



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE

SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER

KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

INAUGURATION OF THE 9TH CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT

**Presidential Palace
Dili, July 1st, 2023**

Your Excellency, the President of the Republic,
Dr José Ramos-Horta

Your Excellency, the President of the National Parliament,
Mrs Maria Fernanda Lay

Excellency, the President of the Court of Appeal,
Dr Deolindo dos Santos

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Dignitaries of Neighbouring
Countries and Distinguished Representatives of International Organisations

Your Excellencies, Ambassadors
Honourable Members of the National Parliament
Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

People of Timor-Leste, to whom I bow with all respect!

First of all, I would like to extend a sincere welcome to all the dignitaries from neighbouring countries present at this ceremony.

I want to thank you for your kindness in coming to Dili and your distinguished presence only dignifies the commitment of the Timorese, revealed in the recent Parliamentary Elections, to consolidate the Democratic Rule of Law in Timor-Leste and to continue on the path of progress and development, which will guarantee a better life for its citizens.

Excellencies,
Honourable Guests,

In 2012, eleven years ago, I was sworn in in the Great Hall of Lahane Palace as Prime Minister of the 5th Constitutional Government. Today, I come before the People of Timor-Leste to again assume this heavy responsibility to continue the processes of State-building and Nation-building.

It is now 21 years since we restored National Independence in a solemn ceremony in Tasi Tolu on May 20th, 2002, witnessed by the highest international dignitaries, and thus Timor-Leste became the youngest country in the world.

Having emerged from a long struggle, the then-new State was trying to rise from the ashes of violence perpetrated before, during and after the historic Referendum of 1999, where the heroic and brave People of Timor-Leste did not hesitate to use their fundamental right to decide their fate.

We fully realised that we were a fragile State in all aspects, from management and operational capacity to legal aspects. So we introduced systems that would regulate all the actions of the State.

With the mission-driven vision of building and consolidating State institutions, the 4th Government laid the foundations for creating a system of complete transparency and accountability, providing responsibility and transparency in administrative acts of governance and recruitment of civil servants on merit, regardless of political factors.

From this emerged a political conjuncture, in this process of State building, with the motto “from fragility to resilience”, counting on the political and technical support of international institutions, such as the World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and several friendly countries, which recognised the safe steps taken by the State of Timor-Leste and called for a better strengthening of the State system and institutions.

As you have all noticed, I stand here today with a new Alliance of two Parties - the CNRT and the Democratic Party - in a shared commitment to restore the democratic Rule of Law.

I realise that there is a bitter feeling that I have ultimately prioritised the former members of the Executive of the 4th and 5th Governments, of which I was Prime Minister. I can understand the disappointment of Timorese society at the need for more new political and technical staff. Therefore, to respond to the concern of Timorese society, it was essential to bring in people who were already familiar with the system so that the efforts to restore legality could bring concrete and immediate results.

I also understand some societal discomfort at the excessive number of government members. I could not help but bring all these Timorese together, as the 9th Government is committed to making a difference - planning, action, and managing responsibilities.

This is why the organisational structure of the 9th Government is enshrined in the philosophy of resuming the continuity of the progress achieved until 2017 and of leading the public administration once again towards the objectives of efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of services to the people and in the fulfilment of responsibilities towards the State.

Making the necessary corrections, doing more and improving is the common platform of understanding for forming this new Government. Our governing practice will be guided by the principles of good governance, inclusiveness and the principle that everyone must obey the law.

Our vision is of a nation where society is prosperous and healthy, educated and skilled, innovative and dynamic, with widespread access to essential goods and services, and where production and employment in all productive sectors match those of an emerging economy.

For this to happen, the structure of the 9th Government aims to give each member of the Government a mission to fulfil in the different areas and sectors so that we can take decisive action in this crucial period of change, also bearing in mind the preparation, in each municipality, of the technical staff that will be needed for the process of decentralisation of powers.

Using their legitimate rights, the People have clearly given this message: **let us save the democratic Rule of Law** so we can walk optimistically along the path of progress!

Today, we have sworn to everyone that we are fully aware of our responsibilities. Whenever any of us feels unable to fulfil his or her mission, he or she will not hesitate to resign from the office in which he or she has been invested.

This political message will decisively mark the History of the Nation because it also serves as a political Lesson for the future Leadership of the Country in order not to fall into the same mistakes that, if continued, would lead our State to a situation of a failed State!

Your Excellency, Mr President of the Republic,
Distinguished Guests,

To meet the expectations of the Timorese people and society, the 9th Government commits itself, within the first 120 days of governance, to:

1 - Restore democratic normality through the legitimate Parliament, which has already started its 6th Legislature, and through a legal Government, to approve the Government Programme for five years, approve the Amending Budget for 2023 and the 2024 General State Budget. Every effort will also be made to repeal all legislation and regulations necessary for the State consolidation;

2 - Repeal Law No. 3/2014, which established the RAEOA and ZEEMS, to subordinate the RAEOA Authority to better control of the Central Government, since the objective described in the Law for the creation of ZEEMS was not outlined, even after nine long years, and proceed to the immediate Audit of all activities, including the process of the expensive acquisition of “Ro Haksolok”;

3 - Repeal the Law that established the municipality of Ataúro due to the total lack of infrastructural and logistical conditions on the islet of Ataúro, such as roads, electricity, water, harbour and airport;

4 - Audit the Court of Auditors, the Anti-Corruption Commission and the Public Prosecutor's Office on the implementation of programmes and the lack of procurement processes for many projects;

5 - Audit the Civil Service Commission and the State Inspectorate-General on illegal recruitments and termination of contracts without justification;

6 - Audit the electoral fraud committed by the Electoral Administration in the recent Parliamentary Elections to put an end to the interests at stake and prevent it from recurring in the future to safeguard the Democratic Rule of Law;

7 - Immediately restructure the management of TIMOR GAP and ANPM to ensure greater efficiency in the oil sector, which is crucial for the country's development;

8 - Restructure the Criminal Investigation Scientific Police (PCIC) due to its total lack of integrity and professionalism;

9 - Consolidate peace and security necessary for national development, guaranteeing the fundamental rights, freedoms and guarantees of all citizens;

10 - Immediately review the illegal process of forced retirement of dozens of PNTL members;

11 - Immediately reform and restructure the National Intelligence Service to ensure integrity and professionalism in this institution;

12 - Alert all PNTL Officers who have been sworn in to serve a particular party, to renounce their oath bonds or else leave the PNTL;

13 - Immediately abolish the brutal tax increase approved in January 2023;

14 - Audit and review, where necessary, the major “deals” made at the end of the previous government's term;

15 - Ensure the immediate availability of all necessary medicines to hospitals and health centres;

16 - Turn school meals into a real “hot” and nutritious meal for children;

17 - Improve the conditions of assistance and treatment for the people with disabilities in the National Rehabilitation Centre and, in the future, create similar centres in all municipalities;

18 - Conduct a nationwide survey of the main road maintenance and river standardisation needs to start urgent rehabilitation works next year.

Your Excellency, Mr President of the Republic,
Distinguished Guests,

In fulfilment of the mandate granted by the People, the 9th Constitutional Government will have the following commitments for the first 12 months of governance:

1 - Implement the Justice reform (through the establishment of the Supreme Court of Justice and the quality training of judges and prosecutors);

2 - Revise the Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030, adapting it to the current circumstances of the country;

3 - Start the process of developing the South Coast;

4 - Secure the Greater Sunrise gas pipeline to Timor-Leste;

5 - Finalise the Land and Sea Border with Indonesia as a **national priority**;

6 - Initiate the process of Local Government through the phased Decentralisation of Government and Municipal Assemblies once the respective infrastructural and technical conditions have been created;

7 - Create a coordinating committee of universities and higher education institutes to study a collective strategy to define better assistance from the State and to implement the objective of raising the quality of education;

8 - Review the Law on Assistance to the Elderly and Handicapped so that the State recognises that the current “so-called elderly” were and should continue to be considered the true National Heroes since it was this layer of the Timorese population that suffered all the hardships of war, all kinds of threats and much pain for the loss of their relatives, but did not step back and faced everything to decide to vote for Independence in August 1999.

9 - Establish and support an Association of Timorese Art and Culture to encourage talented young people in various fields of art and culture to affirm Timorese identity and bring it to international forums;

10 - Double the number of scholarships to be awarded, on merit and based on national needs;

11 - Complete the construction and installation of the Optical Fibre Cable and ensure a quality internet connection for all citizens across the country;

12 - Significantly increase the number of people in employment;

13 - Implement the registration of both movable property and real estate (houses and land);

14 - Start the implementation of a CAFE school in all Administrative Posts;

15 - Complete the country's electrification programme to reach the remaining 20% of the population that has not yet had access to electricity;

16 - Create new seasonal work programmes with friendly countries;

17 - Implement the One-Stop Shop in all municipalities' head offices to allow access to Central Administration services throughout the country.

Your Excellency, Mr President of the Republic,
Distinguished Guests,

The 9th Constitutional Government is committed to fulfilling its Vision and Mission for the Development of the Country.

In its Programme, which will be presented in the National Parliament, this Government will focus on the themes of Basic Infrastructure, both in Health and Education. It will seek to emphasise the Economy as the crucial and vital factor for the development of the Nation, starting from agriculture, fishing, livestock, tourism and the beginning of small and medium industries, to gradually reduce the import of goods and products, which can be produced in the country.

If state-building concerns State institutions and the entire public administration, nation-building encompasses civil society, in its technical and intellectual capacity, and necessarily the national private sector, which should encourage entrepreneurship, especially among women.

Therefore, the next five years deserve a tremendous collective effort, requiring from everyone a great spirit of responsibility, dedication, honesty, persistence and courage.

We will start the long-awaited and necessary process of Decentralisation. To this end, the Government counts on the participation and cooperation of all citizens in this process. This Decentralisation process will require all intellectuals and technicians from each Municipality to actively and constructively participate in the frank and genuine dialogue that will be implemented so that the multiple benefits

that will contribute to the well-being of local populations will be achieved and strengthened from the potential of each Municipality.

That is why I appeal to young people to get involved. Each generation has a role to play in the constant challenges emerging in our reality. Young people must embrace this new struggle for the country's development, thus strengthening the democratic values in which we live.

Young people will be the future leaders of this nation because they will be the ones who, by practice and example, can transform our society and economy.

This Government is committed to creating opportunities for young people to develop their skills, experiences and values to actively and fully participate in the nation's future.

Therefore, the economy, or the diversification of the economy, will be an essential Pillar in this five-year term of the 9th Constitutional Government.

The Government is committed to bringing the Greater Sunrise pipeline to the South Coast of Timor-Leste. We will prove to the world that the pipeline to Timor-Leste is a viable, economically secure solution and that our horizon lies in developing an oil industry capable of creating direct economic dividends for our people.

The development of the South Coast in the oil and gas sector will continue to be a priority. Establishing a supply base, a refinery and a gas pipeline in this part of the country are necessary investments to create our oil industry and generate employment for the Timorese.

To this end, it will also be a national priority to finalise the land and sea borders with Indonesia, the solution of which must only comply with international law.

I take this opportunity to declare that the 9th Government will pay special attention to Investment and, in this regard, Foreign Companies will be very welcome to help develop the Country and create employment for Timorese.

Your Excellency, Mr President of the Republic,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The 9th Government will seriously focus on improving service delivery in the two critical areas of health and education.

In health, everything possible will be done to increase the technical capacity of medical staff to start treating the various diseases that usually require care abroad.

In Education, we are committed to looking deeply at the problem of access to education, which has caused difficult situations in vulnerable families. Thus, the Government also intends to ensure Quality at all levels of education by training teachers.

We propose to continue developing infrastructure that allows better and easier access to services for all citizens, especially those living in rural areas.

When we talk about a fairer society, we are talking about the fairness of our actions. In this challenging context of restoring the democratic Rule of Law, the 9th Government will provide the necessary care to improve the justice sector. We will continue to give greater impetus to the capacity building of the existing Timorese human resources, both in Courts, in the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Public Defender's Office, so that justice is served with seriousness and transparency, respecting the Rule of Law.

The Government will conduct a proper Audit of several cases which revealed either the Law Officers' incapacity or dependence on third-party interests.

We will continue to raise the capacity of the Timorese legal profession so that it can fully exercise its functions, through the formal constitution of a Bar Association, with management and training capacity in this critical sector of Justice. We will continue to invest in the training of criminal investigators in all the necessary specialities to ensure greater credibility to the cases brought before the courts.

Mr President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,

We have already been admitted as Observers to ASEAN. Still, I must honestly state that we have not prepared ourselves sufficiently to be, in a constructive way for the country, a full member of this regional organisation. In this sense, the 9th Government is committed to initiatives with the ASEAN Member Countries for a more in-depth study regarding our capacity to participate, especially in areas that most affect this inclusion of Timor-Leste in ASEAN. Only in this way will we be able to proceed with the selection of the technical staff capable, in each area, of representing the country in this Regional Organisation.

As for the CPLP, our permanent problem is the mastery of the Portuguese language, so the 9th Government is committed, with a view to the future, to implement more CAFE schools in all Administrative Posts gradually and to train Timorese teachers in this area.

In terms of International Relations, as neighbours, apart from Indonesia, we have Australia. I hope that with the current Australian Government, we will end all the differences of the past so that both Australian and Timorese people can see the future of the relationship in light of greater trust and mutual respect.

To conclude, I usually define our foreign policy as having this principle, which enshrines the sense of independence and sovereignty: “For Timor-Leste, there are no allies or enemies; everyone will be only and only FRIENDS!”. And this will be our *Motto*, which will guide us in Foreign Relations in this currently very difficult International Context.

We salute all the countries in the region which have given us unconditional support in various spheres, emphasising the good relations with Australia, New Zealand, China, Japan, South Korea, Indonesia and other ASEAN countries.

We would also like to welcome the friendly relations and solidarity with countries such as Portugal, Brazil and the PALOP, Cuba, the United Kingdom, Ireland and the USA, as well as with International Organisations, namely the UN and its Agencies, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Asian Development Bank, with which we intend to strengthen the ties of technical and professional assistance, which we need to fulfil our mission to the People of Timor-Leste.

I commit myself, here and now, and on behalf of the 9th Constitutional Government, to govern responsibly, instilling in all the other members of the

Government more enthusiasm in fulfilling their duties, always keeping sight of the future.

To the Timorese people, old and young, women and men, I address a special message: today, we face the great challenge of developing the nation we fought so hard to obtain. With the same principles, values and commitments that we all carried in body and soul during the long struggle for independence, we must continue working together to realise our dreams under the motto: “Mehi Povo nia mehi!”.

I know it won't be easy, but the Living Heroes, our elders, have already taught us that United, they faced much more significant difficulties!

The time has come to put Timor-Leste and the Timorese back on the development path.

Thank you all for your attention.

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão