

**Welcome Remarks by H.E. Eng. Gastão Francisco de Sousa  
Minister of Planning and Strategic Investment  
Infrastructure Sector Session, Timor-Leste Development Partners  
Meeting 2026**

**Day 2**

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished Development Partners,  
Representatives of Civil Society,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Bom dia and good morning.

It is with great honor and privilege that I welcome you to the Infrastructure Sector Session of the Timor-Leste Development Partners Meeting 2026.

We gather today at a truly pivotal moment for our nation. Your presence here—your continued friendship, your expertise, and your commitment—underscores the collective determination that has brought Timor-Leste so far on its development journey. For that, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each of you.

**A Foundation Laid, A New Phase Begins**

As many of you know, since the establishment of the Infrastructure Fund in 2011, we have allocated approximately 5.9 billion USD to our infrastructure agenda, with over 3.5 billion executed across more than 2,000 projects. Thousands of kilometers of roads, nationwide electrification reaching 99% of households, new ports and airports—these are not merely statistics. They are the tangible foundation of our national progress.

But today, we are not here to celebrate the past alone. We are here to chart the future.

The Government is finalising the **Medium-Term Plan (MTP) 2027–2030**, which will guide the final phase of our Strategic Development Plan 2011–2030. Through a rigorous whole-of-government process, one message has emerged with absolute clarity:

## **Infrastructure must now become a direct driver of economic diversification.**

For years, our focus was necessarily on basic connectivity and public services. That phase was essential. Now, we must shift.

### **The Strategic Shift: From Connectivity to Competitiveness**

The MTP 2027–2030 represents a fundamental change in how Timor-Leste plans, delivers, and manages infrastructure.

#### **First, we are moving from project-based planning to results-based delivery.**

Not just more projects, but measurable outcomes: lower transport costs, faster market access, reliable services, and real economic opportunities for our people.

#### **Second, we are moving from expansion alone to sustainability and maintenance.**

We must protect what we have built. Many roads still deteriorate too quickly. Water losses remain too high. Rural systems fail too often. This ends now. We will invest in asset management, maintenance systems, and financially sustainable utilities.

#### **Third, we are moving from fragmented investments to integrated economic corridors.**

Roads, electricity, water, ports, and digital connectivity cannot operate in silos. They must work together to unlock regional growth—for agriculture, tourism, fisheries, logistics, and the digital economy.

### **Our Priorities for 2030**

Over the MTP period, our focus will be targeted and disciplined:

- **Roads:** Rehabilitate and seal 480 km of national roads, upgrade over 650 km of rural roads, and strengthen climate-resilient maintenance.
- **Water & Sanitation:** Deliver 40,000 new household connections, rehabilitate 150 rural systems, and expand urban networks.
- **Energy:** Reduce system losses and develop over 50 MW of renewable capacity.

- **Ports & Airports:** Rehabilitate regional ports, upgrade municipal airports, and pilot electric bus systems in Dili.
- **Digital:** Expand nationwide broadband for full participation in the digital economy.

At the centre of this is **stronger governance**. We are strengthening our Public Investment Management system and developing a National Priority Infrastructure Pipeline to ensure every dollar is economically justified, climate-resilient, and aligned with national priorities.

### **Acknowledging the Challenges**

We do not stand here unaware of the road ahead. We face real constraints: limited fiscal space, geographical vulnerabilities, and the growing threat of climate change and natural disasters. Ensuring transparency, accountability, and effective governance remains a constant and necessary challenge.

But these challenges do not deter us. They define our work.

### **Our Invitation to You**

Distinguished Development Partners,

The Government cannot achieve these ambitions alone. We therefore invite your continued partnership—not merely as financiers, but as strategic allies—in four critical areas:

1. **Financing strategic infrastructure** that drives diversification.
2. **Strengthening institutions** for procurement, maintenance, and asset management.
3. **Mobilising private sector participation** in energy, water, and transport.
4. **Supporting climate resilience** and technical implementation capacity.

### **Our Shared Goal by 2030**

Our objective is not simply to build more infrastructure. It is to ensure that infrastructure delivers measurable economic and social returns for every Timorese citizen.

By 2030, we want to see:

- Farmers reaching markets faster and at lower cost.
- Businesses operating with reliable electricity and high-speed internet.
- Families accessing clean water and safe, affordable transport.
- Our municipalities becoming stronger, more equitable centres of opportunity.

**This is how infrastructure becomes the foundation of a diversified, resilient, and prosperous Timor-Leste.**

The Timor-Leste Development Partners Meeting is our premier platform for honest dialogue and shared strategy. I urge each of you to engage actively, share your experiences, and contribute your expertise. Together, we can shape strategies that are not only ambitious but also practical, accountable, and attuned to the evolving needs of our people.

I now invite my fellow Ministers to discuss the priorities, challenges, and opportunities in their respective portfolios.

With that, I once again extend my warmest welcome. I look forward to a productive and fruitful discussion.

Obrigado barak. Thank you.