



MINISTÉRIO DOS NEGÓCIOS ESTRANGEIROS E COOPERAÇÃO
VIII GOVERNO CONSTITUCIONAL

**Statement of H.E. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation
of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste
At the Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Least Developed Countries
New York, 17 September 2020**

Mr President of the United Nations General Assembly,
Madam Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Madam Under Secretary-General and High Representative for Least Developed Countries,
Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States,
Honorable Ministers,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen

Since this is the first time, I am taking the floor, I would like to begin by congratulating Mr President of the General Assembly, H.E. Volkan Bozkir, and express my sincere thanks for the Malawi chairmanship in organizing this important meeting together with the Office of UN-OHRLLS.

Excellencies,

The global pandemic of Covid-19 has been having devastating consequences worldwide; it has impacted on human life and health systems, impeding the social and economic sectors. It has posed multiple challenges to our communities that are suffering severely from the intensity of climate related disasters, limited financial resources, economic instability and disruptions to trade activities and incomes, together with other social problems and it hampers our pathway toward achieving the sustainable development goals by 2030 and the acceleration progress on the Istanbul program of action for LDCs, and the Paris agreement on climate change.



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Timor-Leste has managed to contain the spread of Covid-19 throughout the country; it has registered 27 confirmed cases without any local transmission. But this has given rise to significant challenges with the health system under resourced to respond to the outbreak. Certain restrictions imposed undoubtedly affect the cycle of economic activity and growth due to limited jobs availability to absorb the growing number of our young population including, loss of investments and remittances, a reduced tourism sector, economic recession, individual consumption and the overall well-being of Timorese people, which in turn adds another layer to the social and economic vulnerability of the country.

As a short and medium-term response to cope with the impact of Covid-19, Timor-Leste's government has approved an 'Economic Recovery Plan' aimed at countering the economic downturn and transforming the foundation of the economy and society to be more resilient, while addressing the measures to mitigate the impact of Covid-19. We placed people at the center of our approach. In our context, we continue to focus on human capital development, economic diversification, empowering people through access to quality education and support given to emerging local enterprises, would ease our dependency on oil which is falling and uncertain at the moment. We have seen the benefits of seasonal workers programmes, but we need to retain those workforces to transition them into our domestic development, this would require a financial and technological assistance that would offer opportunities for the potential to thrive.

The year 2021 marks a special year for Timor-Leste along with other countries to be reviewed at the Committee for Development Policy (CDP) meeting in February and it hopes that the CDP will carefully assess, the impact of Covid-19 toward the graduation process. As a country that relies on oil revenue, falling oil prices in the global market have massively affected incomes and continues to obstruct the transformation of other development sectors for diversification of the economy in sustainable ways.



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Timor-Leste suggests LDC issues should be prioritized in the following approaches:

1. Recognize the special needs of LDCs by enhancing support and capacity building and transfer of knowledge and technology to LDCs and equip them with easy access to vaccines and other emergency health packages through a global stimulus package;
2. Developed countries should comply with their commitments under the Paris agreement;
3. Promote investment by mobilizing adequate resources, increasing the ODA commitment including the lifting of trade barriers and scaling up aid for trade, lifting of the debt burden, and easy access to concessionary financing towards securing and resilient economies,
4. The United Nations Project on 'New Assistance Measures for Graduating Countries towards the Achievement of Agenda 2030' to foster an exit strategy should be in place.

Timor-Leste therefore, envisages the importance of collective action and solidarity by the international community as support is needed more than ever before.

I thank you.