



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE  
VI CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT

STATEMENT BY

HIS EXCELLENCY THE MINISTER OF STATE,  
COORDINATING MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, AND  
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES,  
ENG. ESTANISLAU ALEIXO DA SILVA,

AT THE

THE UNITED NATIONS THE OCEAN CONFERENCE  
TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 14

**PLENARY MEETING**

*New York, United Nations, 05 – 09 June 2017*

**[CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY]**



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Distinguished Co-Presidents and Co-Facilitators;  
Excellencies;  
Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is a great honor to address The Ocean Conference, on behalf of Timor-Leste. My delegation and I have travelled all the way from the other side of the globe to be here today and to convey to all of you, a message of hope, persistence and conviction. That we must cement a solid basis for partnership;’, join forces; and work hard in building the future we want;, whereby our oceans are well protected and provide economic benefits to our citizens and serve the international community.

Timor-Leste is a young country, a Small Island Developing State, an LDC of only 1.2 million inhabitants. Being an LDC is not by choice. Being an LDC is not a curse either! I call upon all participating countries to have strong political will and promote national consensus to work hard on increasing the sustainability levels of development, make sure we have peace, stability and security, in order to ensure a better quality of life for current and future generations.

Economic development in Timor-Leste relies largely on our oceans in some form, whether it be fisheries, tourism, or trade. The decisions we make today, and those in the future, will direct how sustainable that economic development is. As a sovereign State, we must delimitate our maritime borders based on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and better monitor our Exclusive Economic Zone.

But our oceans are not solely influenced by the Timorese people. Oceans do not know boundaries! On our own, we cannot succeed in the





fight needed to protect our oceans. It is only when we consider the ocean as one, which we all contribute to, and we all draw from, then we can begin to understand how important our cooperation is.

Engaging partners across all levels, from individual fishers to national governments, will be the only way to ensure transparency, joint responsibility, and co-management of the most important resource of all for small island states.

Therefore, in recognition of this way forward, and in acknowledgment of the Government of Timor-Leste's responsibility to support these actions, we stand ready to the following seven Voluntary Commitments:

1. Implement a national pollution awareness campaign, under our Zero Plastic Policy, to address the issue of plastics, with particular attention to our oceans;
2. Approve and implement Our Ocean Policy to ensure we are all working towards the sustainable development of our marine area, in close partnership with our neighbors;
3. Address our knowledge gaps for our offshore fishing grounds to combat over harvesting and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing, while protecting the key biodiversity areas;
4. Review our fishing licensing and fees to ensure a balance between sustainable harvesting, food security, international and domestic fishers;





5. Map our highly vulnerable coastline to guide sustainable development and protect the fragile areas from climate change impacts and unsustainable development practices;
6. Develop a suite of nature-based tourism guidelines to protect the marine life, while providing the best experience possible for tourists; and
7. Ratify CITES to combat the illegal trade across borders of Timor-Leste's unique wildlife, and that of its neighbors.

This is the message of hope, persistence and conviction we wanted to convey to all of you on the occasion of The Ocean Conference.

Thank you all for your generous attention.

New York, June 2017.

