



**SPEECH 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**

PLENARY SESSION

UN OCEAN CONFERENCE

**“SCALING UP OCEAN ACTION BASED ON SCIENCE AND INNOVATION FOR THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF GOAL 14: STOCKTAKING, PARTNERSHIPS AND SOLUTIONS”**

**Altice Arena, Lisbon
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Distinguished Presidents and Vice-Presidents of the Conference

Your Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, I want to start by thanking the United Nations and the Governments of Portugal and Kenya, for hosting this timely second UN Ocean Conference.

It is both a privilege and a joy to be here today stating once more our commitment to the SDG 14, the Ocean and our collective future.

I have the honour of representing His Excellency the President of the Republic of Timor-Leste, Dr José Ramos-Horta, who passes on his best wishes for a successful conference.

Timor-Leste is a Small Island Developing State – our identity is anchored in the sea. The ocean has traced our past and is a cornerstone of our vision for the future.

As such, we want to add our voices, and most importantly our actions, to those committed to defending the ocean on which we all depend.

The ocean is a vital organ that is sick; putting our planet and all of humanity in peril.

Through human history - power, selfishness and ambition have caused great suffering.

War, hunger, poverty and inequality are tragedies that we could prevent and solve.

Instead, we are treating nature with the same hubris!

And even though we are not all equally responsible for the pressure put on nature, we will all suffer from it.

The first victims are always those most fragile and most vulnerable. It is a cruel fact that these are often the very people who live in greatest harmony with nature.

Scientific reports provide data on degradation of seas and ocean. Our largest carbon filter, which is essential to tackle climate change, is becoming clogged.

In some countries in the Pacific, Asia, Africa and Latin America, we do not need to look at reports. We are already suffering with these effects.

Global threats demand global responses. I hope the Covid-19 pandemic has at least taught everyone this important lesson.

Your Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Supported by international law, particularly UNCLOS, we recently succeeded in delimitating permanent maritime boundaries with Australia. We are currently working with Indonesia to achieve the same.

UNCLOS is essential for the good governance of the ocean and for achieving SDG 14. Areas “without governance” are areas where “uncertainty” breeds.

Timor-Leste is located at the heart of the Coral Triangle. In fact, our seas have areas with the greatest biodiversity in the entire world. We also have one of the largest concentrations of cetaceans on the planet, as well as whale migration corridors, including for the incredible blue whale, humpback whales, sperm whales and dolphins.

We want to establish a Marine Education Centre, with the support of international institutions, including global academics. We are committed to a Blue Economy that protects the ocean in a balanced way.

Cooperation with neighbouring countries is fundamental, as well as partnerships with other States. We want to bring know-how, technology

and investment that could be a turning point for the sustainable development of Timor-Leste.

In my country we have young people who, recognising the importance of preserving the ocean and biodiversity, wish to study marine science. I want to believe that it is possible to make these young people's dreams come true and ensure that Timor-Leste will, with knowledge and conviction, implement a Blue Economy from scratch!

We reiterate our commitment to the Paris Agreement and are pleased with the COP 26 initiatives, even though greater effort is required to help developing countries address climate change.

We also support the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development to come up with transformative solutions linking people and oceans.

We encourage young people to develop science-based solutions. I am certain that the Youth and Innovation Forum has already contributed a great deal towards this goal.

A blue future requires a blue generation.

We renew the commitment we made at the 2017 Ocean Conference and our Voluntary Commitments.

And later today the Pacific Small Island Developing States and Timor-Leste will adopt a Joint Declaration on Climate Change Adaption Alliance.

Timor-Leste is very much hoping to be a part of the global commitments, solutions and partnerships that will come out of this Ocean Conference.

Thank you very much!
Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão