

Dili, 29 February 2016

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**TRANSCRIPT OF THE REMARKS BY H.E. PRIME MINISTER  
DR. RUI MARIA DE ARAÚJO AT THE LAUNCH OF THE  
MARITIME BOUNDARY OFFICE WEBSITE**

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Minister Counsellor, Chief Negotiator for Timor-Leste's maritime boundaries.

Colleagues and members of the Government.

Members of civil society.

I see here the presence of the combatants of national liberation from Australia, Portugal, and England. I also see the presence of national combatants of liberation from Timor-Leste.

I would like to welcome you all to the Government Palace to the official launch of the Maritime Boundary Office website.

This is a very exciting occasion, as it marks the beginning of an important new tool to help us in our pursuit of permanent maritime boundaries.

As you all know, establishing permanent maritime boundaries is a matter of national priority for Timor-Leste. It is a priority due to our need to complete our sovereignty. It is the final step in realising our full sovereignty as an independent State. From our perspective, this is the second and last phase of our pursuit for the liberation of Timor-Leste.

It has been almost fourteen years since the restoration of our independence. We have made tremendous progress. We have made great socio-economic development - we have constructed the foundations of the State, the construction of the nation. We have moved from a fragile country towards strong development in different areas. But, our struggle for sovereignty will not be over until we have claimed our maritime sovereignty.

We, as you all know, share maritime boundaries with two big countries, our neighbours Indonesia and Australia. And because we have not delimited our maritime boundaries, there is uncertainty as to where our sovereignty lies and theirs.

This uncertainty causes issues in various areas, including security, immigration, fisheries and exploration of the maritime resources. These three nations are aware that the establishment of the boundaries is very important in order to resolve all of these issues.

That is why the previous governments, the fourth government and the fifth government under 'Big Brother' Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, and the sixth government which I currently lead - has determined that achieving permanent maritime boundaries with Indonesia and Australia is a national priority. We as the Government will continue with all of our efforts to achieve this objective.

There have been some positive steps forward, especially with the Indonesian Government. The Indonesian Government and Timor-Leste have agreed to start negotiating maritime boundaries based on international law.

In a meeting that was held in August last year with H. E. Indonesia's President, and recently in January when he visited our nation, there was an agreement to expedite the process. Since September 2015, there have been many meetings with Indonesia and we have agreed on the terms of reference to start negotiating.

On behalf of the State, the Government has nominated our Chief Commander Xanana Gusmão - our great leader of the resistance, now Minister of Planning and Strategic Investment, also Minister Counsellor. He has been nominated as the Chief Negotiator for maritime boundaries. When the Council of Ministers made the decision, some colleagues said: "there is no better choice - we have Timor's prize warrior."

Regrettably, we have not made progress with our neighbour Australia. Australia continues to maintain their position that the existing temporary treaties to share resources in the sea which has become the dispute between our two countries, meets the requirements of international law. But Timor-Leste says that is not the case.

And as you all know, before we restored our independence, Australia carved-out from the international dispute settlement body - UNCLOS, better known as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

And since then we have not moved forward. There is still ambiguity in Australia's position, particularly around issues of maritime boundary delimitation. A concrete example is 2004, during the process of negotiations, when Australia asked Timor-Leste to suspend the negotiations of maritime boundaries for 50 years. At the same time, Australia made an agreement with New Zealand on their maritime boundary, in accordance with UNCLOS and international law. In the joint-communique between Australia and New Zealand, they acknowledge that the treaty would "provide certainty of jurisdiction over both the water column and seabed, including over fisheries and petroleum resources." However with Timor they do not acknowledge these issues are equally important to us, and have continued to enforce the existing resource sharing arrangements.

So from Timor-Leste's perspective, this is not what we want. We need to have a really clear message when we talk about the delimitation of permanent maritime boundaries - we do not talk about sharing resources - that is a different case - we talk about where would Timor's boundary lie and where would Indonesia and Australia's boundary lie? Then we will know which resources, in which waters, belong to whom.

Therefore, we need to be clear to everyone that our aim is to delimit our maritime boundaries, not to gain a greater share of the resources - this is not our issue, our issue is to delimit our boundaries as part of the final phase of our sovereignty.

I think those are the important points that I would like to share with you all today.

This website will present a summary about our history, information on the relevant international laws, maps, and also some frequently asked questions, and it will help us develop a better understanding of the process we are facing.

Finally, I would like to invite Minister Xanana to come forward to officially launch the website with me.

I encourage everyone to explore this website to learn about Timor-Leste's determination to secure permanent maritime boundaries. I also ask of you to share the website with your colleagues, friends and families, so we can all learn more about Timor-Leste's position, what we want and how we are going about it.

Thank you very much for your attendance and attention.

Dili, 29 February 2016

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### **SPEECH FOR MBO CEO ELIZABETH EXPOSTO AT THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE MBO WEBSITE**

Excellency, Prime Minister,  
Minister Xanana Gusmão, Chief Negotiator,  
Excellencies,  
Members of Government,  
Members of the Press and Civil Society,  
Good morning ladies and gentlemen.

I am Elizabeth (or 'Betti') Exposto and I am the Chief Executive Officer of the Maritime Boundary Office.

Thank you for coming to the official launch of the Maritime Boundary Office website. This has been a long time in the making and we are very excited to launch this website today – which you can now visit at [www.gfm.tl](http://www.gfm.tl).

In a moment, I will introduce you to the Prime Minister, His Excellency Dr Rui Maria de Araújo. He will officially launch the website and, alongside Minister Xanana, also post our first Facebook message - launching the website and the Maritime Boundary Office into cyber space - to our friends throughout Timor-Leste and throughout the world.

We are particularly delighted to have the Prime Minister launch this website as His Excellency is also the Chair of the Consultative Commission of the Council for the Final Delimitation of Maritime Boundaries. The Government established this Council – which the Maritime Boundary Office is part of - to coordinate all government efforts towards the permanent delimitation of maritime boundaries for Timor-Leste.

Following His Excellency's remarks, we will give you a brief virtual tour of the site and some of its features.

The website is a comprehensive online platform detailing why Timor-Leste is pursuing permanent maritime boundaries. It is an educational tool and looks at the many existing treaties in the Timor Sea, as well as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The website is completely trilingual, in our official languages Tetun and Portuguese and for our international audience in English.

In the development of the website, we have been conscious that this is a complex matter. International law can be complicated and the technical language involved can exclude some people from participating in this very important issue.





We're not all lawyers and we do not all understand the technical language so we have developed a glossary to explain specific terms, and some frequently asked questions - to make this tool accessible to everyone.

We believe the Maritime Boundary Office website will become an important tool for sharing information with our own communities, as well as our international friends and neighbours.

We are honoured to have the Prime Minister and Minister Xanana Gusmão here today to launch the website, as well as to launch the Maritime Boundary Office's presence on social media.

His Excellency has been instrumental in the Government's pursuit of permanent maritime boundaries. This is such an important issue for our nation. It represents the final step to realising our full sovereignty and I hope this website will play a part in achieving that goal.

Thank you for coming today, and please welcome His Excellency Prime Minister, Dr Rui Maria de Araújo.

Thank you.