

## **Speech for RECEPTION – 6 March, 2018 – United Nations**

### **Minister Agio Pereira**

Cherished friends...

I am delighted to announce that Timor-Leste and Australia have just signed their maritime boundaries treaty.

This is an equitable and forward-looking treaty delimiting permanent maritime boundaries in the Timor Sea between Timor-Leste and Australia, guided by the principle of achieving an equitable solution.

This treaty also establishes of a Special Regime for the Greater Sunrise gas field, and a pathway to the development of the resource.

This Treaty sets out the rights and responsibilities of Timor-Leste and Australia with regard to the resources and activities that fall within our respective areas of sovereign rights.

It also institutes certainty in the interest of investment and economic development.

The Conciliation Commission was constituted to help Timor-Leste and Australia reach an agreement on maritime boundaries. Thanks to the committed engagement of the Australian government to this process, and the invaluable facilitation of the Conciliation Commission, this has now been achieved.

We look forward to continuing the important discussions regarding the successful development of Greater Sunrise. We are most grateful to the Commissioners and their advisors, each of whom performed extraordinary work in helping to frame several development concepts which will surely inform further discussions between the Parties.

For this successful outcome, I must offer due credit and acknowledgements.

We are gathered here today at the United Nations. It is under the umbrella of the multilateral system, under the principle of the sovereign equality of States under international law, that a just and fair result has been achieved for both Timor-Leste and Australia.

I wish to acknowledge the Australian team, and to thank Her Excellency Minister Julie Bishop, and Gary Quinlan, Chief Negotiator for Australia and Ambassador to Indonesia. The constructive engagement of the Australian government, and the commitment you have brought to the process, made this Treaty possible.

I believe it fair to say that the true heroes of the conciliation have been the distinguished members of the conciliation commission, each one an expert and leading light in his and her respective field.

All have close connections with international institutions.

Dr. Rosalie Balkin – who was for long an international civil servant at the IMO in London – was the embodiment of wisdom and humanity.

Judge Abdul Koroma, a most distinguished former judge of the International Court of Justice, who reminded us never to give up on the law.

Professor Donald McRae, former member of the International Law Commission and an expert in all fields of international law, but especially the Law of the Sea and international trade law.

Judge Rudiger Wolfrum, whose energy is boundless. Also a former judge and President of an international court, The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in Hamburg.

And the Chairman of the Commission, His Excellency Ambassador Peter Taksoe-Jensen who brought his legal expertise, his supreme diplomatic skills and his Viking determination to bear to drive the conciliation to a productive result for both Parties...

...as well as being Ambassador of his country in Washington and New Delhi, he was legal advisor to the Danish foreign ministry and Deputy Legal Advisor to the United Nations here in New York.

I would like to acknowledge and thank our counsel, legal team and experts:

Professor Vaughan Lowe

Sir Michael Wood, Eran Sthoegar, Robin Cleverly

All our colleagues from DLA Piper: Janet LeGrand QC, Stephen Webb, Gitanjali Bajaj

And the many members of DLA Piper's international team who have done such a commendable and excellent job. Thank you.

And our own "Team Timor-Leste", Elisabeth Exposto and the Maritime Boundary Office – for your hard work and a job well done.

And – my heartfelt gratitude to our friends in Australia and all over the world who have advocated for justice in the Timor Sea. Thank you for your faith and your friendship. You believed, and never gave up.

I believe that in the process of forging this agreement, Timor-Leste and Australia have developed a deeper mutual understanding and greater mutual respect.

With the signing of this Treaty today, a new chapter in the bilateral relationship between our two countries has begun.

Timor-Leste and Australia are friends and neighbours.

And I look forward to our two countries working together for the advancement and prosperity of our people, nations and region.

Thank you.