

## Joint Communiqué

*“A new chapter and revitalised partnership”*

30 July 2018

1. HE Dionisio Babo Soares PhD, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, hosted the Hon Julie Bishop MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, from 29 to 31 July in Dili. As part of her visit, Ms. Bishop met with HE the President of the Republic, Mr. Francisco Guterres Lú Olo, HE the Prime Minister, Mr. Taur Matan Ruak, as well as HE the Leader of the Opposition, Dr. Mari Alkatiri, and visited a number of projects supported by Australian aid.
2. The Ministers committed to a **new chapter** in the bilateral relations that will strengthen ties and deepen collaboration between Timor-Leste and Australia. The Ministers had an extensive discussion on bilateral relations and cooperation and acknowledged that the friendship between their two countries was strong. The Ministers committed to a revitalised partnership for the future, focused not only on close bilateral cooperation but on working together in the Indo-Pacific region and globally. The Ministers restated their commitment to a partnership based on mutual respect and trust.
3. The Ministers acknowledged that deep people-to-people connections, reflected in the cultural, religious, educational, business, military, community and sporting exchanges that have taken place between the people of the two countries for decades, were the foundation of the relationship.
4. Mr. Babo Soares and Ms. Bishop welcomed the historic signing of the *Treaty between Australia and the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste establishing their Maritime Boundaries in the Timor Sea* (the Maritime Boundary Treaty) in New York, on 6 March 2018. The Ministers committed to prioritising the ratification of the Maritime Boundary Treaty upon conclusion of the transitional arrangements and their respective domestic treaty processes.
5. Ms. Bishop and Mr. Babo Soares committed to **regular dialogue** between their respective governments and agreed to convene annual meetings between Foreign Ministers and senior officials through which bilateral priorities would be pursued.
6. The Ministers agreed to deepen the bilateral economic partnership in line with Timor-Leste's priorities to broaden the economic base in Timor-Leste, improve and simplify the investment and business environment. Both Ministers agreed to encourage private sector growth and to enhance **trade, investment and economic links**.
7. The Ministers agreed to work together on a new package of jobs and growth initiatives. Ministers noted the importance of skills development, job creation and labour mobility to supporting the potential of Timor-Leste's people. Ministers celebrated the contribution of ever-expanding initiatives such as the **Seasonal Workers Program, Australia Awards, and New Colombo Plan**. As part of a revitalised economic partnership, Ministers agreed to continue constructive discussions on the development of the Greater Sunrise resource, noting its importance for Timor-Leste's prosperity.

8. The Ministers reaffirmed the commitment of both countries to regional security and the protection of their shared maritime domain. They agreed to strengthen their long-standing security and defence partnership by building defence and law enforcement capacity and increasing the exchange of information. They committed to deepening collaboration on maritime security to combat shared threats such as transnational crime, and on protection of maritime resources.
9. Mr. Babo Soares expressed gratitude and appreciation for Australia's continued commitment and support to Timor-Leste's socio-economic development. Ms. Bishop reiterated Australia's commitment to remaining an effective and reliable development partner to Timor-Leste. The Ministers committed to a new Development Partnership Arrangement to support Timor-Leste's priorities for social and economic development.
10. The Ministers committed to promoting gender equality, women's empowerment and inclusion, including through all joint development activities. Ms. Bishop encouraged Timor-Leste to accede to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and offered to assist with implementation.
11. The Ministers committed to boosting trilateral economic cooperation with Indonesia to maximise trade and investment opportunities with the objective of greater regional economic integration between Timor-Leste, eastern Indonesia and northern Australia.
12. As like-minded states, the Ministers agreed to increase consultation and cooperation in regional and international forums. They agreed to collaborate within the United Nations system and to work together to prepare Timor-Leste to contribute to international peacekeeping missions.
13. Ms. Bishop reiterated Australia's support for Timor-Leste's efforts to join the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and World Trade Organization (WTO) and said Australia would be pleased to sponsor any future membership application by Timor-Leste to the Commonwealth of Nations as a fellow democracy that values human rights and the rule of law.
14. The Ministers reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to the **international rules-based order** and commended the Maritime Boundary Treaty and use of the independent UNCLOS Conciliation Commission as testament to the way in which international law can facilitate the peaceful settlement of disputes.
15. Mr. Babo Soares and Ms. Bishop agreed to work together to commemorate the **20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landing of INTERFET**, noting that the occasion, in 2019, would be a time to reflect and celebrate Timor-Leste's remarkable success as an independent sovereign state.