Our Ocean Conference, Bali 2018

H.E Chief Negotiator Xanana Gusmão delivered a speech as part of a high-level panel on maritime security at the Our Ocean Conference in Bali on 20 October. The Our Ocean Conference was established by former United States Secretary of State John Kerry in 2014 and is now a global event that brings together stakeholders from governments, the commercial sector, scientific communities and civil society to discuss and commit to actionable activities that will protect the world’s oceans. Whilst the Conference is focused on ocean conservation and protection, it also highlights the importance of maritime security to these issues. The Chief Negotiator was invited to address the issue of jurisdiction and the relationship between the establishment of maritime boundaries to enhance accountability and responsibility and the effective management of resources. The Chief Negotiator spoke about Timor-Leste’s success using the conciliation mechanism under UNCLOS to settle maritime boundaries with Australia, and also launched Timor-Leste’s proposal to establish an independent trust fund to assist developing countries resolve their maritime disputes.

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"We are here to celebrate international law" – Chief Negotiator Xanana Gusmão, 30 August 2018
Socialising the Maritime Boundary Treaty (cont)

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American Council of Young Political Leaders (ACYPL) exchange

Based on the Memorandum of Understanding agreed between ACYPL and the Timor-Leste Government, the MBO worked with ACYPL and the U.S. Embassy in Dili to facilitate the first delegation from Timor-Leste to visit the United States on exchange from 13 May to 2 June 2018. The six delegates met with leaders from the federal, state and local government, as well as representatives from business and civil society. The delegation gained personal insights into the governmental systems of Washington D.C.; Massachusetts: Boston; Rhode Island: Providence, Central Falls, Newport; and Wyoming: Cheyenne.

The three weeks’ trip concluded with a Professional Fellows Congress, which involved young and inspiring leaders from more than 60 countries.

The Timor-Leste delegation were grateful for the opportunity to participate in the ACYPL exchange program. The key message from this experience, as noted by the delegation, was that countries should prioritise their agendas in a transparent manner, based on the needs of their people.

Following the success of this visit, the U.S. Government announced that Timor-Leste would be included in the Professional Fellowship Program, an intensive 6-week fellowship exchange program that has previously only been available to ASEAN member countries.

American Environmental delegation visit

The MBO hosted a delegation of environmental experts visiting Timor-Leste from the United States. The delegation included a conservation specialist from the PEW Charity Trust, an independent NGO focused on protecting the world’s marine environment. PEW is considering extending their funding to create additional Marine Protected Areas and Timor-Leste is one of the potential countries being considered. Dr. Sandra Whitehouse is a world renowned environmental expert who has visited Timor-Leste previously as part of an Atlantic Council delegation. The delegation also included a photo-journalist from the National Geographic magazine who was documenting the spectacular marine beauty of Timor-Leste. The delegation gave a lecture to university students at UNTL on plastics and the importance of environmental policies to protect marine life.

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