



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

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

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING SESSION OF THE
19TH CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF JUSTICE OF THE CPLP**

**“Combating Online Scams: Protecting Citizens and International Legal
Cooperation in the Face of a New Form of Transnational Crime”**

Dili, Timor-Leste
27 October 2026

Your Excellencies, the Members of the Governments of the CPLP Member States,

Your Excellencies, Ambassadors,

Your Excellency, the Representative of the Executive Secretary of the CPLP,

Your Excellency, the President of the Portuguese Chamber of Notaries,

Distinguished Directors-General, Advisers and Delegates,

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great joy that the Timorese people welcome to Dili the Ministers, Heads of Delegation and other representatives attending this 19th Conference of Ministers of Justice of the CPLP.

On behalf of the Government of Timor-Leste, I extend a warm welcome to you all, especially those visiting our country for the first time.

It is a pleasure to welcome you to Dili in the year in which the CPLP celebrates its 30th anniversary. Over the years, our peoples have built a relationship founded on language, history, solidarity and cooperation. Your presence confirms our shared desire to continue strengthening these ties through respect, friendship and working together.

I hope that, here in Timor-Leste, you will experience the hospitality of a people who deeply understand the value of solidarity and who have not forgotten those who stood by them, both during the most difficult moments of our struggle and in the hopeful years of building our State and Nation.

Allow me also to recall that this Conference returns to Dili following the meeting held here in 2015. This return honours us and reaffirms the importance of this platform for coordination in the field of justice.

Today, the Conference of Ministers of Justice of the CPLP is a permanent forum for cooperation, with a well-established identity and the capacity to ensure that ministerial decisions are followed through and translated into practical mechanisms to support our institutions.

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

For Timor-Leste, democracy and the rule of law represent fundamental choices in our nation's journey. These choices were made at difficult moments in our history, when our people decided that freedom must go hand in hand with respect for the law, human dignity and institutions.

Yet, in Timor-Leste, the Justice sector, alongside Education, continues to present us with ongoing challenges. Justice reform has remained a constant priority, despite the persistent weaknesses we still face. A society that struggles to trust its justice system becomes more vulnerable to conflict and gradually loses confidence in the institutions that should protect it.

And despite the urgency, building institutions takes time, preparation and trust. The justice system contributes to this effort by protecting rights, providing legal certainty in relations between people and ensuring that every citizen has the opportunity to be heard.

The Portuguese language helps us to study, train professionals and cooperate. It is directly linked to the training of justice professionals, the exchange of knowledge and cooperation between institutions. By bringing this Conference together, we want these close ties to produce tangible benefits in the lives of our peoples.

It is in this context that the theme chosen for this 19th Conference takes on particular importance: combating online scams, protecting citizens and strengthening international legal cooperation in the face of a new form of transnational crime.

Behind every scam there is a person, a family or a business that placed its trust in someone. At stake may be the savings accumulated over many years of hard work. It may be a young person looking for employment who ends up in a situation of exploitation.

When these activities are organised across several countries, no single authority has all the information it needs. The State must be prepared to protect, investigate and cooperate, while respecting the law and the dignity of every individual.

Combating online scams is therefore a responsibility that involves protecting citizens and safeguarding confidence in the economy. A fraudulent transfer can destroy a lifetime's work in a single minute. A job offer received through a message or a digital platform can become a gateway to human trafficking or other serious forms of exploitation.

Timor-Leste faces these risks. We are vulnerable, but we are vigilant.

The digitalisation of the economy and the growing use of social media and electronic payment applications among our communities bring opportunities, but also vulnerabilities.

We recognise the need to strengthen prevention and the response capacity of our institutions. We also want to link this priority to the implementation of national measures to prevent and combat human trafficking, because online scams and human exploitation are often connected.

Your Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen,

During this opening session, we watched the film “Ha’u-nia Tasi, Ha’u-nia Timor”, or “My Sea, My Timor”.

The sea is a source of life. The communities that depend on it understand what it means to protect its resources and pass them on to future generations. The sea brings communities together, feeds families and forms part of our identity and our future.

That same responsibility requires us to safeguard our borders and prevent connections between countries from being exploited to abuse people or facilitate the movement of goods and funds derived from criminal activities.

Whether on land, at sea or in the digital sphere, cooperation between institutions must serve the security and freedom of citizens.

Today, a significant part of most people's lives takes place in the digital world, whether for studying, working, doing business or communicating with friends and family members living abroad.

Yet this space cannot become a lawless territory where criminal networks move faster than the institutions responsible for protecting citizens.

The work of this Conference is particularly important in this regard. Legal and judicial cooperation between our countries is essential to establishing mechanisms that enable authorities to act more quickly and effectively, share vital information and preserve the evidence needed to investigate and prosecute these crimes.

I hope that the discussions here in Dili will help our authorities identify the right counterparts in other States more quickly, prepare requests for cooperation more effectively and prevent the loss of essential information.

I also hope they will help citizens recognise scams and know where to seek assistance.

The value of the decisions we make is measured by how they are put into practice. We should therefore leave this Conference with clear priorities, well-defined points of contact and an established evaluation plan that allows us to monitor results over time.

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

When we speak of online scams, we are also speaking of documents, identity and mutual trust between States.

The secure movement of documents is closely linked to the journeys of students, families, workers and businesses. Every certificate, diploma and official record that crosses borders represents a life project, an investment in mobility and in trust between our countries.

With this in mind, Timor-Leste is preparing to accede to the Apostille Convention. This is an important step towards making life easier for individuals and businesses by simplifying the authentication of public documents.

A secure document and a simpler and clear procedure can spare a family or business unnecessary travel, costs and delays. Preparations for Timor-Leste's accession to this Convention will be accompanied by the necessary work to ensure that public services can implement it and that citizens understand how to use it. We want to facilitate the circulation of official documents while preserving confidence in their authenticity.

Dear Friends,

Turning our cooperation into reality means making commitments. It means strengthening coordination between Ministries of Justice, judicial authorities, criminal investigation bodies and regulatory authorities, so that the response to online scams is coordinated rather than fragmented.

It means investing in the training of our professionals, facilitating the exchange of good practices, the sharing of judicial decisions and cooperation on digital evidence.

It means supporting digital literacy among our citizens, particularly the most vulnerable and those with limited technological skills.

And it means making greater use of the Legal and Judicial Cooperation Network of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, ensuring that information is kept up to date, that points of contact are effective and that requests are processed quickly and securely.

Making these commitments means putting our shared values and responsibilities into practice. Protecting our peoples from a new form of transnational crime is a concrete way of strengthening the values that unite us.

I will conclude by wishing you all a very productive continuation of the Conference.

I hope that these days in Dili will strengthen trust between our institutions, enabling them to better protect our citizens. May the language we share continue to bring our peoples closer together and strengthen cooperation, democracy and peace.

In this spirit of shared responsibility and confidence in the future, I hereby declare open the 19th Conference of Ministers of Justice of the CPLP.

Thank you very much.
Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão