



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

**SPEECH BY
HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER
DR RUI MARIA DE ARAÚJO
AT THE OPENING SESSION OF THE 20TH REGULAR
MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE CPLP**

“The New Strategic Vision for the CPLP”

**Noble Hall of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation,
Dili
24 July 2015**



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

Your Excellencies

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Relations from the CPLP Member States, and their representatives

Dr José Ramos-Horta, former President of the Republic and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

Dr Francisco Lu-Olo, former President of Parliament

Mr Executive Secretary of the CPLP

Fellow Government Members

Your Excellencies

The Members from the Member State Delegations and from the CPLP Executive Secretariat

The Representatives from the CPLP Associated Observers

The Representatives from the Diplomatic Corps

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to Timor-Leste! We Timorese could not be happier for the fact that our country is hosting the 20th Regular Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the CPLP. It is with true friendship and fraternity that we greet representatives from our brothers and sisters of the CPLP and our Community Observers, who have come together in good spirit to discuss “The New Strategic Vision for the CPLP”, based on the principles, values and ties that bring us together.

Precisely one week ago, our Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries celebrated its 19th anniversary. It is a happy coincidence that our Community has come of age here in Timor-Leste at a time when we are having an open debate in order to try to set it on a new path.

I admit that some may find a bit odd that Timor-Leste chose its Prime Minister to be the first voice heard at this Regular Meeting of the Council of Ministers. This is by no means common in the CPLP. However we could not do otherwise, since what we are debating here is the future of our Community of countries that share common history, values and language, with Timor-Leste assuming its pro tempore Presidency. This is indeed a great honour for Timor-Leste, in the year when we celebrate the 500th anniversary of our first meeting with the Portuguese.

This contact, which was determinant and decisive for our identity and self-rule, contributed to our history and enabled the mixing of peoples that led in great part to what we are today.

We know very well that our struggle for independence was also a struggle of all CPLP countries. We know very well that the CPLP is a Community of causes and that this cause was embraced wholeheartedly by the States and peoples of the CPLP: our brothers and sisters. As such, we know and acknowledge very well the importance of the CPLP family.

Your Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen,

One must both value the past and use it to shape the future!

Today we live in an ever-changing globalized world with constant challenges. It is therefore essential that the CPLP keeps pace and reflects on what we want for the future of our Community and our peoples.

When Timor-Leste chose “The CPLP and Globalization” as the theme for its pro tempore Presidency, we did so in order to bring our Community to the stage around a strategic, political and economic dynamic. We want to use the location of Timor-Leste to position the CPLP as a platform for developing our peoples, within a geostrategic position that enables us to create a series of synergies and partnerships in the Asian continent, which has tremendous economic potential.

This dilution of borders brought forward by globalization has favoured the expansion of markets and provided for the creation of multilateral partnerships and the exponential increase of economic and business activities, leading to increasing transactions and providing economic development. This has resulted in the improvement of the living situation of our peoples.

Today we have a growing number of increasingly important organizations moving in blocks and representing their common interests and aspirations. While divided by four continents, our CPLP is a Community that brings together countries sharing historical ties, values, interests and a language. We also have vast experience in terms of cooperation, and the fact that we view each other as brothers and sisters makes us want to do business together and distinguishes us from everyone else.

Instead of being “on our toes”, the CPLP should find its place in this increasingly open world. We cannot continue playing by ourselves in our sandbox, lest we fail to take advantage of this international situation and miss beneficial opportunities. It is essential that we make use of our common interests and develop political and diplomatic arrangements for strengthening bilateral and multilateral relations between the States. As such, I want to congratulate the initiative of starting a CPLP representation in Timor-Leste, as it will surely strengthen its relations with our country, our region, and the international organizations herein.

The CPLP is the best platform for us Portuguese speakers to position ourselves within international forums like the UN and its agencies, as well as in regional forums such as SADC, ECOWAS, MERCOSUL, the European Union and ASEAN. This is an opportunity for our countries to set themselves on the path to development, at a time when the world is undergoing a large financial crisis.

Your Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We require a new strategy that consolidates the CPLP and that projects it as a whole, beyond the interests of each Member State, so that we may find footing in the global arena. We require a strategy that includes measures towards this goal. We need to find a common agenda to which everyone is committed, so that we develop strategic areas.

Nevertheless, this global dynamic cannot allow us lose sight of our history, our culture, our values or our language. These are features that separate us from any other organization and that make us unique. Indeed, the internationalization of Portuguese as a working language in the United Nations and in other watershed organizations should be a clear goal of our common policy.

We can and we should channel - this “brand” of ours - in order to nurture internal, external and multilateral cooperation, providing support in joint solidarity actions as in the case of natural disasters not just within our Community but also internationally, preventing political and military situation crises and promoting peace and stability. In short, promoting the values of democracy, dialogue, inclusiveness and social peace.

For instance, the fight against hunger is a fight involving everyone. Defending our maritime coasts and preserving resources in our seas is a matter of sovereignty and of the very survival of the States. Tourism is essential for giving our economies a boost. The need for greater involvement by Civil Society, working alongside Governments, is also critical. Indeed, only a week ago we witnessed in this very room the approval of the memorandum of association for the CPLP Civil Society Forum.

Additionally, we must capitalize on the fact that together we represent the seventh largest producer of oil and gas in the world, making use of the energy policy and the potential of our countries. This is why Timor-Leste proposed, during the 10th Meeting of Heads of State and Government and during the 1st Meeting of CPLP Energy Ministers, to create a consortium of Member State hydrocarbon companies in order to guarantee that our natural resource wealth is translated into benefits for our countries.

We must also seek to strengthen development cooperation, so as to benefit our peoples. We must nurture economic development and entrepreneurship by focussing on bilateral, multilateral and business cooperation creating a new economic dynamic.

Thus we must make the best use of the CPLP Business Confederation and the initiative of the Global Economic Forum, to be held later this year. Both will boost business cooperation within the four continents, enabling the private sector to establish partnerships with other regional organizations through the Community.

Your Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Globalization has also enabled the movement of people. It is easy to see how the circulation of citizens all over the world has increased, leading to greater approximation between peoples and cultures. This contributes to economic development, as well as to the enrichment of individuals.

Recognizing the importance of the movement of people among CPLP Member States, the Dili Declaration in 2014 recommended assessing the implementation of the Agreement on the Grant of Multiple Entry Visas for Certain Groups of People, as foreseen in the Brasilia Agreements.

This is an issue worthy of everyone's commitment, since it contributes significantly to the growth and development of our countries and our societies. We know that mobility, within a broader perspective, is a complex issue. As such, we propose as a first step to have "selective mobility" that may be sped up through already existent means, thereby enabling easier mobility for professional, health or academic reasons.

Mobility between our States is essential for promoting understanding, the exchange of ideas and economic and personal development, as well as for strengthening ties between our peoples. This also promotes the feeling of belonging to the Community and contributes to the respect for democracy, freedom, equality and human rights.

This diversity makes us feel that the CPLP is not merely an organization of the States, but also of the peoples!

Your Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today is an important day to our Community and to our peoples. The strategic vision that we will be discussing here today gives a new dynamic and strengthens the willingness to work towards a more promising future for our peoples. As such, this is another opportunity for promoting their development.

I trust that the work to be done, in the spirit of friendship and fraternity that is familiar to the CPLP, will be a great success. I thank you all!

Dr Rui Maria de Araújo
24 July 2015