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In New York, Minister Gusmão also featured as a keynote speaker at a panel discussion at The Asia Society about the journey of Timor-Leste’s independence, including the nation’s pursuit of maritime boundaries. The discussion was moderated by former Australian Prime Minister, the Hon. Kevin Rudd. Other participants included the CEO of MBO Ms. Elizabeth Exposto, the Asia Society’s Diplomat in Residence and former Assistant U.S. Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Danny Russell, State Representative Tony Cabral; respected American jurist with a long history in Timor-Leste Judge Phillip Rapoza and former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown’s Chief of Staff David Muir. Mr. Rudd said he hopes to see Australia find a way to resolve the maritime boundary issue.
Bestowal of the Order of Timor-Leste

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Representative Tony Cabral visited Timor-Leste from Massachusetts in the United States to receive the Order of Timor medal on 23 May, 2017. Representative Cabral was a tireless advocate for the rights and freedoms of the Timorese people at the highest levels within the United States. He led the submission of legislation to the Massachusetts Legislature sanctioning companies and businesses in or with Indonesia in the late 1990s. Representative Cabral is still a good friend to Timor-Leste and a strong advocate for Timor-Leste’s pursuit of maritime boundaries.

Singapore’s Workshop on Maritime Boundary

The Meridian International Centre in Washington D.C. partnered with the U.S. Department of State to fund two officers from the MBO to participate in a Maritime Boundaries Workshop from 6-8 June at the National University of Singapore. The workshop was organised by the Centre for International Law (CIL) and the Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security (ANZORES).

Workshop Participants were from government agencies of Australia, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar, Palau, Philippines, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vietnam and USA.

Fireside discussion on UNCLOS Compulsory Conciliation: Timor-Leste versus Australia, Singapore

MBO attended a fireside discussion at the Centre for International Law at the National University of Singapore, hosted by Professor S. Jayakumar and Professor Tommy Koh with experts Professor Robert Beckman and Dr Hao Duy Phan as panellists. The discussion focused on the conciliation between Timor-Leste and Australia, touching on the specifics of UNCLOS and the law of the sea. The panelists agreed that whilst conciliation could not serve every dispute, the very first conciliation proceedings, initiated by Timor-Leste under UNCLOS, appeared to be progressing successfully and could have a significant impact on dispute resolutions in the future.

American Council of Young Political Leaders Exchange Program

The American Council of Young Political Leaders (ACYPL) is a non-profit organisation that promotes global understanding and fosters relationships among the next generation of political leaders from around the world. The Timor-Leste Government and ACYPL established a partnership in order to expose young political leaders to different political environments and perspectives to improve their capacity. The ACYPL exchange program is offered to international participants from Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines and Thailand, and now Timor-Leste. A delegation of five senior representatives from ACYPL visited Timor-Leste in March 2017 to learn more about the country. In October, a delegation of young Timorese political leaders will spend 6 weeks in the United States as part of the exchange program.

MBO briefings

MBO continued to brief organisations, community and religious groups and civil society on Timor-Leste’s pursuit of maritime boundaries. Briefings have been presented to La'o Hamutuk, English Club at Universidade Nacional Timor Loro’ae and Protestant Church in Timor-Leste, Sínodo.
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