



PRIME
MINISTER

**GENERAL STATEMENT ADDRESS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY PRIME MINISTER
KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO**

**IN THE OCCASION OF THE ASEAN LEADERS' INTERFACE
WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF ASEAN YOUTH**

(Delivered by the Vice Prime Minister and Minister for
Economic Affairs and Minister of Tourism and Environment)

Vientiane, Lao PDR

9 October 2024

Your Excellency Sonexay SIPHANDONE, ASEAN Chair and Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic,

Honourable Leaders of ASEAN,

Secretary General of ASEAN,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Timor-Leste is delighted to be part of this important gathering of some of the brightest and most dynamic young people of ASEAN.

On behalf of the people of Timor-Leste, I extend my appreciation for the opportunity to speak as an observer to ASEAN.

We are very aware of the critical role young people have played, and continue to play, in driving progress, creativity, and stability in Southeast Asia.

Regrettably, young people face a future of uncertainty, volatility and change. Young people will have to face great global challenges that were not of their making. This includes climate change, international conflict, global inequality and the impact of technological advances.

In Timor-Leste we look to our young people to embrace the challenge of national development. It was our older generations that made great sacrifices in our struggle for self-determination and independence.

Our young people now face an even greater challenge, to consolidate our State and develop our nation.

We are fortunate that Timor-Leste is a youthful nation full of potential. Sixty percent of our population is under the age of 25.

We have embraced the opportunity for our young people to engage in regional dialogues such as the ASEAN Youth Interface, where they are meeting other young leaders from across the region.

This initiative allows youth representatives from Timor-Leste and ASEAN countries to engage directly with regional leaders, ensuring that the voices of young people are heard and their perspectives are considered.

It is important that we continue to create spaces where young people can contribute to policy discussions and play a central role in shaping our collective future.

At the recent United Nations Future Summit, I highlighted the importance of investing in our youth to address global challenges.

In April 2024, in collaboration with the ASEAN Secretariat, we launched the "Future Leaders for ASEAN" program in Timor-Leste.

This initiative will equip our young people with the skills, knowledge, and values needed to lead our country and contribute to peace and prosperity in our region.

We stand ready to work alongside our ASEAN brothers and sisters to ensure that the young people of Southeast Asia have the opportunity to lead, to innovate, and to create a more connected, resilient, and prosperous region.

Thank you Chair.

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão