



**Permanent Mission of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste
to the United Nations**

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New York, 23 February 2017

The Permanent Mission of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to the United Nations presents its compliments to UN Women and has the honour to transmit herewith the Timor-Leste Country Updates from the Secretary of State of Timor-Leste.

The Permanent Mission of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste would highly appreciate that said letter be forwarded to its highest destination.

The Permanent Mission of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the UN Women of its highest consideration.

Ms. Christine Brautigam
Director, Intergovernmental Support Division
UN-Women
New York





REPÚBLICA DEMOCRÁTICA DE TIMOR-LESTE
SECRETARIA DE ESTADO PARA O APOIO
E PROMOÇÃO SOCIO-ECONÓMICA DA MULHER



Timor-Leste Country Updates

CSW 61st Session, UN Headquarters in New York

13 to 24 March 2017

“Women's Economic Empowerment in the Changing World of Work”

Dear Sir/Madame ...

As a member of the United Nations, Timor-Leste adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, signed at the United Nations General Assembly in 25 September 2015. In his speech to the Global Leaders meeting on Gender Equality, the Timor-Leste Prime Minister reaffirmed the Government's commitment to Gender Equality, where he said: “We must improve the situation of women and address pervasive gender discrimination if we are to meet our development goals”.

In line with the adoption of the SDG objectives, Prime Minister's office in collaboration with Ministry of Finance and the State Secretary for the Support and Promotion of Socio Economic of Women (SEM) is establishing a Working Group on developing SDG and gender indicators. Men and women at all level must work together in achieving the SDG objectives.

We firmly believe that it is fundamental to provide all the necessary conditions to the socio-economic empowerment of women as a crucial foundation for the construction of a modern and developed society. It is vital to provide equal opportunities to Women in terms of education and professional training, as well as guaranteeing equal opportunities in accessing the labour markets and the social and political life to contribute to state development.

This is a follow up and new updates from Government of Timor-Leste, particularly from the Secretary of State for the Support and Socio-Economic Promotion of Women (SEM) on gender equality in Timor-Leste achieved during the period of 2016-2017 as decided at the Global Leaders meeting, New York, 2015.



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1. Women in Politics and decision-making

In regards to political participation, Timor-Leste has one of the highest proportions of women parliamentarians, in the world, and the highest, in the Asia-Pacific region. In the July 2012 parliamentary elections, 38% of those elected, to the National Parliament were women. This means that Timor-Leste has already exceeded the 2015 Millennium Development Goal target of 35% of female representatives in the Parliament. An important contributing factor to the progress, of female representation in the National Parliament, is the amendment, of the Law on Parliamentary Elections 2012, which requires that per three candidates, one needs to be a women on the political party candidate lists.

The president of the National Parliament promulgated the new Village (Suco) Law 9/2016 on the 8 of July, 2016, imposing to have at least one women per Suco standing for the elections as Suco Chiefs, therefore implementing one of the CEDAW concluding recommendation. This led to 319 women standing for the highest position at village level, compared to 66 in 2004. The Secretary of State for the Support and Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women (SEM) in partnership with the civil society platform (100% I am ready), successfully advocated for this change, to tackle the low participation of women in local governance, as despite women's participation at national parliament reaching 38%, only 2% women were elected as Suco (village) chief following the Suco election in 2009. In November 2016, 21 women were elected representing 4,5% of all Suco Chiefs.

In response to the need to increase women's participation and implement gender equality principles in the twelve municipalities, the new decree law 3/2016 on Statutes of Municipal Administration, Municipal Authorities and the Inter-ministerial Working Group on Administrative Decentralization, was approved on 16 March 2016. The decree law gives overall responsibility to the Municipal Administrator to ensure that the administration includes targets to reduce gender inequality, in the municipal plans and in Human Resources, through gender mainstreaming, targeted interventions and affirmative actions. The law also provides SEM a seat on the Technical Working group on Decentralization.

The on going process of decentralization, and local governance reform, is opening up, new windows, of opportunity at district level, for making local level planning, and budgeting responsive to the needs, of women. Decentralization will also, provide a chance for increased women's participation, by establishing quotas through, new legislation; such as the municipality elections law.



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Our recent result of the Suco election in 2016 shows a gradual move from 2% in 2009 to only 5% in 2016, the progress achievement indicates that community and family members have gradually supported women to be community leaders.

We still advocate for 50% of women's participation. .

2. National Action Plan for Gender based Violence

The Government approved the second National Action Plan on Gender Based Violence (2016-2010), on 7 February 2017, following the first NAP (2010-2015) and as response to implement the Law against Domestic Violence (LADV), Law N° 7/2010, which was passed by the National Parliament in May 3 2010.

The NAP aims at reducing and ultimately eliminating gender-based-violence that affects women, men and children in our communities through a multi-sectoral coordinated approach. The NAP-GBV has 4 major pillars: 1) on prevention of gender based violence; 2) provision of services for victims (survivors of GBV); 3) access to justice and 4) coordination monitoring and evaluation.

3. The NAP UNCR 1325

The New National Action Plan for the implementation of the UN Council Resolution 1325 (NAP 1325) on Women, Peace and Security has just been approved by the Council of Ministers in April 2016. Ministry of Interior was in charge of coordinating the works and drafting process during the year of 2015 – 2016. The approval and launch of National Action Plan on UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security is another remarkable achievement for gender equality policies occurred in the year. We know from our life experience that peace is crucial for delivering on our collective promise to 'leave no one behind', including those with physical and mental disabilities, on our path towards sustainable development (2017). In the 2017 Annual Action Plans of the Government, nine line ministries are already contributing to the implementation of the NAP 1325.

4. Support to the Promotion of Socio-economic of women

Timor-Leste is also committed to improve economic opportunities for women. With our leadership, the office of the State Secretary for the Support and Socio Economic Promotion of Women has developed Women's Economic Empowerment Strategy, and provided small grants for women. We know that investing in women has a multiplier effect not just for the present but also for our future generations. That is why we have our motto "strong women, strong nation".



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Economic Empowerment of Women has been our main policy and priority program within the 6th Constitutional Government. Through the CASH TRANSFER program, the Government of Timor-Leste provides opportunities to women to become key actors in the economic sector. Women have been involved in the different kind of economic activities, including small business and enterprises, agriculture and fisheries, and many other economic activities that generate income to their families.

From 2008 to 2016 SEM provided cash transfers to 468 women's groups for small economic activities in all 13 municipalities for a total amount of USD 920,000. In addition, \$106,634 was provided to 10 national NGOs that worked in the area of women grass root economic support. In partnership with IADE, SEM is also providing capacity training and technical assistance to all members of targeted groups on market reach out and productions.

Comment [AM1]: Include total budget for cash transfer to women groups

The Government continues to prioritize Rural Women, through the implementation of the Maubisse Declaration signed in October 2015 by nine line ministries to empower rural women. In 2017, the Government is investing USD 6,118,500 to implement these commitments. The biggest investment is to improve access to clean water for women (USD 3,7 million).

In the Area of social assistance, the Government of Timor-Leste established a Mother's purse (Bolsa de Mae) program in response to the impact of years of conflict on widows and orphans. This conditional cash transfer (CCT) reaches 54000 people, majority of women, but it represents less than 2% of the annual social assistance budget, compared to 70% going to the Veterans Fund where only 15% of beneficiaries are women. The Bolsa de Mae is the only social assistance scheme that currently uses poverty as part of the eligibility criteria and most (90%) beneficiaries are female-headed households.¹

Timor-Leste also reaffirms its commitment through adoption on Social Protection's policies which protect elderly, women veterans, single mothers, working ages, children and access to health. A Policy on Social Protections is being drafted and is in the final drafting process. The MSS is in charge of coordinating the work of drafting the policy.

5. New Laws and Policies

The Government of Timor-Leste, is also committed to reviewing laws to change discriminatory practices, and will create, new laws, and policies to protect women's rights in the next years. These include, the adoption of the re-entry policy in schools, for girls, revision of the Penal Code, customary law, land and property law, mediation law, and municipality election laws (CSW 2015)

¹Bolsa da Mãe database, 2011-2012.



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The adoption of laws and policies in year 2016 - 2017:

- The Law no. 3/2017 on 25 January, on Prevention and Fight Against Human Trafficking and the Forth Alteration of the Penal Code.
- The Customary law is on the way. It is a harmonized law under the Penal Code. It is expected to be presented at the National Parliament by midyear of 2017.
- The Land Law was approved by the NP on 6th February 2017. It is expected to be promulgated by the President of the Republic of Timor-Leste in March 2017. Whilst, the expropriation law² as well as the draft for Real Estate Financial Fund Law have been submitted to the Council of Ministers in March 2015. They are expected to be approved by the National Parliament by early of this year. These bills recognize women's rights to land and provide women opportunity to run business in their own land. The National Directorate for Land and Property of MoJ has been conducting a nationwide cadastral survey through the recent National Cadastral System (Sistema Cadastral Nacional - SCN) to help communities to identify their land boundaries as well as to prevent uncontrolled land conflicts between communities. SCN is a gender sensitive process, where men and women are equally present in the decision making process of determining their land boundaries as well as in claiming any land disputes.
- The Mediation Law is in the final drafting process within Ministry of Justice.
- The indultum law Procedimento de Concessão de Indulto Comutação da Pena was approved in 2016 with Law no. 5/2016.
- The Government approved a Draft Law on Child Protection, which will regulate the promotion of children's rights and the protection of children at risk and in danger, in order to ensure their well-being and healthy development.
- The Government of Timor-Leste is concluding the legal framework to establish special conditions to protect pregnant woman from chemical products, other dangerous substances, noise and mining work.
- We are finalizing the legal framework to establish the "Observatory for women's working conditions" witch aims at collecting data, analysing and proposing actions to establish equal rights and conditions between women's and men's in all public institutes and others public organizations. The Observatory should start working within the next two months.

6. Women in Labor Force

² The Expropriation law has gone through debates at the National Parliament with relevant Committees and is awaiting to be globally approved by National Parliament



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Looking at the size of the Timor-Leste labour force we have: 178,000 men are economically active. The women are only half of the male population economically active with 84,000 women. Women are more likely to be as inactive than men, where 227,000 women are inactive compare to 139,000 men are inactive.³

The LFPR (taxa de participação na Força Laboral) is 42.6% considering the whole country. And women represent only 27.8%. There are reasons why men outnumber women in the labor force participation. For women Family responsibilities is the first issue (50%), Educational level and training skills (24%), and retire (14%). While for men, educational level and training skills (33%) is the first reason for their labor participation, family responsibilities (32%) and retire (15%). Majority of population (66.3%) who do not seek employment due to family responsibilities are women.⁴

³ The LFS 2010

⁴ LFS 2013, Gender analysis on women's participation in the Labor Force.



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7. Women in Employment

The Government of Timor-Leste considers private sector development key for economic growth and sustainable economic development. Gender mainstreaming in private sector is thus crucial to ensure that gender differences are taken into account and that businesswomen and men in Timor-Leste are able to expand opportunities to participate in, benefit from, and contribute to economic development. A National Strategy for Gender and Private Sector, is being implemented during the period from 2014 to 2017, and aims to contribute towards economic inclusion, that is, the process of overcoming barriers to men and women participating in or contributing fully to the economic system.⁵

The assessment conducted for the elaboration of the gender and private sector strategy through wide consultations with key stakeholders and available secondary information and data, and the related problem analysis, identifies 5 areas where interventions are needed and where the Strategy and its action plan are focused and will be executed. These include:

1. Institutional framework and business enabling environment, including lack of dialogue and coordination between the public and the private sectors;
2. Access to credit and financial services, in particular for micro and small entrepreneurs;
3. Access to Business Development Services (BDS) and information;
4. Market's access for products and services;
5. Access to formal network for women entrepreneurs.

Primary goals of the Strategy and Action Plan are to ensure that the needs of women entrepreneurs are better catered for alongside men's, at districts and at national level. It further aims to guarantee a gender sensitive approach in private sector development through an enhanced collaboration of key stakeholders in Timor-Leste.⁶

As the leading institutions which initiated the elaboration of the Strategy and Action Plan disappeared after the recent government's reshuffle quickly after the strategy was established, the new Secretary of State for the Support and Socio-Economical Promotion of Women (SEM) is the main leader on this sector and is supported by UN Women in its process to establish a clear policy in this regard.⁷

⁵ Timor-Leste CEDAW Periodical Report, Combined 2nd and 3rd Report, 2013 – 2015.

⁶ National Strategy and Action Plan for Gender and Private Sector 2014-2017, State Secretary for the Support and Promotion of the Private Sector, supported by ILO, Irish Aid and NZ AID, 2014

⁷ Timor-Leste CEDAW Periodical Report, Combined 2nd and 3rd Report, 2013 – 2015.



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8. Vulnerable Employment is Declining

Our recent Labor Force Survey shows a figure of 56% people in labor force are in vulnerable employments. The number of women in the vulnerable employments is significantly high (69%) compare to men (47%). There has been a gradual declining (22%) since 2010, where 78% women and 66% men worked in vulnerable employments.

The significant reduction is on the number of men in vulnerable employment level, with 19% between 2010 and 2013, while, women experience only 9%. Rural women experiencing higher risk of vulnerable jobs – 83% of employed rural women, compare to 62% of employed rural men.

9. Gender Mainstreaming:

The Government of Timor-Leste is progressively introducing programme based budgeting, which allows for a better planning and monitoring system, based on results. Gender Mainstreaming is being considered in this process, and the Prime Minister's office in collaboration with SEM have developed tools to support line ministries to integrate five gender commitments, including the CEDAW recommendations, Strategic Development Goal 5 target, into their Annual Action Plans. Work is also ongoing to develop a gender indicator as well as a monitoring system which will allow to monitor progress towards implementation of the national and international gender equality recommendations, including SDG 5 on gender equality and women's empowerment.

10. Approval on Women, Peace and Security

On 26 April 2016, the Council of Ministers approved the National Action Plan for the UNCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. This plan was developed under coordination of the Ministry of Interior, in a participatory way, involving five line ministries and state institutions. It covers the four pillars of resolution 1325, adopted in the year 2000: women's participation, prevention, protection, and peace-building. Philippines and Indonesia previously adopted such plans. The Plan aims to strengthen women's participation and leadership in security and justice sectors, promote more inclusive conflict prevention processes, improve protection for women from violence, and ensure that progress in peace building and development reaches all community members. Ministry of Social Solidarity, Ministry of Interior and the National Policy, budgeted in 2016 and 2017 for the implementation of the plan.



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11. Commitment for Rural Women's Economic Empowerment

Nine ministries and secretary of states, under leadership of the Prime Minister, (SEM, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Health, Secretary of State for Employment Policy and Vocational Training, National Commercial Bank, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Ministry of State Administration) have committed to achieve by 2017 concrete targets for Rural Women's Economic Empowerment. This agreement was signed on International Rural Women's Day 2015. The commitments include targets for rural women, especially young women, in employment and training programmes, as well as improved access to health care and clean water. The targets were included partially in the 2016 and 2017 Annual Action Plans of the line ministries.

Thank you for your kind cooperation and we are looking forward to updating you more on our new progress in the next CSW session.

