



**REPÚBLICA DEMOCRÁTICA DE TIMOR-LESTE
V GOVERNO CONSTITUCIONAL
GABINETE SECRETARIA ESTADO DA PROMOÇÃO DA IGUALDADE**

**Identifying Achievements and Challenges to further Implement
the National Action Plan on Gender Based Violence**

April 13, 2013 – 08:30-09:00 am

Opening Session and Welcome Messages

Good morning to Mr. Luis Constantino, Country Manager and Ms. Isabella Micali-Drossos, Senior Counsel of the World Bank, external experts Sonia Amaral from Brazil and Yolanda Serrano from Spain, members of the Inter-ministerial Coordination Body from Government and NGOs, the Referral Network and Service Providers from the National and District Levels, Vulnerable Persons Unit Officers, and donors

First I would like to express my appreciation to the World Bank for their initiative and support in organising this workshop to review achievements and challenges in implementation of the National Action Plan on Gender Based Violence. In addition to the recent seminar organised last February to discuss the World Development Report on Gender Equality and Development 2012, I hope this is the beginning of a long and fruitful relationship for the promotion of gender equality in Timor-Leste.

Combating gender-based violence is a key area that SEPI focuses on. Statistics from our Demographic Health Survey in 2010 indicates that 38% of Timorese women have experienced physical violence since the age of 15, and that the main perpetrators are husbands or intimate partners. Domestic violence is the most common form of gender-based violence. The Survey also shows that only 27% of women could rely on family members to provide shelter for them for a few nights if they were forced to move from their home

because of violence, and even less – only 20%, could rely on their families to financially support them if needed.

Only two and a half years ago, a Law against DV entered into force in July 2010, after 10 years of development. Since then, SEPI has been focussed on disseminating the law to the public, as well as relevant actors such as village councils to understand their roles and responsibilities. The law sends a clear message of the public nature of DV, where anyone can report the crime, whether they are directly involved or not. The law provides for legal protection, remedies and the establishment of support services for survivors of DV. It has a broad definition of violence, encompassing physical, sexual, psychological and economic forms, and applies to acts committed in a family or intimate context, where there exists physical or economic influence, including children and domestic workers.

After the passage of the law, SEPI also undertook wide consultations with government institutions, civil society, and service providers over a period of nearly a year to draft a multi-sectoral National Plan of Action on GBV. It was approved by the Council of Ministers almost one year ago, May 2012. This workshop today is particularly timely as we are almost at the anniversary of the adoption of the NAP GBV. Following this opening session, panels will discuss achievements and challenges in its implementation from the perspectives of the government, NGOs and service providers, as per the 2012 NAP GBV report to Parliament that we have just completed.

In Timor-Leste, we have been using an important coordination mechanism called the Referral Network. It was started in 2001 to support victims of SGBV by a range of non-governmental service providers and the Vulnerable Persons Unit of the National Police. In 2006, the group was expanded to include the Government and the UN. A variety of cases including domestic violence, trafficking and child abuse are discussed, focusing on access to legal, health, social and psycho-social services, protection and advocacy strategies. In 2010 the government took over coordination of the Referral Network, and it was split into two Working Groups: one for Strategy and Advocacy led by my office, and one for Service Providers led by the Ministry of Social Solidarity. Referral networks also exist the district level with the support of Child

Protection Officers and Women's NGOs. At both levels, greater human and financial resources are needed.

This March, I attended the Commission on the Status of Women, whose theme this year was the "Elimination and Prevention of All Forms of Violence against Women and Girls". I am pleased that the CSW Outcome document was signed, and condemns all forms of VAWG, and reinforces that we must end all forms of GBV, collaborating with government, civil society, NGOs, the private sector, and others. Two NGO representatives also attended, and Ms. Luisa Marcal gave a presentation at an Interactive Expert Panel. I look forward to her presentation along with Ms. Mery Barreto from Fokupers later today on their CSW experience.

Persistent challenges in combating GBV and VAW remain. There is a continued reluctance from victims to report due to cultural norms and practices, a large volume of pending cases, weak case management and tracking, and capacity-building of all service providers is still needed. Women lack economic independence, making it difficult for them to leave their abusers. Stable and sufficient funding for victim services requires sustained attention by government, civil society, the women's movement, and donors. I hope the World Bank will be able to assist Timor-Leste to access various trust funds to support us in preventing and eliminating GBV, and providing needed services to survivors.

To close, I would like to share a quote from our Prime Minister, HE Xanana Gusmão at the Closing of an International Conference on the Post 2015 Development Agenda, held in Dili earlier this year. He affirmed that the next MDG framework "must properly recognize, and take into account, the vitally important role that women play in development, and we must tackle violence against women." Let us work together to eliminate all forms of violence against women, for the good of our nation.

Thank you.