



MINISTÉRIO DOS  
NEGÓCIOS ESTRANGEIROS  
E COOPERAÇÃO

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and  
Cooperation

## SESSION

**Partnerships Dialogue:  
“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.”**

STATEMENT by the Minister  
1<sup>st</sup> Conference on Goal no 14

*Our Oceans, our Future:  
Partnering for the  
Implementation of the  
SDG's*

New York, 05 – 09 June 2017

- Distinguished Co-Chairs, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen...
- As I speak to you representing my island nation at the edge of the vast Pacific Ocean, one of the world's 37 Small Island Developing States, I am reminded how urgent these issues are to all of us, although from many different prospective and reasons.
- For Timor-Leste, like many other SIDS, the maritime territory of our nations, are always larger than our land mass. They provide not only the means or potential means of livelihood to our people but also the identity and the limits of our sovereignty. Unfortunately, the legacy of our history, dictated a different path of our journey during decades and centuries. Many of us are still facing the reality of uncertainty on the extent of our rightful maritime sovereignty, hence denying the opportunity for our countries to achieve an otherwise reasonable development and wellbeing of our people.
- This is being intensified by the scarcity of resources on land and the advancement in science and technology which commence to unveil the economic potential of seas and oceans. Hence the run toward the oceans is inevitable. If in the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries the oceans were, primarily the vehicle through which maritime powerhouses reaches new horizons for territorial expansion, in our century, the islands and continents are themselves the starting point for jurisdiction claims over seas and oceans.
- If there is no rule to which we all shall adhere to and accept it as the norm for our global engagement, than the future of our generations survival and the future of our civilization could be compromised.

- The good news is that, the world have realized it quite early and produced the monumental UNCLOAS document in 1982.
- If we look at the provision in the UNCLOAS it provided the legal coverage for the operationalization of many of the aspects being discussed in this conference during the past 5 days from the perspective of rights and responsibilities of each parties.
- The question is how far each of us is willing to be abide by the provision in the UNCLOAS ? How we as an inseparable part of the world civilization perceive it ? One question one might ask is wether our adherence to UNCLOAS is a matter of principle or a matter of circumstantial convenience?
- We believe that It's a question of political will not capacity: We can restore the health of our ocean for this generation and those to come. Let us be clear: with UNCLOS as the legal framework upon which SDG14 implementation is based and under which all ocean-related activities and agreements are governed, with partnership from the community of nations to help with capacity building, infrastructure, and financing to implement our commitments, I know that working together, we can begin to change the current course – so that long after we are gone, our grandchildren and our great grandchildren can chart a course to a sustainable future.
- Since its foundation, Timor-Leste, have realized the importance of multilateralism principle in addressing issues of global interest, therefore, we applaud and cherish the world leaders, for agreeing to the global agenda of our planet for the coming 15 years, the SDG's in 2015. This conference which touch upon one of the critical element of the future of our planet and survival, the

oceans, is in itself self-explanatory of the concept that we all know so well, that no country is an island. The failure of any one of us, without exception, will ultimately affect all of us, sooner or latter, direct or indirectly, that is why the mantra of Leave no One Behind, is wise, just and necessary.

- As an island nation we know to well the importance of the seas and oceans, therefore, in despite of our limitation as a newly independent country, early in this conference we have made public seven voluntary commitments as a contribution to our common efforts. We believe that we, with your support, can deliver it. No journey is to hard if it is travelled along a good friend.

I thank you all