



## President of East Timor reaffirms Scouting contribution to peace

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East Timor President José Ramos-Horta was invested as the Patron of Uniao Nacional dos Escuteiros de Timor-Leste (UNE-TL) on 12th January 2012 at the President Palacio in Nicolau Lobato, Timor Leste. Ramos-Horta is the second President of East Timor since independence and was a co-recipient of the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize.



The investiture ceremony was largely covered by the media where the President was seen in Scout uniform, wearing the Scout scarf and signing the resolution.

Speaking before the crowd of key Scout leaders, dignitaries and guests from various international organizations based in Dili, President Ramos-Horta said he acknowledged the important role that Heads of States in many other countries play as Patrons of their Scouting organisations and said he was honoured to fill this role in his country.



He promised to uphold the Scout Promise and Law and in his speech he stressed the role the Scout Movement has in assisting reconciliation in Timor. He also emphasized the positive role Scouting plays in youth development and promised to assist Scouting in whatever way he could through his role as Patron.

?I am ready together with you to promote Scouting through UNE-TL. Mostly in other countries, the Head of State becomes the Patron of the Scout association. Here in Timor-Leste, we follow this tradition in Scouting. Even though my mandate will finish in the next four months but I am ready to support UNE-TL.?

At the opening ceremony, UNE-TL President Idelta Maria Rodrigues talked about how Scouting evolved and the process of the establishment of UNE-TL. She emphasized how Scouting plays the role of equipping the young people of Timor Leste with leadership skills and self-discipline and how they play the positive role in the society. She thanked the Secretary of State for Youth and Sports for their support and hoped that this will continue. However, she explained that lack of resources is significantly limiting UNE-TL's capacity to provide quality programs. International Commissioner Ms Filomena Reis read out the UNE-TL Resolution.



Scouting in Timor Leste started since 1971. The working visits from WOSM started as far back as September 2003. In January 2004 the National Scout Constitution was drafted, followed by the regional team visit in December 2005 where the first Annual General Meeting adopted their Constitution. This was followed by a training course also in the same month conducted by overseas trainers.

Presently, Scouts Australia is extending some valuable assistance to UNE-TL by responding to some of its needs for sustainability. South Australian Commissioner Phil Radoslavich and his daughter Kathy, who is the Australian Youth Ambassador for development in Dili were present at the ceremony.

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ith report from Phil Radoslovich, Scouts Australia SA Branch

