



## **Remarks**

**by**

**Hon. José Ramos-Horta**

**President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and Noble Peace**

**Prize Laureate**

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1. I thank you Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs and Chief Negotiator, Excellency Joaquim Amaral, for the invitation extended to me to participate in this high-level conference. Congratulations must be registered on the active leadership you have provided to your very able team of experts. And allow me to extend warmest greetings to the Excellency Prime Minister and Excellencies Members of the Government. My special welcome to the Chairperson of the Working Party, Ambassador Rui Macieira, WTO Secretariat, Ms. Maika Oshikawa and Ms. Anna Varyanik, and ASEAN Secretariat.
2. Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is obvious that in this increasingly complex world of interconnectedness and interdependency, of challenges, risks and of opportunities, multilateralism, regional integration and cooperation and a rules-based World Order are sine quo non conditions for peace, security and prosperity for all.
3. From the very beginning of our Independence leaders of all generations and convictions have pursued an active foreign policy of developing fraternal relations with all our neighbors and all other countries in the world, East and West, North and South.
4. WTO and ASEAN memberships are part and parcel of our common commitment to a rules-based integration.

5. We continue our national efforts to improve the country's infrastructure, human capital and domestic legislative reform to accelerate growth and economic diversification.
6. WTO accession is as important to us as our accession to ASEAN. Attainment of these twin goals enjoy solid national consensus and commitment. There may be changes in leadership within the Government and Country, part of normal democratic cycles, but the State is permanent, and the twin goals, membership in ASEAN and WTO remains National Strategic Priorities.
7. I am hopeful that these goals could be achieved according to the accession roadmap established.
8. In the short life of our country as a Sovereign Nation and State we have shown that we have the capacity and the commitment to engage and sometimes lead in a number of international bodies, namely, as active members of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP); g7+ Fragile States; African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States; ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), in addition to our active partnership with the Bretton Woods Institutions and Asian Development Bank. I wish to recall that according to the OECD, in its report of September 2020, Timor-Leste graduated from the category of fragile states, a recognition of Timor-Leste as a post-conflict state on the road to recovery and development.
9. We reaffirm Timor-Leste's liberal market and a stable state – where Timor-Leste is fully committed to abide by the principles, objectives and rules of the WTO, with all of our capacity as an LDC, and to implement domestic structural, legislative and policy reforms required to comply with WTO commitments.
10. I call upon the leadership at the World Trade Organization to pursue reforms in its policies that can be conducive to the true interests of world's least developed, and conflict affected countries, such as Timor-Leste.
11. In closing I wish to state that I truly believe that because of the synergies and the excellent relationship developed between the leaders and officials of Timor-Leste and our WTO partners this meeting will bear fruitful outcomes that will further advance TL WTO membership accession.

12. I believe that Timor-Leste is not alone in this process as with the Chairperson's leadership and with WTO Secretariat's assistance, Timor-Leste will be able to expedite and conclude its accession process to the WTO within the course of early next year.