



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

**Statement**

**By**

**H.E. Snra Idelta Maria Lourenço**  
**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 DPfA, sharing  
of experiences and good practices with a view to identifying  
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 my 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 Valerie Amos as its Executive Director. Under Secretary-General. She has 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 Reis, was elected to the CEDAW Committee. With the recognition of our State's emerging government, financing and human resources, a timely and significant contribution to UN Women, in accordance with our capacity, we believe these strengthen 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. It is a priority that has been enshrined in the Declaration and the Plan of Action of the Timor Women's Congress. These accounts the commitments made by Government, Parliament, Civil Society, 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, let me also state that:

A Law against Domestic Violence was promulgated by the President last year, after 8 years of development. The law provides for shelters and support services for survivors of domestic violence. Dissemination of this law has been carried out in all districts and municipalities. The dissemination of the remaining nine districts. A National Plan of Action on Gender Based Violence is to be drafted. We are also in the final stages of consultations for 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 ongoing gender mainstreaming efforts in the line ministries and parliament, two noteworthy allocations for gender initiatives were approved from the State Budget in 2010. 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 Office. The second allocation is to the Ministry of Agriculture in the amount of \$500,000, to be used in training of women farmers to improve their skills 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 information mechanisms. SEPI has been working to engage national level

planning through the National Strategic Development Plan and other national planning exercises. We are currently participating in multiple M&E strengthening initiatives and 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 that is needed. A challenge we face is a high demand for gender expertise, however resources are limited by limited human resources and finances.

Timor-Leste had its first constructive dialogue with the CEDAW Committee only a year ago, and since we have been focused on implementation. Observations. In 2010 we focused on supporting gender activities in the key sectors of Education and Health. Highlights for 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 bringing reproductive and 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 process to include mental health in the CEDAW Committee's report for this year.

Also responding to the CEDAW Committee's recommendation, "including Timor-Leste, with a permanent interdepartmental structure, with high-level representatives with decision-making powers from all relevant sectors and levels, for developing an effective and inclusive gender mainstreaming strategy", we have developed a new mechanism, which will replace the current inter-ministerial Gender Focal Points, with Gender Working Groups. This new mechanism will consist of high-level officials at national and district levels. This new mechanism is intended to establish more effective coordination and collaboration between ministries. It has been drafted and is currently in the final stages of approval by the Council of Ministers.

On Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, a cross-level dialogue between Ireland, Liberia and Timor-Leste. Topics covered include women's participation, protection and prevention of sexual and gender based violence, justice, security, and the launch of the final report in New York on the 10th Anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325. 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 in conflict settings.

Chairman, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

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

Thank you for this opportunity.

Mrs. Idelma Maria Barlgies  
Secretary of State for the Ministry of Justice  
24 February 2011.