



**P R I M E
M I N I S T E R**

**ADDRESS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER
KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO
AT THE COMMERCIAL LAUNCH OF
CABOS DE TIMOR-LESTE, E.P.**

Bebonuk, Dili, 28 July 2026



Palácio do Governo,
Avenida Presidente Nicolau Lobato,
Dili, Timor-Leste

Excellencies,

Members of Government,

Members of the diplomatic community and representatives of our development partners,

Representatives and staff of Cabos de Timor-Leste,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very pleased to be here today for the commercial launch of Cabos de Timor-Leste and the beginning of commercial operations using the Timor-Leste South Submarine Cable System.

This is an important day for the development of our national telecommunications system.

In June 2024, I stood here in Bebonuk to welcome the arrival of Timor-Leste's first submarine fibre-optic cable.

On that day, the cable reached our shores. Since then, it has been installed, connected and tested.

Today, we take another important step as Cabos de Timor-Leste begins the commercial operation of this national asset.

This means that our country will no longer have to rely as heavily on expensive and less reliable satellite and radio connections.

It gives Timor-Leste access to greater international capacity and provides the foundation for faster, more reliable and more affordable internet services.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This project has been many years in the making.

In 2012, the Government liberalised the telecommunications sector. This helped create competition and expand mobile services across the country.

The reach of telecommunications services increased greatly, including in our municipalities and rural communities.

However, Timor-Leste continued to face a major limitation.

Our international connections depended largely on satellite and radio technology. These services were expensive, had limited capacity and could be affected by weather and other disruptions.

The Government therefore decided to invest in an international submarine fibre-optic cable.

This decision reflected the long-term vision set out in the Strategic Development Plan for 2011–2030.

The Strategic Development Plan recognises that modern telecommunications are essential for economic development, education, health, effective government and the connection of our people with each other and with the world.

Our national development requires roads, ports, airports, electricity, water and telecommunications.

These are the basic foundations that allow our people to build a strong economy, access essential services and improve their lives.

The submarine cable is now an important part of this national infrastructure. Its purpose is to serve the Timorese people.

Around the world, the digital divide continues to separate richer countries from poorer countries and wealthy communities from those with fewer resources.

This divide is not only about access to the internet. It is also about access to education, information, markets, public services and employment.

Timor-Leste must not allow new technology to create another form of inequality between families who can afford good services and those who cannot.

This cable gives us the opportunity to narrow that divide.

But this will only happen if telecommunications services become more affordable, if access continues to expand and the benefits of better connectivity reach schools, health clinics, businesses and communities throughout our country.

The success of this project will be measured by whether it improves the lives of our people.

It must help students and teachers gain better access to educational resources and digital learning.

It must help health professionals communicate with specialists, share information and provide better services to people living far from Dili.

It must allow all Timorese to access public services more easily and reduce the time and money they spend travelling to government offices.

It must help farmers, cooperatives and small businesses obtain information, reach new customers and participate more fully in the national, regional and international economy.

It must also help our brothers and sisters living abroad to remain connected to their families and to our country.

The Government expects this infrastructure to support better and more affordable services for ordinary families, schools, health clinics, businesses and communities throughout Timor-Leste.

The cable creates the conditions for these improvements.

Cabos de Timor-Leste, telecommunications providers and the responsible public institutions must now work to ensure that the benefits reach our people.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Better telecommunications will also support the diversification of our economy.

Timor-Leste cannot depend forever on petroleum revenues and public expenditure.

We must develop productive sectors, create private investment and provide employment for our young population.

Reliable international connectivity is now an essential requirement for investment and business.

Companies expect to be able to communicate securely, transfer information and operate online.

Tourism operators need to reach international markets. Banks and financial institutions require secure and dependable networks.

Businesses of every size increasingly depend on digital systems.

Better connectivity can also help create new industries and new forms of employment.

Young Timorese should have the opportunity to work in software development, telecommunications, cybersecurity, digital services, creative industries and other fields that are continuing to grow around the world.

Our young people should not only be consumers of technology.

They must have the skills and opportunities to use technology to create businesses, provide services and solve the problems facing our country.

For this reason, our investment in infrastructure must be matched by investment in people.

We need Timorese engineers, technicians, network specialists, software developers and cybersecurity professionals.

We need education and technical training that prepare our young people for these careers.

We need cooperation between government, universities, training institutions and the private sector.

Cabos de Timor-Leste also has a responsibility to develop Timorese staff and support the transfer of knowledge and technical skills.

International expertise will continue to be important, but our people must be able to operate, maintain and protect this infrastructure themselves.

This is how national development becomes sustainable and our State becomes resilient.

Ladies and gentlemen,
Timor-Leste is also becoming more closely connected to our region.

Following our accession to ASEAN, we must strengthen our economic, institutional and people-to-people connections with the countries around us.

Digital connectivity will support trade, education, government cooperation and the movement of information and services throughout the region.

Our connection through Australia is an important first step.

In the future, Timor-Leste will also develop additional connections, including towards Indonesia and other regional networks.

This will increase our capacity, strengthen the resilience of our telecommunications system and deepen our links with our neighbours.

It is important for our future development that Timor-Leste becomes more connected to the economies and peoples of Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Greater connectivity also brings greater responsibility.

The internet provides knowledge, communication and economic opportunity.

But it can also be used for fraud, cybercrime, exploitation and attacks against individuals, businesses and public institutions.

As our use of the internet grows, we must also strengthen our ability to protect our people, businesses and institutions.

The Government will continue to develop the laws, institutions and technical capabilities needed to combat cybercrime, protect personal information and defend our national systems.

This work requires cooperation between government, telecommunications companies, financial institutions, law enforcement agencies and our international partners.

Cabos de Timor-Leste must operate this infrastructure with discipline, professionalism and strong security.

The cable is an important national asset and must be managed in the interests of the Timorese people.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I acknowledge all those who have contributed to this project over many years.

This achievement required long-term planning, technical expertise, cooperation between institutions and the hard work of many Timorese and international personnel.

Today is an important achievement, but much more needs to be done.

We must continue to expand access, improve services, reduce costs and develop the skills of our people.

We must also use this infrastructure to improve education, health, public administration and economic opportunity.

In June 2024, we welcomed the arrival of the cable to the shores of Timor-Leste.

Today, we begin to put that cable to work for our people.

Let us ensure that its benefits reach people across our country and support a stronger economy and a more resilient State.

And let us continue working together to build a healthy, educated and prosperous Timor-Leste.

Thank you very much.