



**COUNTRY STATEMENT
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE**

**AT THE 78TH SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

BANGKOK AND ONLINE

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

78th Session – Timor-Leste Statement

Secretary General, Your Excellencies Prime Minister, Presidents,

Distinguished members, Ladies and Gentlemen

(....to complete based on the list of attendees)

Warm greetings from Timor-Leste!

Sustainable development is never far from my governments mind. On the 20th of May, only a few days ago, we celebrated our 20-year anniversary of the restoration of our independence, it has been a time of reflection on our achievements, as well as an opportunity, to focus on our continued challenges and how we can do better over the next 20 years.

Like our neighbours and indeed all countries across the world, Timor-Leste has not been immune from the health and economic effects of the Covid-19 global pandemic, while at the same time we are facing the challenges coming from climate change.

These uniquely challenging times have shown the strength of our Nation and its success in acting together as one, as a united Government at the service of its People and our People's societal capacity for resilience and adaptation to shocks. The Government and we, as a People and a Nation, tackled COVID-19 decisively and effectively. We quickly mobilized over US\$ 220 Million, including US\$ 92 Million for immediate economic response measures. With unprecedented planning and speed, we developed an emergency response unit. With goodwill and cooperation from our neighbours and development partners we were able to maintain our international connectivity, ensuring much needed medical, food and other supplies could reach our Nation.

The past two years has taught us, more than ever, how interdependent our region and world are, and while we closed our borders, we did not close our reliance on our trading partners and development partners.

We understand that these challenges are not going away if anything we expect the impacts from climate change and, God forbid, future pandemics to become part of our way of living. We must learn to manage these risks and protect our people, starting from increasing our national food security challenges and implementing development policies that minimise harm to our environment. This does not mean we become more isolated, in fact, the opposite is more important, we must have regional approaches to addressing our environmental and economic challenges.

Our cooperation with ESCAP over our short history, has been one of a shared vision to create a better world for our people and our region. Timor-Leste was proud to take up the chair of the 6th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development ‘APFSD’ in 2019, the year that we conducted our first Voluntary National Review ‘VNR’ of our progress against the Sustainable Development Goals. This work, together with other cooperation is invaluable, in helping us to learn, share experiences and therefore implement better more informed policies for our country and our people.

Lastly, but by no means least, I congratulate the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific “ESCAP” on reaching its 75th birthday. This milestone is a testament to the value and importance of ESCAP for our region. We look forward to the next 75 years of cooperation with ESCAP, confident that the benefits of regional cooperation will lift us all.