



REPÚBLICA DEMOCRÁTICA DE TIMOR-LESTE

**HE the President of the Republic, Hon. Dr. José Ramos-Horta's Opening
Remarks at Timor-Leste 5th Working Party Meeting**

Díli, 20th April 2023

(Video Message)

Your Excellency Director General of the WTO, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

Your Excellency Ambassador Rui Macieira, Ambassador of Portugal to the WTO
and Chairperson of Timor-Leste's Accession Working Party,

Your Excellency Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs & Timor-Leste Chief
Negotiator for WTO Accession, Eng. Joaquim Amaral and his Team

Your Excellency Ms. Maika Oshikawa, Director of Accessions of the WTO, and
her Team

Esteemed WTO Member and Observer Participants, in Geneva and across the
world

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning,

The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, the newest country in Asia is a strong
believer in integrating its economy in the Multilateral Trading System as well as
regionally. At the WTO, Timor-Leste applied for WTO accession in December
2016. On the multilateral front, including today, Timor-Leste has held five cycles

of Working Party Meetings in just 2½ years, registered substantive advancement of the Timor-Leste accession process, both at multilateral and bilateral front of negotiations.

For Timor-Leste, becoming a member is essential to unleash the potential of our economy in several sectors. Trade is an engine for development, and Timor-Leste has a huge potential that is yet to be explored. As a full member, we will be able to diversify our economy, become part of the value chain of global economies and bring about more cross-border business opportunities. We will be able to improve the quality and the well being of our People through improving our economic growth. Henceforth, we will be better suited to attract foreign investors and our companies will have a better opportunity to grow and expand beyond our borders in a globalized economy.

Esteemed participants,

We recognize that undergoing accession to the WTO as well as our integration effort to ASEAN is an opportunity to accelerate important reforms to maximize benefits and ensure that they contribute to Timor-Leste's domestic reform and development goals as an LDC, in line with Timor-Leste's Strategic Development Plan (2011-2030). We consider both processes to be intertwined and key for the success of our vision of Timor-Leste as a modern and diversified economy with high-quality infrastructures and a growing, healthy, and well-educated middle class by 2030.

The large number and the swiftness of the reforms that have taken place and are currently undergoing are preparing Timor-Leste to accede to Multilateral and Regional organizations, but they are also creating a very modern country with one of the most developed legal systems and functioning institutions in the region.

Thus, Timor-Leste's accession, by itself, has brought great benefits for the country, and we expect that further benefits will be seen once Timor-Leste gains its membership to the organization.

Esteemed participants,

To conclude my brief remark, Timor-Leste is fully committed under its capacity as a Least Developed State to abide by the principles, objectives and rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to implement domestic structural, legislative and policy reforms needed to comply with our future WTO commitments, defined in accordance with the Marrakesh Agreement. Therefore, I ask for Members' unshaken support of Timor-Leste as during this process of being fully integrated into the multilateral trading system.

Today's meeting reflects an important milestone and sturdy commitment from Timor-Leste, with a strong hope to conclude our discussion with Members on the outstanding issues, as we are moving closer to our Membership to the WTO. In particular, I wish all the success to His Excellency Eng. Joaquim Amaral and his negotiating Team for today's meeting, and I continue to applaud Timor-Leste's endless and strong commitment thus far in bringing the Nation towards its accession to the WTO.

Thank you.