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PRESIDÊNCIA DA REPÚBLICA

Keynote Address

“Supporting the Presidential Vision for Timor-Leste’s Development”

J. Ramos-Horta,
President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste

2022 Timor-Leste and Development Partners Meeting 10 June 2022

Excelências,

First and foremost, I thank the Prime Minister for the invitation extended to me to address this TLDPM and commend his ministerial colleagues and staff for the excellent arrangements for this timely meeting.

I wish to express my warmest gratitude to all our development partners, neighbors and non neighbors, large and small, the United Nations system, programs, funds and specialized agencies, for the two decades of steadfast support and engagement with our people.

As an island State, a small community of people, we are many times more vulnerable, are not immune to global pandemics and war induced catastrophes, irrational intrastate and interstate wars in many parts of the world, and drought or deluge caused by Mother Nature’s reaction to centuries of abuse perpetrated by humankind. Climate change caused by human activities and global pandemic that spreads as fast as human beings travel the world always reach our shores.

The gains made over the last two decades on poverty eradication globally have been reversed with hundreds of millions of fellow human beings across the globe falling back into poverty, having lost their livelihood to lockdowns and the breakdown of the supply chain. Child labor and child slavery have increased exponentially.

Wherever we may be located on this beloved Planet, we feel the impact of catastrophes not of our making.

Excellencies,

Our people are also feeling the impact of these multiple global crisis and I'm afraid the worst is still to come and will hit the miserable shacks of the poorest.

But there's always a light at the end of the tunnel even when times are darkest if we all coalesce around a national vision and agree on actionable goals. The Grande Opções do Plano para 2023, Art. 3o. gives us a wide angle view of what the Government proposes for 2023 and following years.

I believe that we can attain modest prosperity by investing more on green and blue economy with a sustainable community-based tourism, one whose main attraction is not only our exceptionally rich biodiversity, our majestic mountains and history, but also our tolerant, all embracing society making this island an oasis of tranquility and harmony in diversity.

In partnership with neighbors and friends, near and far, we can all be pleased with the progress so far....we have built a functioning democracy, we have a lively free media, an unrestrained civil society, a country at peace, a people reconciled, wounds of past conflicts mostly healed.

On the other hand, we might not have always set our priorities right, we might not always invested wisely and sufficiently in what we should all cherish the most, our mothers and babies.

Your Excellency Prime Minister Taur Matan Ruak,
Excellency Ministers,

Ambassadors,
Representatives of UN agencies
and civil society organizations,
Ladies and gentlemen,

At our 20th independence anniversary we should rightly celebrate the progress we have made thus far, but with courage and humility we should also reflect on our failings. And the “we” I mean us Timorese leaders of all seasons, how we have failed the mothers and babies of this country.

We must ask ourselves how at 20th anniversary of Independence, the country of this size with reasonably adequate financial resources has half of our children living below the poverty line (more than adults), the highest neonatal mortality in the region. With every second child malnourished, this being the third highest child malnutrition rate in the world, it is simply unacceptable.

We invested heavily in electricity which now reaches 96.1% of our people, we have invested in national roads and rural roads, we did invest in Human Capital. Average life expectancy at birth improved by more than 10 years since 2002. In 2002 we had 20 Timorese doctors, today we have over 1100.

But somehow in the race to development we left our children and mothers behind. Their care and needs from us, as the leaders and policy makers of this country, have been almost an afterthought when it comes to passing necessary legislations, and allocating adequate government budget for the 42% of this country’s population – our children.

My plead to our Government, Parliament and our Development Partners is let’s work together, all without exception, Government and Opposition, Catholic Church and all other religious leaders, private sector, civil society, Chefes de Suku, to have a Timor-Leste where no child dies at birth, and where every child is healthy, well-nourished, learning, and safe.

To achieve this vision, I propose our government and development partners to have a targeted focus on two priorities:

1 The first priority is to reduce child malnutrition, especially in the first 1000 days between a child's conception to the second birthday. As we all should know, after a child turns two, it is almost impossible to reverse the effects of malnutrition. Breast feeding has been declining alarmingly and this is due to ignorance and the unscrupulous promotion of formula milk. I urge the Govt to urgently adopt the WHO Breast Feeding Code that has been languishing in the Health Ministry for almost a decade. The combination of poverty, ignorance and unrestrained commercial promotion of artificial milk formulas play a critical part in the spread of the scourge of stunting among our children.

2. The second priority is to provide access to pre-school education for every child - to build a strong foundation for our children so they achieve their full developmental potential, don't drop out of schools and finish their studies.

Let me unpack why I have chosen these two areas as my top presidential priorities.

First, as we know, almost half of the Timorese children are malnourished and therefore:

- They are 4 times more likely to die,
- They have impaired brain development,
- They are more likely to keep getting sick due to weak immune system,
- They are less likely to complete their education, due to lower IQ and cognitive ability, and
 - They are likely to earn less.

This means that if we do not do something today, the potential of half of our future generation will go to waste. We will not have the 'human capital' needed to develop this country, to take on jobs, to start businesses, and to contribute to the economic development of Timor-Leste.

A second priority is to ensure that every 3- to 5-year-old is enrolled in a pre-school. It is critical because in the first five years of life, more than one million neural connections are formed each second – a pace never repeated again in our lives.

The quality of a child's early experiences makes a critical difference as their brains develop, providing either strong or weak foundations for learning, health and behaviour throughout life.

Currently, 75% of Timorese children do not attend pre-school. 56% of children under five years of age are not on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being.

We do not have to go far to witness examples of successful countries that invested in the health and education of their children and are now enjoying the returns of their investments.

Take South Korea, for example, a country that I know well. South Korea has achieved remarkable success in combining rapid economic growth with significant poverty reduction. The country's achievement is even more impressive considering that less than 25% of the country is usable for agriculture or other economic activity and that South Korea possesses very few natural resources. Like Timor-Leste, South Korea also experienced a devastating civil war in which a major part of its infrastructure was destroyed. One of the main achievements of the Korean government during the 1950s was the eradication of illiteracy through a rapid expansion of educational institutions.

In conclusion, let me propose 2 practical steps to turn around the dire situation of Timorese children and achieve my vision:

One, the government should allocate more budget to combat child malnutrition within the overall nutrition sector.

I congratulate the Prime Minister who recently launched the "National Health Sector Nutrition Strategic Plan for 2022 – 2026". Now the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Health should ensure that budget is allocated to the implementation of this Strategic Plan.

I also propose that the Ministry of Health considers establishing a Nutrition Directorate in the Ministry in order to move the nutrition agenda to the right level. I have also nominated a Senior Adviser on nutrition and food security to support this cause.

Second, every Suku should have a pre-school. I understand that UN agencies have successfully piloted cost-effective models such as community pre-schools.

The Ministry of Education must reach 100% enrolment of children in pre-schools across the country.

Let me take this opportunity to also share that as a first step in this direction, I will launch a model pre-school at the Presidential Palace. I have also directed my team to establish an Early Childhood Development Group, to be chaired by the President's Office, which will include all line ministries, development partners and civil society organizations.

I believe that all the development partners present here, and the government of Timor-Leste, will support my vision to have a Timor-Leste where no child dies at birth, and where every child is healthy, well-nourished, learning, and safe.

I pledge that I will do everything in capacity to stand with you in this endeavour.

I thank you.

Diskursu Prezidente Repúblika Dr. José Ramos-Horta iha Enkontru Timor-Leste Development Partners Meeting (TLDPM)

“TOGETHER WE WORK TO RECOVER THE ECONOMY TOWARDS A RESILIENT SOCIETY”

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Sesta-feira, 10 Juñu 2022

Exelénsia,

Ba dahuluk liu, ha'u agradese ba Primeiru Ministru ba konvite ne'ebé mak diriji mai ha'u atu halo diskursu iha TLDPM no eloja ninia kolega ministerial no funsionáriu sira hodi organiza enkontru oportunu exellente ida-ne'e.

Ha'u hakarak hato'o ha'u-nia gratidaun ba parseiru dezenvolvimentu sira hotu, viziñu no la'ós viziñu, bo'ot no ki'ik, Sistema Nasaun Unidas, programa, fundus, ajénsia espesializada, ba kontinua apoia durante dékada rua no engajamentu ho ami-nia povu sira.

Nu'udar País illa, comunidade ki'ik, dalabarak ami sai vulneravel liu, laiha imunidade ba pandemia globál, funu ne'ebé hamosu katastrófe, funu intra-estadu no entre-estadu irrasional akontese iha fatin barak iha mundu, no rai-maran (bailoron naruk) ka inundasaun tanba Inan Natureza nia reasaun ba abuzu durante sékulu ba sékulu ne'ebé komete husi ema. Mudansa klimatiku kauza husi atividade umanu no pandemia globál ne'ebé espalla lalais hanesan mós ho ema ne'ebé halo vijajen iha mundu sempre to'o iha ita-nia rai.

Atinjimentu iha dékada rua ikus kona-ba eradikasaun pobreza globalmente reverte fali ba ema miliaun-ba-miliaun ne'ebé filafali ba pobreza iha mundu tomak, lakon sira-nia rendimentu tanba konfinamentu no interupsaun kadeia abastesimentu (supply chain). Traballadór labarik no eskridaun labarik aumenta exponensialmente.

Iha ne'ebé de'it ita lokaliza iha planeta ida-ne'e, ita sente impaktu husi katástrofe ne'ebé la'ós ita mak kria.

Exelénsia sira,

Ita-nia povu sira mós sente impaktu husi krizi globál oioin no ha'u preokupa karik aat liu ne'e sei mosu no ataka ema kiak sira-nia baraka ne'ebé miserável.

Maibé sempre iha naramon iha túnel nia rohan maske iha tempu ne'ebé nakukun loos bainhira ita hotu hamutuk iha vizaun nasionál ida no konkorda kona-ba meta ne'ebé bele implementa. Grande Opscoes do para 2023, Art. 30. Oferese pontudevista ampla kona-ba saida mak Governu propoin ba 2023 no tinan hirak tuirmai.

Ha'u fiar katak ita bele hetan prosperidade natoon liuhusi investe iha ekonomia matak no azúl ho turismu sustentavel baze iha comunidade, ne'ebé ninia atrasaun prinsipál la'ós de'it ita-nia rikusoin biodiversidade ne'ebé exesionál, ita-nia foho kmanek no istória sira, maibé mós ita-nia toleransia, no sosiedade abranjente ne'ebé halo illa ne'e sai fatin hakmatek no armonia iha diversidade.

Parseria ho viziñu no maluk sira, besik no dook, ita hotu bele haksolok ho progresu to'o ohin loraun ... ita harii ona demokrasia ida-ne'ebé funsiona ho di'ak, ita iha mídia ne'ebé livre, no sosiedade sívil ne'ebé la-kontroladu, nasaun ne'ebé iha dame, povu sira rekonsiliadu, kanek sira husi konflitu pasadu mairoia kura ona.

Iha parte seluk, dalaruma ita la-sempré estabelese ita-nia prioridade ho loloos, ita la-sempré investe ho matenek no sufisientemente ba buat ne'ebé ita hotu tenke valoriza liu, mak ita-nia inan no bebé sira.

Sua Exelénsia Primeiru-Ministru Taur Matan Ruak,
Exelénsia Ministru sira,
Embaixador,

Representante Ajénsia ONU sira
No organizaun sosiedade sívil
Señor no señora sira

Iha ita-nia aniversáriu independénsia ba dala 20, ita tenke celebra duni progresu ne'ebé ita halo ona to'o agora, maibé ho aten-brani no haraik-an, ami mós tenke refleta ami-nia faillansu. No "ami" ha'u refere ba ami lider Timoroan sira iha tempu hotu-hotu, oinsá ita falla ba inan no oan sira iha nasaun ida-ne'e.

Ita tenke husu ita nia-an oinsá aniversáriu independénsia ba dala 20, nasaun ida-ne'ebé ho rekursu financeiru adekua ne'ebé razoavel, iha metade husi ninia labarik sira moris iha liña pobreza nia okos (liu ema adultu sira), nasaun ida-ne'ebé iha mortalidade neonatál ás liu iha rejiaun, no nasaun ne'ebé kada labarik daruak sofre malnutrisaun, nu'udar taxa malnutrisaun ne'ebé ás datoluk iha mundu. Ida-ne'e simplesmente la-asetavel.

Ita investe maka'as iha eletrisidade ne'ebé agora asesu ona husi ita-nia povu 96.1%, ita investe ona iha estrada nasionál no estrada rurál, ita investe iha Kapital Umanu. Desde tinan 2002, médiu esperansa moris aumenta ba tinan 10 liu. Iha 2002 ita iha doutór Timoroan nain 20, ohin loron ita iha ona doutór liu 1100.

Maibe tansá mak kompete ba dezvoltimentu ita husik hela ita-nia oan no inan sira iha kotuk.

Sira-nia nesesidade no kuidadu husi ita, nu'udar lider no ema ne'ebé foti desizaun polítika iha nasaun ida-ne'e, kuaze hanesan reflesaun ida liga ba aprovasaun legislasaun ne'ebé nesesáriu, no aloka orsamentu governu ne'ebé adekua ba populasaun 42% iha nasaun ida-ne'e - mak ita-nia oan sira.

Ha'u-nia apelu ba ami-nia Governu, Parlamentu no Parseiru Dezvoltimentu mai ita serbisu hamutuk, hotu-hotu sein exesaun, Governu no Opozisaun, lider Igreja Katólíka no relijiaun sira seluk, setór privadu, sosiedade sívil, xefe suku, atu iha Timor-Leste ida-ne'ebé laiha tan bebé mate bainhira moris, no ida-ne'ebé labarik hotu-hotu saudável, nutrisaun di'ak, aprende no seguru.

Atu atinji vizaun ida-ne'e, ha'u rekomenda ba ita-nia governu no parseiru dezvoltimentu sira atu iha alvu ne'ebé konsentradu ba prioridade rua:

Prioridade dahuluk atu redús malnutrisaun ba labarik, liuliu iha loron 1000 dahuluk entre konsepsaun (bebé iha knotak) to'o bebé sira halo tinan daruak. Ita hotu tenke hatene katak, hafoin labarik halo ona tinan rua, kuaze imposivel atu revertete efetu malnutrisaun.

Fó-susubeen inan ba bebé diminui alarmante no ida-ne'e tanba ignoransia no promosaun susubeen formula ne'ebé laiha moral. Ha'u husu ba governu atu urujentemente adota kódigu OMS susubeen inan nian ne'ebé keleur ona iha Ministériu Saúde to'o kuaze dékada ida. Kombinasaun husi pobreza, ignoransia no promosaun komersial susubeen formula artifisial hola papel kritical ba prevalénsia raes-badak ne'ebé akontese ba ita-nia oan sira.

Prioridade daruak mak atu fornese asesu ba edukasaun pre-eskolar ba labarik hotu-hotu— atu harii baze ne'ebé forte ba ita-nia oan sira atu nune'e sira bele atinji sira-nia dezvoltimentu pontensial tomak, labele para eskola, no remata sira-nia estudu.

Permite ha'u atu esplika tansá mak ha'u hili área rua ne'e hanesan ha'u-nia prioridade prezidensiál ne'ebé prinsipál.

Dahuluk, hanesan ita hotu hatene katak, kuaze metade labarik timoroan sira malnutrisaun no tan ne'e:

Sira iha possibilidade ba risku atu mate dala 4

Sira nia dezvoltimentu kakutak la-di'ak

Sira iha risku atu moras hela de'it tanba sira-nia imunidade fraku

Sira iha possibilidade atu la kompleta sira-nia edukasaun, tanba sira nia IQ no abilidade kognitivu menus,

Sira iha possibilidade liu atu hetan rendimentu ki'ik.

Ida-ne'e signífika katak se ita la halo buatruma agora, possibilidade metade husi ita-nia futuru jerasaun sei lakon leet de'it. Ita sei laiha 'kapital umanu' ne'ebé persija atu dezenvolve nasaun ida-ne'e, atu halo serbisu, atu hahú negósiu, no atu kontribui ba dezenvolvimentu ekonomia iha Timor-Leste.

Ha'u-nia prioridade daruak mak atu asegura katak labarik tinan 3 to'o 5 inskreve iha pre-eskolar. Ida-ne'e, importante tanba iha tinan lima dahuluk, koneksaun neural liu miliaun ida mak forma kada segudus - ritmu ida-ne'ebé nunka bele repete fali iha ita-nia moris.

Labarik ninia qualidade esperiéncia dahuluk halo diferensia ne'ebé krítiku bainhira sira-nia kakutak dezenvolve, bele fornese baze ne'ebé forte ka fraku ba aprendizajen no komportamentu iha sira-nia moris tomak.

Dadaun ne'e, labarik timoroan 75% sira la atende pre-eskolar. Labarik tinan lima mai kraik 56% ninia saúde, aprendizajen no bem-estar psikososial la la' o ho di'ak.

Ita la persija atu ba do'ok hodi hatene ezemplu husi nasaun susesu sira, ne'ebé investe iha saúde no edukasaun ba labarik sira no agora aproveita retornu ba sira-nia investimentu. Ezemplu, Korea do Sul.

Korea do Sul atinji susesu ne'ebé notavel iha kombinasan entre kresimentu ekonomia ne'ebé lalais no redusaun pobreza ne'ebé signifikante. Atinjimentu nasaun nian ne'e impresionante tebes, bainhira ita konsidera katak menus husi 25% husi sira-nia rai (nasaun) mak uza ba agrikultura ka atividade ekonomia seluk no Korea do Sul iha rekursu natural ne'ebé limitadu tebes. Hanesan mós ho Timor-Leste, Korea do Sul iha esperiéncia funu sívil ne'ebé estraga maioria infraestrutura. Atinjimentu prinsipál ida husi governu Korea iha 1950s mak eradikasaun analfabetismu liuhusi ekspansan instituisaun edukasaun ho lalais.

Nu'udar konklusaun, permite ha'u rekomenda pasu prátiiku 2 atu reverta situasaun terivel labarik timoroan sira nian no atinji ha'u-nia vizaun:

Ida, governu tenke aloka orsamentu liután atu kombat malnutrisaun ba labarik sira iha setór nutrisaun tomak.

Ha'u kongratula Primeiru Ministru ne'ebé foin lalais lansa ona "Planu Estratéjiku Nasionál Setór Saúde ba 2022 – 2026". Agora Gabinete Primeiru Ministru no Ministriu Saúde tenke asegura katak iha alokasaun orsamentu ba implementasaun Planu Estratéjiku ida-ne'e.

Ha'u mós rekomenda ba Ministriu Saúde atu konsidera hodi estabele Diresaun Nasionál Nutrisaun iha Ministriu atu progresa agenda nutrisaun ba nivel ne'ebé loos. Ha'u mós nomeia tiha ona asesor ba nutrisaun no seguransa ai-han atu apoiu objetivu ida-ne'e.

Daruak, suku ida-idak tenke iha pre-eskolar. Ha'u hatene katak ajénsia ONU ho susesu pilotu ona modelu ne'ebé kustu efetiivu hanesan pre-eskolar komunitária

Ministriu Edukasaun tenke atinji matríkula 100% ba labarik sira iha pre-eskolar iha nasaun tomak.

Permite ha'u uza oportunidade ida-ne'e atu fahe mós katak pasu dahuluk ba asaun ida-ne'e mak ha'u sei lansa modelu pre-eskolar iha Palásiu Prezidensiál. Ha'u mós husu ona ba ha'u-nia ekipa atu estabele Grupu Dezenvolvimentu Infánsia nian, ne'ebé sei lidera husi Gabinete Prezidente, ida-ne'ebé sei envolve liña ministeriál hotu-hotu, parseiru dezenvolvimentu no organizasaun sosiedade sívil.

Ha'u fiar katak parseiru dezenvolvimentu hotu-hotu mak prezensa iha ne'e, no governu Timor-Leste, sei suporta ha'u-nia vizaun atu iha Timor-Leste ida-ne'ebé laiha tan bebé mate bainhira moris, no ida-ne'ebé labarik hotu-hotu saudável, nutrisaun di'ak, aprende no seguru.

Ha'u promote katak ha'u sei halo buat hotu ho poder no kapasidade ne'ebé ha'u iha hodi apoia imi iha esforsu ida-ne'e.

Ha'u-nia obrigado.