



PRIME  
MINISTER

**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY  
THE PRIME MINISTER  
KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE LUSOFONIA LIFETIME  
ACHIEVEMENT AWARD CEREMONY**

**8<sup>TH</sup> EDITION OF THE LUSOFONIA AWARDS GALA 2024**

Black and Silver Room, Casino Estoril, Portugal  
12 October 2024

Your Excellencies

Distinguished Lusofonia Laureates

Dear friends,

It is an honour to receive this award, in the presence of such esteemed fellow laureates and this distinguished audience.

It is with great emotion that I join the long list of distinguished personalities honoured since the creation of this award in 2017.

However, this award belongs to the people of Timor!

It was the Timorese who fought for the integrity of the nation and who sacrificed themselves for the liberation of a people and their territory.

I was tasked with leading this struggle for liberation and independence, but in truth, it was I who was led by my people.

It was the women, men, young people, and children of my beloved country who inspired me, who gave me strength and hope, and who never allowed me to give up during the most difficult moments of my journey, for which I am being honoured today.

And if this was true during the period of the fight for independence, it is no less true over the last 22 years of building a state and a nation that rose from the ashes.

Without the resilience and courage of the Timorese people, we would not be today a Lusophone country proud to be a vibrant, peaceful democracy on the path to progress.

Your Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Those who do not understand the value of our Lusophone community do not understand the meaning of genuine friendship and solidarity free from convenience.

*“The universe of the Portuguese language and Lusophony has the dimension of dreams, and all great dreams are inexhaustible”* is the epigraph of this Gala, and I believe it!

In time this Lusophone dream, this deep bond that unites us around a language and a culture, merged with the Timorese dream of freedom, and together we turned an inexhaustible dream into reality.

It was the values of fraternity, of the defence of justice, advocated all over the world, but particularly in Portuguese-speaking countries, that helped us reach this moment of celebration.

Values that are present today in Timorese society, values that we will continue to instil in future generations.

Values that do not yet prevail in so many forgotten places around the world, and for which we must continue to fight.

We all have this immense responsibility to continue defending these fundamental principles internationally, through this incomparable community that can give a voice to those who do not have one, through the Portuguese language which, more than being unique, is the one that best expresses feelings and embraces diversity.

We must, therefore, use our language and our common identity to spread a message of peace, which is so urgent in the world.

And taking advantage of the moment when we have a United Nations Secretary-General who is Portuguese, and now also recently Timorese, leading an international community facing countless uncertainties, challenges, and threats, the values of Lusophony have never been more significant.

May the fundamental legacy this community has inherited – of culture, values, language, and faith (and let's not forget football!) – serve to unite us around just causes.

I take this opportunity to share that in June 2025, Timor-Leste will host the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the Luso-Asian Communities Conference.

This is not only because Timor-Leste is the only CPLP (Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries) member state located in the East, but also because we consider it essential to value the Luso-Asian communities, descendants of the ancient Portuguese sailors and soldiers who ventured to our side of the world, and who survive to this day as minorities in countries like Sri Lanka, Malaysia (Malacca), Myanmar, Thailand, China (Macau), Vietnam, and Indonesia itself, from Ambon to Flores, and from Jakarta to Aceh!

We want to welcome them and embrace them in their vulnerability, supporting their own process of recognition as communities where Portuguese is still spoken and felt.

To conclude, I would like to thank the administration of the Lusofonia Awards Gala for the generosity of your choice and this immense privilege.

To Ms Isabel Leitão (Mentor)  
To Mr Mário Máximo  
To Ambassador Lauro Moreira  
To Member of Parliament Paulo Pisco  
To Mr Hélder de Oliveira  
To Mr Tony Tcheka

And also:

To Ms Raquel Flores and Mr Gabriel Niva, the hosts of this Gala.

To the Gala partners, CPLP and the Municipality of Cascais, who uphold the principles of Lusophony.

And to our dear friend José Cid, patron of the Lusophony Gala, who has also fallen under the spell of a Timorese woman, my dear sister Gabriela Carrascalão.

And to all of you, for your warm support and affection.

Thank you for this evening.

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão