



**P R I M E
M I N I S T E R**

**SPEECH BY
HIS EXCELLENCY PRIME MINISTER
KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE
4th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING
STATES (SIDS)**

“CHARTING THE COURSE TOWARD RESILIENT PROSPERITY”

St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda
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Palácio do Governo
Avenida Marginal
Dili, Timor-Leste

Your Excellency, Gaston Browne, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda and President of the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States

Excellencies, Heads of Government

Distinguishes delegates

Before I begin, I wish to extend my profound condolences for the victims of the tragic landslide in Papua New Guinea.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour to be in Antigua and Barbuda at this pivotal moment.

I would like to thank the people and the Government of Antigua and Barbuda for their wonderful hospitality.

Our presence here demonstrates our collective commitment to addressing the challenges facing Small Island Developing States.

I believe that together we are not “small”. Together, with a shared vision and ambition, we are “Big Ocean States” working for the resilient prosperity of our people.

Our list of challenges is long but this conference provides the opportunity to speak with one voice to chart a development agenda for the next 10 years.

SIDS have much in common; but we must also be firm in what sets us apart. We have our own history, culture and context which means that one solution does not fit all.

Timor-Leste is a small country, with only 1.3 million people. It was only 25 years ago that the Timorese people voted for independence after a long period of occupation and colonialism.

Since then we have overcome daily challenges to build a peaceful and democratic State, brick by brick, from the ashes of war.

We know that we are not alone in our struggle. We are only one of the many SIDS that face the overwhelming task of sustainable development.

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We work to develop our countries in fraught and challenging times.

Entrenched inequality between nations is preventing many SIDS from making progress.

Global conflicts threaten our peace and security.

And climate change - that was caused by the industrialised world - has created a global emergency that threatens the existence of poor and vulnerable nations the most.

Everyday we hear the developed world talk about the importance of a 'rules based global order' governed by international law. But it is this same global order that perpetuates inequity and exploitation.

And then we watch as the developed world ignores international law whenever it suits them – and it suits them a lot.

This includes promises that have been made to support developing countries, particularly commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Paris Agreement and achieving sustainable development.

The 2023 Special Report of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals reveals that half of the SDGs are not on track to meet their implementation targets, with 30 per cent either stalled or in reserve. This includes critical issues such as poverty, hunger eradication, and climate change.

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Three decades ago, the United Nations recognised the unique challenges faced by SIDS and committed to assisting their sustainable development.

Since then, we have adopted three frameworks for action: the Barbados Programme, the Mauritius Strategy, and the Samoa Pathway. This week, we will adopt a new blueprint to complement the previous commitments.

Timor-Leste supports these instruments and welcomes the new blueprint's adoption.

However, these commitments are meaningless without effective implementation and the necessary financial allocations.

I call on all States to deliver on their commitments to support SIDS to achieve sustainable development.

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Allow me to finish by talking about our ocean's potential.

For SIDS, the ocean is an inseparable part of their identity.

Timor-Leste is developing a Blue Economy Policy and Action Plan, with concrete actions to address marine pollution, conservation of the marine environment and biodiversity, while developing a sustainable blue economy.

These initiatives require cooperation and support from our international friends and partners. Support that aligns with national priorities.

Timor-Leste aligns our position with the statement made by G77 and China that SIDS should lead on and own their development and should not be asked to compromise our ambition.

To conclude, let us move forward and leave this beautiful island of Antigua and Barbuda with a sense of urgency and a spirit of cooperation to ensure our commitments are translated into practical and tangible actions.

Thank you very much.

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão