

Brief Remarks by
His Excellency the President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, Dr. José
Ramos-Horta,
on the occasion of the
Visit of the French Navy Frigate "Vendémiaire" to the Port of Dili,
Monday, March 11th, 2024

Your Excellency, Ambassador
Fabien Penone,
of the French Republic to Timor-Leste

Commander Sébastien Drouelle, Commanding Officer of the French Frigate "Vendémiaire".

Excellencies, Members of Parliament, Government, Members of the Diplomatic Corps and International Agencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen, Officers and Sailors,
Distinguished Guests,

It is with great pleasure that we welcome the presence of the French Navy Frigate "Vendémiaire" in our port of Díli.

I extend my warmest greetings to you, Mr Ambassador, as well as to Commander Sébastien Drouelle, Commanding Officer of the Frigate "Vendémiaire", and all the authorities present.

This moment has a profound significance, as it represents a mark that strengthens the bonds of fraternal friendship between our peoples and countries.

I reaffirm the increasingly close ties between France and Timor-Leste, which were discussed during my visit to the French Republic earlier this year, where I was warmly welcomed by President Emmanuel Macron and the President of the French National Assembly, Madame Yaël Braun-Pivet, among other authorities.

The bilateral collaboration we are now consolidating is an integral part of a new French policy for the Indo-Pacific and ASEAN member countries, a tangible sign of mutual commitment to peace, sustainable development and regional stability.

The presence of the Frigate "Vendémiaire" not only symbolises this cooperation, but also promises significant advances in crucial areas such as maritime defence and security.

We are determined to strengthen our Maritime Authority, ensuring respect for international navigation rights, our fishing reserves or protected areas, and the protection of our precious marine resources.

French experience and technology will be invaluable in this endeavour, paving the way for wider cooperation, including in areas such as the surveillance of our territorial waters and exclusive economic zone, the fight against illegal fishing, human trafficking and organised crime, as well as the training or capacity building of our Timorese officers, sailors and military personnel.

It is also encouraging to know that France is committed not only to extending its naval presence, but also to providing technical and voluntary assistance to support our economic, cultural and social diversification.

The regular arrival of specialised technical teams from the French Embassy and the imminent support of Business France in investment and trade promotion initiatives, alongside our TradeInvest Agency, are concrete steps² towards a stronger and more prosperous partnership.

The shared vision of a stronger Timor-Leste and a more central ASEAN are fundamental catalysts for national and regional sustainable development.

Together, we can explore new opportunities in crucial sectors such as tourism, agriculture, sustainable energy, the green and blue economy, and climate change mitigation.

This visit marks the start of an exciting chapter of cultural, social, commercial and economic exchanges.

I am confident that, with the renewed commitment of our citizens, investors and entrepreneurs, we can forge new partnerships and achieve tangible and lasting results for the benefit of our nations and our citizens.

Thank you all very much.

May God bless us all.