



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO
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AT THE UN OCEAN CONFERENCE,
CHIEF NEGOTIATOR OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE FINAL DELIMITATION OF
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THE BLUE ECONOMY**

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE 7

**“Enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their
resources by implementing international law, as reflected in the United
Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea”**

**Tejo Hall, Lisbon
30 June 2022**

Thank you, Co-Chairs,

Please let me thank the distinguished panelists for their contribution on this important topic on enhancing conservation and the sustainable use of the ocean by implementing international law.

Timor-Leste is a proud supporter of international law. We can stand here today as a sovereign State thanks to the international community and its respect for international law.

After we achieved sovereignty over our land, as a small island nation, we turned our attention to realising sovereignty over our seas. Again, we looked to international law.

In April 2016, we initiated the first-ever United Nations Compulsory Conciliation, under Article 298 of UNCLOS, so that we could finalise our maritime boundaries with Australia.

It was only through this process that we were able to settle our maritime boundaries with Australia in the Timor Sea.

We are now discussing our maritime boundaries with our other neighbour, Indonesia, and we have agreed to do so in accordance with international law and UNCLOS.

And now, we turn again to international law and UNCLOS to conserve and guide the sustainable use of Timor-Leste's precious ocean resources.

Timor-Leste is located at the centre of the Coral Triangle. Our tropical reefs are some of the most biodiverse in the world and our seas have one of the world's largest concentrations of cetaceans. We also have a migration corridor for blue whales just off our coast.

Our country has great potential to develop a Blue Economy – this is our future.

But to achieve sustainable development we must protect biodiversity, fight illegal fishing and tackle climate change.

We cannot do this alone. We will need global action and local partners.

We will need partners from educational institutions, governments, multi-laterals and the private sector. Partners that understand our priorities, our culture and the context of our country.

As a small island developing country we will need to strengthen our human resources and build capacity, including with the use of science and technology.

Our nation will continue to be guided by international law, including UNCLOS. This will be the foundation from which we conserve and protect our ocean resources and develop a Blue Economy to support the future prosperity of our people.

Thank you.

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão