



THE FIRST 100 DAYS AND OUR FUTURE CHALLENGES

Address to The National Parliament by J. Ramos-Horta, President of the Republic, 15 September 2022

Excellencies, Mr President of the National Parliament, Mr. Speaker of the National Parliament,
Mr. Prime Minister,
Mr. President of the Court of Appeal
Your Honourable Deputies
Members of the Government
Former Title Holders
Commander in Chief of the FFDTL
Commander General of PNTL
Mr. Prosecutor General of the Republic
Ombudsman for Human Rights and Justice
Mr. Commissioner of the CAC
Your Excellency the Representative of the Holy See
Your Excellency the UN Resident Coordinator
Your Excellencies the Ambassadors
Beloved Religious Leaders

Your Excellencies,

Introduction: human fraternity and the current national and global context.

As I complete 100 Days in office I'm honoured to return to this *Casa Mãe Da Democracia* to report to the Nation on what I and my team have done so far and to share some perspectives and concerns on some issues.

Addressing the Plenary of this House is a unique privilege granted by the Constitution to the President of the Republic. And as I stand here I bow with humility to the people who, with their sovereign vote, entrusted me with the highest position in the Land to serve them, to be their voice, of their expectations, fears, disappointments, and also hopes. That's what I have always tried to be throughout my adult life, the voice of the voiceless, in our country and elsewhere in the world.

I bow with humility to our martyrs and heroes, those gone and those still with us, and by the grace of God, Maun Bot Xanana is very much with us. I bow in reverence to the many who remain unknown, humble living heroes whom I have met often times across this sacred Land.

I shall share with the esteemed Members of the Parliament what I and my staff have attempted to do in the first 100 days of my second presidency. And I shall repeat here what in my view should be the national absolute priorities in the next five years, for every leader, every government, every political party, for all of our society.

First, I wish to congratulate and thank the esteemed members of this Parliament for your sage action in unanimously passing the Resolution on Human Fraternity (NPR No.11/2022, 13 May on World Peace, Human Brotherhood and Common Coexistence).

Our much revered Church stated that the adoption of this Resolution corresponds to the special vocation and mission of the Timorese people in the world. The Declaration on Human Fraternity co-authored and launched in 2019 by Pope Francis and Grand Iman Dr. Ahmad Muhammad Al-Tayyeb, seeks to further promote a "culture of mutual respect" between religions and communities across the world. The Resolution reaffirms equality, recognises the right to education, to work and to the exercise of political rights. It recognises religious plurality and freedom of belief, thought, expression and action as pillars of democracy pillars. It recognises the common challenges facing humanity, such as peace, hunger, misery, climate change and public health. This Parliament's Resolution urges the government to promote the values of human fraternity through concrete measures to improve the welfare of the Timorese people.

The restoration of our national independence is closely rooted in the concept of human fraternity. We not only buried old divisions among ourselves that had lingered from the time of our short and tragic 'civil war', but, we came to regard the country with which we formally parted ways at midnight of 20th May 2002 as friends and partners.

In our literature and political discourse we have never called an enemy those who entered our land and homes. Our beloved Founding Leaders, Xavier Amaral, Nicolau Lobato and Xanana Gusmao, always taught the Nation that those peoples from lands near and afar, who over centuries, in different times, were present in our land, were not enemies. The encounters with these forces and their invasive presence over centuries did bring divisions, subjugation, they sowed internecine conflicts, but they also inadvertently helped

forge what Timor-Leste is today....a very distinct people with a distinct identity, religion, languages, culture, borders, the very concept of Nation-State.

The future of our nation can only be guaranteed when we come together and are willing to continue to understand each others' differences. Diversity, tolerance, dialogue and human fraternity are vital for this and for any nation to thrive. They should guide us so that all are able to contribute to the economy. So that all are able to effectively utilize their potential, talents and resources to improve their living standards, and together eradicate poverty and misery from our country.

Communities that are disenfranchised result in the end in the weakening of the State. The people of a nation are the foundation. If there are fractures and faults in the foundation, the nation becomes more vulnerable to collapse. A house divided cannot stand.

Beginning in 2017 our country experienced a succession of political instability and disfunctional governance. This culminated in 2020 with the rejection of the State Budget by Parliament, the collapse of the governing coalition and the resignation of the Prime Minister. At the same time we experienced widespread dengue cases and natural disasters.

Our domestic political and economic enfermity was exacerbated by the global Covid-19 pandemic. The international community was not prepared for the pandemic and at home it exposed our own abysmal failure to build a modern public health sector.

As if the Covid-19 pandemic had not caused enough suffering, what was thought to be unthinkable in a post Cold War world did happen. A brutal war in Europe whose fallout is being felt globally. Supply chains are again disrupted, shipping, energy and other commodity prices oscillate wildly. These developments illustrate the unpredictable nature of regional and global force relations.

We must ask ourselves...are we united, committed, educated, informed, wise, with the knowledge and tools to navigate these storms that reach the shores of our common Uma Lisan called Timor-Leste ?

Building Bridges through Presidential Programs

As you all know, upon the assumption of the highest office of the Land, I have focussed on a domestic agenda, building bridges with the Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches, engaging with urban and rural communities, youth and students, civil society, religious leaders, professionals, small farmers, traders, private and banking sectors. All with the aim of further promoting a culture of peace, to protect our lively democracy and democratic institutions, and to reenergise our moribund economic life.

The Prime Minister, his cabinet members, this esteemed Parliament and our Judicial leadership have responded with a commitment to forge a new path of mutual respect and partnership.

Democracy like Development has to be all inclusive, involving every age group, youth, women and men all enjoying equal opportunities, and with all feeling and seeing the benefits deriving from their participation in the democratic process.

My Presidency is an open one, with no iron gates and no armed security. It is accessible to everyone, particularly children, who have unrestricted access to the Presidential grounds with a special swimming pool for children, and an after school learning center.

It is my firm commitment to work with the Government, the National Parliament and international partners, in order to seriously confront the moral and ethical challenges of extreme poverty, child malnutrition and stunting. To confront head on stunting and child malnutrition we must proactively promote breastfeeding. We must provide cash and in-kind support for pregnant women and mothers. We must expand early childhood education (as proposed by the Government in its 2023 National Priorities and as clearly advocated by UNICEF). Actions such as these will lay the best pathway to address stunting and child malnutrition.

Timor-Leste like almost every country on the Planet has suffered multiple climate change catastrophes, prolonged dry seasons, followed by consecutive years of floods, the Covid-19 pandemic and its many collateral effects.

While we had minimal direct impact of the Covid-19 plague in terms of hospitalisations and fatalities, inevitably as we undertook actions to prevent the spread of the insidious virus, such as curtailing free movement of peoples and goods. These actions had a negative impact on the livelihood of our people across the country. Poor subsistence farmers and poor small traders became even poorer. I recognize the best efforts of the Government with several initiatives aiming at softening the blow of the economic and social crisis. While the *Cesta Básica* may have been a well meaning endeavour, unscrupulous elements involved in the supply chain shockingly profited with minimum consideration for the intended recipients.

We shut down schools to protect our children, but these measures aimed at defeating the cruel virus had negative consequences for the same children we wanted to protect. Hundreds of thousands of children missed their “one meal a day”, and for too many poor children this *merenda escolar* was their only daily nutritious food intake. Sadly there were no perfect options.

In launching some modest programs my sole intention has been to support or complement our Government pro-poor initiatives, addressing in practical ways community concerns, raising awareness about specific urgent humanitarian needs and using culture, music, entertainment and sports to foster dialogue, fraternity and non-violence.

When we launched a Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality program the purpose was to contribute in a small way to end gender inequality and hopefully with it end violence and discrimination against women and girls.

When I invited the poor *tiga rodas* (three wheeled street vendors) into the Presidency this was meant to make the humble vendors feel that someone has deep respect for them, understand their life of daily struggle for survival. When the Presidency buys their fruit which in turn we offer to the children playing in the Presidential garden, this is part of our education campaign promoting the habit of eating healthy fresh fruit. The fact is that, despite its abundance, our children, and a large number of our adults, do not consume fresh fruit on a daily basis.

We are relaunching the Dili International Marathon, and rebranding the Ramelau Music and Cultural Festival, an International photo competition, an international fishing competition, book fairs and other activities that engage our communities and youth. We seek to promote a culture of peace with multiple tools.

Whenever possible, we engaged government agencies, the private sector, communities and international partners in the support of government initiatives. The last few months have been extremely busy and rewarding.

As you know, one major concern of mine, and in fact of the Government - and it should be of all of us - is coffee. It is our primary agriculture product whose beginnings date back many generations. So a major aspect of the advocacy of my Presidency concerns the promotion of coffee, as part of Timor-Leste's identity and culture. I have taken inspiration from the way that the Japanese people cherish their own rice. How it forms a part of their cultural treasure. We must embrace coffee in the same way. And we must invest seriously in renewing the old shade trees and old coffee bushes, expanding the area under the cultivation of coffee.

We must equally seriously invest in agriculture and as the basis of this, invest in irrigation, new agriculture technologies on both small farms and on a larger commercial scale with the aim of achieving complete food sovereignty.

We must educate our children, youth, mothers, to consume more local products, namely, corn, sweet potatoes, vegetables, coconut, fruit, dry fish. The Government should support the commercial production of smoked and dried fish.

Diplomacy and Security

Your Excellencies,

Let me now turn to other equally important matters, just as important as the issues that we define as national.

Diplomacy is as important as defence and national security. Diplomacy is an integral part of our defence and security arsenal. An arsenal of persuasion and prevention. A defence of our national interests.

Just as an army or a police force must have leaders with a high degree of natural intelligence, strengthened by studies and experience, in order to fully accomplish their mission with competence, without room for improvisation or error.

Diplomacy also requires a great deal of intelligence, in-depth research, a high degree of pride and discipline, supported by an arsenal of studies on history, strategy, international relations, international law and in addition to the official languages of the country foreign language proficiency.

Diplomacy, like defence and security, cannot be left to the curious or to amateurs. It cannot be partisan or be a matter of partisan bargaining.

Following a centuries-old tradition, throughout the world, the Head of State - Emperor, Pope, King, President of the Republic – has the last word in the choice of Ambassadors, as they are the Envoys of the Head of State. The Head of State is the one who signs the Accreditation Letter that gives legality and legitimacy to the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

It is in this context that I must inform you that I have begun the process of assessing all the Embassies and Ambassadors of our country. Analysing their respective academic and professional curricula, their years of service, their written and spoken command of our official languages, and their command of at least one language of diplomacy and international trade, that is English.

The dissuasive, defensive and offensive capability and credibility of an army depends on a strong, well-organised rearguard, where research, collection, study, information analysis, the drawing up of defence plans, the training of men and women in uniform. Furthermore, the size of an army and its sustainability must be proportional to the Country's GDP. Numbers do not always equate with quality and real effectiveness.

Similarly, the effectiveness of a country's diplomacy depends on a serious, highly qualified, integrated and dedicated 'rearguard' that studies, plans and executes. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the backstop. Foreign Affairs requires a very experienced Minister, academically qualified, who must be multilingual and have a deep knowledge of international politics and of the world in general. He or she may be a Minister with political appointments, but, he or she must be able to serve the Country with professionalism, with total dedication and always remain detached from party affiliations or sympathies. He or

she will be a Minister who favours career diplomats and does not turn the Ministry into a branch of their own political party.

Regional Relationships

Your Excellencies,

I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to Maun Boot Xanana Gusmao for his willingness to recently represent the President of the Republic at some very important international events. Namely the Development Summit in Brussels in June, an EU initiative, and the Oceans Summit in Lisbon, a UN initiative. I also requested Maun Boot Xanana Gusmao to represent the President of the Republic at the historic ceremony of the elevation of our beloved Archbishop Dom Virgilio to Cardinal in an unforgettable ceremony celebrated by our beloved Pope Francis. Maun Boot Xanana Gusmao was again absent from the Country on a mission from our State to deliver a speech at the Summit on Education chaired by the United Nations Secretary General. As always, Maun Boot Xanana Gusmao represented our Country with great eloquence and with high statesmanship, honouring us all.

I have always advocated that our relations with Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand, and with nearby Southeast Asian countries, should always be high on our national agenda, and that we should explore concrete ways and strategies for greater economic and trade integration, cooperation in the areas of defence and security, including maritime security.

In particular we should encourage sub-regional cooperation with the Eastern Indonesian provinces, such as Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) and the Northern Territory of Australia, to increase trade and mobility of people and goods through improvements in maritime and air connectivity.

I salute Maun Boot Xanana Gusmao and all its team for their extraordinary effort, intelligence and total dedication which resulted in the enshrinement of the Treaty confirming the median line in the Timor Sea as the permanent maritime boundary between Australia and Timor-Leste. Equal recognition is due to the Australian side.

Since its establishment in 1967, ASEAN has been a fundamental pillar of prosperity and stability in our region, as well as a model of success for multilateral organizations in the international order.

The accession of Timor-Leste to ASEAN is a national strategic goal that I have personally advocated since 1974. This journey began with my historic meeting in Jakarta with the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Adam Malik, who was one of the signatories of the Bangkok Declaration of August 8, 1967 that initiated ASEAN.

As has become tradition, upon taking office the President of the Republic visits, before any other country, our two immediate neighbors, Australia and Indonesia. It is with our two giant and rich neighbours that we have the closest possible relationship, encompassing all sectors, from A to Z.

The story of Timor-Leste - Indonesia reconciliation and our subsequent partnership is a remarkable one. It is a living testimony to the spirit of human fraternity, only made possible through vision, wisdom and political courage. This reconciliation has not only brought about an exemplary bilateral relationship and the opportunities that flow from it, but it is integral to our country's regional integration.

As such I was honored and very pleased to accept the invitation of His Excellency the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, to make my first State visit to Indonesia, from 18 to 24 July 2022.

Given the geographic connection between Indonesia and Timor-Leste , and the political and economic, socio-cultural and regional context, the main objective of this first State Visit was to consolidate our already strong good neighbourly relations, and to foster more active commercial and economic interaction. Especially at a time when the world is facing severe, disruptive tensions and conflicts, pandemics, and climate change-induced natural catastrophes.

We explored the possibility of developing a manufacturing and industrial hub along our common land border in order to increase exports, to Australia and Europe, thus taking advantage of the free tariff status that Timor-Leste enjoys as a Least Developed Country. In relation to the free trade zone and the border manufacturing hub, informal work has started between officials and experts of both countries.

As part of the commitment to promote private investment, I have promulgated the the Decree Law on Industrial Parks. President Joko Widodo and I agreed to develop cooperation in the area of transport and communications, and sea routes between Kupang, Dili and Darwin. The latter is vital for Timor-Leste to expand its exports of some of our niche agricultural products and for our future joint manufacturing base.

Currently, Indonesia's investment in Timor-Leste amounts to US\$818 million, primarily in the banking, oil, gas and telecommunications sectors.

Indonesia will host the G20 Presidency beginning in November 2022 and the ASEAN Presidency in 2023. I hope that Timor-Leste accession to ASEAN will occur during Indonesia presidency of ASEAN.

In relation to G20 I handed over to President Joko Widodo two letters, one co-signed by me and former UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown and more than 100 other global leaders and another from the Chairman of G7+ both addressing concerns in regards the spill over

impact of Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine on the economies and lives of hundreds of millions in the emerging world, in particular in fragile States.

Remaining issues related to our land border will be resolved in a wise, amicable and pragmatic manner, between the two sides, with our Chief Negotiator Maun Boot Xanana leading our side.

At the invitation of the Governor of Eastern Indonesia Vitor Buntilo Laiskodat I visited Kupang and Labuan Bajo. We followed up on the discussions initiated in Jakarta regarding the construction of an industrial park along our common land border as articulated by President Widodo and the creation of free trade zone between RAEOA (the Oecusse Special Administrative Region of Timor-Leste) and NTT. We met with investors committed to the development of the Moringa industry in Timor-Leste.

In all my previous trips overseas, private or official, I have always sought out our people in the diaspora, wherever they may be, in Australia, Korea, China, Portugal, UK. In Kupang I met with some East Timorese who have been in Indonesia since the 1999 Popular Consultation. This atmosphere was a warm and cordial one.

As the esteemed MPs are aware I shall travel to New York to participate in the UN General Assembly. I am scheduled to address the Plenary on the morning of 23 September. I will also address a special session of the Peace Building Commission on the 26th. I expect to be back in Timor-Leste on the 28th.

I will seek the concurrence of this Parliament to visit Cambodia at the invitation of His Majesty the King. Our trusted friend Prime Minister Hun Sen, who holds the rotating chairmanship of ASEAN, has been an active advocate Timor-Leste membership in the important regional organisation. The visit will be an opportunity to explore trade and investment opportunities, particularly in the agricultural sector.

Soon after the visit to Cambodia I will seek the concurrence from the esteemed members of this Parliament for a State Visit to Portugal, at the invitation of our great friend President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa. I will also participate as a keynote speaker in the global Web Summit in Lisbon, an event which is expected to have 65,000 Delegates physically present.

I will also seek Parliamentary clearance for an official visit to Singapore in the first week of December in response to a kind invitation from the President. Singapore has been a steady friend and partner and I intend to explore further Singapore investments in Timor-Leste.

Through trade and investment we are expanding and deepening our regional economic integration. By necessity, by imposition of geography and strategic choice, we continue to explore all avenues of regional economic integration. In early 2023 Timor-Leste will gain

WTO accession, another natural extension of our country's regional and global economic integration.

ASEAN and WTO accessions are driven by Timor-Leste's own economic interests. A vital part of this is the domestic economic reform process to ensure healthy enabling environment for foreign and national investors and the diversification of our economy. Beyond economic Integration, accession to ASEAN is a strategic imperative. ASEAN is as important for Timor-Leste's stability and prosperity as much as peace and prosperity in Timor-Leste should matter to ASEAN.

Senior expert missions from ASEAN, covering its three pillars (political-security, social-cultural and economic) have conducted a thorough review of Timor-Leste's ASEAN accession preparadness. Their reports support our own views and those of UN Agencies, Breton Woods institutions, the ADB and foreign missions based in Díli. These reports all recognise that Timor-Leste has made significant strides since independence and that we should be welcome into this regional organisation as its 11th member.

We live in an interconnected world where the principle of leaving no one behind should always be upheld in all development processes. As much as peace and prosperity in our neighborhood benefits all, conflicts or threats of, and risks and conflicts originating in one country can impact on others.

Returning to national issues: policing and drug policy.

In respect of the role of the police in our society I want to take this opportunity to say a few things. I am increasingly becoming concerned about what appears to be a form of competition between different arms of the police and other security services. The overlapping responsibilities of different parts of the police forces tends to raise confusion, rivalry and tensions.

The Government must urgently address and resolve these overlapping agencies before they develop into a situation that may contribute to breeding a future crisis similar to that which occurred in the past.

Social tensions that merge with confusion concerning the legitimacy of police actions and responsibilities are a ticking time bomb for our nation. Sustainable inclusion is one aspect that can go towards helping resolve a part of this problem. But administrative and operational threats to the legitimacy of the police forces must be resolved as well. Police work must be carried out with care and responsibility if legitimacy is to be maintained. Especially in times of crisis. On one hand the police must engage with vulnerable and disaffected communities. When social tensions arise force in the form of batons and tear gas act only to increase disaffection.

Furthermore, the police must always work to uphold the legitimacy of the law. The law establishes police procedures not only to safeguard the rights of the accused but also to safeguard the legitimacy of the work of the police. When procedures, for example in cases of arrest and searches, are not followed, or when the media is enlisted to declare people guilty before an investigation or trial is completed, the legitimacy of both individual investigations and of the whole justice system are undermined. Respect for human rights and the presumption of innocence do not undermine the work of the police, but in fact work to build their legitimacy.

The recent investigations into cannabis in Dili have brought all of these issues to public attention. I will not enter into the judicial processes that are underway. But I can make some comments about drug policy in general.

For many years I served with the late Koffi Anan and many other eminent people, as a Commissioner on the Global Commission on Drug Policy. During that time I came to understand that the war on drugs with its attempts to abolish their use through penal measures was a failure.

It became clear to me that the numerous documented negative impacts of drug policy were all occurring without any reduction in drug production, use or traffic. The purpose of the criminalisation of some drugs is only a tool to achieve the goal of ensuring that certain drugs were made available for medical or scientific reasons and use. But drug control has failed to achieve its own stated objectives. This failure has made me turn to look at the issue from the perspective of the economy and the people impacted. The debate around drugs policy in Timor-Leste needs to move on. It has been ill-informed and relies on prejudices inherited from the past. It is out of step with the situation in many other countries.

For example Thailand and Malaysia have realized this and have implemented enlightened policies in relation to the medical use of cannabis. Many other countries, including Portugal, have moved to enlightened policies. In Europe, Australia, and the USA the medical use of cannabis has had a positive effect on crime prevention, health outcomes and the economy. Some states of the US now rely on taxes from medical marijuana to fund their economies. The legal cannabis industry in the US is foreseen to soon result in \$128.8 billion in tax revenue and an estimated 1.6 million new jobs. The East Asia Forum estimates that the market value of medical cannabis in Thailand is estimated to be between US\$660 million and US\$2.5 billion by 2024.

In reviewing our drug policies we need to differentiate between narcotics and cannabis. Cannabis can no longer be grouped together with dangerous drugs such as methamphetamines or heroin.

Timor is not a drug free society. Alcohol, tobacco and betel nut are in constant use and abuse. We have to be open and frank and accept that the biggest, possibly most

dangerous narcotic used in Timor-Leste today is betel nut. We need to understand its positive and negative effects.

We have to consider the disproportionate cost of law enforcement and its negative consequences. We need to weigh the perceived threat against the possible benefits of permitting some use of cannabis. A more modern and enlightened approach may have great health and economic benefits for our society.

Our current drug policies are having a negative effects on people's right to health care. Access to certain painkillers has become more restricted affecting those who live daily with pain. Reconsidering the way we deal with drugs could lay the basis for locally produced alternatives. Punitive prohibition denies Timor-Leste many benefits: medical marijuana, farmer income, taxes, hemp products, and tourism.

Cooperation and Dialogue between Sovereign Bodies.

The Constitution allocates legal and political power to the four organs of State Sovereignty: the President, the Supreme Court, the National Parliament and the Government. The respective powers of each organ of the State are subject to both the principle of the separation and importantly the principle of the interdependence of powers. The relationship between the President, the Parliament, the Government and the Courts is a reciprocal relationship. Each organ of sovereignty depends upon the others to ensure the proper exercise of their functions. This interdependence requires each of the organs, in so far as their constitutional mandate permits, to work together to ensure not only the unity of the State, but also the smooth functioning of our democratic institutions.

Without this complementary separation, interdependence and the unity that results from it we are unable to deliver to the most important members of our society, the people, the promises that we have made in our struggles for national independence and national development.

Ultimately, the Presidential powers plays a vital role in ensuring national unity and the smooth functioning of our democratic institutions is guaranteed. The President must work to bring all sovereign organs together to work in the best interests of the people and the nation. This does not mean we must always agree on everything, this does not mean that there cannot be room for debate, doubt or divisions. But it does mean that in the end, we all must put the interests of the nation and the people above our own personal or political interests.

As the guardian of the Constitution the President of the Republic must always stand protected from party-political dispute, always striving to maintain a distance from the political differences between the parliamentary majority and opposition. But maintaining a

distance is not the same as not having a view or not working together with the Parliament and the Government.

Our Constitutional system does not bestow on one organ total sovereign power. As far as possible, and this has always been my starting point in our relationship, we must all be working together, cooperating for the benefit of the nation. Dialogue must be open, respectful, encouraged, and maintained at all times. Even when we might have different views or ideas about how best to proceed.

If and when a conflict arises within the Constitutional system, the President of the Republic is the political arbiter. The Court of Appeal is the final legal arbiter. It is for the Court in the end to decide what the law is, and each of us, The President, the Parliament and the Government must accept that. But a President exercises political powers that allow him or her to be the arbiter between the Government and the Parliament and between a parliamentary majority and opposition.

Over the first 4 months of my tenure I have sought to engage in and promote dialogue: with the Court of Appeal, the Parliament, its majority and its opposition and the Government. I have also engaged in dialogue with Local Government and with the people. I have engaged in dialogue with the national and international private sector, with NGOs and International Organisations. At all times my purpose has been to bring the various actors that influence our countries future together, so that we may all, separately and interdependently work to create a future for our nation and our people.

During this period I have also promulgated important Laws and Decree laws. I have worked with the President of the Parliament and the Prime Minister in order to agree to minor or substantial improvements on some of those laws before their promulgation. Such cooperation is essential for us to continue to improve the working of our Constitutional system and to achieve the goal of that much used, but so often misunderstood term, good governance.

As you are all well aware, as a part of this essential process of open dialogue, I have had my doubts and concerns about certain Laws that have been made by the Parliament and have asked the Court of Appeal to undertake judicial review to determine their constitutionality.

In the first of those cases our Court of Appeal has displayed their growing legal acumen in finding present in our Constitution an abstract principle of equality, separation and interdependence between the sovereign organs of the State. Such a constitutional development is evidence of the growing maturity of our judicial system, something that is necessarily vital for the principles of the rule of law by which we are all in the end governed.

Requesting that the Court undertake the judicial review of a law is an integral part of the democratic process. It should not be misunderstood as an adversarial process in which the

President seeks or sets out to engage in confrontation with the Parliament or the Government. It is not a process that seeks to find fault or attribute blame. It is a process where issues of law and constitutionality are raised before the Court, in a considered and legitimate manner, so that any doubts that exist concerning a law may be clarified for the benefit of all the organs of sovereignty, and most importantly for the future of the nation and the people.

We should not shy away from such review, which is a form of legitimate constitutional dialogue. We should not be offended or upset by a request judicial review, but embrace it in the spirit of cooperation that it is intended.

Requesting the review of laws so that they may be considered in an impartial manner, by judges of the Court of Appeal, is one of the ways provided for in the Constitution for the President to perform his function as guarantor of constitutional legality. This process of guaranteeing the constitutionality of laws is, as I have said, another aspect of the dialogue between the organs of sovereignty. One in which the Court of Appeal performs its function as the final arbiter of legality.

One of our greatest tasks as sovereign organs is to ensure that we all comply with and properly implement on a daily basis the rules that we have collectively made. It is only in this way that we can expect that the people themselves respect the laws that have been and are being made. How can we expect the people to respect our laws and follow them if those making them cannot themselves set an example?

The task of Government and the Parliament is not just to be a factory for the continual making of new laws. The pumping out of laws is not an end in itself. More importantly we must make laws that are relevant to our national and social context, relevant to the country's best interest and then fully abide by and implement them. Too many laws are made are daily not implemented, understood or followed. We have to inform and educate all what the rule of law means and how the laws that we make guide our work and lives. In order to teach this lesson, we must ensure always that the laws we make are made with the desires and needs of our people in our hearts, and that they participate in the creation of the laws, through the process of ample public consultation.

Behind all of our separate and interdependent responsibilities lays the task of working together to improve the lives of our people and the well-being of our nation. Therefore the constitutional structure demands our cooperation.

Inclusive Sustainability.

Above everything else we must recall that the State does not exist for our benefit but for the benefit of all people in our nation.

Article 2 of the Constitution sets out the basis of our democracy. It is not one of party political or personal interest, but one that exists to serve the people. This must be at the forefront of our minds when we exercise our separate but interdependent powers. The four basic principles that form the basis of our democracy must be always upheld.

Those are, firstly, Sovereignty rests with the people. Secondly, the State, its organs and its institutions are subject to the Constitution and to the law. Thirdly, the validity of the laws and any other actions of the State and Local Government depends upon their compliance with the Constitution and the laws made under it. Fourthly, the norms, customs and culture of our people are the life spring from which all else has developed and evolved and are valued and recognised by the Constitution, and as a result the State and its organs and institutions. It is from these four fundamental principles that everything else flows.

Also enshrined in our Constitution are other principals of fundamental value that establish the basis of our political system, including how power is separated and shared between the President, the Parliament, the Government and the Courts.

But they go beyond that. The State and its sovereign organs, the political powers that we each hold as custodians of the people, exist for a purpose. They are not an end in themselves. This distribution of political power does not exist to simply create a system of *ema boot* and self aggrandisement.

It is the people who are the original organ of Timorese sovereignty. We only exist, on paper, and in, practice, to serve them.

Following on from this fundamental principle, the Constitution establishes the fundamental rights, duties, liberties and guarantees that form the basis of the relationship between our people and between the people and the State. It sets out the guarantees of personal rights, liberties and guarantees and of the various economic, social and cultural rights and duties. Importantly, the Constitution establishes the basis of the economic and financial organisation of the State and the nation. The Constitution guarantees to the people particular rights which I wish to highlight as they are essential to establish the conditions for the well-being of the people and the future of the nation.

The Constitution states that every citizen has the right to education and culture. It is incumbent upon the State to promote the establishment of a public system of universal and compulsory basic education that is free of charge. As a part of this right I believe that one our our priorities is to ensure that all children have their constitutional right to access quality pre-school as part of their basic education fulfilled. But our role is not simply to ensure access. It is to ensure our system of educations at all level provide high quality teaching and learning in safe and well-resourced environments.

Everyone has the right to health and medical care. The State has a constitutional duty to promote the establishment of a national health service that is free of charge, universal, and that lifts the standards of health for all people.

Everyone has the right to a house, both for himself or herself and for his or her family, of adequate size that meets satisfactory standards of hygiene and comfort. Hygiene in this context includes that everyone has the right to access clean water for drinking and washing.

Furthermore, every citizen, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, has the right and the duty to work and to choose freely their profession. We must work together to achieve these constitutional rights. They are The Priority for the future of our nation because without raising the standard of living for our people in the most essential and fundamental of ways – education, health, housing - we are nothing, and we have failed in our duties and responsibilities to the people.

Our Constitution embodies also a principle that I believe forms a fundamental basis of our system of democracy. For now I will refer to it as Inclusive Sustainability. The rights I have referred to are an essential part of achieving this principle of Inclusive Sustainability.

Let me talk a little about this principle.

It is clear that we have taken great steps as a nation to be an inclusive democracy. The Constitution clearly states that all are equal before the law. Civil society and the State have each taken steps to ensure that ours is a nation of equality, non-discrimination and inclusion. In the Presidential office I have taken steps to include special advisors for women's empowerment and for people with disabilities.

In respect of people who have special needs, the 2015 Census tells us that they number over 38,000. On top of this there are over 14,000 blind people in our Country. We do have a National Action Plan to address the needs of these citizens but in implementing it there are things that we need to ensure are done.

Each Ministry must implement the necessary measures as soon as possible. For example, the Ministry of Education must give its maximum attention to the priority of inclusive education. The Ministry of Health needs to increase its focus on illnesses such as leprosy and tuberculosis. A public community campaign must be carried out with dignity to raise awareness of the bacteria that cause these illnesses. And dignified treatment must be provided to those affected. The Justice Ministry must organise proper training for lawyers and the police so that they are aware of and comply with their responsibilities in dealing with people with special needs. The Ministry of Public Works must implement the rules to ensure proper access of people with special needs to offices and buildings. Measures such as this are only the beginning of the process to create inclusive sustainability for our citizens with special needs.

As another example of inclusive sustainability, the Presidency has embraced the LGBT movement, so that it is clear to everyone that all members of our society are equal and serve to be treated with respect in every aspect of their lives. But, Inclusive Sustainability

means something more than formal equality in the context of our Constitution. It is more than just formal equality before the law.

Inclusive Sustainability – a Constitutional duty to ensure social and economic justice.

The objectives of the State set out in the Constitution include such things as the building of a society based on social justice, establishing the material and spiritual welfare of the citizens, protecting the environment and preserving our natural resources. These objectives include promoting the harmonious and integrated development of the sectors and regions, and importantly, ensuring the fair distribution of the national product.

In respect of this idea of Inclusive Sustainability I want to focus upon the objectives of establishing the material and spiritual welfare of the citizens, the protection of environment and preservation of natural resources and the fair distribution of the national product.

Integral to the protection of environment and preservation of natural resources, enshrined in the Constitution, we find the concept of sustainable development, in which the protection of the environment is seen from the perspective of economic development. More than a mere guiding principle, the Constitution assumes the State's legal duty to safeguard the sustainable development of the economy, and to ensure that the nation's natural resources are used in a fair and equitable manner.

What we should take from this is that in our Constitutional system inclusion means that there is a Constitutional duty to ensure social justice, the material welfare of the citizens and the fair distribution of the national product. Inclusion means that our natural resources and the product of those resources, such as the Petroleum Fund and our common national wealth, must be Constitutionally distributed fairly and used in a fair and equitable manner.

Inclusive Sustainability means that our economic system, the use of our national product and the use of our natural resources must be done in a manner that is sustainable both now, and in the future, for the generations that come. That does not mean that the Government cannot spend and use, for example the Petroleum Fund, but that it must do so fairly for the benefit of all with the needs of future generations considered alongside the present.

It means we must look beyond our personal and party political interest to ensure the material welfare of all of the citizens of the nation, whilst at the same time protecting our abundant natural resources and our environment.

It gives substance to the overriding and fundamental right to equality before the law in the context of the allocation of the nation's financial and natural resources and its sustainable economic development, in the fair distribution of the national product and the fair and

equitable use of natural resources. It entails the duty and obligation to ensure and safeguard the sustainable development of the economy, the environment, and the nation. It entails the duty and obligation to ensure and safeguard the inclusive and sustainable development of our greatest asset, our people.

From the perspective of my Presidency, I have already begun to outline and advocate for the principle of Inclusive Sustainable Development. Its substance, for example, includes our collective duty as organs of State power and sovereignty to plan and build an inclusive social and economic policy. It includes our collective duty to create employment for all in our own country, to revitalize and build our agricultural sector to ensure food nutrition and security and to build local food production, packaging, distribution systems and networks as basis for local manufacturing industries.

To achieve Inclusive Sustainable Development we must work together, for example to create an accessible and efficient business environment, where we can begin to implement and achieve in a substantial way the principles enshrined in our Constitution. It requires us to overcome the gap between our existing law and its legitimacy and implementation.

Inclusive Sustainable Development means we need realistic plans to address the challenges and opportunities for our people and the nation.

Inclusive Sustainable Development requires us to develop strong Constitutional values and a strong and inclusive democracy. It requires us to work together to improve access to government, its services, and the legal system and to improve the responsiveness and the implementation by government of infrastructure, services, and the law.

Inclusive Sustainable Development requires us to prepare the nation, our system of government legal system and crucially our people, especially the young for generational change.

We have many challenges as a nation that require us to work together, separately, interdependently and with an overall collective unity of vision. There are a number of risks and threats that we face as a nation. Climate change, lock-downs caused by pandemics, economic geopolitics causing freight and transport disruptions are only some.

Among the greatest are unemployment, a lack of national food security and environmental degradation. We must be aware that all these things can, over time, lead to social disruptions, with in the end the possibility of violence. We have already seen in recent times confrontations between certain groups resulting in injury or worse.

Facing up to the challenges of our Constitutional duties, embodied in what I have referred to as the principle of Inclusive Sustainability forms the bedrock of how we can positively deal with these risks and threats, that flow from things such as unemployment, climate change, economic instability, and global geopolitics.

We need to think beyond merely reciting the Strategic Development Plan (SDP) 2030 goals. Rather than simply resting on our achievements we need to collectively identify our outstanding failures and adjust our existing targets to the reality of the nation and the world we live in today.

At the same time as facing challenges we have many opportunities as a nation that require us to work together, separately, interdependently and with an overall collective unity of vision. We have an enormous number of young people in education, both at school and in university. We must work together to improve the quality of that education so that they can tackle the future. We must develop proper vocational training.

We have substantial local and public infrastructure requirements that provide us with ample opportunities to put our greatest resource, our people to productive use by creating employment for them. Whilst unemployment is a risk it also provides us with a great opportunity to build the infrastructure of the nation, from every Aldeia and Suko up.

Decentralisation, building the country and its physical and social infrastructure from the ground up, provides us with a base from which to create economic stimulation and employment. The development of our nation must be inclusive, and it must be sustainable.

Conclusion: building together a just, inclusive and sustainable nation.

In conclusion, it is time for us to concentrate and stay focused on our collective future, the future of our people. In the spirit of human fraternity and in the spirit of the principles laid down in our own Constitution we must pursue and build together a just, inclusive and sustainable society and nation. We must always try to reach out and build bridges; including with those who in the past we may have had differences and even considered to be enemies. Our ability to engage in respectful dialogue resolve differences is our collective strength. It is the strength of our humility and of our national mission. Humility is the virtue of the truly great people. As a people we must always espouse humanity and compassion. We must always engage in dialogue to build our collective, inclusive and sustainable future.

Obrigadu.