



# PRIME MINISTER

**SPEECH OF  
HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER  
KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE  
PROGRAMME OF THE 9TH CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT  
TO THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT**

National Parliament, Dili  
July, 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023



Government Palace  
Avenida Marginal  
Dili, Timor-Leste

Your Excellency,  
Madam President of the National Parliament

Your Excellencies,  
Vice-Presidents of the National Parliament

Your Excellencies,  
Honourable Members of the National Parliament

Ladies and gentlemen, Members of the Government

Ladies and gentlemen,

First, I would like to express my gratitude to the Timorese for the privilege of once again having the opportunity to stand in this great House and, together with the Honourable Members of Parliament, discuss the country's future for the next five years.

When, on September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012, I presented here the 5th Constitutional Government Programme, I stated: *“We are aware of the pressing needs of the Nation and the difficulties that the Timorese face daily. (...) it has never been the lack of quality of our People that has limited our development, but rather the lack of opportunities!”*

Unfortunately, 11 years later, these opportunities have not been created for our people, who continue to live in hardship.

Worse... in the last six years, we have witnessed a setback from the democratic Rule of Law and the stagnation of development and economic growth directly impacting the population.

Therefore, the debate and appreciation of this Programme presented by the 9th Constitutional Government is more than a constitutional formality. It is a vote of confidence that we ask for this qualified and experienced Executive who wants to restore the rules of good governance, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness so that we can ALL aspire to the Timor-Leste we dreamed of during the struggle's difficult years.

I cannot promise miracles, nor can I promise immediate progress in national development. I can, however, promise that the inertia, inefficiency and irregularities we have witnessed in recent administrations are not part of the structure of this Governmental team.

Honourable Members of the Parliament,  
Grandmothers and grandfathers, mothers and fathers, young people of our Nation,

Freedom is not living in misery and without hope!

The freedom we dreamed of included living in peace and security and access to health, education, justice and employment - in short, well-being.

Freedom, however, is earned! No Strategic Plan or Government Programme can be implemented with the sole effort of an individual or institution. The Executive, of course, has the great responsibility of outlining and executing it, but this is an endeavour that requires the involvement of all citizens of the country.

And I can understand that there is general weariness among our people and even difficulty trusting the political promises and commitments made over these 21 years of Independence. I understand a particular disappointment, but I want to remind you that we are still a young and, therefore, fragile State.

Therefore, once again, I am asking for your trust! Trust that we can preserve social peace, improve justice and consolidate State institutions, which are fundamental pillars for attracting investment and thus developing the economic and social sector sustainably.

My first request is, therefore, not only to my Government but to all the Sovereignty Bodies, Civil Society, and all of Timorese:

**Let's embrace a new national cause.**

**Let's fight for our democratic Rule of Law: armed with the will to work, with active and constructive participation and encouraged by a vision of Freedom and Development!**

**And this vision does not belong to the 9th Constitutional Government; it belongs to the Timorese, the same way that the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, which governs our democratic Rule of Law, does not belong to a President of the Republic, to a Government or the Members of the National Parliament – it belongs to the Timorese!**

And the Timorese, using their legitimate right in the recent elections, were able to send that message clearly. They have once again given us a lesson in democratic culture. Let us now, as rulers, learn that lesson and act responsibly in carrying out our mission.

I will now present the set of commitments of this Government for your appreciation and debate, confident that the future begins today, and, as such, we want the agenda to be implemented in the country to be the result of a participatory and constructive dialogue from the outset.

Madam President of the National Parliament  
Vice-Presidents of the National Parliament  
Honourable Members of the National Parliament,

The Programme of the IX Constitutional Government, for the period 2023-2028, encompasses six main commitments:

### **First - Reaffirming the Democratic Rule of Law**

We will correct the irregularities committed by the previous governance that broke the implemented system of good governance, transparency, and financial and administrative accountability.

This includes undertaking structural reforms to accelerate the necessary transformation of sectors that are not providing a valuable and timely response to Timorese society and investing in improving State Institutions – their systems, processes and methodologies – to drive sustainable and inclusive development.

We will review all legislation and regulations necessary for State consolidation, including:

- The Law that created the RAEOA and the ZEESM, ensuring the separation of powers between the two and the establishment of a new Authority in the Oe-cússe Ambeno Region, with a total staff restructuring;
- - The Law that created the municipality of Ataúro, given that the concept of "RAEOA" should continue to include Ataúro until the infrastructural and technical conditions are developed, for Ataúro to be then autonomously separated from the RAEOA;
- The Judicial Organisation Law;
- The Chamber of Accounts Law;
- The recently approved Statute of Judicial Magistrates, Statute of the Public Prosecutor's Office and Statute of the Public Defender's Office;
- The legal framework of institutions in the Internal Security and Civil Protection sectors, including road legislation and the Martial Arts Law;
- The legal regime of the financial sector, by revoking outdated legislation that is still in force;
- The Budget and Financial Management Law and the Procurement and Public Contracts Regime, by gradually transforming the State's accounting system from the *cash basis system* to the *accrual basis system*;
- The Tax Law that will introduce the Value Added Tax;
- All existing anti-corruption legislation;
- The Lifetime Pension Law, so that this scheme is integrated into the Contributory Social Security Scheme regarding the pensions of the new members of the Sovereign Bodies;
- The legislation regulating the Framework Law and the recently approved National Spatial Planning Plan;
- The legal framework for the organisation and functioning of Municipal Authorities and Municipal Administrations, continuing the strategy of administrative

decentralisation, and taking the opportunity to approve the regulations on the Law on Local Government and Administrative Decentralisation, the Municipal Electoral Law, and the Municipal Finance Law.

In the next 120 days, we will also carry out an immediate Audit of RAEOA and ZEESM, as well as other State institutions such as the Court of Auditors, the Anti-Corruption Commission, the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Civil Service Commission, the State General Inspectorate and the Electoral Administration Bodies, also including audits of “deals” made by the previous Government, already at the end of his term of office.

We must speak of justice to speak of the Rule of Law. And the Rule of Law “*can only exist when justice wields the sword with the same skill with which it manipulates the scales*”. The 9th Government considers it a priority to pay greater attention to the justice sector so that it is practised with more professionalism, seriousness and transparency.

Also, to reaffirm the Democratic Rule of Law, we will thoroughly review the Strategic Development Plan in permanent consultation with Civil Society to update it to reflect the current State of the Nation.

This plan will continue to focus on developing social capital, infrastructure and the economy, to accelerate economic diversification and job creation in the country.

One of our most significant challenges, but also one of our most excellent opportunities, is the massive growth in the youth population. We need to find intelligent strategies to capitalise on this critical resource. In exploiting the country's energy resources, we want to escape the “resource curse” by relying on the “gift of youth”. In this combination of natural resources and young human resources lies the progress of the Nation.

Thus, in addition to the investment in traditional diversification sectors, the investment in the transformation of the south coast into a regional oil centre – the Tasi Mane project – is the commitment of this Government with multiplier effects in all municipalities.

Implementing the Maritime Boundary Treaty between Timor-Leste and Australia in the Timor Sea is a priority for this Executive, as is bringing the *Greater Sunrise* gas exploration pipeline to the South Coast of Timor-Leste. And to ensure greater efficiency in this sector, we will immediately restructure the TIMOR GAP and ANPM Directorates.

Lastly, as an integral part of State and Nation building, and because we want to be a FULL Rule of Law State, we will prioritise finalising the delimitation of the land and sea borders with Indonesia.

## Second - Developing Social Capital

A Nation just and developed guarantees access to quality health and education, fights inequalities, and promotes inclusion, creating opportunities for all, regardless of gender, age, place of residence, religion, social or economic status, or sexual orientation.

From 2007 to 2017, Governments have given high priority to promoting social justice. In the long term, providing quality education and training and creating job opportunities will be essential tools for lifting people out of poverty.

Until this happens, the State must ensure that National Liberation Fighters (who have sacrificed for the Homeland), women and children (where the success formula for sustainable development lies), as well as poor and deprived families, the elderly and other vulnerable citizens (such as persons with disabilities), have access to fulfilment of their essential needs and well-being.

Therefore, we will continue to support this population while developing policies and creating strategies that reduce dependency on State support. In particular, we will:

- Consolidate the implementation of the National Social Protection Strategy and the Law on the General Social Security Regime, ensuring the protection of citizens in precarious or vulnerable situations;
- Consolidate the National Social Security Institute and the Social Security Reserve Fund to manage the social security system, including contributory and non-contributory schemes, with Independence, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency;
- Approve the Framework Law on Social Protection;
- Review and assess the legislative and operational documents of the Social Pension and the Mother's Grant New Generation (*Jerasaun Foun*) Programme;
- Extend the construction of Social Solidarity Centres, already existing in the Municipalities, to all Administrative Posts, improve Social Care Services through the Social Solidarity Centres, and improve the Support Programme for Social Solidarity Institutions;
- Improve the National Rehabilitation Centre to provide better care and treatment for people with disabilities and extend the Centre to all municipalities;
- Create business opportunities for women in vulnerable situations, to ensure their economic Independence;
- Ensure equal opportunities for women and continue to implement gender-sensitive issues in all areas of governance;
- Ensure that girls of school age complete basic education and prevent women from dropping out of education when they reach their majority (18 years);
- Continue to implement the National Action Plan against Gender-Based Violence and promote campaigns against domestic violence;
- Supporting the Elderly, particularly and urgently for those aged over 70;
- Create Centres for Elderly Care in all municipalities, as well as Leisure and Occupational Therapy programmes for older people;
- Stimulate the creation of self-sustainable businesses for citizens with disabilities, also investing in equipment and accessibility to equipment of public institutions;

- Develop programmes to support not only people with disabilities but also families and communities who are responsible for people with disabilities;
- Improve relief and assistance mechanisms for victims of natural disasters, including food assistance, infrastructure construction and distribution of building materials and storage materials;
- Continue to promote official recognition and support for National Liberation Veterans and Combatants and their families;
- Study the feasibility of creating a Veterans' Fund and support the creation of a commercial bank with funds from the Veterans' Investment Fund.

I have already mentioned that our young people are one of our Nation's riches. Not only do they have the power to transform the country, they will be our future leaders.

We will invest in a National Youth Policy that ensures coordinated action for the development and autonomy of these young people. This will be developed in conjunction with more responsible investment in Sport and Culture, essential instruments for developing civic, social and leadership skills, while also promoting that young people have an occupation, contributing to social stability.

For these young people to know their past, honour the present and cherish the future, we will complete rigorous research on the History of the National Liberation Struggle and promote the dissemination of the Contemporary History of Timor-Leste.

Also in the area of Culture, we want to create and support an Association of Timorese Art and Culture to encourage talented young people in the arts and culture, to reaffirm the national identity and expand it internationally.

We will also resume the old projects of building a Museum and Cultural Centre in Dili, improve the legal framework associated with culture, and invest in cultural facilities and initiatives.

Honourable Members of the Parliament,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

We must prioritise the health and education sectors to discuss social capital. And in these areas, we will focus on things other than the policies already in place but on improving the public provision of these essential services. We will work hard to improve planning, financing, management and quality service delivery, as this is the main problem in these two crucial sectors for development.

In the Health sector, the Government will continue to implement the National Health Policy and the National Health Sector Strategic Plan 2011-2030, maximising efforts to ensure better service delivery, as well as generalising access to quality health care, constantly assessing efficiency, transparency and professionalism in the management of financial, human, material and logistical resources, infrastructure and equipment.

In particular, we will:

- Ensure the immediate availability of all necessary medicines to hospitals and health centres, guaranteeing a reform in the management and administration of the health sector so that, in the future, this fundamental right to the protection of citizens' health is never jeopardised;
- Improve child nutrition, also through nutritious school meals for all children;
- Ensure that all villages (*sucos*), especially in remote areas, have access to a Health Post with a comprehensive package of services;
- Ensure that Community Health Centres in Administrative Posts guarantee that more people are served;
- Continue to improve maternal and child health through comprehensive policies that include preventive and integrated care, such as immunisation;
- Improve and expand the provision of medical care at the Guido Valadares National Hospital, in various specialities, with more doctors and specialised technicians so that it is possible to treat various diseases, which usually require care abroad;
- Reform the National Health Laboratory and Blood Bank to improve the management of laboratory services and blood supply systems;
- Regarding infrastructure, we will continue to build and rehabilitate Health Posts and improve Community Health Centres and Referral Hospitals, including the necessary supporting infrastructure;
- We will also establish a Psychiatric Health Hospital.

Regarding the Education sector, we want Timor-Leste to achieve a better-quality education by 2028, with a broader access opportunity for all. This education must be able to respond to the needs of the labour market, contribute to reducing unemployment through lifelong learning, and thus break the vicious circle of intergenerational poverty.

In particular, we will:

- Reform the management and administration of the education system, at the level of the Ministry of Education and the municipal and school levels, including the establishment of appropriate procedures and systems for monitoring and evaluation;
- Improve the quality of teaching at all levels of education through more excellent teacher training;
- Review school curricula, especially in general and vocational secondary education (High School), to ensure the acquisition of skills appropriate to the labour market and national development needs;
- Continue to build, rehabilitate and equip schools from pre-primary to secondary (High School) education;
- Evaluate CAFE schools in terms of teaching development and financial aspects to consider expanding them to all Administrative Posts;
- Double the number of scholarships to be awarded on merit and in line with national needs;
- Improve higher education by ensuring adequate academic assessment and accreditation and continuous teacher training;



- Expand Higher Technical Education in areas strategic to the national economy by creating the Polytechnic Institute of Tourism, Hospitality and Tourist Agencies and Guides in Lospalos, the Polytechnic Institute of Engineering in Suai, and the Academy of Fisheries and Marine Studies in Manatuto. We will also improve infrastructure, management and teaching at the Polytechnic Institute of Betano;
- Set up a coordinating committee of universities and colleges to study a collective strategy to define better assistance from the State and implement the objective of raising the quality of education.

On the other hand, we will continue to focus on vocational training and employment, investing in the qualification of young people in strategic areas of development. We will also continue to work with friendly countries to create opportunities for vocational training and employment abroad through professional internships and seasonal work programmes, hoping that these Timorese will return to the country to apply the skills they have acquired.

### **Third - Developing Infrastructure**

Between 2007 and 2017, the infrastructure sector was considered the engine of national development, capable of leveraging social capital, economic growth, job creation and the consolidation of institutions.

The 9th Constitutional Government wants to recover this momentum and resume the integrated infrastructure plan with quality building works and proportionality of the investment.

In this regard, in the next 120 days, we want to survey the primary needs for road maintenance and river standardisation throughout the country to start urgent rehabilitation in 2024.

The Government has prioritised road sections in two phases. The most pressing phase refers to those roads linking Administrative Posts and rural roads, then moving on to urban roads in Ainaro, Baucau, Bobonaro, Ermera, Lautém and Viqueque.

On the other hand, we must reinforce investment in access to drinking water and basic sanitation, essential conditions for public health and the quality of life of populations. To this end, we will approve and implement the Investment, Policy and Institutional Reform Plan 2023-2030 to fulfil the targets set in the SDP and the 6th SDG. This plan will identify the investments needed for water supply and sanitation nationwide.

We will also continue to ensure that the entire population has access to electricity by expanding the National Electrification Programme. Regarding Ataúro, we will conduct a feasibility study to materialise a sustainable electrification plan for the island.

This Government will also establish a Renewable Natural Resources Office, which will coordinate actions at the cross-sectoral level, carry out analyses and feasibility studies relevant to this sector and be responsible for implementing renewable energy projects, including management, monitoring and evaluation.

In this regard, we want to implement pilot renewable energy projects such as the construction of the Lariguto and Bobonaro plants for wind energy development, invest in solar energy systems and develop a feasibility study for the construction of a thermoelectric plant to generate energy from household and industrial waste in Dili.

The 9th Government is also committed to completing the installation of the Fibre Optic Cable and ensuring a quality internet connection for all citizens throughout the country.

We also commit to resume investment plans in land, sea and air transport, with emphasis on the following initiatives:

- Carry out a thorough review of the Highway Code with a particular focus on improving safety, including the establishment of compulsory pre-test driving lessons;
- Improve the harbour facilities at Com and Ataúro;
- Build a harbour facility at Kairabela in Vemasse to facilitate access to the sea and support the tourism sector;
- Carry out feasibility studies for the construction of the Manatuto harbour and the creation of a national shipping line;
- Restructure and modernise the Port of Dili to convert it into a City Marina and Cruise Port;
- Develop the International Airport Master Plan and finalise its expansion;
- Develop feasibility studies for municipal airports and operationalise Suai Airport.

#### **Fourth - Developing the Economy**

Ladies and gentlemen,

If we want to create opportunities for the people, we must develop a diversified economy based on agriculture, fisheries, livestock, and tourism and invest in creating small and medium-sized industries and businesses to reduce the import of goods and products gradually.

We can only talk about full sovereignty if we are self-sufficient in food.

The 9th Government will expand the agricultural sector, improve cultivation practices and agricultural productivity and develop actions to improve the production of specific and systematic crops according to the potential of each region of the country.

We want to increase livestock production by 20 per cent by 2028 to reduce imports of livestock products from abroad. We will also invest in incentivising fishermen and fishing efforts sustainably.

I would therefore like to highlight the following policies:

- Establish a Public Agricultural Research Laboratory to develop research programmes for all major agricultural products in Timor-Leste;
- Establish an Agricultural Research and Development Institute dedicated to farmer-led production systems;
- Continue to improve agricultural practices to increase and improve production and support farmers, including through training, equipment and irrigation systems;
- Continue to support the production of organic and high-quality coffee, including the promotion of Timor coffee at national and international levels;
- Establish an Animal Production Research Centre to assess which species are best adapted to Timor-Leste conditions, improve genetic quality and selective breeding techniques;
- Support the establishment of a Cattle Breeders' Association by facilitating its establishment and related policies and initiatives;
- Promote the creation of small livestock support enterprises, including meat chilling, sorting, processing and packaging infrastructure, to develop a safe and quality livestock industry;
- Review the studies prepared on the fisheries sector to identify priority actions and strategies for the growth of the sector;
- Regulate and control fisheries and campaign with fishermen and their communities on fishing techniques that present less risk of depleting fish production capacity and the surrounding environment;
- Invest in the training of human resources in the area of fisheries and aquaculture to support technical services at sea and in aquaculture and deep-sea fisheries with a future export orientation;
- Prepare studies to establish a State indirect administration entity for fisheries and aquaculture, such as the National Institute for Fisheries and Aquaculture, which could promote and motivate private investment.

As I have already mentioned, the 9th Government is genuinely committed to bringing the pipeline to Timor-Leste, proving to the world that this is an economically viable and safe solution.

Thus, the South Coast development will be a centre of oil and gas activity, with the establishment of a logistics base in Suai, an oil refinery and petrochemical complex on the south coast and the installation of a liquefied natural gas plant from *Greater Sunrise* through the construction of a submerged pipeline to that region.

The Tasi Mane project will develop the entire southern coastal area by constructing new towns and supporting infrastructure. Not only the exploration but also the construction phase, as well as the operation of related infrastructure and services, will create more than 50,000 direct and indirect jobs.

The whole country will benefit from this project, not only by the increase in Gross Domestic Product but by the economic dynamics provided by the productivity of economic factors that also include the subcontracting of services such as catering, engineering, security, fuel supply, management services, professionals and technicians and agricultural product needs, to name but a few.

On the other hand, this Government is determined to look at the sea from a different perspective since the sea is crucial for human life! It gives us almost everything we need: food, health, connectivity, entertainment, inspiration and prosperity.

From the sea, a whole range of sectors presents themselves as a potential driver for sustainable development, from traditional sectors – such as fisheries, ports, shipbuilding and shipping, port activities, tourism, and oil and natural gas – to strategic sectors – such as defence and security – to more recent sectors – such as biotechnology, marine renewable energy and even the sea as a carbon sequester.

Building a sustainable sea economy is an opportunity for our country. I would even say, a hope!

The Government will continue implementing the *Ha'u nia Tasi, Ha'u nia Timor* campaign to raise awareness of Timor-Leste's maritime areas. The Government will also prioritise the development of a Timor-Leste Blue Economy Policy for the sustainable growth of the Nation, including the preservation, conservation and sustainable use of our ocean resources and the promotion of initiatives and programmes aimed at environmental, economic and social sustainability.

This policy will require the joint and dynamic effort of several ministries and public entities, especially those with responsibilities in agriculture and fisheries, environment, foreign affairs, petroleum, State administration, defence and security, for the successful and sustainable development of the Blue Economy.

This Programme will also boost the Tourism sector, combining its strategy of attracting tourists and improving and promoting tourism products and offers, sustainable maritime tourism and ecotourism in Timor-Leste.

This strategy will also reinforce our strategy of preserving and valorising natural resources, our biodiversity, and safeguarding, in general, the environment, land and sea for the sustainable development of the economy.

Lastly, and before ending this commitment to the economy, I cannot fail to mention that we will focus on boosting foreign investment and developing the national private sector through attractive and safe conditions, removing obstacles and fostering entrepreneurship so that the private sector, national and international, is a true partner of the Government in economic growth.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen, I now want to talk to you about the fifth compromise.

## **Fifth - Consolidating Governance**

In addition to the legislative reforms I have already mentioned, we will focus on an economic policy that contributes to the development of private investment and a fiscal policy that contributes to a more significant fiscal balance through a tax system that collects more domestic revenue while maintaining a competitive tax regime, capable of attracting investment.

In the next five years, we want to create jobs for all and reduce the minimum poverty rate to 10% by developing infrastructure and the economic fabric, as I have already mentioned. A better financial sector policy will contribute to the shift in the structure of the economy, which is mainly dependent on public spending, towards a sustainable economy with increased private sector activities.

The private sector mainly fails to progress because it is limited to state projects and needs access to long-term, affordable credit and finance. Existing commercial banks only lend to international organisations and companies from their home country and sectors that rely heavily on government contracts and public investment.

The Government will establish a Development Bank of Timor-Leste to facilitate access to long-term finance at affordable interest rates so that entrepreneurs can participate in the development of the Nation.

On the other hand, we will support and expand the Banco Nacional de Comércio de Timor-Leste to municipalities and Administrative Posts so that micro, small and medium enterprises, both urban and rural, can also be an active part of this growth.

The Government also intends that in its investment policy, the Petroleum Fund can consider the investments made by the companies in shares it holds. To this end, the Government will strengthen the capacities of existing State-owned enterprises to orientate their activity to promote investments in Timor-Leste and assess the financial and economic effects for the State, promoting the activities of State-owned enterprises towards productive sectors.

It will also establish the Timor-Leste Investment Corporation (TLIC) as a State investment company and capitalise on State-owned companies through business plans.

The Government will approve the State Enterprise Sector Regime to improve the monitoring of State-owned enterprises, promote State participation in private investments, and contribute to their financial and economic return.

The Government also intends to implement the financial diversification mechanism, Equity Participation, as it will stimulate private sector investments, promote infrastructure development, and contribute to the diversification of the economy and job creation, to raise revenue for the State.

These commitments will only make sense if the Government continues strengthening fiscal policy and public finance management with transparency, accountability, efficiency and sustainability. As one of the priorities during its mandate, the Government will reform Public Finance Management.

We will also ensure a return to rigour in the execution of public expenditure by investing in financial decentralisation to public institutions and regional and municipal authorities, strengthening public institutions' capacities by interconnecting the public sector's IT system with the financial IT system. Linked to this, we will resume "programme-based budgeting " to avoid irrelevant expenditures that could be indicative of corruption.

## **Sixth - Promoting Good Governance and Fighting Corruption**

Lastly, we will work to ensure a robust, honest and efficient public sector, coupled with justice and internal security mechanisms that contribute to the country's security and prosperity.

We will act resolutely:

- On performance appraisals and merit-based promotion;
- In the fight against corruption, also preventively. Members of the Government will be no exception, with the approval of a Code of Conduct;
- In the association of information technologies, including eGovernment, and good cooperation with the country's media to promote good governance;
- In Public Administration Reform and Modernisation;
- On Institutional Strengthening, including the review of the institutions' organisational matrix;
- On Training and capacity building of the State's local Government human resources to improve the delivery of local public goods and services.

The Government will also, as I stated at the beginning of this speech, carry out the Decentralisation process, focusing on the potential of each municipality, considering that this can be a second Independence for the country, where everyone can contribute to their own development.

Therefore, in the next five years, we will start the process of Local Government through a phased Decentralisation of the Government and Municipal Assemblies after the respective infrastructural and technical conditions are created. This objective will only be fulfilled with the active and responsible involvement and participation of all Timorese from the East to the West.

Lastly, in the context of good governance and the fight against corruption, we cannot fail to mention, once again, Justice and Defence and Security. In this regard, the 9th Constitutional Government will prioritise the following actions:

- Implementation of the National Defence and Security Strategic Concept, including the review and approval of the respective legal framework;

- Immediate reform and restructuring of the National Intelligence System to ensure the integrity and professionalism of this institution;
- Restructuring of the Criminal Investigation Scientific Police, also due to the absolute need for greater integrity and professionalism;
- Review of the 2030 Internal Security Strategic Plan to adapt it to the current challenges of the Internal Security and Civil Protection sectors;
- Elimination of the partisanship of the country's Security and Defence Forces;
- Implementation of a thorough Reform in the Justice Sector, with the creation of the Supreme Court of Justice and impeccable training of Judges and Prosecutors.

Madam President of the National Parliament  
 Vice-Presidents of the National Parliament  
 Honourable Members of the National Parliament,

The road ahead is full of challenges. Challenges that we must face responsibly.

This Programme requires a lot of determination, perseverance and honesty because sometimes it is easier to start again than to correct processes and systems, addictions and established habits. But only then can we get back on the right track of progress.

And we have to be prepared for unpredictable conjunctures. It is not only the internal crisis of democratic irregularity that we have recently experienced in the country that has caused social and economic stagnation. The lack of capacity to analyse and overcome other crises, also on the international scene, has put us in the Nation's current State.

We faced a global pandemic with a tremendous impact on the whole world, which claimed millions of lives, forced the closure of borders, weakened global democracy and led to a global economic and social crisis that further exacerbated poverty and inequalities.

Timor-Leste was no exception!

The 2021 floods, in addition to several fatalities, left severe damage in the country. More than two years later, we can still witness the signs of these floods all over the country, with roads and houses that have never been repaired and many of those that have been, reminding us of the importance of spatial planning, especially in the capital of the country, Dili.

Less than a year after the floods, war breaks out in Ukraine. And not even our half-island on the other side of the world can remain indifferent to war in Europe. This war has caused even more uncertainty for our young State needing development.

War is not only the most abject action of human beings. This war is not only causing the greatest humanitarian crisis since World War II; it is causing democratic and economic disruption in many countries. And Timor-Leste, once again, is no exception, with disruptions in the supply chain, international inflationary pressure, and rising energy and raw material costs.

The International Community, always swift and present in its support for Timor-Leste, has continued to show solidarity with our people during these recent crises. But donor countries and international agencies have many suffering peoples to look after.

Timor-Leste must be prepared to deal with national and international crises. In the face of the complexities and challenges that the world presents us with - from conflict to war, from the refugee crisis to fanaticism and terrorism, from maritime insecurity to climate change, it cannot simply shelter from the “storms” and forget that there is an ever-changing world out there.

We must face the world proactively because no country can overcome global challenges alone.

We can have a more active voice on the international stage and have valid experiences to share within the G7+ countries and with all countries worldwide. Our success in resolving disputes peacefully in the case of maritime boundary delimitation, using UNCLOS and international Law, has earned us global respect.

We want to continue to reciprocate the solidarity shown during the years of struggle and restoration of our Independence by joining our voices to the international movement to promote reconciliation, peace and stability.

Given the complexity of the international environment, we will promote multilateralism as a priority foreign policy objective. We will strengthen our engagement with the UN and other International Agencies, participating in critical issues such as climate change, maritime affairs and ocean sustainability, the Blue Economy, migration and refugees, and humanitarian initiatives.

And, of course, to strengthen relations of friendship, cooperation and solidarity with all States, in particular with friendly countries and development partners, in particular with the "closest", whether they are our neighbours, the countries of the region, or the countries of the CPLP, but also with all those who have supported us unconditionally during the various phases of peace and nation building.

I cannot fail to mention with gratitude that in the same month that we took office, we were honoured with the visit of the Foreign Minister of Japan, the Foreign Minister of Australia and the Prime Minister of Portugal. This friendship and bilateral cooperation reinforces our conviction that we are equal in fulfilling our mission to the Timorese.

And this commitment also includes being fully prepared to join ASEAN and the World Trade Organisation.



And this is where my second request lies:

**Let's all be diplomats for our country!  
Let's build a credible image of an independent, responsible and developing country which  
stands for tolerance, human rights, the democratic Rule of Law and a global system  
governed by internationally accepted rules.**

**And we will, regardless of our professional, social or economic status, dignify our presence  
abroad while caring for our country to attract investment, trade and tourism to Timor-  
Leste.**

Lastly, I thank the Honourable Members of Parliament for your cooperation and determination to debate and improve the 9th Constitutional Government strategic agenda.

Tomorrow begins today, here and now. Let us be worthy of the mandates - of Parliament and Government - that we have received from the Timorese. It is our duty. It is our responsibility.

I am counting on your vote of confidence so that together we create opportunities for our people!

Thank you very much.