



MINISTRY OF SOCIAL SOLIDARITY AND INCLUSION (MSSI)
Office of Vice Minister of Social Solidarity
Rua de Caicoli, Dili
Timor-Leste

Timor-Leste Country Statement
By H.E. Mr. Juvêncio Martins
Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to the Kingdom of Thailand
To the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
Committee on Social Development
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Strategies for strengthening regional cooperation on social protection in Asia and the
Pacific

*Her Excellency Dr. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, the Executive Secretary of ESCAP
Madam Chair and members of the bureau of the Seventh Session
Distinguished delegates
Ladies and gentlemen*

Social protection is a right guaranteed in the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. Article 56 of the Constitution states that “Every citizen is entitled to social assistance and security in accordance with the law”.

The following are progress made by Timor-Leste concerning social security and assistance toward a more inclusive and comprehensive social protection system.

1. The Universal Allowance for the Support of the Elderly and the ‘Invalids’ (*Subsídio de Apoio a Idosos e Inválidos – SAll*) targets citizens aged 60 or older and those aged 18 or older who are unable to work due to disabilities. With Decree-Law No. 53/2022 of 20 July 2022, the current Government decided to increase the payment of social pensions to the elderly and the invalids under the internationally defined standard of extreme poverty of \$1.90 a day. Hence, the beneficiaries will receive a monthly payment of up to \$50 this year and \$57 afterward, as a way of fighting extreme poverty in the country. SAll has

been a very effective program as its coverage is about 92.8% of social protection programs.

2. Mother's Allowance (*Bolsa da Mãe*) provides support to the most vulnerable families with children through conditional cash transfers for up to three children aged 6-17 years in a household. Annually around \$7 million is budgeted to benefit more than 100 thousand students. The program is now reformed with universal Mother's Allowance – New Generation (*Bolsa da Mãe - Nova Geração*) intending to support expecting mothers and children up to six years old, including children with disabilities. In 2022, the program is carried out in two municipalities and one special region with the highest number of malnutrition and stunting among children. In 2025 the program will cover all municipalities in Timor-Leste.
3. Housing for Vulnerable Families (*Uma ba Ema Kbiit-Laek Plus*) helps families whose earnings are less than \$1.25 with decent housing with an average cost of \$15,500. The program kick-started in 2021 and to date, there are more than 5,000 houses built. The total budget allocated for the program is \$82 million.

Another important milestone in the development of social protection in Timor-Leste is the launch of the 2021-2030 National Strategy for Social Protection in February 2022, which will guide Timor-Leste to contribute significantly to the accomplishment of the Agenda 2030, along with other documents such as the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the Incheon Strategy.

Distinguished delegates

Ladies and gentlemen

Timor-Leste commits to improving its social protection system. Timor-Leste is ready to engage at the regional levels, especially with the UNESCAP, to strengthen its social protection toward a more inclusive, comprehensive, and sustainable social protection system.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.