

**CLOSING REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER
DR RUI MARIA DE ARAÚJO AT THE 2015 TIMOR-LESTE DEVELOPMENT
PARTNERS' MEETING**

**Dili
6 June 2015**

Excellency former Prime Minister, Dr Mari Alkatiri

Minister of Planning and International Cooperation of the Central African Republic, Ms
Florence Limbio

Members of the Government

Distinguished members of Parliament

Representatives from the Diplomatic Corps

Development Partners

Directors and Public Servants

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for participating in another very successful Development Partners' Meeting.

This meeting has reinvigorated our partnership, and given us the opportunity to focus on our common objectives, and how we are going to achieve them.

During the bi-lateral meetings, and during today's discussions, we have focused on how to consolidate our institutions and improve the lives of the Timorese people.

We know that many of our development partners are renewing their country plans for Timor-Leste. This meeting has allowed us to work together to ensure that, consistent with the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, there is local ownership and alignment of your country plans for Timor-Leste.

I thank the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Mr Hernâni Coelho, for leading bi-lateral meetings and for his discussion of the importance of coordination with our development partners in this regard.

Timor-Leste has made great progress as a nation. We can be proud of what we have achieved. However, we remain a fragile State that needs to consolidate our institutions and build our resilience. We cannot achieve a stable, peaceful and prosperous nation without building strong and accountable institutions.

We have learnt from experience that without strong institutions our State is fragile. That is why we have all put in so much effort to professionalise and train our police force and our armed forces as well as our civil service and the justice sector.

That is why we are embarking on a round of civil service reform to build an effective and productive civil service that is responsive and accountable to the people.

We are also prioritising reform of our legal system to harmonise our laws and build a productive and well-functioning justice sector. This is critical because we all know that without the rule of law and without justice we cannot build a stable and trusting society.

Ladies and gentlemen,

At this meeting we focused on the importance of consolidating our institutions and the challenges ahead for our policy sectors.

I was pleased to be able to participate in the session today on the Social Sector and Social Audits.

As I discussed, we have challenges in the social sector to improve the quality and coverage of service delivery and to de-concentrate the responsibility for service delivery.

To address these challenges the new Government has developed a coordination mechanism to drive public sector productivity and policy linkages across a sector.

Without coordination between our line Ministries we will not be able to achieve results. For example, we cannot improve education outcomes for our children if they are not well fed and if they do not receive the early childhood health and family support that they need.

This is why the coordinating mechanism and the role of the Minister for State, Co-ordinating Minister for Social Affairs is so important to ensure that line Ministries are joined-up and working together on cross-cutting issues. We need a true whole-of-government response to achieve our shared goal of social inclusion and social development.

To do this we also need to strengthen our management capability. First, this means that we need good data so that we can develop and implement programs based on evidence and not just on our perception.

Second, we need to improve the ability of our public sector managers to plan for the future so that they can respond to emerging problems. Our management needs to be able to anticipate future challenges rather than wait for problems to arise and then react.

Achieving outcomes in the social sector, however, is not just the responsibility of the government. It is also the responsibility of civil society and the people through inclusive

participation.

Civil society can play an important role in monitoring and reporting to government on the delivery of social services. This should be undertaken in a rigorous manner with hard data and evidence provided to our coordinating Ministers to allow the government to respond and improve.

The most valuable role for civil society is to participate to achieve results. That is why we have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with civil society to undertake Social Audits with us to ensure transparency and accountability in the delivery and the coverage of social services.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We also know that one of our challenges to building a stable and prosperous nation is to diversify our economy and achieve fiscal sustainability. Many of us today spoke of the need for a roadmap to bolster Timor-Leste's economic sector. Without fiscal sustainability we will not be in a position to do the hard work to further consolidate our institutions and improve our service delivery.

I am pleased that there was consensus between government, civil society, representatives of the National Parliament and the donor community that we must make it a priority to strengthen and diversify our economy and achieve fiscal sustainability.

I look forward to working together, with the support of our development partners, to reform our tax system, review our expenditure and diversify our economy. With falling petroleum revenues, we must start now to better balance our revenue and expenditure to ensure our fiscal sustainability. This includes designing and implementing a fair and simple tax system to broaden our tax base and provide the necessary revenue to support our institutions and their service delivery role.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today we also focused on legal reform and heard from the Minister of State, Co-ordinating Minister of State Administration Affairs and Justice and Minister of State Administration, Mr Dionísio Babo Soares.

Without an effective legal system to provide justice and without the rule of law we cannot build a stable, sustainable and a trusted State. To strengthen our justice system we will working in close cooperation with the justice sector to review where we are now, to ensure we have a sensible and coherent body of laws and that we have the financial, physical and human resources to operate a productive justice system.

We cannot do this alone and we look forward to also working with our development partners, and drawing on experiences and expertise from other nations, to consolidate our

institutions of justice.

Friends,

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Minister Mentor and Minister of Planning and Strategic Investment, Xanana Gusmão, for his address this morning in which he spoke of the work of the g7+ towards Peace building to State building.

Our nation is also encouraged by the discussion of the preparation for the post 2015 development agenda. In particular, Timor-Leste is pleased that the United Nations will consider the inclusion of a Sustainable Development Goal to promote 'peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development'. This is a recognition that without addressing fragility we cannot achieve sustained development progress.

We were very pleased to explore this reality in our session with members of the g7+ where we spoke of the need to achieve institutional and structural resilience to ensure national stability and the ability of the State to delivery basic social services.

Timor-Leste was honoured to welcome the Minister of Planning and International Cooperation from the Central African Republic, H.E. Ms Florence Limbio. The Minister provided an excellent overview of the challenges facing fragile nations. She reinforced that while the nations of the g7+ are at different stages of overcoming fragility, we all share the common objective of building a path to resilience. Importantly, she gave an example of how the crisis in the Central African Republic had increased institutional fragility which made it difficult for the State to deliver services to the people. We were, however, heartened by the reconciliation process she outlined in this g7+ member nation.

We heard a similar story from the Aid Coordination Officer, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development of Sierra Leone, Mr Abdul Kaikai, who stressed the need for institutional resilience. This need was demonstrated when Ebola struck his country and the weakness of security and institutions led to a national crisis. We are, however, pleased that Sierra Leone is building its resilience and emerging from this terrible crisis.

Mr Theo Kanene, the g7+ focal point from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, also reinforced the need for peace building and State building to achieve resilience and institutional consolidation.

We were also pleased to welcome Mr Moses Mabior, Director of Aid Coordination, South Sudan, back to Timor-Leste but we remain saddened by the conflict and fragility in this g7+ member nation.

The Guinea-Bissau General Secretary of State for Planning and Regional Integrations, H.E. Mr Antonio Co, also spoke today and thanked Timor-Leste for its support to his country to conduct fair and inclusive elections. This is an excellent model of 'fragile to fragile' cooperation to build resilience.

We also look forward to further 'fragile to fragile' cooperation at a g7+ Ministerial Meeting to be held later this year in Afghanistan and which was discussed by the Afghanistan g7+ Focal Point, Mr Moheb Jabarkhail, who also spoke of his new government's insistence on the need for peace as a pre-condition of development progress and the importance of aid effectiveness and development partner cooperation.

Today, in front of our g7+ family, we also launched the second phase of the Fragility Assessment for Timor-Leste which I am pleased will help us to identify the peace building and State building progress of our country and our path towards resilience.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We were also very fortunate to hear the address of H.E. Dr Mari Alkatiri, the Former Prime Minister and President of the Special Zone of Social Market Economy in the special Administrative Oecussi-Ambeno and in Ataúro Island.

This Special Zone is a visionary initiative which will see integrated development, connecting social and economic aspects of change, to achieve sustainable growth and the improvement in living standards. This will include a focus on tourism and industry to strengthen culture, create jobs and provide services to the people.

This year we will also be celebrating the 500th anniversary of the arrival of the Portuguese at Lifau in Oecussi-Ambeno which shaped our nation's culture and history. We also look to H.E. Dr Mari Alkatiri and his vision and commitment to make this celebration a success.

Today, the government also launched the fifth publication of the Timor-Leste's National Accounts for 2000-2013. These accounts were launched by the Acting Minister for Finance, Helder Lopes, and the Director of General Statistics, Mr Antonio Freitas, and they contain important macro-economic data including gross domestic product, gross national income and gross national disposable income.

Importantly, the statistics in this publication will give us a picture of the state of our economy and of our nation and help us to develop government policies for the future based on facts and evidence.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank our development partners for taking part in what has been a productive and positive discussion on Timor-Leste's development future.

I know that working together in our social, economic and infrastructure sectors, as well as on good institutional governance, we can make great progress.

I am confident that we can build on today's discussions so that together we can build our nation and improve the lives of our people.

For those that are going back home, I wish you safe travel, but before you go I invite you to the dinner we are hosting tonight.

Thank you very much

Dr Rui Maria de Araújo
6 June 2015