



Timor-Leste exemplifies continued UN help in settling sea dispute with Australia, General Assembly told



UN Photo/Cia Pak | Maria Helena Lopes de Jesus Pires, Chair of Delegation and Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to the UN, addresses the seventy-third session of the United Nations General Assembly.

1 October 2018

Timor-Leste, a country which the United Nations shepherded to independence from Indonesia 16 years ago, is a prime example of what the world Organization can do in resolving international conflicts and disputes, Delegation Chair Maria Helena Pires told the General Assembly on Monday.

“Timor-Leste is undoubtedly the leading example of the importance of an order based on international law. Next year, our Nation celebrates the 20th anniversary of the popular consultation organized by the United Nations, in which our people voted courageously for the independence,” she said on the last day of the Assembly’s seventy-third annual general debate.

Speaking on behalf of Dionisio Baba Soares, Timor-Leste’s Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, she stressed the UN’s continuing beneficial role in her country’s affairs with the resolution this year of a maritime conflict with Australia, holding it up as an example for other countries.

“Recently, the United Nations played again a major role (<https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/03/1004362>) in Timor-Leste’s future. For the first time, a Conciliation Commission, established in 2016 under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS (http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/convention_overview_convention.htm)), succeeded in the positive resolution of a longstanding dispute between Timor-Leste and Australia about the definition of maritime boundaries,” she added.

“This new [Maritime Boundary] treaty allowed us to consolidate national sovereignty and establish an important model for the peaceful resolution of international disputes. In a time of increasing global geopolitical tensions over maritime disputes, the success of the first conciliation process in history assume an unprecedented international significance.

“Timor-Leste encourages other State Members to consider this mechanism for the peaceful settlement of maritime disputes. We believe that this mechanism will play an important role in appeasing global tensions on our seas.”

Full statement available here (https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/73/tl_en.pdf).



(<https://news.un.org/en/interview/2018/09/1019532>)

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Every year, in September, global leaders and change-makers gather at United Nations Headquarters in New York for two weeks, to discuss the burning issues of our time and set the global agenda for the year ahead. The 73rd session of the UN General Assembly (<http://www.un.org/en/ga/info/meetings/72schedule.shtml>) opened this week and the body's annual high-level segment – formally known as the 'general debate' – begins on Tuesday, 25 September, where every country's leader gets to address the world.