



PRIME  
MINISTER

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

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
4<sup>TH</sup> CONFERENCE OF THE LUSO-ASIAN COMMUNITIES**

**Dili Convention Centre  
29 June 2025**

Your Excellency, the Promoter of the Luso-Asian Communities Conference, Mr Joseph de Santa Maria

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Dignitaries Representing the Luso-Asian Community Delegations

Esteemed Representatives of International Organisations

Your Excellencies, Ambassadors

Distinguished Members of Parliament and of Government

Your Excellencies, Honourable Guests

Dear Friends, Dear English

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great honour and pleasure that we welcome to Dili, for the very first time, an event dedicated to the unity and preservation of Portuguese-Asian communities.

This Fourth Conference of the Portuguese-Asian Communities is, in my view, historic—not only due to the breadth and strong participation of the communities represented, but above all, for the powerful message we seek to share with the world, which has been echoed throughout these last two days.

**We are united in diversity!**

Regardless of what separates us—be it geography, political systems, ideologies, or distinct historical and cultural journeys—there is something that binds us in a unique way: our shared ancestry.

And this means we hold a common identity that distinguishes us from other communities around the world. It also means we are brought together,

spontaneously, by deep bonds of friendship and a shared will for cooperation.

This unity in diversity has never been more relevant than it is today. In a world divided and scarred by conflict, instability, and war, any initiative that aims to institutionalise the values of solidarity, cooperation and humanism is a ray of hope!

We gather here today to affirm a shared understanding: that in Asia, despite the physical and temporal distance from a distant ancestry, there are still communities that feel and speak—or once spoke—a common language, and that share cultural traits and similar values.

**And these values are rooted in peace, friendship and dignity.**

They are expressed through art, dance, music and song—magnificent cultural expressions we have had the privilege to witness over the past few days here, in this Convention centre.

Your Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you know, Timor-Leste has endured a difficult past of colonisation, followed by a painful period of illegal and violent occupation.

Yet we, the Timorese, chose to overcome the bitterness rooted in our collective memory and to resolve our internal and external conflicts through reconciliation.

With courage and dialogue, we embraced what we call future-oriented justice: to confront, acknowledge, assume, and move beyond the traumas of war and the ideological contexts associated with historical regimes—from colonialism to the Cold War.

Embracing and understanding history, and trusting in an international rules-based system, were the cornerstones of the achievements that we can

share with the world. They allowed us to break our isolation, to gain the courage and resilience to keep resisting, and ultimately to secure our full sovereignty.

This process of deconstruction not only freed us from corrosive feelings but also created the necessary space for what truly matters in the present: building the State and Nation and working toward the sustainable development of our country.

This example has never been more relevant than it is today. The world faces grave geopolitical, socio-economic, and environmental challenges—challenges that can only be addressed through humanism, rooted in the highest values of solidarity, tolerance and cooperation.

Regrettably, we now see that the greater the power and economic capacity, the greater the intransigence. And this, Ladies and Gentlemen, is the central weakness of the developed world: the relentless pursuit of economic interests at the expense of human dignity.

True courage lies not in inflexibility or confrontation, but in the unwavering search for peaceful solutions to collective problems.

I am confident that this conference in Dili, by strengthening ties among our communities and peoples, marks a firm step on the path toward development and the well-being of our societies.

Your Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you know, Timor-Leste is the only CPLP country located in the East. We therefore share a particular connection with the Luso-descendant minority communities in Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, China, Indonesia and India, reinforcing our natural affinity with the Asian region—now strengthened by this new dimension.

We recognise one another not only through cultural, religious, and linguistic heritage, but also through our common vulnerabilities, through the challenges overcome across centuries, and above all, through our shared desire to create better living conditions for our communities.

It was from this spirit of recognition and dialogue that the first Conference of the Portuguese-Asian Communities was born, in 2016. I cannot let this moment pass without thanking the Luso-descendant community of the Portuguese Settlement in Malacca for initiating this bold and unifying movement—one that brought us to this day, here in Dili.

The vision and will to preserve a unique and shared cultural heritage—emerging from small communities seeking connection, dialogue, mutual respect, and shared reflection on common challenges—is something Timor-Leste could not overlook.

From this event, beyond the magnificent cultural celebration, we now have the formal record of the Dili Declaration and the establishment of the Association of Portuguese-Asian Communities. The institutionalisation of this Association, with its legal base in Dili, fills us with pride.

I believe that with the support of the countries of these communities, and with the backing of the CPLP and all those who wish to join this mission of promoting centuries-old communities with rich cultural and historical legacies, we can also promote peace, tolerance and the development of our peoples.

I conclude by extending my heartfelt thanks to all the communities who travelled to Timor-Leste to take part in this event, to all the cultural groups for their outstanding performances, and to the Conference Organising Committee for their dedication and excellent work.

A special word of appreciation also goes to the Executive Secretary and Ambassadors of the CPLP, whose presence has greatly enriched this gathering.

May today mark the beginning of many more centuries of friendship and solidarity among our peoples, reinforcing the important sense of belonging and shared joy that brings us together.

Thank you for all being here, for shared our relationship, our friendship, and of course, our future.

Thank you very much.

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão