



PRESIDÊNCIA DA REPÚBLICA

Speech of the President of the Republic and Nobel Peace Prize

Hon. J. Ramos-Horta

on the Occasion of the Inauguration Ceremony of the 9th Constitutional Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor- Leste

Dili, 1 July 2023

Your Excellencies,

Having performed the Constitutional rituals as the honourable host of the swearing in ceremony of His Excellency the Prime Minister, our much loved Maun Bot Xanana, and his Government, it falls, on this occasion, on me to say a few brief words.

I shall begin by reversing the protocol order. Inspired by the old traditions of many peoples and cultures, I first greet the guests who came from other seas and lands to be with us on this day. Ambassadors representing Kings, Sultans, Presidents and Prime Ministers who, on behalf of their peoples and as a sign of respect and friendship, crossed seas, mountains and forests to be with us in this City of Peace, in this Land of Fraternity.

Welcome to all, friends, distinguished visitors, you are in your home; we cannot match the comfort with which our friends receive us in their homes, but we try to compensate with open hearts and our deep respect.

I greet Friends from neighbouring countries, Indonesia, Australia, Myanmar.

HE. Pak Luhut Binsar Panjaitan, Coordinating Minister of Maritime Affairs and Investment of Indonesia and delegation:

Deputy Minister Pak Jody M.;

Pak Gen Jhony Lumintang;

Pak Gen. Sitorus;

Pak Gen. Yayat Resyadi;

Pak Dr. Shri I Gusti Ngurah Arya Wedakarna Mahendradata Wedasterapura Surya III, Dewan Perwakilan Daerah - RI (DPD-RI);

Pak Agus Purnama Wirawan;

Honourable Zin Mar Aung, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the National Unity Government (NUG) of Myanmar;

Mr. Linn Thant NUG Rep. to Czech Republic;

HE. Natasha Fyles, Chief Minister of Northern Territory of Australia;

Her Excellency Ibu Susi Pudjiastuti, former Minister of Fisheries and Maritime of Indonesia;

HE. Mr. Dino Pati Jallal, Former Chief of Staff of the President of Indonesia and Former Ambassador;

Excellency Mr. Victor Bungtilu Laiskodat, Governor of West Timor (NTT) Province of Indonesia and Delegation;

Secondly, I want to salute our sovereign people, the people that the government and elected parliamentarians are meant to serve. And some humble representatives of the people are here as Guests of Honour of the President of the Republic.

Who are they? Hundreds of children of the people, our children, are here as Guests of Honour. Street vendors who seven days a week, over 8 hours/day, toiling in the sun, from morning till night, contribute to our national life.

The fruits displayed before you were bought from the 'Ai-lebas', 'tiga rodas', barefoot, undernourished, guests of honour of the President of the Republic.

Poor mothers, vendor mothers, farmer mothers, small traders mothers, are also here, guests of honour of the President of the Republic.

Chiefs of Suku and of Aldeia, teachers, academics, intellectuals, nurses, doctors, students, young people, are guests of honour.

I salute these true heroes and martyrs, heroes of struggle for survival and development, martyrs chained to secular poverty.

Let us learn to respect these unfortunates of the society and we apologise, we say penance, for our inability to have the adequate intelligence and genuine dedication to effectively help them free themselves from the secular poverty to which they are chained.

And lastly, in reversed hierarchical order, I salute the national leaders, Maun Bot Xanana, bowing with respect to his person, in whom the people place their trust to lead them.

I will monitor the performance of each ministry. Within a few months we will be able to make an initial assessment of the performance of each member of the IX Government. And, as the Prime Minister has said very clearly, those who do not execute their ministerial and/or sectoral program will be replaced.

I salute the members of the Government, Parliament, the Courts, the esteemed and respected former holders of sovereign bodies, military and police authorities.

I greet the religious and spiritual leaders, the Catholic and Protestant Churches and the Muslim community. I ask all religious people for your prayers.

The mission of the members of Parliament, members of the Government, advisors and staff is to serve the people and they serve the people by implementing the program approved by the National Parliament with promptness, competence and honesty.

I want to remind everyone what is stipulated in Article 74, No. 1 of the CRDTL: the President of the Republic is "the guarantor...of the regular functioning of democratic institutions."

As the President of the Republic is the "guarantor of the regular functioning of democratic institutions", I will monitor the delivery of services to society in accordance with the Government's program approved in Law by the National Parliament.

Some first recommendations ... serve with honesty, humility, professionalism; contribute to the integrated and sustainable development of the country.

Let me make some recommendations to the Government and the National Parliament.

Our accession to ASEAN is a national strategic goal to which we must mobilise all national attention and resources. In terms of national and international policy, ASEAN membership takes precedence over all other priorities.

We need only recall the three pillars of ASEAN to understand the domestic dimension of our membership of ASEAN:

- ASEAN POLITICAL-SECURITY COMMUNITY (APSC);
- ASEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY (AEC);
- ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY (ASCC);

I share and read the Declaration I made on May 10, 2023, on the occasion of the ASEAN Heads of State and Government Summit, held in Labuan Bajo, Indonesia, under the Presidency of Indonesia.

"Timor-Leste participates, for the first time, in a Summit of ASEAN Leaders marking a new chapter in our country's history as we reach important milestones in our long journey towards regional integration.

ASEAN membership has always been a Timor-Leste's strategic goal. ASEAN membership - regional economic integration, peace and inclusive prosperity - is not only a "foreign policy priority", it is very much a pillar of our national life and agenda.

Timor-Leste and ASEAN Member States share common interests in promoting durable peace and sustainable development through active cross regional strategies encompassing socio-cultural and economic dimensions.

The adoption by ASEAN Leaders of an objective criteria-based Roadmap enables us to move progressively with sufficient time towards full membership in the near future.

Integration into ASEAN provides opportunities for Timor-Leste to fulfill its interests and strategic development goals, namely investment in strategic pillars that would significantly improve health, education and quality of life of our people.

Timor-Leste is firmly committed to undertake the institutional, policy, and regulatory reforms, enhance human resource development, invest in the strategic infrastructure that creates new opportunities for our economy and addresses the common regional challenges in a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect. This

would ensure that our membership benefits not only our country but the region as a whole.

Timor-Leste will continue to count on the active support of ASEAN Member States and partners in the implementation of the Roadmap.

We welcome and express our deep appreciation to all ASEAN Member States and external partners who have launched capacity-building programs for Timorese officials covering a wide range of development.”

To the Government and National Parliament I recommend:

At the Government level strengthen sectoral and inter-ministerial coordination, preferably under the direct responsibility of the Prime Minister, with the implementation of the Road Map as the base working document.

At the National Parliament level, I recommend the creation of a Parliamentary Committee for ASEAN, to accelerate the necessary legislative process, including treaty ratification.

I also recommend that National Parliament should approve a Legislative Authorization to the Government to undertake all necessary legislative acts such as elimination of double taxation, investment protection, and an arbitration commission for the speedy and fair resolution of disputes, etc.

Every effort should be made so that Timor-Leste's formal accession to ASEAN is celebrated during Indonesia's Presidency, that is, in 2023 or 2024.

I reserve my final words for the esteemed former Prime Minister Taur Matan Ruak. Excellency, I congratulate you on the performance of the government that you have led since 2018. I also salute the members of your government.

Despite the many vicissitudes, pandemics (Covid-19 and swine flu), natural disasters, political crisis, war in Ukraine, world inflation, which have had a profound impact on the economies of the world and of Timor-Leste, you have managed to remain calm and determined in the pursuit of your government's program.

Once again I would like to express my deepest sympathy for the irreparable loss of your wife Mana Isabel. I accompany you, Your Excellency, your children and other family members on this journey of grief. We are left with vivid images and memories of Mana Isabel.

I also wish to address a few words to the President and Members of Parliament of the Fifth Legislature (2018-2023), in particular Dr. Aniceto Longuinhos Guterres, saluting him for the professional, proactive and impartial manner in which he has led the work of the august House of Democracy.

I now invite the esteemed Prime Minister Maun Bot Xanana to deliver his much anticipated speech.