



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

**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE
KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 69th SESSION OF THE
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

**UNESCAP
BANGKOK, THAILAND**

29 April 2013

H.E. Mr. Thein Sein, President of Myanmar

H.E. Mr. Gordon Darcy Lilo, Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands

H.E. Mr. Plodprasop Suraswadi, Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand

H.E. Mr. Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations

H.E. Ms. Noeleen Heyzer, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank you all for the confidence placed in me and the great honour that you have bestowed on my country and on me.

I am aware of the great responsibility of serving as the Chairperson of our Commission, and I am very thankful I will have the benefit of the expert leadership of the Executive Secretary of ESCAP, Dr. Noeleen Heyzer.

The annual Commission session is the highest intergovernmental forum for policy dialogue on development issues in the Asian and Pacific region. The Commission session is the most inclusive regional platform for our 62 Governments, to forge Asia-Pacific perspectives on economic and social development challenges.

Please allow me to say a few additional words.

Distinguished delegates
Ladies and gentlemen,

66 years ago, the great and visionary Nehru made a call to countries to stand-up together and to face the challenges of that time, and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Far East was formed.

I have to say, in 1947, I was 1 year old and my people were trying to dry out the tears of the devastation of the Second World War.

In 1974, while the organisation changed its name to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, my people were involved, in a violent way, in breaking 500 years of colonial rule, having unilaterally declared our independence on 28 November 1975.

Nine days later, Timor-Leste was invaded and occupied for 24 years which forced us into a long and difficult struggle.

So it is a great honour and indeed, recognition of the fighting spirit and resilience of my people, to chair this Commission Session today.

This Commission session aims to achieve inclusive and sustainable economic and social development for our region.

As much of the world faces austerity, the Asia Pacific region is making remarkable progress and is home to emerging economies that are driving global growth and lifting millions from poverty. We should all feel proud to be part of this region, which is becoming a centre of global economic and strategic weight.

While our region does face growing tensions we all trust that international leaders will move beyond statements made in good faith and will take constructive actions – and participate in real dialogue and active engagement – so that we can move beyond these concerns to focus on the needs of our people.

The economic success in our region has already helped so many people out of poverty and has been an inspiration to the LDCs. And it seems that we are all enlightened by the big picture of the Asian Century.

Regrettably, some of the economic growth in our region has often not been balanced and inequality is rising, and we are still home to nearly two-thirds of the world's poor people.

The real problem in today's world is the need for economic growth v's social exclusion and inequality or, in another words, is GDP growth v's poverty.

In our region, we can draw a map of countries in, at least, 3 levels of economic and social development (developed, emerging economies and LDCs).

And when we read the analyses from the macroeconomic experts, we get the impression of a colossal and difficult task, that we can call "Mission Impossible".

I have to recognise and value all the hard work that presents us with a very detailed examination of each country and their challenges ahead, which also allows us to have a more global understanding of the need to work together and of the need to change our way of thinking!

Distinguished delegates,

The interdependency of today's economy is a factor that can help one push ahead one's own policy but, at the same time, can create obstacles to others. The fundamental problem is the imbalance among countries.

Some countries, and perhaps countries within a region, are not able to run the economic marathon race together with, we can call, professional runners, in terms of trade policy, imports and exports, inflation, together with investment and core infrastructure. The LDCs are simply disqualified before the start.

Besides this, all the LDCs are not able to address their own priorities from the long list of needs, underscored with equal importance, such as:

- Stability
- Political environment
- Gender issues
- Unemployment
- Education
- Impoverished rural areas
- Human rights
- Health
- Water, Sanitation and Energy
- Food security
- Environment
- And natural disasters among others.

This is the reason I'm here accepting the responsibility to chair this session.

With the support of my colleagues, the Honourable Vice Chairpersons, and the ESCAP Secretariat, I promise to discharge the responsibilities of serving as your Chairperson to help bring about more inclusive, sustainable economic and social development in our region.

And I'm here to make a different call - We have to work together to draw a road map, in a joint approach with a regional and sub-regional integrated development plan.

Isolated efforts will not succeed if we all are committed to lift the 1.5 billion people from poverty, hunger, disease, exclusion and neglect.

Therefore, all the social and economic issues can be addressed together, their barriers and their potential, reducing the difficulties each country faces alone and improving the capabilities for a sustainable growth for all!

Economic growth can only be sustainable if we put emphasis on the improvement in the social well-being of the people.

We have to change the too strict and unhelpful macroeconomic policy standards that only benefit the rich countries, in detriment of the poor.

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates
Ladies and gentlemen,

Later today, this forum will be considering Sustainable Development and the Development Agenda Beyond 2015. And so, I want to draw your attention to an important new collaboration between many of the worlds' fragile nations known as the 'g7+' group.

The group was formed in 2010 to provide a united voice for fragile countries and to advocate for change in global development policies. The 'g7+' knows from bitter experience that without peace and stability there can be no development. Not one fragile or conflict affected nation has achieved even one Millennium Development Goal.

This means that it will not be possible to eradicate poverty in the world without first addressing the issues of fragile and conflict affected countries. That is why the 'g7+' nations are working together to ensure that the post-2015 development agenda addresses the need for peace and stability, and that the perspectives of fragile States are central to the global dialogue.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In February, with the support of ESCAP, Timor-Leste hosted an international conference with the theme "Development for All". The Conference brought together participants from around the world, including Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and it agreed on the "Dili Consensus" that set out our priorities, and hopes, for the post-2015 development agenda.

We recognised that standard approaches to development were failing to acknowledge that the challenges we face in the mountains of Timor-Leste for example, are not the same as those faced by families struggling to survive a drought in Pakistan, or living in a world that is slowly sinking into the vastness of the ocean, like Kiribati.

Next time we have to focus not just on goals and targets – but on means of implementation.

Importantly, it must be recognised that development cannot be achieved when countries are fragile – we must address fragility directly.

And while hunger persists, we cannot speak of democracy and freedom and so we must achieve food security for the sake of our common humanity.

And so, we must make sure that there is local ownership of the development process – we must make sure there is not only "development for all", but "development by all".

I look forward to working with you towards peace, social development and progress. I know that together, and acting with determination and courage, a brighter future belongs to us all.

Thank you very much.

28 April 2013
Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão