



**INTERVENTION
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE**

AT THE 8TH ASIA PACIFIC FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
(UN ESCAP)**

TUESDAY, 23 MARCH 2021

BANGKOK, THAILAND

(VIRTUAL)

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

8th APFSD – Timor-Leste Statement

Excellency Vice-Chair

Representative of Member States

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure to speak at this 8th Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development.

In Timor-Leste, since last year, the COVID-19 has impacted our economic growth to a negative of 6% and worsened undernutrition and chronic food insecurity, affecting 36% of the population.

The first case was identified on 21st March 2020, on its anniversary this month, 21st March 2021, we identified a record of 44 cases in a day bringing the current active case to 211 cases. The Government have imposed a state of emergency and locked down three affected municipalities in Timor-Leste. Only allowing selling and transporting foods and medical items to operate.

On SDG, as you may have seen in our VNR 2019 reports that we have made some achievements but also still have many challenges to achieve our targets. The COVID-19 made the challenges even more difficult. Like many other countries, Timor-Leste is now working on readjusting and refocusing our interventions to get back on track to achieve its SDG targets.

Last year in 2020, the Government established an Integrated Centre for Crisis Management led by the Prime Minister to manage the COVID-19 situation. A total of \$219.5 million emergency funds was approved to finance COVID-19 prevention actions, such as:

- Building isolation and quarantine facilities;
- Procure COVID testing and protection gears;
- Training front-line health workers;
- Cash subsidy to 298,495 families;
- Salary support to private sector employees;
- Electricity subsidies for 160,000 households;
- Food basket distribution;
- Procured rice for emergency response;
- Provided businesses with emergency loans;
- Establish an online learning system for education; etc

An ad-hoc committee was established to draft an Economic Recovery Plan, and a total of \$124million was approved in 2021 to implement the Plan with \$31 million for COVID management. The fund has been used to finance 32 programs in sectors such as health, education, water and sanitation, rural development, housing for vulnerable people, agriculture production, etc.

The Government is currently requesting additional of \$200 million to manage the current outbreak and vaccinations.

In the future, the government will increase budget allocations to health and education sectors, and prepare a multi-sector national action plan for food security and nutrition, which will scale up investment in key priority sectors.

Timor-Leste is also planned to launch an Integrated National Financial Framework and conduct a second phase independent evaluation of its Strategic Development Plan.

Lastly, I believe with better coordination, more transparency and better program alignment will help to ensure that 2030 SDG targets are achieved.

Thank you.