



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

**REMARKS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY PRIME MINISTER
KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO
ON THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL LUNCHEON IN HONOUR OF
THE PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR FINANCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF
SINGAPORE
HIS EXCELLENCY LAWRENCE WONG**

Dili, 3 July 2026

Excellency, Dr José Ramos-Horta, President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste,
Excellency, Lawrence Wong, Prime Minister and Minister for Finance of the Republic of
Singapore,



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

Excellency, Fernanda Lay, President of the National Parliament,
Excellency, Afonso Carmona, President of the Court of Appeal,
Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Prime Minister, it is a great pleasure to welcome you to Timor-Leste.

Your visit is a special occasion for our country. It is the first Official Visit to Timor-Leste by a Prime Minister of Singapore.

It also follows my Official Visit to Singapore last year, where I was received with great friendship and where we were able to discuss the future of our bilateral relationship.

Today, we are pleased to extend that same friendship here in Dili.

Prime Minister,

Timor-Leste has great respect for Singapore.

Singapore has shown the world that the strength of a country is not measured by its size or by its natural resources alone.

It is measured by the quality of its institutions, the discipline of its leadership, the skills of its people and the confidence it builds with the world.

Singapore's success was not accidental. It was built through vision, hard work, good governance and a deep investment in its people.

For Timor-Leste, this is an important example.

We are also a small country. We also know what it means to face difficult circumstances. We emerged from conflict and occupation, and from that history we have built a peaceful and democratic State.

We are now working to build the next stage of our national development.

We must build a more productive economy, create jobs for our young people and strengthen the skills and institutions that will support a capable and resilient State.

This is why our partnership with Singapore is so important.

Singapore's support has always been practical and targeted.

It has helped train our officials, strengthen our institutions, build human capacity and prepare our country for ASEAN membership.

This support has made a real contribution to our national development, and we are grateful.

But we also want our relationship to grow beyond government cooperation.

We want to see more trade and investment between our countries.

We welcome investment in areas such as infrastructure, tourism, health care, services and the Blue Economy.

Timor-Leste has a young population and a plan to build a modern and productive economy.

Singapore has experience, standards and knowledge that can help us realise our dreams as a nation.

Prime Minister,

I also want to thank you for your announcement today that Timor-Leste will be included in Singapore's work permit arrangements.

This is a significant development in our relationship and a strong sign of confidence in the Timorese people.

I know it will be warmly welcomed in Timor-Leste, especially by our young people.

For our country, this opportunity is not only about employment. It is about training, skills and experience. It is about supporting families, creating new opportunities and strengthening the links between our peoples.

We look forward to working with Singapore to make this new opportunity a success for our workers, our families and our countries.

Prime Minister,

At a time of growing uncertainty and tension, international cooperation and friendship are more important than ever.

We need a region and a world in which disputes are managed through dialogue and in accordance with international law, where sovereignty is respected and where countries work together for peace, stability and prosperity.

Singapore has long provided a respected voice for these principles.

Timor-Leste values that leadership and we look forward to working closely with Singapore in ASEAN and beyond.

Prime Minister, thank you again for your visit to Timor-Leste.

I hope that your time in Dili will deepen the friendship between our Governments and our peoples and help open a new phase in the relationship between Timor-Leste and Singapore.

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, please rise and join me in a toast:

To the President and People of the Republic of Singapore

and to the enduring friendship and cooperation between our two countries.

Thank you very much.

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão