



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

ADDRESS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER
KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO
ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF THE
TIMOR-LESTE TRANSPARENCY PORTAL

Dili Convention Centre,

15 March 2011

Your Excellency the President of the Republic
Honourable Members of Parliament
Honourable Government Members
Honourable Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Distinguished Members from the Church
Distinguished Director-Generals and National Directors
Distinguished Civil Society Representatives
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure today to welcome you to the launch of the Timor-Leste Transparency Portal.

Since the IV Constitutional Government came to office, on 8 August 2007, we have been walking a long path to strengthen the institutional capacity of public administration, so as to better protect the interests of the State, to improve public service delivery and, of course, to promote good governance.

As such, it is a great honour for me to be here today at the launch of the Transparency Portal, which will enable real time data on State expenditure that can be accessed by the public through a website.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This Portal represents much more than the development of a mechanism for promoting transparency, accountability and control in regard to the public accounts of the State. This Portal represents **the true transformation of our State**, particularly in Public Administration, which “step by step” has been adopting new efficiencies, innovation and accountability standards.

This was the commitment we made when we accepted the challenge of governing the Country for five years, that is, to implement bold policies enabling the social and economic development of the country and the reduction of poverty.

This goal can only be achieved with a strong Government that is transparent and that does not favour one party over others; when we have the necessary instruments to oversee

Government members, Directors and other public servants, so that they do not misuse the financial resources that belong to the People and that they never put their individual interests above the interests of the whole.

Ladies and gentlemen, this oversight, this control over the public accounts of the State, can now be performed by ALL Timorese citizens, regardless of whether they reside in Timor-Leste or anywhere in the world!

Timor-Leste is, therefore, leading one of the most progressive systems in the world, enabling any person to have access to the Timor-Leste State General Budget process, as well as to its tax execution, in real time and in an interactive manner.

Your Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have achieved reforms in the area of Public Finance Management that resulted in efficiency improvements, including a significant degree of decentralisation to enable better service delivery to our People.

The reform and improvement process continues every day, step by step, as we continue to build on the foundations that have already been set.

Civil servants are first with front line responsibility for providing services to the entire population, and have the potential to contribute to improving the living situation of the Timorese People.

Therefore they must – or rather ALL OF US HERE IN ATTENDANCE MUST – perform our duties with greater efficiency and professionalism, making better use of the available tools and mechanisms that support integrity and productivity.

And so, the establishment of the Civil Service Commission, in full knowledge that civil servants are vital to our economy and are, currently, the main driver of economic growth given their management and administration of public investment.

It was also in pursuing greater accountability in the national development process that we established the Anti-Corruption Commission. We have also began a process of reform to

Public Finance Management and started to set up a Superior Audit Agency, which, for the time being, is the Chamber of Accounts. This Chamber will constitute part of the Court of Appeal with the mandate of promoting transparency in public accounts and ensuring accountability in regard to reporting.

I say all this to put in context this reform, to show that the Transparency Portal is just one more measure from this Government to achieve the goals set out in our 5-year Program, particularly in regard to:

- Fighting corruption in Government and Public Administration;
- Implementing the principle of Good Governance, including encouraging the People to take part in political decisions and their execution;
- Creating transparency mechanisms;
- Establishing an efficient and transparent system so that the entire population knows how the executive carries out the tasks given to it.

The Government is also committed to managing the revenue flow with accountability and transparency, investing in the development of the Nation.

In July last year we became the third country in the world to be given full compliance status with the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

In October last year we were recognised in the first ever Revenue Watch index as a Government with Comprehensive Revenue Transparency.

Further, and as we have done since the beginning of our mandate, this year we held a full parliamentary debate on the State Budget that was conducted transparently and televised to the public. This degree of public accountability is something that is not seen in many countries in the world.

I said it then, and say it again to you now, that as we see people across the globe crying out for democracy, this type of transparency proves that our people have reasons to be proud of their Democratic Institutions. And indeed, we all ought to be proud of our Nation's democracy.

Your Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Public Administration Reform is already in full swing.

With this reform, the Principle of Bringing Public Services Closer to the Population and the Principle of Participation by all Stakeholders in Public Administration, particularly Civil Society representatives, has already been realised!

Through the Transparency Portal we provide an innovative way of calling upon all Timorese to be involved in the very operation of public administration and, in as much as possible, participate in Government decision making.

Starting today, people will be able to go on-line and monitor the books of public expenditure, with information updated daily. People can see how the budget is being executed, what is being spent in each Ministry, Department and Directorate and on what category of items.

For a Government that is committed to broad development throughout the country, it is important that the public has access to this information.

At a time when we are preparing to make significant investments through the Infrastructure Fund and Human Capacity Development Fund, we now have an important instrument for monitoring our expenditure.

As we work towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals through the MDG Suco program we can see what is being spent and where. Furthermore, the expenditure information concerning the Decentralised Development Programs will be updated daily.

This innovative Portal will also be strengthened with the launch of the Procurement Portal, which will take place in Dili, on 25-27 August, on the occasion of the large Regional Conference on the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) that we are currently organising and where we hope to see each and every one of you.

We are aware that the Timor-Leste Transparency Portal will raise many questions, and some of these may require some time and some knowledge of public accounting to reconcile. But we also know that this is part of the process for reforming and improving our Institutions.

I urge you to use this Portal for the good of Timor-Leste, as I believe that it will contribute:

- to detailed research on the country,
- to foster knowledge and understanding, and
- to bolster our national development.

As such, I cannot but thank the Minister of Finance and her entire team for their commitment and hard work in this difficult task that is the promotion of Transparency and Good Governance, particularly in regard to the management of the public finances of the State.

That being said, and since in this case images speak louder than words, let us all log on to the Transparency Portal and witness another major step in our Country's path towards development.

I officially launch the Timor-Leste Transparency Portal.

Thank you very much.

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão

15 March 2011