

Reconciliation: A Nation commitment to move forward.

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Opening Statement;

“Reconciliation is the most preferable approach to end the cycle of revenge, and reunite Timorese to begin new dimension of mutual interaction to the future”

SUMMARY

Background

Timor Leste has long experience under colonization, invasion and occupation of foreign powers. These foreign powers can help create and reinforce sense of national unity or destroy it. From historical perspectives, they also left behind list of positive and negative legacies. One important element was on how the authority (language) and power (culture) can be a source of tension afterwards. Another interesting phenomena of this historical background; some part of society gained social benefits and opportunities while the opposite gets nothing, oppressed and victimized. This imbalance situation and condition creates animosity, intolerance and revenge latently within society which can be easily exploited or even explode if it failed to deal accordingly.

Timorese were united by two ferocious decades of external force, a process that occurred not on a natural basis. Therefore when the communal enemy left, old accounts fill the gap. Revenge and animosity has vanished thousands of millions of innocents Timorese. Intolerance has engulfed the country to the Stone Age and tribalism conflict style even emerged during 2006 episode.

I. Legacy on society;

Tendency of revenge becomes new trend (Latent tension)

The obscurity of colonization and oppression of occupation powers also resulted in the excessive use of force over the people which results in the vast human rights violation and social destruction. To consolidate the power, “*Social interrelation*” was established between foreign power and local partners (collaborators?) in order to maintain and

sustain its power and existence. However, the so called “*collaborators*” of foreign power later on were victimized and oppressed when the power structure collapsed and changed. People start to blame each other for all destructions and negative consequences, and begin to codify or distinguish others not on positive values (merit system) but accusation and stigmatization.

The impact of having an experience under multiple foreign powers generates double consequences. The positive side results in the transfer of knowledge and experience to the small part of society. The negative side results in suspicious and animosity among the people which then generates deadly and latent cycle of revenge within society. (*Ex; pro independence versus pro Indonesia; pro Integration versus anti integration,” Supermi versus Keju”, etc*)

Transformation of social values

Today, again Timorese has to choose between incorporating new values or keep the Timorese way which has been changed?

1. *Portuguese approach, Australian solution or Indonesian way?*
2. *A combination of modernity and tradition?*

The bold question is; can Timorese move forward? If So How?

II. Alternative policy recommendations;

1. Socio-cultural approach;

****Intra Timorese Reconciliation;***

This policy is important and strategist to end the cycle of social revenge and animosity. Otherwise there will be no peace, stability and development for all.

The country has to move forward and it needs contribution from all segments of society. One thing for sure, the outcome will not satisfy the entire world. The dimension of this approach must be conducted in external and internal/formal

and informal methods to reach “conciliatory atmosphere” for a nation to move forward.

*** *Human Investment and curriculum reform;***

Invest more on human resources and incorporating new values and methods of education as part of curriculum reform (Ex; Human Rights; participative democracy; leadership training programs, IT, including critical elements that support national unity, etc)

*** *Religious and Traditional Dimension;***

There are existing religious and traditional approaches and mechanism that regulates the harmony of social interaction, including on conflict resolution that needs to bring on board (Ex; Amu lulik; Uma Lulik; Biti boot, etc).

2. **Socio-political approach;** *Criminalize act based ethnicity; Adopting policy on equal and just share of natural resources to avoid “Oil Curse Syndrome”; Political system has to be conducted based on the principle of “Estado de Direito Democratico” as stipulated by the constitution; Shifting the theme of social discourses by focus on “socio-economic recovery” to support the nation building process.*

3. **Socio-economic strategy;** *adopting pro growth and pro employment approach to fight poverty. Policy on basic public investment that generates economic benefits to the people in short period (5 years) has to be bold part of the government development agenda. Timorese can fund it via Petroleum Fund. While investment on strategic infrastructures such on national rural electrification, IT network, alternative energy, and national road network, which is a long term objectives can be supported via multilateral or bilateral approach (Kuwait Fund; Yen Loan, IMF, etc). Timorese leaders have to secure the nation strategic economic resources; diversify petroleum fund portfolio.*

4. **Strong leadership with commitment and vision;** *in post conflict and oral tradition society like Timor Leste, strong leadership is very important to keep the country stable and unified. The fact is; Timorese never inherited functioning democratic institutions and a stable state apparatus system in place; no proper infrastructure in place, etc (agenda setting).*

In fact, Timor Leste, an eight year old country is an emerging post conflict society, in simultaneously it has to reconcile with its residual problems of history, and move forward as sovereign country and not a failed state. The country characterized by the stagnation of social infrastructures, high growth in population and unemployment, latent communal tensions, new social configuration, in addition to new challenges and opportunities to deal with in order to comply with the principle of liberating the people of Timor Leste from war, hunger, and oppression to the better future. Timorese people count on friends like you and on your support, Thank you!

Your kind and warm attention is very much appreciated Obrigado barak!

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