



SPEECH

BY THE

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DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE

Mr. President for the 39th UNESCO's General Conference

Mrs. General Director for UNESCO

Distinctive Heads of Delegation,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, headed by Prime Minister Dr. Mari Alkatiri, I am honored to congratulate every member present at the 39th UNESCO's General Conference.

Timor-Leste is a young and dynamic nation, located in South-eastern Asia, which has recently celebrated its 15th Restoration of Independence's Anniversary. We are at the beginning of a new chapter on our history, through which - after ensuring peace and stability - we hold, exclusively, our own destiny. Timor-Leste takes benefits, nowadays, from peace, stability and from a rapid expanding economy which has been, gradually, reflecting on the general improvement of the people's well-being.

By the middle of this year, Timor-Leste has, peacefully and democratically, passed through two elections: presidential election and parliamentary election. Dr. Francisco Guterres Lu-Olo was elected for president of the RDTL and Fretilin Party was the first most-voted party.

Our National Strategic Development Plan refers that the biggest asset of our nation is the strength of our people, reason through which Education is an essential priority of the governmental action. As an outcome for the work developed over the last 14 years, it is with pride that I acknowledge the significant improvements on the number of children enrolled on Basic Education, which is, nowadays, over 94%.

However, we still face challenges which are common to many of the developing countries, particularly, on what concerns to education quality.

We want to reduce the current differences between schools, between municipalities and between rural and urban areas.

On May 2017, Timor-Leste, through the Ministry of Education, has conducted a national education congress on the subject “The Education is the pillar for reinforcing Identity and Nation Development”.

At that national congress, questions asked were related to 5 key-areas, namely, national education curriculum, teachers’ management and training, schools’ management and supervision, infrastructure, equipment and educational resources and public and private education management. We are grateful for the support being provided, since the beginning, by the international community. We embraced the program “Education for Everyone” and are committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

On what concerns our regional inclusion, we established friendship relations with South-Eastern and Pacific neighbor countries, in particular Australia and Indonesia, which are the closest neighbors, with which we hold an intense cooperation. Through our geographic location, we also want to become part of ASEAN, with which we will, together, contribute towards regional growth, social progress and cultural development, within a partnership spirit. In addition, we hold strong historical and affective connections with the group of countries that, with us, are part of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP).

On what concerns the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda, Timor-Leste has signed “A Call to Action”, at an event launching the High-Level Group for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Implementation. We think that the world should move quickly towards the

understanding of the new, ambitious and transforming sustainable development agenda.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to Your Excellency UNESCO's General Director, for her continuous support provided to UNESCO's National Commission in Timor-Leste, in its initiatives across the fields of education, science, communication and culture.

Particularly, I emphasize the support provided to the programme from the Ministry of Education regarding a multilingual education, based on mother language. Timor-Leste's countless existing languages reflect the current linguistic richness of our country, by being part of our cultural heritage.

In the area of Culture, also with UNESCO's support, we are committed to the preservation of our rich cultural heritage. Our culture is essential towards the strengthening of national unity and cohesion, and it is important for this culture to be protected and celebrated. We are counting on the contribution from UNESCO towards reaching our cultural and educational goals, for the benefit of our people.

Across Communication area, we established Timor-Leste's Memory of the World National Committee, which will work on the aim and according to specified goals from the Memory of the World's General Guidelines

Before finishing, I would like to take this opportunity in order to thank and reiterate Timor-Leste's commitment in cooperating with UNESCO, on the several and diversified means of Peace maintenance and promotion, which is an essential goal of this Organization.

Thank you very much!