



PRIME
MINISTER

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

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING SESSION OF THE EVENT
“ENGAGEMENT QUALITY ASSURANCE AND QUALIFICATIONS
EXCELLENCE IN TIMOR-LESTE”**

Delta Nova Hall, Dili
18 March 2025

Your Excellencies,

Delegates of the ASEAN University Network (AUN)
Managers, Members, and Professors of the Academic Community of
Timor-Leste
Members of the Government
Directors-General and National Directors

Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great honour and satisfaction that I welcome to Dili this distinguished delegation from the ASEAN University Network.

Today, we are pleased to gather academics and technical specialists from our region to exchange knowledge and deepen cooperation to ensure the quality and excellence of higher education qualifications in Timor-Leste.

Timor-Leste values knowledge, qualifications, and higher education as fundamental pillars for the country's sustainable development. We recognise the vital role that academic institutions play in shaping the future, influencing policies (good policies), and contributing to the well-being of citizens.

Consolidating a quality assurance body for higher education with international prestige, through the strengthening of the National Agency for Academic Assessment and Accreditation (ANAAA), is therefore **a challenge we have embraced and a commitment we have made, particularly within the scope of our full accession to ASEAN.**

One of the main reasons why Timor-Leste seeks to join ASEAN is to become part of the success story of this association.

And I am not only referring to greater economic integration with regional and global markets, nor to the confidence and security that this

accession provides for the growth of trade, foreign investment, and employment opportunities.

Timor-Leste aspires, above all, to be part of ASEAN's "people-centred" approach. An approach that allows for broad public participation and ownership of ASEAN affairs, increases per capita wealth, enhances life expectancy, and improves health and education outcomes, lifting millions out of poverty.

This transformation has been achieved through the building of trust among ASEAN countries and the promotion of stability, unity, and peace in our region, forming a community bound by a shared commitment to tolerance, friendship, and cooperation.

Timor-Leste wishes to be an active part of this transformation. And this greatly depends on our human resources and the development of our human potential.

The Government has identified human development and social capital as priority investment areas, alongside economic diversification, infrastructure development, and good governance.

I believe that our membership in ASEAN will reinforce these priorities.

I also believe that, through partnerships with ASEAN, it will be possible to promote excellent qualifications to achieve these priorities. How? **By strengthening our higher education institutions, ensuring they offer training programmes suited to the country's economic and social needs, academic reputation, and faculty and research staff capable of integrating the regional and international scientific community.**

The development of Timor-Leste requires the **training of qualified middle and senior professionals to meet the future needs of industrialisation and economic development, as well as the preparation of specialised labour for various development sectors.**

Your Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before concluding, I must publicly thank the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Culture (MESCC) for its initiative in driving the process of consultation and collaboration with the ASEAN University Network.

I am confident that the MESCC, working in partnership with university leaders and faculty members, ANAAA, and the ASEAN University Network, can ensure the quality and integrity of our academic institutions and the improvement of national qualifications.

We want our courses and higher education qualifications to be valuable and recognised not only nationally but also internationally. We want to protect our young people and students, preparing them for entry into the national, regional, and international labour market. And, of course, we want to develop our Nation.

I wish everyone a productive and enriching event, one that allows us to identify national weaknesses but also our potential in terms of human resource development and qualifications.

I also hope that the distinguished delegates visiting us this week will have the opportunity not only to engage in technical and academic discussions but also to experience the hospitality of the Timorese people.

I sincerely hope you feel inspired by the cultural diversity and natural beauty that our country has to offer to ASEAN.

Thank you very much, and once again, welcome!

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão