



Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste
Office of the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality

Statement

By
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Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality

On the occasion of
57th Session
of the Commission on the Status of Women

Interactive expert panel on key policy initiatives and capacity-building for gender mainstreaming:
elimination and prevention of all forms of VAWC

Focus: prevention of violence against women and girls

United Nations, New York
5 Mar 2013, 3-6pm

Mr Chairperson, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

In Timor-Leste, we feel that gender mainstreaming is fundamental in order to tackle the multi-dimensional nature of gender-based violence. At the root are gender inequalities and unequal power dynamics. To address this issue, we focus on capacity building on gender analysis and gender mainstreaming in order that everyone, from policy-makers to communities, understand and recognize the multiple forms of violence that women may face, be it physical, emotional, or economic.

The approval of a Law against DV in 2010, clearly defined DV as a public crime, to be reported through the formal system. After its approval, many women began reporting cases. But then, many communities wondered, why are there so many cases of DV? We are now reinforcing messages that women are empowered to report and stand up for their rights.

This January, we began working with Catholic Relief Services (CRS), to design a booklet, to be used by the Church in a pilot project in Liquisa District, in mass, youth activities, pre-marital training, and community events. The booklet contains positive messages, on equality in marriage through the sacrament, respect of opinions and decisions, non-violent communications skills, and the meaning of dowry as symbolic binding of families, rather than a financial operation. It emphasizes the positive role of the extended family in ensuring healthy relationships. This year, we have a plan to work with STL news to create a news column focusing on women's empowerment and combating violence against women.

Efforts have been made, to uncover, the root causes of VAW, and research on Bride-Price and DV was commissioned by the East Timorese Women's Communication Forum (FOKUPERS). It

looked to understand, the use, and misuse, of the symbolic value of bride-price, impacts on the role of women, women's voice and that of her clan, the financially binding implications on families, and the resulting penalties when a woman tries to exit an abusive marriage.

The government will continue to implement the Law against Domestic Violence and the National Action Plan on GBV that was adopted last year. Our delegation is eager to learn more about key policy initiatives, and capacity-building for gender mainstreaming, for the elimination and prevention of all forms of VAWC.

I would like to ask some questions, on how to foster women's economic empowerment, as many discriminate against them. Do you only work with the victim, or with the entire family as all are affected?

Thank you.