



**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 FIRST GLOBAL ECONOMIC FORUM OF THE
COMMUNITY OF PORTUGUESE SPEAKING COUNTRIES**

**“Timor-Leste as a hub for business cooperation between the CPLP and
the Asia-Pacific region”**

**Dili Convention Centre
25 February 2016**

Your Excellencies

The Former Holders of Sovereignty Bodies
The Minister of State, Coordinator of Economic Affairs and Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries
The CPLP Ministers of Commerce and their representatives
The Executive Secretary of the CPLP
Fellow Members of Government

Illustrious

Presidents of the CPLP Business Confederation and the CPLP Exporters Union
Members from the Member State Delegations and from the CPLP Executive Secretariat
Representatives from the CPLP Associated Observers
Representatives from the Diplomatic Corps
Guest lecturers and moderators
Business people

Ladies and Gentlemen

I want to start by thanking you all, the partners of Timor-Leste and our private sector, for being here today. I also wish to welcome all representatives from national and international businesses and all delegations from the twenty countries that travelled near or far to be here in Timor-Leste taking part in this First Global Economic Forum of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries. It is a great satisfaction to host you in our country, some of you for the very first time.

It is also with great pride that we to follow through the commitment in the area of economic and business cooperation that we made when we took on the Presidency of the CPLP for the 2014-2016 biennium. Holding this First Global Economic Forum was always in the strategic agenda of our presidency, linked to the motto chosen by Timor-Leste: "The CPLP and Globalisation". We wanted to instil a new economic and business dynamic within our Community, so as to realise our potentials; both among ourselves as well as among and between our partners.

We felt the need to open the CPLP to the globalised world that encompasses each and every country. We believe that this "internationalisation" of our Community, which is present in four continents, can only be advantageous to us. Each of our countries, in view of its geographic location and its historical, social and cultural ties with its neighbours, is integrated in regional economic communities such as the EU, MERCOSUL, ECOWAS and ECCAS, which have enormous economic potential. Timor-Leste is also committed to joining ASEAN, which will expand our presence in the regional economies even further.

When we speak about globalisation we speak about expanding markets and the economy, as well as people, goods and services. The international arena is a multipolar one, with an increasing number of interdependent relationships, in which the Asian continent is acknowledged as the driving force of the world's economy. This requires us to reflect on our positioning in the region and in the world.

Timor-Leste's geostrategic and geopolitical location, between the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean, where important international sea routes converge, makes us a State with great potential within this increasingly open international system.

Consequently it only makes sense that countries should make use of Timor-Leste's potential as a platform between the CPLP, Southeast Asia and the Pacific, so as to promote economic growth and diversity by establishing new strategic partnerships that in turn will nurture the improvement of the economic and social situation of our peoples.

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Within this economic dynamic and diversification we have completed yesterday the Second Meeting of the CPLP Ministers of Trade, in which, among other things, we reviewed the measures adopted alongside the Luanda Declaration in 2012, which made an extremely important contribution to the concept of "economic cooperation".

This Declaration boosted economic and business cooperation, enabling us to identify key clusters that considerably improved the commercial relations between CPLP companies, while revitalising the CPLP Business Confederation.

Today we have the first edition of this CPLP Global Economic Forum, providing the participating businesspeople with greater insight on the business atmosphere within the CPLP countries and the regional economic communities in which they are inserted, while nurturing private sector development and promoting and facilitating the exchanging of new synergies, experiences and technology.

The First CPLP Global Economic Forum is consequently a unique opportunity for businesspeople to get to know each other and to showcase their businesses, within a relationship favouring direct contact between companies and nurturing entrepreneurship.

We are very happy to see our national business fabric and our local commerce represented here, and we want to tell you all about the business opportunities that Timor-Leste can present to you. I am certain we will have the possibility of creating partnerships that enable us to generate businesses, create wealth and lead to a more sustainable and diversified economy in which the private sector plays a stronger role.

It is important that we use this Forum to create and nurture a fitting environment for increasing our economic and business cooperation, also with our partners, particularly in sectors that we regard as being strategic, such as the oil, gas and mining industry, agriculture and agribusinesses, sea and fisheries, manufacturing, tourism and infrastructures.

As you are aware, Timor-Leste is committed to implementing its 2011-2030 Strategic Development Plan. Consequently we continue to invest in major projects that in the future will enable us to diversify our economy and to make it more sustainable.

Here I am speaking about projects such as the “Tasi Mane project”, which will develop industry in the Southern Cost; of the trilateral cooperation between Timor-Leste, Indonesia and Australia, which has great potential; and also of the Special Zone of Social Market Economy of Oe-Cusse Ambeno and Ataúro, focusing on the areas of tourism and agribusinesses. These are projects where we have already made significant achievements and where we know there is still much investment to be made and many opportunities to be explored and developed.

Additionally we are creating conditions for attracting investment and enabling the private sector to grow, not just through public investment but also by implementing strategic reforms such as the Tax Reform and the Economic Reform, which will create the required legal conditions, as well as legal certainty and security.

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I think it is now time to let you enjoy what the CPLP Global Economic Forum has to offer, including the exchanging of experiences that will surely enrich your knowledge, make the private sector stronger and better suited to generate employment and give the economy a new boost, so as to improve the living situation of our peoples.

I trust that this event will be fruitful for our national businesspeople and our private sector, so that you may increasingly be filled with that entrepreneurial spirit that Timor-Leste requires so much in order to continue building a sustainable economy.

I also want to praise the Minister of State, Coordinator of Economic Affairs and Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries for the success this Forum is already having, as well as to thank the CPLP Business Confederation and the CPLP Exporters Union for all their support in organising and socialising this event.

I trust that this will be the first of many similar events where we continue nurturing this type of initiatives that make us increasingly want to work in partnership, particularly since together we are more and we are stronger.

Thank you.

Dr Rui Maria de Araújo
25 February 2016