



INTERVENTION

By

**H.E. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation
Mrs. Adaljiza Magno**

**High-level Asia-Pacific Regional Review Meeting on the
Istanbul Programme of Action in Preparation for the Fifth
United Nations Conference on the Least Developed
Countries (UNLDC-5)**

Session 1: Ministerial dialogue on lessons learned in the implementation of
the IPoA – challenges encountered and the way forward

MONDAY, 30 August 2021

Excellency Chairperson, H.E. the Minister of Finance of Bangladesh,

Excellency High Representative for the LDCs, Landlocked Developing Countries and SIDS,

Excellency Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCAP,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, I wish to commence by expressing our gratitude to the government of Bangladesh, High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, and UN-ESCAP for organizing the High-Level Asia Pacific Review Meeting on the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) for LDCs in preparation for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (UNLDC-5), in Doha, Qatar, in January 2022.

I take this opportunity to express our heartfelt congratulations on the nomination of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing

Countries and Small Island Developing States, Ambassador Courtenay Rattray, and rest assured that you have Timor-Leste's full support.

The theme we are addressing today “from Istanbul to Doha – a journey towards sustainable and resilient development: Asia-Pacific stories for graduation” focuses on lessons learned as the Programme of Action is implemented, the challenges encountered and the way forward which stands to be critical in our deliberations.

As noted, many of the LDCs in our region have made some progress and improvement in socio-economic development yet still encounter challenges in the implementation of the Istanbul Program of Action. We are still far from reaching the targets set out by the Committee for Development Policy. Already in 2018, LDCs were not on track to achieve the SDGs even before the pandemic. The persistent structural challenges faced by LDCs remain unresolved and the continued exposure of the LDCs to vulnerabilities,

compounded by the effects of climate change and current Covid-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a number of challenges for Timor-Leste, including economic and social distress, affecting the country's revenue, economic growth as well as increasing the unemployment rate and I believe those types of challenges are also prevailing in other Asia Pacific LDCs and SIDS since it has had a global impact and has taken a significant toll on every person's way of life. It has negatively affected global economic growth, significant loss of life, and continuously undermine the well-being of people from all walks of life. The LDCs are the hardest hit of its impact. Considering the existing issues that we continue to battle with such as extreme poverty, violent conflict, food shortages, and climate-related emergencies, the psychosocial and socio-economic shock of the pandemic has made moving forward adapting challenge and an even more difficult achievement.

While many of the LDCs, including Timor-Leste, have reported a small number of COVID-19 cases, the pandemic

still has multidimensional effects on LDCs. Many of the LDCs have high levels of external dependency and exposure as well as low levels of resilience to recover from economic and non-economic shocks. As for Timor-Leste, one of the devastating impacts, in a long range, will be on the development of Human Resources which is one of the substantial conditions for poverty reduction. Due to successive lockdowns, as preventive measures against the spread of Covid-19 pandemic, the students have attended the online classes from home but a great number of students who are from poor families have not been able to do so, since they don't afford to have the electronic devices and money for that purpose.

Therefore, it is imperative that the next programme of action must address the unfinished business of the realization of the Istanbul Programme of Action, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and overcoming the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the programme of action for the next decade shall also (1) initiate sustained socio-economic recovery in the aftermath of the pandemic; (2) take an integrated approach in addressing

multidimensional poverty; (3) adjust to the new normal and pursue effective, sustainable development strategies; and (4) revitalize international and regional cooperation.

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic is a tragic milestone but it has forced us to view things differently. It has required us to reassess our economies, re-examine our societies, and reawaken us to the truth - that health is indeed WEALTH. Needless to say, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be a game changer and we should learn to change with it and forge through it. In light of this, and being that Timor-Leste is on the pathway to graduation from the LDC category, that I respectfully emphasize the importance of reassessing international support measures with a renewed focus, thereby, ensuring the Istanbul Programme of Action's objective of a sustainable, equitable, and inclusive growth in LDCs.

I thank you for your kind attention.