



**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE PROMOTION OF EQUALITY**

**Statement**

**By**

**H.E. Snra Idelta Maria Rodrigues  
Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality**

**To the**

**55<sup>th</sup> Session**

**of the Commission on the Status of Women**

**On**

**General Discussion: Review of the implementation of the BPfA, sharing  
of experiences and good practices, with a view to overcoming  
remaining obstacles and new challenges**

**United Nations, New York**

**24 Feb 2011**

Chairperson, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I begin my statement, I would like to convey our deepest condolences to the families of the victims of the earthquake that hit New Zealand on Tuesday.

Timor-Leste welcomes the establishment of UN Women, and the appointment of Michelle Bachelet as its Executive Director and Under Secretary General. She has our full confidence and support, and we look forward to joining her at the official launch of UN Women this evening. We hope that this will strengthen international assistance for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. We look forward to an increased field presence, and greater partnership in our programming. Timor-Leste, is a member of the Executive Board of UN Women. We would like to use this opportunity to positively influence the development of an efficient, and sustainable organization. At this time, I would also like to mention that Timor-Leste's first-ever candidate, Maria Helena Pires, was elected to the CEDAW Committee. With the recent adoption of our State Budget, the government is finalizing and hopes to announce its multi-year contribution to UN Women, in accordance with our capacity. We believe these signify our commitment to gender, and desire to contribute to the promotion of gender equality at all levels.

Thank you for this opportunity to share an update from my country on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The Government of Timor-Leste is committed to advancing equality between women and men in all spheres of life. Gender equality is guaranteed in our Constitution as well as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which Timor-Leste ratified in 2002. This guarantee has been elaborated upon in the Dili Declaration and the Plan of Action of the Third Women's Congress. These accords are commitments made by Government, Parliament, Civil Society and Religious Authorities, recognising the needs and rights of Timorese women.

Among the achievements and challenges in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment since our last appearance at the Commission on the Status of Women 2010, I am pleased to report that:

A Law against Domestic Violence was promulgated by the President last year, after 8 years of development. The law provides for legal protection, legal remedies and the establishment of shelters and support services for survivors of domestic violence. Dissemination of this law has been done in 6 out of 13 districts, and this year we plan to complete the dissemination to the remaining districts. A National Plan of Action on Gender Based Violence is to be drafted this year. We are also in the final stages of consultations for a Gender Justice Policy, which focuses on the reduction of violence against women and children.

In the area of Gender Responsive Budgeting, as a result of intensive gender mainstreaming efforts in the line ministries and parliament, two noteworthy allocations for gender initiatives were approved from the State Budget last month. The first is a special allocation to implement the recently passed Law against Domestic Violence, of \$1.45 million, to be distributed among the main actors in its implementation, namely the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Solidarity, the Ministry of Health, and the Vulnerable Persons Unit of the National Police. The second allocation is to the Ministry of Agriculture in the amount of \$500,000, to be used in training of women in rural areas to improve their nutrition and that of their families, as well as to increase market oriented production to increase incomes.

SEPI's continued participation in the National Priorities process, and in the reviews of ministerial Annual Action Plans, will assist in the embedding of the principles of gender equality. In terms of strengthening gender in monitoring mechanisms, SEPI has been working to engender national level

planning through the National Strategic Development Plan and other national planning exercises. We are currently participating in multiple M&E strengthening initiatives, including the development of a central database for gender statistics. This will act as a centralized place for gender-based violence (GBV) statistics. However, increasing capacity for gender mainstreaming and the need for disaggregated data is still needed. A challenge we face, is that there is a high demand for gender expertise, but we are constrained by limited human resources and finances.

Timor-Leste had its first constructive dialogue with the CEDAW Committee, only a year and a half ago, and since then, we have been focused on implementation of the CEDAW Concluding Observations. In 2010 we focused on supporting gender activities in the key sectors of Education and Health. Highlights of activities in the Education Sector included: a Gender in Schools Sensitisation Programme in 3 Regional Offices; Awareness raising through theatre on the value of education for girls with the aim of raising the number of girls in schools. For the Health Sector, a workshop was held, to increase awareness of the importance of disaggregated statistics on women's health, sensitise participants about gender, women's mental health and reproductive health, and gender barriers to accessing health services. SEPI is now in the process of preparing a special progress report in the areas Education and Health, to send to the CEDAW Committee, later this year.

Also responding to the CEDAW Concluding Observations, which asked for a “*permanent interdepartmental structure, with high-level representatives with decision-making powers from all relevant sectors and levels of policymaking in order to ensure the effective functioning of gender mainstreaming strategy*”, we have developed a new mechanism which will replace the current inter-ministerial Gender Focal Points, with Gender Working Groups within each ministry, which will consist of high-level officials at the national and district levels. This new mechanism is aimed to establish more effective coordination for gender mainstreaming. A resolution for this has been drafted, and is currently on the agenda of the Council of Ministers.

On Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, a cross-learning initiative between Ireland, Liberia and Timor-Leste. Topics covered included women's participation, protection and prevention of sexual and gender based violence, justice, security and health. At the launch of the final report in New York on the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of SCR 1325 last October, the initiative was described as ground-breaking. It was the first time a developed country had sought to learn about peace-building from developing countries. In our case, Ireland came to Timor-Leste to learn from our experiences in protection of women and girls from gender-based violence in a post-conflict setting.

Chairman, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

The Government of Timor-Leste will continue its endeavors to ensure the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals. Our vision is for a Timor-Leste that is a prosperous and peaceful nation, with a gender-fair society where human dignity, human rights and women's rights are valued, protected, and promoted by its laws and culture.

Thank you for this opportunity.

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