



MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES OF TIMOR-LESTE

COUNTRY STATEMENT

ON THE OCCASION OF PRE-SUMMIT OF FOOD SYSTEM

HIS EXCELLENCY MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

ENG. PEDRO DOS REIS

Rome, Italy 26-28 July 2021

His Excellency the Secretary-General of United Nations Mr. António Guterres

Excellency Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the 2021 Food Systems Summit,
Mrs. Agnes Kalibata

Excellencies Head of Delegation from UN members

Distinguish Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen.....

I would like to express our gratitude to the United Nations specially to His Excellency Secretary-General Mr. António Guterres and Special Envoy Mrs. Agnes Kalibata that convened a Food Systems Summit as part of the Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in Rome-Italy.

The Government of Timor-Leste would like to take this opportunity to confirm the concern of challenges related to Food System facing in Timor-Leste. Food deficit country, where up to 40 percent of food needs are met through imports. Agricultural

production, which is a source of livelihoods for 66 percent of the households,¹ is heavily dependent on subsistence farming and rainfall, and natural resources degradations also remains a challenge contributed to local food production system as well as vulnerability to natural disasters (floods, droughts, fire damage, earthquakes, tsunamis etc) and climate change. Timor-Leste also has many infrastructural and logistical challenges that makes it difficult to manage food availability and accessibility.

All these points, caused around 430,000 people, or over one-third of the total population, that are chronically food insecure.² It also has high levels of stunting (47.1%) and wasting (8.6%) amongst children under-five, while 23 percent of women aged 15-49 are anaemic. At the same time, overweight and obesity are rising across all age groups with marked increases in adult women and men (11.2 %)³, indicating that the country is facing a double burden of malnutrition.

Distinguish Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Government has prioritized food security and nutrition in its development agenda and declared its commitment through the 2010 Comoro Declaration, to put an end to hunger and malnutrition. On 9 January 2014, Timor-Leste became the first country in Asia-Pacific to launch a national campaign under the United Nations Zero Hunger Challenge, which seeks to ensure universal access to food in the face of looming threats such as climate change.

Timor-Leste also committed and participated to all agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, particularly put ambitions to SDG2 in the way of action till 2030. Working side by side between all actors: UN System/Agencies, Development Partners and platforms or movements for realizations of Agenda 2030.

At the regional level, working together in Asia-Pacific Region, either in the platforms of regional and bilateral, always put high priorities commitments for fighting against hunger and malnutrition. Also, in the CPLP countries, committed to focus on food

¹ 2019 Agriculture Census.

² Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Analysis Report, January 2019.

³ STEPS 2014

security agenda since adopt its Food and Nutrition Strategy in 2012 and implemented by each country state.

Recent 2020 Global Hunger Index, positioning Timor-Leste still need greater efforts. In conclusion recognized that Food System in this country as a “Poor Management” in terms of Food Supply Chain (production, transportation, storage, distribution and consumption) as well as poor management in access to food importation particularly for the distribution and price in different places are also issues that contributed to an inadequate Food System.

Distinguish Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Participating in this important event, Timor-Leste can learn from other countries that are experiencing similar challenges to Timor-Leste and therefore learn from their best practices in dealing with the question of food and nutrition security. Timor-Leste can also showcase its achievements to other countries and demonstrate its serious commitment to addressing the issue nationally and as part of a wider global system.

At the moment, Timor-Leste, like most countries, does not have a position paper that describes its vision about which type of food systems would be suitable for the country, how its food systems should work, and about Timor-Leste goals and needs for the future.

Therefore, the National Dialogue has conducted to ensure the effective participation of various stakeholders such as Government, UN Representatives, Development Partners, Civil Society, Private Sector, Academics, People with Disabilities as opportunity to elaborate ideas and suggestions from key players in order to contribute directly to Timor-Leste’s Government in participating to the Pre Summit and its vision and objectives and direct paths towards sustainable food systems that will contribute to the fulfillment of all 17 Sustainable Development Goal.

Last but not least, Timor-Leste recognizes that Food Systems Pre-Summit will therefore give a golden opportunity to learn from the experience of other countries that have managed to transition into such systems.

Thank you

