



P R I M E
MINISTER

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

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE
GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND
EXPANSION OF PRESIDENTE NICOLAU LOBATO INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT**

VIP Area of Presidente Nicolau Lobato International Airport, Dili
20 May 2025



Your Excellencies
Members of the Government
Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Development Partners Representatives
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to stand before you today at the official groundbreaking ceremony for the Development and Expansion of Presidente Nicolau Lobato International Airport.

Today is the 23rd Anniversary of the Restoration of Independence. Twenty-three years ago, we committed to building the State and the Nation.

We continue to face many challenges, including the need for improved infrastructure – a driving force for development.

If we want economic and social development for the Timorese people, we must build and maintain a wide range of basic infrastructure to support health and education services, people's mobility, the growth of agriculture, industry and the private sector, and the general well-being of our people.

The development of infrastructure is vital for national development, for a dynamic and productive economy, for job creation, and for the consolidation of institutions across our territory. Infrastructure enables physical connection which in turn enables access to services, to markets, to opportunities, and to the broader regional and global community.

Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Infrastructure development is a priority of the Ninth Constitutional Government, in accordance with the goals of the Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030.

When the Government initiated its mandate, on 1 July 2023, we reviewed previously planned projects, including the airport project, to ensure they were sustainable, effective and appropriate for our country's development needs.

We would like to thank our partners for their support for the review process which has enabled us to conceive an airport capable of responding to the Timor-Leste's needs and capacities.

The development and expansion of Presidente Nicolau Lobato International Airport will ensure modern air transport corridors can connect Dili with regional capitals and integrate Timor-Leste more effectively into regional and global systems.

It will, at the same time, enable us to strengthen Timor-Leste's position within ASEAN and the broader Asia-Pacific region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is not possible to ensure inclusive and sustainable development in the absence of an efficient and integrated infrastructure system.

I reaffirm our steadfast commitment to promoting the modernisation of the country's critical infrastructure to boost economic growth and improve the well-being of our people and the sustainable development of our country.

And I reaffirm the Government's commitment to ensuring transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in all public investment management procedures and processes, particularly in the infrastructure sector.

Importantly, it is not enough just to do it; it must be done well!

To conclude, I would like to extend my appreciation to the institutions who have worked with us on this national effort, including JICA, ADB and the governments of Japan and Australia, for their support for this project.

Thank you.

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão