



**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 HIGH LEVEL SIDE EVENT ON “TIMOR-LESTE AND THE UNITED
NATIONS RELATIONS: ACHIEVEMENTS AND THE WAY FORWARD”**

**UN, New York
30 September 2015**

Your Excellencies

Dr Atul Khare, Under-Secretary-General for Field Support

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

Ms Helen Clark, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme

Mr Hernâni Coelho, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is both a pleasure and a privilege for me to be here today speaking among so many of the friends of Timor-Leste in this audience.

Over the last few days I have had the privilege to represent my country, to walk these corridors and to speak where many inspirational world leaders have spoken.

This is a momentous occasion for me personally and also for Timor-Leste.

This side event is also very important. It is here that we will celebrate and reflect on the achievements of partnerships that has endured over 13 years, in the form of 5 UN missions to Timor-Leste and subsequent continued development partnership.

The relation between Timor-Leste and the United Nations has always been constructive and based on open and frank dialogue, which is reflective of the quality of leaders both sides had in the process of building a nation literally from the ashes of destruction.

Today we pay tribute to our shared history, and in this day and age, and with the kinds of troubles the world faces, we must ask ourselves the obvious questions: how was it that Timor-Leste succeeded when so many other nations unfortunately did not. What makes us so special?

One key ingredient has been the quality of leadership on both sides, who entered into dialogue most of the time but also into heated arguments a few other times.

At least we were always consistent in the way we were assertive and knew we had to play an active role in our development and in the decision-making processes shaping our future.

We did not always agree on everything, but through constructive dialogue we always reached consensus for the way forward.

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen,

From the history of our own struggle, we have come to appreciate that irrespective of the magnitude of challenges and changes we have to make, we must not lose sight on our objective: the independence of our people.

It is in this spirit that the founding fathers of Timor-Leste have decided to take us through our latest experience on inclusive democracy, where the nation has gone through a less divisive and non-confrontational democratic path in the national politics during the last 3 years, whereby the winning parties work hand-in-hand with the opposition to strengthen peace and fortify institutions to achieve commonly agreed development goals, through consensual legislative and budget approvals, without sacrificing the multiplicity of individual thoughts and options.

This experience shed some lights on new democratic ways of doing politics, which are less divisive, non-confrontational, and more conducive to peace maintenance and state building, and to also pass on the torch of leadership to the younger generation without compromising the strive to bring prosperity to our people, which the current government embodies.

And it gives me great pleasure to be able to represent Timor-Leste and share this with you today, in the most esteemed company of one of our founding fathers, Dr José Ramos-Horta, and Mr Xanana Gusmão who, due a last minute agenda issue, can not be here now.

The Timorese were always motivated by righteousness, and our leadership had the courage to ask nothing less than what by right was always ours - our sovereignty, a point that I will come back to shortly.

I would like take a moment to express my appreciation, on behalf of the Timorese people, to those who worked in the different UN missions and agencies in Timor-Leste, both nationals and internationals, many I am glad to see here as well, and to people like Ms Helen Clark who have worked tirelessly to support Timor-Leste, both in her capacity as a top national politician in New Zealand and as Administrator of UNDP.

Your Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the past 13 years we have walked our own development path and at our own pace and always with a strong and clear vision, reflected in our Strategic Development Plan, of the type of prosperous society we strive to be: A society of and for the People where no one is left behind as we transition towards sustainable development.

Our Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030 highlights the achievements needs to be achieved across four key sectors: the social sector, the infrastructure sector, the economic sector and the governance sector. Each of these sectors, without exception, is vital for ensuring economic growth that is fair and that safeguards the quality of the education, health and protects the general wellbeing of our citizens.

Ever since we launched the Plan, we have counted on the support of the various United Nations agencies in terms of implementing the countless projects that have contributed part and parcel towards us realizing the goals we set for ourselves.

Now we are in a different partnership, we continue to work alongside the United Nations and other development partners. We completed the peace-building process and we continue building and consolidating the State and thus the future of Timor-Leste.

Within the key sectors, we have already recorded some progresses concerning the development of our people and our country. Nevertheless we know that we cannot afford to slow down, since there is still so much more that remains to be done.

We will continue to work alongside our development partners, the international community in order to realize the promise of giving our people access to decent housing and living situations, as well as health care, nutrition, education, drinkable water, proper sanitation and basic infrastructures, including roads, communications and electricity.

Your Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The successive Governments of Timor-Leste have been setting the priorities for the country and working hard so that they truly have an impact on the lives of the Timorese. In turn, the United Nations agencies have been adapting their roles to our priorities so as to provide long-term support.

In this regard, the Government of Timor-Leste is particularly pleased to have approved, only last week at the latest Meeting of the Council of Ministers, and signed with the United Nations, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2015-2019, the first UNDAF document approved since the departure of the UN Peacekeeping Mission, and the Country Programme Action Plan.

This document is the result of the joint effort between the Government of Timor-Leste and the United Nations seeking to draft a roadmap for the next five years to be used by every UN agency working in Timor-Leste. It was a joint effort involving my office, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation.

UNDAF sets the strategic programme for supporting the national priorities decided by Timor-Leste and to which the United Nations have corresponded in an integrated manner. It was thought out and aligned with our Strategic Development Plan (SDP), being divided precisely into the same four strategic sectors: the social sector, the infrastructure sector, the economic sector and the governance sector. As one would expect, it is also in line with the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Millennium Development Goals and the Millennium Declaration.

On the same day the Council of Ministers also approved a resolution adopting the Sustainable Development Goals and creating a mechanism for their implementation. This attests our commitment towards sustainable development, which we want to be part of the plans we draft for our country, while working to achieve a global goal.

We also want to make use of our resources and to diversify our economy. In a country like Timor-Leste we must focus on an economic policy that encompasses our rural

development, our agriculture, fisheries and forestry, while creating conditions for the private sector and for job creation.

Additionally we must continue investing in the development of the governance sector, namely with regards to justice, transparency, accountability and the decentralisation process, which we believe will help all of these processes.

Still, UNDAF 2015-2019 also entails a new dynamic and is consistent with the initiatives assumed by Timor-Leste, such as the g7+ and the fact that we are one of the pilot countries for the implementation of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States. We own the process for implementing the national priorities and, having the United Nations as partners, we will work towards sustainable human development. Ultimately we will be able to extend the fruits of our experience to fragile and conflict-affected countries.

As such, this new stage of the relationship between Timor-Leste and the United Nations, symbolized by the signing of the new UNDAF, is a reason for great satisfaction because of what it represents for Timor-Leste and because it shows that our relationship is not limited to peacekeeping or political missions.

This is evidence of the progress and maturity that Timor-Leste has been achieving and of the trust that others can place on us.

If we were not a country where peace and safety are felt everywhere; if we had not been presenting sound social and economic growth indicators; if we had not created more opportunities for diversifying our economy; and if we had used the revenue from our natural resources in ways other than for developing the country and improving the living conditions of our citizens, then perhaps we would not be a success story today.

This could not have been achieved without the excellent relationship that Timor-Leste has with every country in the world, particularly our neighbors Indonesia and Australia. It is within this spirit that we have recently agreed with the President of the Republic of Indonesia to start negotiations on our maritime boundaries and have also requested the government of Australia to start negotiations on the demarcation of the maritime boundaries. We strongly believe that achieving full sovereignty will ensure safeguarding the success story we so rightly celebrate.

As I have stated in the past, and wish to repeat here today, both before and after our independence, we owe much to the United Nations. Now once again, as we continue our struggle for full sovereignty over our maritime boundaries, we look to the United Nations and to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. As in the past, we now believe that only respect to the International Law will bring the Timorese to achieve our full sovereignty!

Your Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are not even close to being the country we want to be for our people, but I am confident we are on the right path. The victories we have earned are also your victories.

In sports good managers “don’t change a winning team”. Let us then continue as partners in the winning team over the next following years!

Thank you very much.

Dr Rui Maria de Araújo
New York, 30 September 2015