



**Statement**

**by**

**H.E. Ms. Sofia Borges**  
**Ambassador and Permanent Representative**  
**of the**  
**Permanent Mission of the**  
**Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste**  
**to the United Nations**

**to the**

**General discussion under agenda item 69, "Women and the twenty-first century: the twenty-first century" (the twenty-first century")**  
**Conference on Women and the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality and the twenty-first century")**

**5 March 2012**  
**New York**

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H.E. Mr. Sofie Boyer  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative  
of the  
Permanent Mission of the  
Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste  
to the United Nations

to the  
General discussion under agenda item 3 (follow-up to the Fourth World  
Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General  
Assembly entitled "Women 2000: a century of development and peace for  
the twenty-first century")

2 March 2012  
New York

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Madam Chair,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,

First, let me begin by congratulating you and the other members of the Bureau on your election and for the manner in which you are steering the 56th Session of the Commission of the Status of Women.

Timor-Leste welcomes the statement by the Chair of the Commission of the Status of Women.

Madam Chair,

Timor-Leste welcomes the focus on Empowerment of Rural Women and the recognition that the majority of women and girls around the world live in rural areas. Rural women are driving forces for agricultural production, economic growth and sustainable development. Moreover, they are vital to achieving the Beijing Commitments as well as the Millennium Development Goals.

The vast majority of women in Timor-Leste and in many regions of the world live in rural areas. These women are more vulnerable to shocks, natural disasters and climate change, and they may generally undertake work outside the home for female entrepreneurs. These women are often less educated, and face additional barriers to education, access to health services, formal economic activities, and participation in government. Additionally, 70% of Timor-Leste's women are from rural backgrounds, which further compound the challenges they face.

The FAO calculated that if women had the same access to productive resources as men, total agricultural production in developing countries would almost double. This is only through supporting and educating rural women that countries can hope to achieve their millennium development Goals. Timor-Leste additionally hopes that it will give due recognition to the essential role of women in achieving sustainable development, especially in the areas of poverty reduction, climate change mitigation and adaptation. As we approach the Beijing Platform for Action Development Conference this June, we must recommit to Principle 20, which acknowledges women's vital role in all three pillars of sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental. In order to achieve sustainable development, gender equality and empowerment, which include rural women, must be mainstreamed into all policies, strategies, and actions, including agriculture, energy, and finance.

Madam Chair,

It is crucial that women gain full participation in both the political and economic sectors of society. The Government of Timor-Leste is working to ensure that women's participation is enhanced and that women's empowerment is ensured in a variety of ways. Last June, our Constitution and Election Law was amended to increase the quota of women on parliamentary candidates from 25% to 33%. Currently, women have 33% representation in Parliament, which is the highest in the region and 26th in the world. Timor-Leste hopes to reach our MDG Target of 35% women in Parliament soon. Additional efforts are underway to increase the participation of women at all levels of decision making, especially rural women at the district and village levels.

The Government acknowledges that gender-based violence is an extremely serious issue and as such must be addressed in a comprehensive manner. The Law Against Domestic Violence was promulgated in 2010, and a National Plan of Action on Gender-Based Violence was finalized in 2011. The Council of Ministers will consider the National Action Plan in the coming months.

In Timor-Leste approximately 28% of women over 15 years of age have experienced some form of physical intimate partner violence, many of whom are disabled. Those who are disabled face obstacles in accessing resources and services. As such the Law Against Domestic Violence establishes a national address for disabled women's partner violence, and the Government is working to address this through a national strategy for disabled women's partner violence. A key task of engaging men and boys.

The empowerment of women must be integrated into all sectors of society, as well as in all policies. The Government is using gender budgeting to ensure that equality and women's empowerment are mainstreamed throughout the Government and the Country. In 2019, the Group of Women Parliamentarians, with the support of civil society partners, adopted the State Strategy for the Promotion of Women's Security and Gender Equality. This strategy includes the Ministry of Agriculture's gender budget, and a Gender Budgeting Resolution was passed in Parliament as well.

Madam Chair,

Thank you.