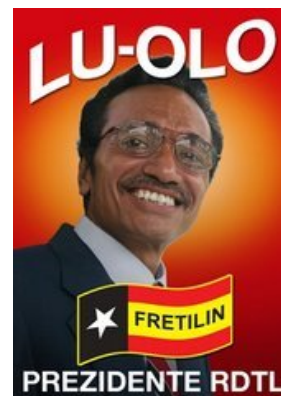


Francisco Guterres Lu Olo for President

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

Media release

Sunday 22 April 2007



Lu'Olo: “Youth of Timor-Leste, This is Your Time!”

Presidential candidate Francisco Guterres Lu'Olo today pledged to establish an Office for Youth Advocacy to give young people a greater say in the running of Timor Leste (East Timor).

“I will give youth a central place in my presidency, by establishing a national non-partisan and inclusive Office for Youth Advocacy, staffed by young people,” Lu'Olo said.

Speaking in Dili, Lu'Olo made the pledge in a message of congratulations to young people attending the annual Cruz Juventude gathering in Los Palos this past weekend.

“Cruz Juventude is a wonderful example of young people from all over the country coming together in peace and harmony, to celebrate their faith and values,” he said.

“It is also an opportunity for Timor Leste to acknowledge the great contribution that our youth make to our independence. Youth have the right to share in the peace and prosperity of our country, not just in the future, but now, today.”

Lu'Olo said he was personally indebted to the youth of Timor Leste. “When we were fighting in the mountains, it was the youth in the cities and the villages who helped us and supported us. Without the youth, there would be no independence.”

“We need to work together now, again, to overcome the crisis that has befallen our nation. Many young men and young women are now in leadership roles, helping to build their communities, our nation. Young people are involved in peacebuilding, in education, in health, in community development.”

Lu'Olo said that as President, he would be a committed advocate for youth. "I will engage in regular dialogue with youth and youth organisations, and help them engage with government and religious confessions and non-government organisations. Already I have been an advocate with the government for the establishment of youth parliaments in the schools."

Lu'olo said too many people blamed the youth for the violence and the crisis in Dili. "I do not agree with this. Youth come to Dili with high expectations. Too often, they are disappointed. But most young people are doing excellent work, supporting their families, studying, helping their communities. We need to respect our young people, listen to them, and work with them as they find their own solutions to the problems they face."

Lu'Olo said that he is already talking with youth and students about their visions and needs: "Youth and students tell me they want opportunities for long distance education in their own districts, instead of having to travel to Dili. They want Youth Resource Centres in the districts. They want help to develop their own peace and security initiatives, to do training, to learn computers, and to organise sports and cultural festivals."

"Youth want to work with women and farmers in rural areas, to establish co-operatives and livelihood projects. I know youth who are already doing these things now, and I undertake to support them to broaden and strengthen these initiatives. Youth in the districts want to be part of the modern world, and they have a right to it without being forced to leave their homes. I do not agree that quick-fix schemes like building dormitories for students in Dili are the answer."

Lu'Olo concluded with a direct appeal to youth:

"Young people have always played a central role in our struggle for independence. I say this to our youth: I began to make my own contribution to our national struggle as a youth. I learnt from my older brothers and sisters, especially with Vicente Reis, Sahe, who became my guiding light during those times. I learnt from them how to struggle for our liberation. In the last five years we have taken hold of the reins of our nation. We achieved much, but we also encountered a lot of challenges. Together we have to seek solutions to these challenges. This is your time! Let us all continue to work together for the future of our beloved country."

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>