

Francisco Guterres Lu Olo for President

“I shall be a President of all and for all”

Media release

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LU OLO CONGRATULATES ALL TIMORESE WORKERS

FRETILIN Presidential candidate Francisco Lu Olo today called on the people of Timor Leste to celebrate the Labour Day holiday by honouring the work of the whole nation in building the world's newest independent country.

“To build an independent country out of the ashes of colonial war and occupation is the work of several lifetimes”, said Lu Olo. “This is not the work of one generation but of several. This work of building an independent nation requires patience, courage and commitment, from each and every one of us. Today we need to stand up and be proud about what we have done together.”

“We should not allow the crisis of the last twelve months, which was mainly confined to Dili, to blind us to the facts of the enormous progress made since 2002,” he said.

“We should also use today to remember that nothing can be built except through work. There are no simple, quick solutions to helping a country emerge from poverty. Our own work, as Timorese, is the only thing that will guarantee our independence and prosperity. Working together, Timorese can achieve security and prosperity. We need to learn to work together again, as we did during the resistance, helping each other and supporting each other. But we must all share the load equitably to the best of our abilities.

We should not be blinded by the false gold of instant prosperity, but work efficiently, according to our agreed plans, to achieve our objectives.

“I want to acknowledge the 17,000 government workers who are doing vital work to build our nation's basic institutions. This includes our public servants, our teachers, our health workers, our police and our FFDTL soldiers. I want to acknowledge the work of the small business people, and the people in a small private sector. And let us not forget the work of those many thousands of women in their homes, caring for children and many of the most important tasks for daily living.

“But above all I want to honour the work of the 225,000 people who work in subsistence farming and fishing, in the rural areas. These people are the backbone of our country, as they

were the backbone of our independence struggle. These people work hard, every day, for long hours, and receive very little. These are the people we must give priority to. Not with handouts or false charity, but by building the capacity of them and their children to produce more for themselves, so they can enjoy real independence,

We have a national development plan already, to guide our work. We have priorities, debated and approved through the parliament. Now is not the time to change course, to give up on what has been achieved and try something different.

The biggest problem we face is how to find productive work for the many thousands of young people leaving school each year. Many come to Dili, hoping to find work, and are disappointed. We have to find ways to engage them in the work of rural development and we need to help them build the new skills we will need to make our economy more productive and more sustainable.

On labour day we honour the work of cooperation, and we can use this day to think of ways we can cooperate to produce what is needed, to achieve self sufficiency, to reduce our dependence on foreign countries. We already have many cooperatives being formed in rural areas.

Our constitution guarantees:

1. The right to work regardless of gender, right to choose profession
2. The right a secure and hygienic workplace, remuneration, rest and holidays
3. Protection against dismissal without just cause or for political, religious or ideological reasons
4. Compulsory work is prohibited
5. Creation of cooperatives
6. Right to strike and prohibition against lock outs
7. Right to organize itself to promote and protect their own interests and rights

“I was the President of the Constitutional assembly which guaranteed these rights for workers in our constitution, and FREILIN and I will always fight to preserve them against the tendencies amongst some in our society to derogate from them”, vowed Lu Olo.

For more information contact:

Harold Moucho (Lu Olo’s political adviser) (+670) 723 0048 (Dili)

Jose Manuel Fernandes (Lu Olo’s official election representative) (+670) 734 2174 (Dili)

<http://www.luolobapresidente.blogspot.com>, <http://luolo.blogspot.com>,
<http://www.timortruth.com>