



Keynote address

By

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United Nations University Symposium

Tokyo, 25th February, 2004

**Peace Building: Towards Rehabilitation of Timor-Leste**  
**– Achievements and Challenges**

Professor Hans Ginkel, Rector of United Nations University,

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Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to come here again to Tokyo, not only to be warmly received by senior Japanese government officials but also to feel the continued sympathy and solidarity of our friends, the Japanese people.

On behalf of the people of Timor-Leste, I wish to express here publicly my gratitude for the great honour afforded me in having been received by His Majesty, Emperor Akihito. It must be mentioned that the meeting was the culminating point of relations between Japan and Timor-Leste that the Government of Japan, under the leadership of Prime Minister Koizumi, knew how to build up and consolidate.

It was under this wave of sympathy and solidarity that Timor-Leste emerged as the youngest nation of the world.

And it is also in this context that I wish to express my appreciation to the Japan Institute of International Affairs and to this University, for having invited me to participate in this Conference to speak about Timor-Leste. It is always gratifying for us to know that the commitment for Timor-Leste is still ongoing, not only on the part of the governments but also on the part of peoples around the world. And this always constitutes a motivating factor for us, when countries, such as Japan, which has supported us extraordinarily, continue to follow our process closely.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It was here in Tokyo in December 1999, that friendly countries and international financial and humanitarian organizations met to assist Timor-Leste to rise up from the disastrous consequences of violence and destruction of September, only four months earlier. The

support afforded to the emergency period and consequently, for the transition to independence, which took place on 20th May, 2002, was extraordinary.

Today, I am once again in Tokyo, representing the first nation of the millennium, a small country, situated amongst the ten poorest in the world, and is the poorest in Southeast Asia. Today I am here to share with you the joy and satisfaction that Timor-Leste is considered a success case, thanks to the support of the United Nations and donor countries and above all, to the maturity of our people, acquired in suffering and pain.

However today, above all, I wish to speak to you about the aspirations of our people, of the expectations and challenges that we face in building our Nation. I say Nation-building, which despite having many elements of reconstruction, speaks much more on building the State: the Democratic State.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The most important step taken in 2001 by UNTAET was the agreement to follow the political agenda, presented by a National Council, a legislative body consisting completely of Timorese, of diverse political exponents, including former defenders of integration. The agenda prescribed democratic elections for the formation of a Constituent Assembly.

The Resistance Movement, CNRT, which organized, united and mobilized the people for the struggle, right up until the popular consultation on 30th August 1999, and having already completed its mandate, was dissolved to make way for pluralist democracy. The elections which were held on 30th August 2001, demonstrated the democratic conscience of the Timorese people, thereby asserting the principles of tolerance and social harmony.

In addition to this step, another was undertaken, though not of less importance. A countrywide consultation was held to allow the people to express their aspirations on what they hoped to gain from independence. The challenges are obviously enormous, from the physical reconstruction to the building of new mentalities; from developing the capacity of human resources to the gradual consolidation of State institutions; from the understanding of human rights to the deepening of the democratic conscience; from meeting vital needs to a vision of sustainable development for the country.

There are real expectations of the people, as a whole, but there exists also the demands from segments of society, legitimate demands which are not in question but are rather difficult to meet immediately, because of inherent conditions of the beginning of the process; the process of building a nation.

It is in the analyses of these responsibilities of meeting the aspirations and expectations of the people, that the challenges became clearer in the present situation. And the greatest challenge is the consolidation of institutions of the State; the young State of Timor-Leste.

The gradual and permanent progress towards the consolidation of State institutions demand precisely the improvement and professionalism of human resources but fundamentally require a change of mentalities that were acquired or are still under the influence of the previous system.

The people's expectations reveal the desire to see the conditions of their day-to-day life improve so as to guarantee hope for their children. And during the 24 years of foreign occupation, the people experienced a corrupt system; they lived under a system where abuse of power allowed constant violations of human rights; a system where injustice was applied only to the population.

And even in the course of the long resistance, the people hoped independence could bring the capacity to establish a different system, one which would not commit the same excesses of power; a system where the primacy of law prevailed.

Only the Rule of Law can guarantee democratic freedoms, respect for human rights and can affirm justice as a foundation of the Nation.

In this difficult phase still in the process of building this Timorese state, the concerns of the people, the fears of society, the affirmations of the politicians and the declarations of the rulers, are directed at achieving this objective – the establishment and consolidation of the Rule of Law.

And that is why the judicial system continues to demand our attention constantly; and that is why our recommendations continue to be focussed on the creation of an effective mechanism to prevent and combat corruption, and that is why ethics and professionalism of Public servants continue to demand our attention.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The difficulties are enormous and so are the challenges, inherent in societies, arisen from situations of injustice, and are beginning to detain the reigns of power or to usufruct the benefits of independence. Nevertheless, we believe and I can actually affirm that the commitment not to offend the sacrifices consented by the People to achieve the freedom in which we live today, is firm.

Timor-Leste is a country that emerged from a long conflict; a country that carries in its entrails the complexity derived from diverse nature and characters of the physical and psychological state of mind. And it is from this complexity that expectations arise and demands are formulated, originating complaints and feeding frustrations.

The whole and long conflict of more than two decades brought disagreements, resentments and hurt between the Timorese themselves. September 1999 joined in these sentiments, not only with the physical destruction, as you all know, but also the human tragedy, the forced displacement to West Timor of more than two hundred and a half thousand people.

With the support of the International Humanitarian Organizations, UNHCR and IOM, which played a pivotal role in the process, we were able to bring back more than two hundred thousand Timorese, with only twenty-eight thousand people remaining behind in West Timor.

The internal political divisions provoked suffering and pain in families and therefore efforts were made for Reconciliation to be broader, to include political organizations which initiated violence between Timorese, in order to make them take responsibility for their actions. Mr. Pat Walsh, one of the conference panelists will no doubt elaborately cover this issue.

Nevertheless, the needs in the social and economic areas do not help the spirit of the people to conciliate with the memories or with the consequences of past abuses. And this healing process will take a long time, until the global economic development and the consequent improvement in the conditions of daily life for everyone, dissolves the memory of suffering to give way to smiles and confidence in daily life.

Only a system where social and economic justice is practiced can help to heal the wounds. And, at present, only assistance programs and/or vocational training can help to reinsert people into society, thereby, at least, giving value to their sacrifices or recognizing their participation in the struggle.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Timor-Leste has been the recipient of assistance from donor countries and international financial institutions. In these last four years, millions of US dollars were disbursed. It is normal when we sum up the contributions and expenditures, to reach the conclusion that much has been given and much has been spent.

In the case of Timor-Leste, it may have occurred that year after year, people begin to forget the consequences of destruction which we inherited in October 1999. And I dare to affirm that, had there been more time to destroy everything, then all would have been destroyed. Just to give you an example, for Timor-Leste, we cannot speak exactly of development but rather of rehabilitation. I can mention that in 2000, USD 12 million were spent for the reconstruction of schools. Even today, there are hundreds of schools still without roofs, many where students sit on the ground as there are no desks. The same can be said of hospitals, clinics and other public buildings throughout the territory.

There appears to be a tendency to refer to Timor-Leste as a success case, in achievements or that in Timor-Leste all is well. And this is what we would like to correct.

Today, we also understand the concern of donors when more conflicts are emerging alongside old ones hopelessly without solution. And when we ourselves place our country on the map of conflict or post-conflict countries, we have the feeling that the scales do not weigh in our favour.

At times, because of the duty of conscience and solidarity with the other millions and millions of people of countries which need help, we feel that we should be more modest. Some countries, with no comparison whatsoever with Timor-Leste, are much more populated. Other countries, compared with Timor-Leste, are cause for greater concern, be it in terms of security and stability or in terms of political viability.

But the Millennium goals also constitute our benchmark and the Vision offered by our People for global and sustainable development of the country, merely corroborates the validity and pertinence of the Millennium goals, opportunely elaborated by the United Nations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

If we were considered a success case under the aegis of the United Nations, it was based fundamentally on the following:

- a) in the stability and security, and General Mike Smith, another panelist who served in INTERFET and PKF and profoundly knows the socio-economic problems, adjacent to the issue of security, will no doubt give a more objective and broader view of this;
- b) in the establishment of an administration, as there was simply none before – and here we pay tribute to Sergio Vieira de Mello and the whole of UNTAET for the good work done; and
- c) in the political scope, by the predisposition of the Timorese to be guided by universal values in the drafting and implementing of the National Constitution.

As it is, what can Timor-Leste offer now? Why should the international community continue to support us, when there are other countries which are obviously in greater need for assistance?

Of course, as you all know, from time to time, we are reminded in terms of the perspective of income, resulting from the exploration of petroleum and gas. Firstly, I should say that we do not wish to depend totally on the revenue from this source for our development. Secondly, if this were to already have been a reality, we would not want to be labeled a burden for the donors; to be viewed in the eyes of the world as another country with major difficulties.

We are a new country, recently independent, aiming to bury the past of suffering and pain, in order to plant the seeds of harmony, tolerance and justice. We are a people who have overcome a long period of war and now desire to live in peace forever. We are a young country, underdeveloped, committed to the well-being of our people, so that there is no more hunger, misery, disease, illiteracy and ignorance.

Therefore, what can Timor-Leste offer? It is this conviction!

The conviction that there must be concrete efforts made to establish a Judicial System which instills trust in all the people and guarantees that no-one in Timor-Leste, regardless of who they may be, is above the law. It will take time to change the practices which mock good sense and violate the law. Society and the people will have to continue to prepare themselves to defend this principle.

The conviction is that there should be continued concrete and palpable efforts to obtain good and clean governance, so that the habits of the previous system do not undermine the political commitment of the Nation.

The conviction is to reinforce the democratic conscience of society and people in general, in order to create and consolidate an environment of political tolerance and social solidarity, so that respect for human rights becomes effective in the practice of good citizenship.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This is the major concern of our people and this is our commitment; that of continuing to be a success in the defense of democratic values, which constitute the foundations of our State. However, democracy is not practiced in words; democracy is not fed from declarations.

As you all know, last week at the Security Council, the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, who coincidentally is also here in Tokyo, presented his report on the progress made in Timor-Leste; the achievements since May 2002 in some important areas of governance; the shortcomings or gaps in other areas; the challenges and difficulties ahead of us, as well as the opportunities for the posterior progress and consolidation of our young democracy.

The Secretary-General recommended a follow-up UN consolidation mission after May 2004, which will consist of 58 advisors in key areas of the administration, 42 military observers, 157 police advisors, with 310 Peacekeeping Force personnel. We hope that the international community continues to make the right decisions for the good of the people of Timor-Leste, as they have always done up until now.

And I am certain that Mr. Hasegawa, as a panelist and DSRSG of UNMISSET and Resident Representative of UNDP, will provide a more measured image of the Timorese reality, of which he knows well, in terms of the young nation wanting to establish itself in solid bases. Mr. Uramoto, another panelist with a background of stimulating activities for UNICEF in our country, will provide you with a clearer perception of the human potentials for the future and of the gigantic challenges of today.

Our State is still fragile; still with an emerging democracy and without economic bases to propel sustainable development.

We have the potential in the medium term to be self-sufficient in agricultural products. Japan has been supporting irrigation projects and I believe that with the introduction of quality seeds and techniques for adequate production, we can achieve this objective.

We have potential in exploring the industry of tourism, namely eco-tourism, not only because of the beauty of the landscapes, combined with the varied microclimate of our mountains; but also because of the irresistible beauty of our beaches, combined with varied cultural and sociological expressions of our people, who will make our country a place of exotic sensations, above all, of peace, joy and smiles.

As an island, or more precisely, half an island that we are, the potential in fishery appears to be a more certain bet for our national economy, in addition to coffee that needs to be put again in its proper place as it was many decades ago - 'the best in the world', with its charm being that it is 100% organic.

The efforts of the state bodies are being directed towards opening up the country to investment. But investment will only be attracted if the basic infrastructures are in place, so as to guarantee confidence and certainty. And the continued support for infrastructure is a pressing need.

If we are a certainty, it should not be a question but rather an affirmation!

If we guarantee trust – this is the commitment!

But for this, we will continue to need the support of all who have confidence in the process and certainty that our people will not disappoint anyone!

Thank you very much.

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