

(Revised translation from Office of the President)

## TELEVISED ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC ON SOVEREIGNTY

Beloved people of Timor-Leste!

We have entered a new phase of the strengthening of our sovereignty as an independent state. On the 20th of May 2002, we restored our national independence after a 24-year struggle for national liberation. On the 27th of September 2002, the international community recognised Timor-Leste as a member state of the United Nations.

With the international recognition of our independence, our leaders turned also their minds to our maritime sovereignty, **in accordance with international law.**

Despite being independent, we don't yet know the limitations of our maritime area. We don't have yet our sovereignty or the capability to make decisions regarding our territory, because we don't know the limitations of the maritime and land borders that separate us from our neighbouring countries, Australia and Indonesia.

In the exercise of the authority granted to the government by the Constitution of Timor-Leste, the 6th government, through Resolution no. 4/2016 of 9 February, a chief negotiator was appointed to lead the negotiation team to negotiate a treaty of the demarcation of the maritime borders with Indonesia and Australia. According to the terms of this Resolution, it was our brother Kay Rala Xanana Gusmao who took on the role of chief negotiator and, today, head of the negotiation team for the final demarcation of the maritime borders with Indonesia and Australia.

In August 2015, Indonesia agreed to enter direct negotiations with Timor-Leste regarding our maritime border.

With Australia, the process took a different path, guided by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The obligatory conciliation procedure appeared as an alternative solution. This process began in April 2016. Timor-Leste was the first country to make a decision based on this international procedure to start the negotiation of the maritime border.

This conciliation procedure is extremely difficult. Nevertheless, Xanana Gusmao has shown leadership skills, wisdom, dedication and determination to bring about the treaty of the final demarcation of the maritime border between Timor-Leste and Australia in our South Coast.

Because this negotiation is intimately related to the sovereignty of Timor-Leste, as one of our national interests, **as the Head of State, I want to express my full support to the government of Timor-Leste, through our brother Xanana Gusmao, who is leading and will continue to lead the negotiation with a view to achieving a result that is fair to us, in accordance with international law.**

The President of the Republic wishes success to our chief negotiator, our brother Xanana Gusmao, and to his entire team who are committed to work to overcome this new challenge.

**Within the context of international law**, I am certain that we will one day be able to identify our maritime and land areas which are part of our national territory. We will have sovereignty over the entire territory of Timor-Leste, from north to the south coast, from west to the east coast.

The sovereignty organs of the State of Timor-Leste, the public and private institutions, including our defence and police forces, will remain committed to the defence of our sovereignty and with the support of our people, guarantee peace and stability,

This is one more challenge we must face, but one that I believe we will overcome!

Dili, 21<sup>st</sup> August 2017