



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE

SPEECH BY
HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER
KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO
AT THE OPENING SESSION OF THE
“g7+” MEETING

Díli

08 April 2010

Your Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to be here today at the start of this meeting which we call “g7 plus”. First and foremost, I would like to thank you all for being here in Dili. I trust that throughout this meeting we will be able to better understand each of our realities.

One of the main principles of this meeting is to share experiences, obstacles and challenges faced in each of our States. We are considered fragile States, but nevertheless we are determined to provide better responses to the needs of our Peoples.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our group consists of seven countries: Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste. No other group of countries could be more different, yet at the same time more similar.

We are different in relation to geography, culture, religion, history and even politics and ideology. But at the same time, we are similar because we are post-conflict or latent conflict countries, where generalized poverty is sadly still a reality.

Still, we take strength in knowing that we are not alone, that it is up to us and no one else to act in the defence of our peoples and to decide the manner in which the International Community may be more constructive and better directed to our real needs.

Therefore, I would like to suggest everyone engage in an open and trusting dialogue, forging a new alliance and a common agenda, based on the fact that we are a group of countries that is facing various types of difficulties but that we are also the ones most interested in helping ourselves.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Unfortunately not all countries from the group of 7 are represented here today, however we are very pleased to have a “plus” that brings value to this meeting. The presence of Burundi, Chad, Southern Sudan, Nepal and Solomon Islands (for the first time in our country) makes us believe that this is truly a forum of great expectations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Timor-Leste is truly committed to assuming its rights and duties as a Member of the International Community, using our collective experience as nation and people to support other nations involved in democratic consolidation and nation building processes.

We do not want the “Third High Level Forum in Accra” to be just another “goodwill initiative” where the “Principles for Good International Involvement in Fragile States and Situations” are just that: principles!

We want today’s meeting, which we may call the first “Fragile State Forum” to continue, to expand and even to become institutionalized, so that we can improve the coordination of international assistance from Development Partners.

Still, as I have said before, as members of the community of nations we have both rights and duties, and one of the latter is contributing so that the assistance provided by our Development Partners is used in an effective and responsible manner. I believe we have this moral obligation towards the “tax payers” from the donor countries.

Therefore, ladies and gentlemen, we have a series of topics in our common development agenda that need discussing, so that the 10 structuring principles agreed in Accra may be implemented with coherence and responsibility. This is what I ask of you at this meeting.

We need to coordinate consultation mechanisms and synergies, as well as to share experiences, successes and failures, so that we can definitively move away from situations of conflict and adversity that are inherent to our societies, particularly poverty.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Yesterday, at the Timor-Leste and Development Partners Meeting, in which some of you were present, I had the opportunity to speak about the Timorese context and our obstacles and challenges. I described our past, our present and what we want for our future.

Today I would like to state that Timor-Leste is in a way fortunate to be part of the region of the world that is presently the driving force of global economy. Taking into consideration the context of the current international financial crisis, this is something that is very encouraging for us to boost our own economic growth.

Some countries from the vast African continent have also recently experienced high levels of growth. Considering that most countries assembled here come from Africa, we have one more reason to learn from each other, seeking better practices and setting better policies to achieve economic growth and sustainable development in our countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would suggest that we explore the lessons each one of us has acquired, and the best ways for us to:

- manage our international relations and our relations with our development partners;
- raise the awareness of the developed countries, the G8, regarding our concerns and needs, to ensure our own development and the achievement of our dreams – the dreams of our Peoples;
- convey that we have our own objectives, benchmarks and milestones, so that we can achieve progress aligned to our societies according to our own intrinsic realities;
- make the most of our natural wealth and reduce exploitation by third parties;
- show that our sovereignty is a cause for national pride and identity.

Furthermore, through this Forum we may convey a message to the international community saying that, although we are fragile States, we are not alone and vulnerable. Instead we are strengthened by common ideals and goals.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Timor-Leste is still a rather young State, one of the youngest in the entire world. Nevertheless, with only eight years of State building and consolidating, we want to strengthen our political and institutional maturity. This maturity includes acknowledging that the responsibility for our national development is, in the first place, ours!

The message we want to convey to the world, which I believe many of you share, is that we are able to guide our own destinies, to set our own paths. We are not merely relying on international generosity and dependent on our Development Partners to ensure our future and the future of our children.

Thank you very much.

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão

8 April 2010