



**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 GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY FOR THE
LALEIA SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC PROJECT**

Manatutu, 23 July 2026



Palácio do Governo
Avenida Marginal
Dili, Timor-Leste

Excellencies,

Members of Government,

Representatives of the diplomatic community,

Representatives of EDTL, ITOCHU, EDF and Manatuto Renewable Power,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very pleased to be here for the groundbreaking ceremony for the Laleia Solar Photovoltaic Project.

This is an important project for our national electricity system and for the long-term development of our nation.

The Government understands the importance of providing electricity to the Timorese people and the power needed by our economy.

This is part of our long-term national plan, as set out in the Strategic Development Plan for 2011–2030, to build a prosperous country with a strong economy and a healthy and well-educated population.

To achieve this, we need reliable electricity for homes, schools, health clinics, public institutions and businesses across our country.

One of the most important achievements of our national development has been the construction of an electricity generation and distribution system across Timor-Leste.

Electricity has improved daily life for our people. It has supported education and health services. It has allowed businesses to operate, communities to develop and public services to reach more of our population.

This was a necessary foundation for the development of our State. But our work is not finished.

We must now strengthen the national electricity system and prepare it for the future. We must diversify our sources of power and reduce our dependence on imported fuel.

This is why the Laleia Solar Photovoltaic Project is so important.

The project will have a solar generation capacity of 72 megawatts and a battery energy storage system with a capacity of 36 megawatt-hours.

It will provide additional electricity to the national grid and help diversify the way Timor-Leste generates power.

This is important because we are living in a period of international uncertainty. Conflict, rising political tensions and disruption to global energy markets are affecting countries around the world.

Small countries are often the most vulnerable to these events. Timor-Leste cannot control international fuel prices. We cannot control disruptions to global energy chains.

Conflict, rising political tensions and disruption to global energy markets are affecting countries around the world.

But we can take steps to reduce our vulnerability. By developing solar power and battery storage we will make our electricity system more diverse and more resilient.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The project is also expected to provide significant financial benefits.

It is estimated that it will reduce Timor-Leste's annual fuel expenditure by around 25 to 30 million dollars.

This will allow more funds to be used to support health, education, infrastructure and other national priorities.

Our national development must also build our human resources and the knowledge, skills and experience of the Timorese people.

This project will also provide training for EDTL technical staff during installation, operation and maintenance.

This transfer of skills is essential because we need Timorese engineers, technicians and workers who are able to operate and maintain modern infrastructure.

The project will also support technical education and research for students in Timor-Leste. This will give young Timorese the opportunity to learn about solar generation, battery storage and modern electricity systems.

It will help prepare them to support the development of our energy sector in the future.

This will give young Timorese the opportunity to learn about solar generation, battery storage and modern electricity systems.

The project will also create jobs during construction which is expected to take between 18 and 24 months.

I encourage the companies involved in this project to employ and train Timorese workers wherever possible and to work closely with local communities.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This project is also an example of the role that the private sector must play in our national development.

In the early years of independence, the Government had to take the leading role in building the foundations of our State.

We built institutions and national infrastructure because these were necessary for our people and for the development of our economy.

Now Timor-Leste must build a stronger and more productive private sector.

Our private sector must grow so that it can create jobs, attract investment and help sustain a strong and sustainable State.

We need cooperation between the State, national businesses and responsible international investors.

This project will be implemented under an Independent Power Producer model.

ITOCHU of Japan and EDF of France have established Manatuto Renewable Power to implement the project.

The private sector will finance, construct, operate and maintain the facility. Electricity will then be provided to EDTL.

The investment is around 107 million dollars. This is a major investment in Timor-Leste.

It brings capital, technology and international experience to support a national development priority.

The Government welcomes foreign investment that creates employment, transfers skills and provides lasting benefits to our people.

We need international partners who understand our national priorities and who are prepared to take a long-term view of Timor-Leste's future.

This project demonstrates what can be achieved when government and private investors work together towards a clear national objective.

This cooperation will help grow our economy, create jobs and strengthen the resilience of the State.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I congratulate EDTL and the Ministry of Public Works for their leadership in developing this project.

I also acknowledge the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Finance for their work on the agreements necessary for this project to proceed.

I thank ITOCHU, EDF and Manatuto Renewable Power for their commitment to investing in Timor-Leste.

I also acknowledge the municipal authority, community leaders and people of Laleia and Manatuto for supporting this important national project.

Today, construction begins.

I ask all parties to continue working with discipline and with respect for the people and communities affected by the project.

This project will make a significant contribution to our national electricity supply.

It will reduce our dependence on imported fuel, provide training and employment for our people and support the long-term development of our country.

This is another important step in building a strong economy, a resilient Timorese State and a better future for our people.

Thank you very much.