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O Ministro dos Negócios Estrangeiros

KEYNOTE ADDRESS
BY

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MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE

Mr. Co-Chairs

Experts and Eminent Persons,

Excellencies, SRSG, Members of the Government,

Distinguished and Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. On behalf of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor- Leste, I am pleased to welcome you all to Dili and to the 5th meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum Experts and Eminent Persons.
2. Since our new nation re-gained independence in 2002, we have worked hard as a people to find our place in the world and particularly in this region. As a result, in our aspirations to achieve full membership of ASEAN, we have now accredited Ambassadorial Representation to all ASEAN countries, have achieved full membership of the ASEAN Regional Forum since 2005 and acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia in 2007.
3. Timor-Leste has conceived a road map for ASEAN membership. Some concrete steps have been undertaken to realize our firm commitment towards formal integration into the ASEAN community of states. We are in the process of making our formal application to become a full member.

4. The fact that this process will be initiated under the Chairmanship of Indonesia is testament to the strength of our bilateral ties and depth of friendship. Normalizing relations with our immediate neighbor has been a major foreign policy commitment on our part, and much work has been invested to this end at all levels of Government and State. We have taken a pragmatic proactive approach of engagement to confront issues of common interest. This rooted in the firm belief that our relations must be one that reconciles with the past yet at the same time is forward looking.
5. Since 2000 Timor-Leste has been invited to attend the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting for Foreign Affairs Ministers as a Special Guest of Honour. As mandated by our Constitution, our policy accords with the ASEAN spirit to promote peace and stability in the region.
6. In 2006, our nation faced internal conflict. However, through the guidance of our national leadership and the assistance of our ARF partners, we overcame and resolved this conflict. We believe that we can now use our knowledge and experience in conflict resolution gained from this period to assist nations in promoting peace and stability.
7. Today it is encouraging for Timor-Leste to have so many Experts and Eminent Persons who have taken time off their busy schedules to attend 5th ARF EEP meeting this year. I encourage you to use this opportunity to discuss and exchange views to find concrete actions to strengthen those confidence building measures that have already been adopted, and to discuss and debate new mechanisms and ideas in Preventive Diplomacy which can be used by our nations to further contribute to peace and prosperity in our region.
8. Over the course of this Forum, I encourage you to build on the deliberation of the 4th ARF-EEP's theme of "preparing an ARF Work Plan on Preventive Diplomacy: Moving Forward from Confidence Building Measures to Preventive Diplomacy" as well as new and innovative ideas during your deliberations over the course of the Meeting.
9. I believe by sharing and comparing perspectives and experiences from the diverse regions represented here, we can pool our ideas to conceptualize and narrow the divergence of views inherent in such a complex term like Preventive Diplomacy to find common ground and evolve measures that are readily acceptable by all participants for the benefit of this region. I have every confidence in your endeavours and wish you well in your deliberations.
10. Before concluding, I would like to reiterate our gratitude to the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand for their assistance in preparation for this Forum. I would like to acknowledge the presence of our Co-chair, General Boonsrang Niumpradit, the former Commander of United Nations Transitional Administration of East Timor (UNTAET) who dedicated his service at a critical time of our nation and state building by laying the groundwork for the peace and stability. In that regard I would like to extend to him our deepest appreciation and gratitude.
11. I would like to congratulate Indonesia on its chairmanship of ASEAN. We look forward to continuing to work with Indonesia during its term as the ASEAN Chair to promote peace and stability throughout our region. Indonesia and Timor-Leste have come a long way in forging a productive partnership. Such partnerships have manifested itself in the establishment of a Commission of Truth and Friendship. This mechanism has helped us deal with our common past in a constructive manner. What Indonesia and Timor-Leste

have achieved together could be regarded as a successful confidence building measure within the region.

12. Finally, I would also like to acknowledge the assistance and support provided by our ARF partners to make this meeting possible.

Thank you and obrigado barak.