



PRIME MINISTER

**SPEECH BY
HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER**

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**ON THE OCCASION OF THE SWEARING-IN OF THE
NEW GOVERNOR OF THE CENTRAL BANK OF TIMOR-LESTE**

Central Bank of Timor-Leste, Dili
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Excellencies
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to participate in the swearing-in ceremony of the new Governor of the Central Bank, Dr. Hélder Lopes.

This is another crucial step for the country since the BCTL, our financial regulator, is fundamental to consolidating the national economic sector. Consolidating the rule of law is only possible with a credible institution that holds the financial system accountable and manages the oil fund, our national wealth, with transparency and independence.

I would like to express my complete confidence in the new Governor of the Central Bank. I believe that Dr. Hélder Lopes, who is taking on the leadership of this institution today, will act with the responsibility of someone who has made a public service commitment to the State and the people of Timor-Leste.

I would also like to express a word of gratitude and appreciation to Dr. Abrão de Vasconcelos, who has led this institution with commitment, professionalism and integrity over the last 12 years.

A long road has been travelled since the establishment of the Banking and Payments Authority and its transformation into the Central Bank of Timor-Leste in 2011. It has been a democratic maturing of the State itself, where accountability, transparency and independence, critical factors of a democratic rule of law, have accompanied the national objectives of developing the economic and social sectors.

National interests cannot be defended without an efficient and effective financial sector. The outgoing Governor of the Central Bank understood this responsibility, and I am convinced that the new Governor will continue this legacy.

For the relationship between the Government of Timor-Leste and the Central Bank, I have two concrete aspirations that can be summarised in two words: independence and cooperation! The prestige of the Timorese State, the nation's success and the future of the Timorese depend on this healthy relationship between these two institutions.

Perhaps we should remember the fundamental role that the Central Bank plays for the country since it is a discreet institution that may go unnoticed by Timorese society... until the day it stops fulfilling its role with efficiency and professionalism! We could even say that the importance of the Central Bank would only really become visible the day it failed "miserably" to fulfil its mission.

The financial sector is crucial in contributing to Timor-Leste's economic development. The Central Bank is responsible for mobilising the country's savings resources effectively and efficiently and managing foreign investment capital resources. On the other hand, the Central Bank plays a fundamental role in the execution of payments, which are inherent to economic dynamics and commercial development, drivers of economic growth and, consequently, the well-being of citizens.

This naturally includes the development of the private sector, the job creation that goes with it, and the regulatory action it takes towards Timor's existing commercial banks, which support the country's economic development.

For these reasons, I hope that the Central Bank, with this new leadership, will be able to fulfil its role as a partner of the Government in facing the country's challenges. And that it can advise the Government of Timor-Leste to maintain the stability of the national financial system.

I wish the new Governor success in his term so that he maintains the independence of the Central Bank. But this independence does not mean alienation, in the sense that its presence and advice are of the utmost importance for national development through its technical capacities, which must be continually improved and modernised, and active but conscious and impartial participation in the fulfilment of national development objectives.

I believe that the Central Bank can be an essential partner for the Government, as a solid and independent institution, in defining national policies that lead the country towards progress, prosperity and the well-being of all Timorese.

Thank you very much.

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão