less than a century the world will be producing 11 million tonnes of waste per day. This means that the world’s population will be producing three times as much waste as it does now. This amount of waste will entail enormous environmental, economic and social consequences. Timor-Leste is a young country that has many priorities, and one of these priorities must be environmental sustainability.

In our country as well, managing urban waste is a challenge. According to a study carried out in 2014 by the Asian Development Bank, around 120 tonnes of waste arrive at the Tibar dump every day just from Dili. Unless we have the ability to transform waste, its volume may increase up to 500 tonnes, as a result of the growing population, the development of the sectors of industry, trade, agriculture and infrastructure, and economic growth, together with the increase of the purchasing power that we are trying to boost. We need to take actual steps to deal with this situation, lest we face an even greater challenge in the future.

These are concerns that have influenced government policies, namely in terms of environmental quality and urban waste management. Timor-Leste has been introducing guidelines seeking to solve these issues, promoting a waste management strategy that, in addition to collection, is also concerned with the treatment and even the reuse of waste.

Your Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In view of the above, I am very pleased to witness such an important step for our country as the launching of this project that has been discussed throughout the years and that now takes shape.

The “processing of waste into energy” project reduces public health risks through the collection, processing and incineration of waste, thereby reducing the spread of disease and parasites.

This process also reduces negative impacts in the contamination of soil, air and water, which constitutes a risk to public health and to environmental quality. In addition to having an impact on the living situation of citizens, the deterioration of health and environmental conditions also has negative cross-cutting impacts in the medium and long term, namely in the tourism, agriculture and economic sectors.

By choosing this type of waste treatment we are also transforming waste into an asset, namely electricity.

We should not forget that the things we throw away and call “waste” can often be used again. It is a question of converting that which we no longer want into that which we need!

As such, this waste treatment plant can produce energy to feed an electric power plant with a 25MW capacity. This will meet the local needs in terms of energy, so as to benefit the entire community.

By implementing this and other mechanisms for treating waste and producing clean energy, Timor-Leste may gradually replace energy sources depending on non-renewable resources and have an environmentally sustainable development.

Making waste an alternative energy source means transforming waste into a profitable economic asset.

Your Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are seeing that waste management is a challenge that may also present opportunities. Waste has value. In this case, it is also an opportunity in terms of economic activities that create jobs for the community. With the entire waste collection, handling, screening and processing system, this project will be creating around 300 jobs, while focusing in the training and professionalisation of these workers.

As such, I must highlight the role played by the private sector, which has joined the Government in searching for a strategic solution that solves the problem of waste in Timor-Leste while promoting the Timorese workforce.

Before I conclude, I would like to stress that everyone wins with this partnership between the Government and the private sector seeking to improve the waste management system and environmental quality in our country. This is an efficient intervention and a sustainable business that has brought a strategic and benefit-generating strategy to Timor-Leste.

On behalf of the Government and the people of Timor-Leste I would also like to thank the community of Tibar, which displayed a true spirit of citizenship by agreeing to the construction of this waste processing industry, thereby contributing to improve the living situation of all Timorese citizens.

I would also like to seize this opportunity to thank former Prime Minister Maun Bo'ot Xanana Gusmão for the boost he gave to this project.

Thank you very much!

Dr Rui Maria de Araújo
Dili, 22 May 2015