



**P R I M E
M I N I S T E R**

**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME-MINISTER OF THE
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE,
MR. RUI MARIA DE ARAÚJO,
AT THE 70TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

**UN, New York
October 1, 2015**

Your Excellency, Mr. President of the General Assembly of the United Nations
Your Excellency, Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations
Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with the utmost pleasure that I address this prestigious Organization today. It is my privilege to take this podium for the first time in this General Assembly, particularly because the Member States are together celebrating its 70th anniversary.

This is undoubtedly a historical moment in the life of the United Nations, when we can celebrate and honestly reflect on the principles and the spirit that were at the genesis of this Organization, as well as the failures and successes over these 70 years. These failures and successes are intimately associated with various world events, including the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, whose status as a sovereign State was internationally recognized on May 20, 2002.

Nonetheless, the world has changed dramatically since the United Nations Charter was signed seven decades ago, in 1945. Today we are an Organization with 193 Member States, many of which formed after the end of World War II.

The world in the 21st century is marked by a combination of complexities, challenges, and different opportunities that require coordinated action by the States. While in the 1940s we already had the audacity to proclaim that “no country is an island,” this adage becomes even more real in our own century, with the advances in communication and transportation technologies that transform our world into a globalized village in which distance and location are no longer impediments to the interaction among peoples and States. This requires from us a stronger commitment to understanding and cooperation as a means to better capitalize on the potentials and to minimize the adverse risks of this new reality.

Our commitment to the principles of the United Nations Charter and the multilateral system thus constitutes an indispensable element in the interactions of humanity in our century.

Today, we must again reaffirm our commitment to “protecting future generations from the scourge of war” and reiterate our “faith in fundamental human rights,” with dignity and equality for all. We must strengthen our commitment to justice and respect for all obligations that emanate from Treaties and international law to promote “social progress and better living conditions with greater liberty.”

These ideals are the pillars of this Organization and have guided its work since its foundation but we must acknowledge that they have yet to respond to the aspirations of all peoples in all nations of the world. This is an opportune moment to renew our efforts toward fulfilling these principles. To this end, the United Nations need a reform that will allow it to respond to the challenges emerging from the new circumstances of our century.

Reforming the Security Council has been pointed out as one of the requirements to make the Council more representative and balanced.

Improving the system is the only way for us to be prepared for the long journey ahead toward fulfilling and honoring the promise of peace, security, and human rights for all.

A few days ago, we all met to launch the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Through the change imprinted on this new agenda, we have redefined the pillar of development of the United Nations and reoriented the planet toward sustainable development. The dynamic of change must now focus on the other pillars of this Organization, which are peace and security, and human rights.

Mr. President of the General Assembly
Ladies and gentlemen,

The United Nations Organization was born out of the need for the various States to pursue closer relations and work together in a world dismayed and marked by the shards of war. Conflicts and violence continue to ravage the world, and millions of people continue to be forced to abandon their homes and countries. We currently have the largest number of refugees since World War II. And estimates indicate that this number should increase. In addition to these refugees, there are many other people who migrate in search of better opportunities.

We are seeing thousands of people arriving in Europe every day, trying to escape threats to their lives, which they face in the conflict zones in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan, among several other countries. It is crucial that we bear in mind that we must provide those who are forced to flee persecution and armed conflict with the protection to which they are entitled under international law. We cannot forget that crises, wherever they crop up, can drag on and spread indiscriminately, affecting the economy, social life, peace and stability in the regions and in the world.

Notwithstanding the progress achieved since the establishment of the United Nations in 1945, we must acknowledge that there remains much to do and fulfill. Conflicts and crises still persist in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Europe, and the Americas. The Saharawi, Palestinian, and many other peoples continue to be denied their fundamental rights.

When there is disagreement, leaders must recognize that dialog is a means to an end. Timor-Leste is particularly pleased with and congratulates the United States of America and the Republic of Cuba for their reestablishment of diplomatic relations, and wishes that a frank and open dialog may quickly lead to the removal of impediments to economic, financial, and trade relations.

Mr. President of the General Assembly,
Ladies and gentlemen,

New and different threats to peace, security, and human rights have emerged since the creation of the United Nations. Terrorism, organized crime, and extreme violence are new obstacles to international peace and security. The United Nations and the international community must adapt to these new threats in order to ensure a process

to build peace and to build an inclusive, responsible, and transparent State with a view to achieving lasting peace.

Another challenge, which may not appear as constantly in the social media but equally affects us, is climate change, and the international community is approaching a moment of decision in this regard. The discussions that will take place at the end of this year in Paris must produce universal, ambitious, and legally binding results.

It is time to act with respect to climate change!

The whole world is advancing toward a consensus that recognizes the urgency of combating climate change, including citizens, civil society, and religious leaders, as seen in the message conveyed by His Holiness Pope Francis and the declaration by Muslim leaders, underscoring our moral duty to protect those who are most vulnerable and to care for the planet we inhabit.

We also know that the impacts of climate change are even more pronounced in developing small island States, which are on the frontlines of this struggle. Our neighboring islands in the Pacific have been assailed by the same storms and by an increase in the number of natural disasters, which are compounded, as if they were not enough, by soil erosion and the rise of sea levels.

Mr. President of the General Assembly,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Timor-Leste has been a part of the community of nations for thirteen years and is ready to roll up its sleeves, leverage its national experience, and contribute to the international community.

We are a young nation but this has never been nor will it ever be a reason for us to ignore events and realities of the world we share. We officially announce our desire to join ASEAN, boost progress in fragile States through the G7+ group, and adopt the international mechanisms for the promotion of peace, democracy, justice, and human rights.

We have served in the presidency *pro tempore* of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries since 2014. We wish to instill a new dynamic in this Community of sister nations and bring it to the forefront of economic globalization and investment opportunities that may be brought to bear to improve the living conditions of our peoples and also to contribute to the development, peace, and stability of the peoples of the world.

We had the opportunity to share our experience with other brotherly countries and peoples, such as Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé & Príncipe, and the Central African Republic.

Timor-Leste's participation on the stage of international politics reflects our conviction regarding the importance of solidarity, mutual respect, and cooperation for a better world.

We have also undergone a government transition recently. After many years at the helm of our country, our historical leadership, among which the former Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão and former President of the Republic Dr. José Ramos-Horta here present, understood that Timor-Leste lacked a model of inclusive democracy. This democratic inclusion, which gave origin to the current VI Constitutional Government, was achieved in a peaceful and dignifying manner. The Government that I am honored to lead is committed to preserving the previously achieved peace and stability, as well as advancing the efforts of previous Governments in fostering growth and development in our country and the well-being of our people.

However, the road ahead for the Timorese is still long and arduous. In addition to further building our institutions and promoting sustainable development, the national consensus in Timor-Leste is that we must work toward the full assertion of our national sovereignty under international law and standards. And this full assertion of our sovereignty includes the demarcation of our maritime borders with our two great neighboring nations: Indonesia and Australia. As a matter of principle, Timor-Leste resorts to negotiations pursuant to international law and standards and, when dialog fails to resolve disagreements, our country chooses to use international conflict-resolution mechanisms.

Though small, Timor-Leste has also contributed to the development of nations. The recent report of the High Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, chaired by former President José Ramos-Horta, proposed fundamental shifts for the future of peace operations, which will impact the lives of many thousands of people.

The four major shifts proposed by the Panel help to enhance the credibility, relevance, and legitimacy of the United Nations, making it effective in preventing and resolving conflicts, peacemaking and peacekeeping, so peoples may live in security and freedom.

Mr. President of the General Assembly,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Over the last three years, we have witnessed an unprecedented effort on the part of the Member States of the United Nations and the community in general to redefine our approach to sustainable development.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development embodies a remarkable balance of interests and priorities with a set of goals that are profoundly interlinked and indivisible.

Timor-Leste is particularly pleased with the inclusion of Goal 16, which strengthens the essential elements of peace, justice, and institutions. We know from our own experience that these elements are crucial to our joint commitment “not to leave anyone behind” on our path toward sustainable development. Goal 16 is the basis for a truly inclusive agenda and, together with Goals 5 and 17, serves as the cornerstone for the achievement of the other goals. Timor-Leste is committed to working with other countries and development partners, and sharing what little we have to implement these and other sustainable development goals.

In conclusion, I wish to thank the United Nations, its Secretary-General, the President of this august General Assembly, and all Member States of the United Nations here present, as well as all sectors of society that supported us in our struggle for liberation until we were recognized as a sovereign State.

It is with humility that we once again express our profound gratitude and declare our commitment to being a part of this great team of nations, which fights tirelessly for a more prosperous, just, and peaceful world, as we believe that nations, when united, are much stronger and produce better results.

Thank you very much.

Dr Rui Maria de Araújo
1 October 2015