

Asia-Pacific Ministerial Dialogue:
*From the Millennium Development Goals to the
United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015*
Bangkok, 26-28 August 2013

**Opening statement by H.E. Mr. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão
Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and
Chairperson of the 69th Commission session**

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

As Chair of the sixty-ninth session of the Economic and Social Commission of Asia and the Pacific, it gives me great pleasure to participate in this very timely meeting.

On behalf of the 62 member and associate member countries and territories of the Commission, allow me to thank the Government of Thailand for taking the initiative in organizing this very important meeting and also for financially supporting the participation of the least developed, landlocked and Pacific island developing members of the Commission.

I would also like to thank H.E. Dr. Noeleen Heyzer, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP and her staff for their cooperation in organizing, co-financing and servicing this meeting.

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Almost 15 years ago, at the turn of the century, humanity took a momentous collective decision at the UN Millennium Summit to halve poverty and ensure that the fruits of prosperity reach a greater number of people. We have reached an important junction in our collective journey.

In Asia and the Pacific, while we have not achieved all the goals and targets we set for ourselves, we have made progress on almost all of them. As we forge the agenda beyond 2015, we must aim for eradicating poverty and ensuring a secure and sustainable future for all men, women and children. We have to recognize that on this collective journey, while our destination is the same, our paths and our strides will likely be different. Some of us will reach the destination earlier than others. Some will take a different path to suit their specific circumstances. The post-2015 development agenda must therefore allow us all to choose the path and pace that we think is best for our countries.

From the perspective of g7+ group of fragile states that my country currently chairs, the post-2015 development agenda must integrate inclusive economic growth, peace building and state building, climate

change and environmental management. We cannot achieve a better future for our people and for our environment, in the absence of peace, stability and the rule of law.

Timor-Leste's own experience has shown that when there is firm commitment to the interest of the country and to the wellbeing of the people, crisis can be catalytic to development and progress.

Global collective action can help us face challenges that lie beyond our control, and with the right policies, we may be able to build effective institutions leading to fair, peaceful and sustainable societies. The post-2015 development framework should help us realize and strengthen our immense potential.

I am very positive about our collective future. Therefore I reaffirm that with the right policies at the country level, with the necessary investment, with partnerships with civil society and the private sector, and with collective action at the global and regional levels, we have the potential to build peaceful, vibrant, just, resilient, inclusive and sustainable societies.

Regional, sub-regional and cross-regional cooperation, specially South-South cooperation, will be a key driver for change as we further develop our national development strategies, build our capacities and contribute to the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda. In this, the role of ESCAP, as the most inclusive intergovernmental

platform in Asia and the Pacific, will be crucial. The Commission can undertake policy research and analysis on critical and emerging issues and bring them to the attention of member States for intergovernmental policy discussion and decisions. The Commission can then build capacities of member States on those issues through technical cooperation at the regional level and by forging partnerships with other development partners within and outside the UN system. This Ministerial Dialogue is a good example of the regional cooperation that can be undertaken under the auspices of the Commission.

In conclusion, allow me once again to thank the Government of Thailand for organizing and financing this Dialogue that will provide us with an opportunity to discuss the post-2015 development agenda from the perspective of Asia and the Pacific. As the current Chair of the Commission, it is my fervent hope that such regional consultations continue in the coming months so that we, the policy makers in Asia and the Pacific, could be informed of the latest development at the global level, and have the opportunity to inform the global level of regional concerns and priorities in formulating and operationalizing the UN Development Agenda beyond 2015.

I thank you.

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