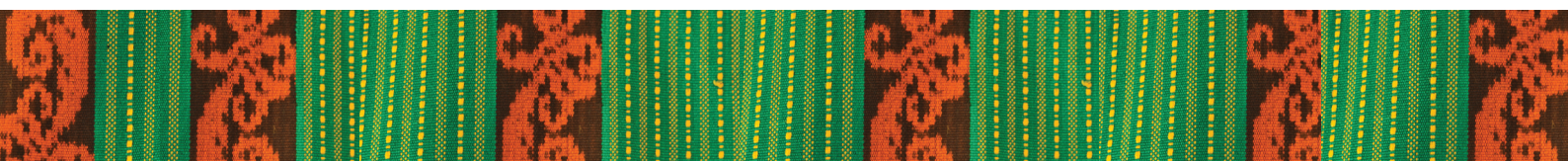




SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EQUALITY AND INCLUSION
(SEII)

**TIMOR-LESTE BEIJING DECLARATION AND
PLATFORM FOR ACTION (BPFA) NATIONAL
REVIEW AND EVALUATION REPORT**

2014-2018





DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EQUALITY AND INCLUSION (SEII)

**TIMOR-LESTE'S BEIJING DECLARATION
AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION (BPfA)
NATIONAL REVIEW AND EVALUATION
REPORT (2014-2018)**

PREPARED BY
THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EQUALITY AND INCLUSION (SEII)

Rua dos Mártires da Pátria, Caicoli (Ex Obrigado Barracks) Díli, Timor-Leste

Tel.: +670 331 1391 www.seii.gov.tl facebook/seiirdtl

Table of Contents

FOREWORD	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
INTRODUCTION	8
SECTION I: PRIORITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS.....	9
1. Priorities.....	9
2. Key Achievements during the period of 2014-2018.....	15
3. Major Challenges and Setbacks	19
SECTION II: PROGRESS ACROSS THE 12 CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN FOR THE PERIOD 2014-2018.....	22
I. Women and Poverty.....	22
II. Education and Training of Women	24
III. Women and Health.....	29
IV. Violence against Women	34
V. Women and Armed Conflict	39
VI. Women and the Economy	41
VII. Women in Power and Decision-Making	48
VIII. Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women	52
IX. Human Rights of Women	52
X. Women and the Media	53
XI. Women and the Environment	54
XII. The Girl-Child	55
SECTION III: NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, MECHANISMS AND PROCESSES	56
SECTION IV: NATIONAL DATA AND STATISTICS	59
CONCLUSION	60

FOREWORD

Gender equality and social inclusion have been a cornerstone of Timor-Leste's development priority since its independence. Timor-Leste has made valuable progress in all sectors, since our last National Review and Appraisal reporting period in 2014. We are continuously making concerted efforts to achieve gender equality and inclusive development to ensure every citizen enjoys their full potential. The 2019 report shared the main advancements attained until 2018 in response to our common pledge to accelerate the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

The Secretariat of State for Equality and Inclusion (SEII), as the coordinating body within the government of Timor-Leste, that primarily focuses on policies and strategies on improving gender equality, especially creating equal opportunities for men and women, people with disabilities and LGBTIQ community in all social sectors in Timor-Leste. SEII has worked closely with all line ministries to ensure that their policies are gender responsive, inclusive and promoting the empowerment of women and girls in Timorese society.

The Timor-Leste's second national appraisal report highlights the importance of prioritizing gender-based approach in all social sectors including the development of policies, laws, programmes and budgeting that reflects the concerns of gender equality, women empowerment and inclusion. It also provides positive evidence on progresses have made in the twelve critical areas of concerns and where actions need more to be focused on. It is therefore, SEII will continue to advocate for gender mainstreaming and gender responsive planning and budgeting to ensure that policies and programme in the areas of concerns are addressed.

Timor-Leste is still a long way from bringing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action into reality. But Timor-Leste remains committed to achieve more substantive equality in all layers of our society. SEII will continue working in partnership with civil society organizations, private sectors, the United Nations and the international community to accelerate gender equality, women's empowerment and inclusive development in our country.

I am particularly delighted to the fact that this evaluation report was conducted under the leadership of SEII. This report also could not have been completed without the collaboration and assistance of colleagues from other line ministries, state secretariats and other state institutions. The contributions from experts in nongovernment and development partner organizations has also been pivotal. I thank the many people who have been actively engaged throughout the process of the production of this report.

Maria José da Fonseca Monteiro de Jesus
The Secretary of State for Equality and Inclusion

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Timor-Leste submitted its first National Review and Evaluation Report on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 2014, which covers the progress and achievements since the restoration of its independence until 2013. This report outlines Timor-Leste's progress in the promotion of gender equality and inclusion. The State Secretariat for Equality and Inclusion (SEII) is the primary coordinating body within the government. The SEII has worked closely with all line ministries to ensure that their policies are gender inclusive and are promoting the empowerment of women and girls in society.

Priorities

In order to ensure the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in Timor-Leste the national government has outlined the following priorities:

- Strengthen national institutional mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality and inclusion (the national women's 'machinery')
- Strengthen gender mainstreaming across all government institutions
- Increase and empower women's representation and participation in political life at local and national levels
- Improve systems and mechanisms for gender responsive budgeting and planning
- Reduce maternal and infant mortality rates
- Eliminate all types of violence against women and girls
- Increase literacy rates and improve levels of literacy for both women and men
- Improve the social protection system to eradicate extreme poverty; and
- Support women's participation in the national development process

Achievements and progress to date

From 2014-2018, Timor-Leste has made significant progress in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. This progress is evident in the number of laws, policies and programs designed and implemented by the national government to ensure equal protection for the human rights and safety of men, women and children. The national government has worked in partnership with civil society organizations, NGOs, development partners, and the private sector to integrate a gender mainstreaming approach across all sectors including health, education, justice, politics, and the economy.

Women in Poverty

- The Poverty Mapping and Gender Perspective Analysis (Director-General of Statistics, World Bank 2019) indicates remarkable progress in poverty reduction over the past 10 years.
- SEII has supported women through public funds transfers and also assisted 5 women's groups from Dili to access credit from Timor-Leste's National Commerce Bank (BNCTL) to run their businesses.
- In 2017, SEII in collaboration with Heineken provided support for 6 vulnerable families in Dili to increase their family income and free them from extreme poverty.

Education and Training of Women

- Implementation of the 'Zero Tolerance for Violence' policy is supporting the eradication of sexual violence and corporal punishment in the education sector. This aims to increase security for girls and children to participate safely in education and learning.

- SEII has developed a Gender Based Violence (GBV) subject at the Judicial Training Centre to improve awareness of GBV amongst those that work within the judicial system. This subject was also offered to the National Institute of Public Administration in 2019.
- The Basic Education Law No. 14/2018 highlights that education should provide equal opportunity for all boys and girls and ensure gender balance.

Women and Health

- The maternal mortality rate has reduced from 557/100,000 child births (DHS, 2010) to 218/100,000 child births (DHS, 2016).
- The infant mortality rate has reduced from 45/1,000 child births (DHS, 2010) to 30/1,000 child births (DHS, 2016).
- The children under-5 mortality rate has reduced from 64/1,000 child births (DHS, 2010) to 41/1,000 births (DHS, 2016).
- The fertility rate has reduced from 5.7 children (DHS, 2010) to 4.2 children (DHS, 2016).

Violence Against Women

- The National Action Plan (NAP) for UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2016-2020) is a transformative gender policy that has provided support for women to participate in peace-building, state-building, conflict resolution as well as in the general national development process.
- Approval of Law No. 3/2017 on the Prevention and Elimination of Human Trafficking on 24 October 2016 provides measures to protect victims and prevent and combat human trafficking. This is an important step to reduce human rights violations associated with human trafficking.
- Guidelines on 'No to Sexual Harassment in the Public Service' have been developed by the government to reduce women's experiences of sexual harassment in the public service.

Women and Armed Conflict

- The NAP-UNSCR 1325 includes compensating and recognising women suffering during past conflicts as well as recognising and valuing the contribution made by women during the struggle for independence.
- In 2018, the Timor-Leste National Police (PNTL) established and launched its gender strategy with the overall aim of contributing to the achievement of the PNTL's National Police Mission through its strong commitment to gender equality. There are currently 6 women in the PNTL who will be participating in trainings for United Nations Peacekeeping Missions.
- The Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion (MSSI) has provided assistance to victims of past conflicts.

Women and the Economy

- The Timor-Leste Government committed to a two-year implementation (2015-2017) of the Maubisse Declaration in 2015 to promote the socio-economic empowerment of women and renewed this commitment in October 2018 for a further period of five years.

- SEII effectively advocated for an increase in the number of state institutions making the commitment to the Maubisse Declaration, resulting in an increase from 9 prior to 2014 to 16 state institutions with the renewed Maubisse Declaration in 2018.
- The Roads for Development program established the Social Safeguards Framework for rural road works providing guidelines for the Ministry of Public Works and local contractors to ensure social and economic benefits from the implementation of rural roads programs. The renewal of the Maubisse Declaration in October 2018 resulted in the Ministry of Public Works setting a quota for women's participation at 30% and people with disabilities at 2%.
- Approval of Government Resolution No. 38/2017 supporting the rights of men and women to receive equal pay for equal work.
- Women are disproportionately under-represented in the formal labour economy.
- SEII has been working in partnership with NGOs and civil society groups in the development and implementation of programs to encourage greater participation of women in the formal labour economy.

Women in Power and Decision Making

- Approval of the Suco Law No. 9/2016 ensures at least two women candidates must be elected to the Village Council as well as women candidates for Suco Chief.
- The Decree-Laws on: the Regime for Competition, Recruitment, Selection and Promotion of Public Administration Officers; General Regime for Public Officers Career Promotion; and the Regime of Distinctions and Awards in the Public Service all support the preferencing of women in obtaining employment when women and men receive equal scores during the recruitment process. These laws aim to increase women's participation in the public sector, particularly at the decision-making level.
- Women's participation in the National Parliament is at 38%, the highest in the Asia Pacific region.
- Women have less representation at the municipal level. SEII holds women's congresses at the municipal level to encourage an increase in women's leadership.

Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women

- SEII operating under the office of the Prime Minister advocates, coordinates, and evaluates gender mainstreaming strategies within government institutions.
- SEII advocates for gender mainstreaming within government laws and policies.
- Approval of Government Resolution No. 35/2017 on the Inter-Ministerial Working Group, National Gender Working Group, and Municipality Gender Working Groups is improving intersectoral cooperation and coordination. These groups are working together to increase knowledge of gender equality issues at all levels of society.

Human Rights of Women

- Approval of Decree Law No. 3/2017 on Municipality Administration aims to integrate gender issues at the municipal level in order to promote women's rights in rural areas.
- In 2017, approval of the Law on Expropriation for Public Purposes; and the Law on the Special Regime for Definition of Ownership of Real Estate (Land) stated that women have equal rights to men to own property. In the development of these laws, a broad consultation process was undertaken with local communities, including with women in rural areas.

- The Government has adopted the National Policy for Family Planning and the National Strategy for Sexual, Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent Health (2015-2019).
- Reproductive health rights are included in Timor-Leste's national legal frameworks.
- The independent Office of the Ombudsman for Human Rights and Justice is responsible for the promotion of human rights and good governance.

Women and the Media

- The Secretary of State for Social Communication (SEKCOMS) promotes gender equality in the media.
- SEKCOMS helps to promote and implement programs to train journalists and editors in conducting gender sensitive reporting.

Women and the Environment

- The Government provides support and compensation to women who run their businesses on the sides of roads and rivers, which are affected by climate change, and especially those that are at risk of natural disasters such as landslides.
- The Government carries out gender analysis when building public infrastructure, considering any potential impacts on women. Women's access to water is also a major consideration in many communities where households are dependent on women going out and fetching water.

Children

- The National Action Plan (NAP) for Children in Timor-Leste is a policy roadmap for the government to create an environment in which boys and girls' rights are protected, particularly for children living in low-socio economic situations.
- The National Youth Policy provides a framework to support the challenges faced by boys and girls their daily life.

National Institutions and Processes

- The Gender Responsive Budgeting Policy outlines institutional responsibilities and provides detailed guidance to support ministries to integrate gender issues into the government budget cycle. As a result of this policy, it is a requirement that all government entities integrate gender issues into their Annual Action Plans.

National Data and Statistics

- SEII is working with the General-Directorate of Statistics to produce joint research and to provide advice on sample design for data production.
- The National Statistics and Data System has prioritised the production and utilisation of gender statistics.
- Government efforts related to data collection and the strengthening of administrative systems are aimed at supporting the development of baseline data and to help monitor targets and indicators related to gender issues.

Major Challenges

There are still significant barriers to achieving substantive gender equality and women's empowerment. Current challenges include but are not limited to:

- Political representation of women in the municipalities is significantly low

- Gender-based violence is still high and sometimes disputes are resolved based on traditionally held beliefs, rather than in the formal justice system
- Women's participation in the labour force is still low, and predominantly resides in the informal sectors, such as hospitality and agriculture, meaning employment is less secure and more unstable
- Women are still disadvantaged when it comes to equal access to land rights
- Sexual violence in schools is still a threat to some girls in the education system
- Vulnerable women and girls are still facing barriers to access land rights and ownership under the Land Laws that were passed in 2017
- Budget allocation for gender policy implementation was insufficient to address all gender concerns in rural areas during the period from 2014-2018.

The national government have shown strong commitment to improve these current barriers to gender equality through dedicated training and mentoring programs, dedicated staff such as police officers that focus on gender-based violence, funded entrepreneurship programs for women, implemented guidelines for appropriate conduct in the workplace, an established gender-responsive budgeting system, and dedicated data collection mechanisms to inform future policies and programs on gender equality. As a new country, Timor-Leste has made strong progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in a short period of time. The national government is committed to continue advancing the promotion of women in the future to ensure they have equal access to resources and equal opportunities to participate across all aspects of society.

INTRODUCTION

Timor-Leste has undertaken significant work to achieve the effective promotion of gender equality outlined by the Peking Declaration 2020. This work included reforming legislation and policies to promote and uphold human rights and the principles of equality to achieve gender equality by 2020. For the second time, Timor-Leste will present its progress relating to the Beijing Platform for Action since its first presentation in 2014. In the first report, Timor-Leste demonstrated progress towards equal participation of men and women. This report outlines Timor-Leste's continued work and dedication towards achieving gender equality in its policy and program implementation from 2014 to 2018. Over the past four years (2014-2018), a significant number of women have experienced equal rights and women's empowerment. In addition, during this period women have had access to increasing opportunities in the labour market, improved access to the judicial system, and to political, social and cultural life. This is a result of the Timor-Leste Government's work in actively promoting gender equality at the national and sub-national levels.

Timor-Leste has implemented a number of National Action Plans in specific areas relating to achieving gender equality and will continue to integrate these National Action Plans in all priority areas in order to continue its promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. The Government of Timor-Leste has achieved significant success in the sectors of maternal and child health, economic development, and women in politics.

The Ministry of Health has implemented programs that have significantly improved maternal and child health by contributing to the reduction of maternal and child mortality and an improved rate of access to and use of family planning services. In addition, the Ministry of Health guarantees that victims of sexual violence have quick access to support services.

In the sector of economic development, the Government has committed to the Maubisse Declaration to support the implementation of gender equality across all sectors of government. The Declaration was renewed in October 2018, which resulted in the Ministry of Public Works setting a quota for women's participation at 30% and people with disabilities at 2%. The Declaration has also influenced institutions to support women in economically productive sectors, specifically focused on women's livelihood development. The Maubisse Declaration is also linked to legislation that allows women to access loans from the bank.

Women's participation in politics and decision-making has significantly improved as a result of new legislation and policies approved by the Government. These include the Electoral Law for Village Council Elections No. 09/2016 that supports women's participation in local government. This law has increased women's representation in politics at the local level from 2% in 2009 to 5% in 2016. The use of a quota for women's participation in the National Parliament has also been maintained, with an increase of women's participation in the National Parliament from 30% in the previous government to 38% this year.

Despite Timor-Leste showing significant progress towards achieving greater gender equality, there are still many barriers and challenges in integrating the promotion of gender equality in program implementation and planning. However, this will not deter the Timor-

Leste Government from prioritising the promotion of gender equality, ensuring strong attention is given to programs and targets for women and girls. In the next four years, Timor-Leste will endeavour to become a leading nation in the promotion of women's equal role in society to further support its national development.

SECTION I: PRIORITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS

1. Priorities

Timor-Leste has made strong commitment and effort to promote gender equality in various sectors and at different levels since the restoration of its independence in 2002. Gender equality was enshrined in the RDTL Constitution and further promoted in the National Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030. Priorities for gender equality promotion have been considered by Timor-Leste and have been evaluated within the period of 2014-2018 as the following:

Strengthen the National Women's Machinery (institutional coordination mechanisms) by improving its technical and financial resources and decision-making power, and improve coordination mechanisms at national and municipality levels. SEII is the state institution with the main functions and responsibilities to advocate, coordinate, implement and assess gender mainstreaming strategies in policies, laws, programs, and budgets across all government ministries to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. This includes advocating for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, girls and vulnerable groups, establishing appropriate mechanisms for women's economic empowerment, and enhancing women's participation in politics and decision-making at the national, municipal and local levels. Since 2017, the role of SEII has also included social inclusion particularly for marginalized groups in lower socio-economic and LGBTI communities. Under the VIII Constitutional Government Decree-Law, SEII holds its portfolio directly under the Office of the Prime Minister enabling it to have strong influence at the national level. SEII participates in the Council of Ministers and plays a key role in advocating for gender equality and inclusion in policy-making and legislation. SEII has also been an observer in the Budget Review Committee (BRC) to ensure that a gender perspective is integrated into State planning and budgeting.

SEII implements gender mainstreaming strategies to promote gender equality with the aim of achieving gender equality by 2030. Strategies utilised by SEII involve empowering women's participation in the economy, reducing and eliminatng forms of gender-based violence and domestic violence, empowering women's participation in politics and in decision-making, improving women's access to health services, education and justice. Timor-Leste is a prosperous and peaceful nation and a gender fair society. Human dignity and human rights, including the rights of

women and girls, are valued in Timor-Leste's culture, with this respect reflected in the laws of the country. In the pursuit of its goals, SEII adheres to the key values of equality, non-discrimination, participation of women and men, socio-economic empowerment of women, human rights and the rights of women, justice, peace and transparency. SEII seeks to promote a culture of gender equity. As a government institution, SEII has the authority and responsibility to implement gender mainstreaming programs in government institutions, and to influence laws and policies to be gender responsive.

Timor-Leste has already made great progress in strengthening the coordination mechanism to promote gender equality through the establishment of three levels of coordination: an Interministerial Working Group for Gender, the National Gender Working Group, and the Municipal Gender Working Group. The objective of the gender working group mechanism is to enhance government coordination, resource allocation, gender mainstreaming strategies and monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of gender commitments within ministries, state secretariats and the municipal administrations. There are additional inter-ministerial working groups that specifically oversee and monitor the implementation of national gender policies such as the National Action Plan against Gender-Based Violence and the National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Additionally, SEII has 13 focal points deployed throughout 12 Municipalities and the Special Administrative Region of Oé-Cusse Ambeno (RAEOA).

Strengthen the Gender Mainstreaming (GM) strategy across government institutions, particularly in government legal frameworks, policies, planning and programs to accelerate the promotion of gender equality. Timor-Leste has made great progress in strengthening gender mainstreaming across government. From 2014-2018 the government have developed a series of gender sensitive legal frameworks and policies to support the promotion of gender equality and to empower women and girls. The government has adopted the Maubisse Declaration¹ with its first phase from 2015-2017 and the second phase from 2018-2022; the National Action Plan (NAP) on Gender-based Violence (GBV) with its first phase for the period 2012-2016 and its second phase from 2017-2021; the NAP on UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security for the period 2016-2020; the NAP on the Children in Timor-Leste for the period 2016-2020; the NAP on Gender and the Private Sector for the period 2014-2017; the NAP on the Rights of People with Disability for the period 2014-2018; and the National Youth Policy from 2016. Timor-Leste also approved Decree Law No. 3/2017 on the Prevention and Combat against Human Trafficking on 24 October 2016, which provides the legal framework required to address human trafficking. Furthermore, gender issues have been strongly considered in the Law on Suco Elections, Law on Municipal Administration, Law on Expropriation for Public Purposes, and Law on the Special Regime for

¹ The Maubisse Declaration aims to eliminate all forms of discrimination against rural women and people with disability in order to improve their lives, engaged them in planning for public investments and in the decision making and promoting their participation in various aspects within development process. The second phase of the Maubisse Declaration was renewed by sixteen (16) Government entities, including Timor-Leste National Commercial Bank (BNCTL) and launched on 12 October 2015, in Fatisi-Aileu.

Definition of Ownership of Real Estate. The approval of these laws and policies demonstrates that Timor-Leste has a strong commitment to the elimination of gender inequality in multiple sectors at the national and municipality levels.

Increase and empower women's representation in political life at the local and national levels. Timor-Leste has made great progress towards supporting women's participation in political life. This is evident through the establishment of a female quota for representation in the National Parliament, resulting in women comprising 38% of the fifth legislature. Despite this, women's participation at the executive level is still under 30% and at municipal level it is much lower. The approval and ratification of the Law on Suco Elections No. 9/2016 in September 2016 supported an increase in women's political participation at the local level. This Law promotes women's opportunity to become candidates for election to the position of Suco Chief. This resulted in an increase of women's participation from 2% (11 females elected) to 5% (21 women elected) out of 452 positions in 2017. Although the percentage is still low, it demonstrates Timor-Leste's ability to implement legislation that enhances women's political participation at the local level. In addition, the Law on Suco Election, the "100% I'm Ready" Program (*Programa fl 100% I'm Ready*), the National «Program for Suco Development (PNDS) (*Programa Nasional da Dezenvolvimentu Suku (PNDS)*) and the Women's Congress for Women with Potential in 12 Municipalities and RAEOA have also contributed to the increase of women's participation in local government and decision making.

Improvement of systems and mechanisms for Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) and planning to ensure the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. In 2017, SEII worked with the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (UPMA) under the Office of the Prime Minister to integrate gender perspectives into the reform of Public Finance Management (PFM). As a result, SEII and UPMA developed essential tools for planning and budgeting systems including Gender Markers and Indicators that promote gender equality. A gender marker is an instrument to help track the proportion of funds earmarked for the promotion of gender equality. The use of gender markers will support data collection on the proportion of budget allocation and actual expenditure on gender equality. By developing these essential tools, SEII and UPMA are advancing the gender equality commitments that public institutions are required to follow in their planning and budgeting systems. Gender specific programs entitled "Gender Policy Implementation" require implementation of national gender policies in Line Ministries' Programmatic Budget Structures. These fall under 3 sub-programs described in: the Gender Program, the State Financial Management Information System (FMIS), and the Way of the Future (*Dalan ba Futur*). These are:

² "100% I'm Ready" Program²) is a program which was led by civil society organizations with support from the government to encourage women and to increase women's participation in political life and local governance, particularly in rural areas.

³ PNDS is a Government program lead by Ministry of State Administration (MAE) that aims to improve the living standard of citizens in rural areas by supporting women and men to rehabilitate small-scale infrastructure projects based on their needs and priorities.

1. Implementation of National Action Plan (NAP) against Gender-based Violence (GBV);
2. Implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) (UNSCR 1325);
3. Implementation of the Maubisse Declaration

Public institutions that are not directly responsible for national gender policy implementation are still obliged to promote gender equality in response to the recommendations of the CEDAW Committee (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women). The Programmatic Budget Structure regulations require each institution to abide by a standard budget structure outlined in the *fi « « Ÿ · fi « ² j |®ª § ¥ œ# ° ¥ § Ÿ § policy. SEL and UPMA have developed gender specific requirements entitled *fi jª Ÿ j ® · ! § ¥ under this; § © ¥ª £ standard budget structure. Change to this budget system will support the government to generate a gender sensitive report and will enable all public institutions to be responsible for gender commitments within their service delivery area. This gender reform within the planning and budgeting system will provide opportunities for strong data collection. This data collection will provide important resources to inform future policy development and political decision making, to enhance the promotion of gender equality in service delivery. As such, this new approach will provide a fundamental basis for developing policies, plans, programs and for the allocation of specific resources necessary for their implementation.**

Reducing maternal and infant mortality rates. In the health sector, the Constitution of the RDTL states that everyone has the right to health and medical care, and the State shall promote the establishment of a universal national healthcare service that is free of charge in accordance with the capacity of the State and in conformity with the law and that the National Health Service shall have, as much as possible, a decentralized participatory management system. The government through the Ministry of Health has already worked hard to improve public health services for all East Timorese citizens. The National Institute of Health (NIH) and the Department of Maternal and Child Health have provided training and capacity building for midwives and health professionals working in Community Health Centres to enhance their skills in Emergency Assistance for Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care – (EmONC). This is part of the government’s strategy to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates. This training has supported a reduction in pregnancy related mortality rates. In 2010, 557 pregnant mothers died for every 100,000 newborn babies, and in 2016, this number was reduced to 218 pregnancy related mortality deaths for every 100,000 newborn babies. Timor-Leste has also achieved the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) to reduce the rate of infant mortality. In 2010, there were 45 infant mortalities for every 1000 newborns, and in 2016 this rate reduced to 30 infant mortalities for every 1000 newborns. In addition, on 2 August 2018, Timor-Leste became the third country out of 11 in South East Asia to obtain certification from the World Health Organisation for eliminating the measles and congenital rubella syndrome.

Eliminate all types of violence against women and girls. The government of Timor-Leste together with civil society and members of the Women's Network (*Rede Feto*) have implemented various activities for the first phase of the NAP-GBV from 2014-2018. In addition, they have reaffirmed their commitment for the second phase of the NAP-GBV implementation from 2017-2021. This commitment will focus on promoting and enhancing people's behaviour change to eliminate all types of violence against women and girls. This includes the provision of support and delivery of services for victims and survivors, particularly in access to health, social security and access to justice. During the first phase of the NAP-GBV implementation, SEII together with civil society service providers have made significant progress under the gender-based violence pillars, Pillar I: Prevention and Pillar II: Protection. The results from the first phase of the NAP-GBV implementation show that communities' knowledge and understanding of gender-based violence, and its impact particularly on women, has increased. However, there were still many victims who experienced gender-based violence, particularly domestic violence in the home. For the majority of these cases there was a preference to resolve issues via a family based process or using the informal justice system rather than formal justice processes.

Timor-Leste has ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Therefore, it has a State obligation to eliminate all forms of violence against women, including sexual harassment. The Constitution of the RDTL and the Code of Conduct and Ethics of the Public Service considers sexual harassment in the workplace as a violation of the rights of the victim. In 2017, the government of Timor-Leste through the Public Service Commission developed a specific Guideline to Prevent and Combat Sexual Harassment in the Public Service (Directive No. 12/2017, August 9th), while also launching specific instruments and campaign materials to ensure that all public servants at national and municipal levels have increased knowledge and understanding of sexual harassment as unacceptable conduct. Moreover, the Public Service Commission, supported by UN Women, has developed and launched an innovative application called "ChatBot Rosa." This tool is an innovative way for Timorese to report cases where public officers have committed sexual harassment in and outside the workplace. This tool aims to strengthen the quality of public service delivery provided by the public administration. The innovative application was launched during the 16-Day Campaign against Gender-based Violence in 2018. SEII has also collaborated with the State Secretariat for Social Communication (SEKOMS), and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) funded NABILAN program implemented by the Asia Foundation to distribute gender equality messages through the media. SEII and the Asia Foundation have produced a referral network application "Hamahon", as an innovative way to provide detailed information on all support services available to victims of violence. A Media Resource Package on the Prevention of Violence Against Women was also launched. This will assist journalists to appropriately cover incidents of violence against women and children. The government has also implemented a Zero Tolerance policy

towards sexual violence in schools throughout the country to ensure that all girls are safe to participate in education and learning.

Increase in literacy levels among females and males as a key foundation for fostering sustainable development in Timor-Leste. From 2010 to 2015, literacy rates for Timorese above 15 years old have increased from 57.8% (2010 Census) to about 63% (2015 Census). There have been strong improvements in literacy rates in Tetun (one of the two national languages) among young people. In 2010 only 68.9% of young people aged 10-14 years could read and write; however, 5 years later this had increased to 79% showing marked progress. Crucially, both girls and boys have shown strong progress in increasing their literacy and numeracy levels, demonstrating that gender equity is present in primary and secondary education (Census 2015). A new evidence-based curriculum for pre-school and primary school education was finalised in 2015. This progressive curriculum focuses on developing knowledge, critical intellectual and social skills, and promoting creativity and problem-solving skills. Improving assessment of students' learning outcomes and improvements in education quality are important for monitoring progress against Sustainable Development Goal 4 - Quality Education.

Improvement of the social protection system to relieve the extremes of poverty amongst East Timorese people and to ensure women's participation in the national development process. The government has focused more attention on its social protection policy, which provides opportunities to liberate East Timorese from the vicious cycle of extreme poverty. Since 2008, the government has provided financial assistance (Conditional Cash Transfers)⁴ to East Timorese citizens, in particular, the elderly and disabled support allowance (non-contributory scheme); the transitional regime to support state workers and their families in old age, disability and death; veterans; vulnerable families suffering from chronic diseases; vulnerable households with single mothers, widows and orphans (the *Bolsa da Mãe* Mother Purse program); women's groups; people living with HIV and other people who are experiencing insecure or poor living conditions. Currently, the *Bolsa da Mãe* program is the only program in Timor-Leste that specifically targets poor and vulnerable households with children. The *Bolsa da Mãe* program was launched in March 2008 by the government of Timor-Leste, together with United Nations agencies (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women and IOM). The objectives of the program are to help reduce poverty, promote attendance of nine years of compulsory basic education, and increase the utilization of primary health care services. The program provides cash transfers of US\$5 per child per month for up to three children, so that US\$15 is the maximum grant amount a household can receive each month. The government recognizes the necessity to assess the current targeting system, coverage and the monthly amount of the cash transfer in order to maximize poverty reduction from the program's effective implementation. The

⁴ Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) aims at reducing poverty through cash transfers to poor families while at the same time making these transfers conditional upon the recipients' actions. Individuals must meet specific criteria such as ensuring that their children attend school or regularly use basic health care services.

Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion (MSSI) supported by ILO, is carrying out a review on all of the types of social protection schemes while also finalising the National Social Protection Strategy. The MSSI has been working on promoting gender inclusion and improving public monetary transfers to support individuals and families who are beneficiaries of the government financial assistance. This approach aligns with the principle of 'no-one left behind' in the National Development Plan 2030 Agenda.

In May 2018, MSSI and the United Nations Organizations launched their Report on the “Challenges and Future Actions to Expand Social Protection for all East Timorese Citizens” as part of the review process on social protection policy and schemes. The report also recommended increasing social protection impact and efficiency through specific actions including, strengthening protection for children under the age of 5 years, protecting vulnerable young workers in informal sectors and improving the balance of financial resource distribution to provide better support vulnerable groups. Following the promulgation of Law No. 12/2016, which created the Social Security Contribution Scheme, a major campaign was launched to publicize and socialize the new law, which was attended by teams from all ministries, the courts and the Office of the Attorney General as well as some from the various autonomous services and funds. This Universal Contribution for Social Security scheme has been implemented in public and private sectors since 2017, ensuring that workers and their families will receive a pension at times of retirement, disability or death. Additionally, subsequent to a national seminar on “Social Security: A Right for All” in April 2019, a bilateral cooperation between Timor-Leste and Portugal in the areas of social protection and social security was signed for a three-year period (2019-2022).

2. Key Achievements during the period of 2014-2018

Timor-Leste made a number of key achievements related to gender sensitive legal frameworks and gender policies in the period from 2014 to 2018. These include:

- In 2015, the government of Timor-Leste committed to a two year (2015-2017) implementation of the Maubisse Declaration to eliminate all forms of discrimination against rural women and people with disability to improve their lives, engage them in public investment planning and decision-making processes and to promote their participation in all aspects of the development process. This commitment was renewed in October 2018 for a further period of five-years, which resulted in the Ministry of Public Works (MOP) showing their commitment to gender equality promotion by establishing a quota of at least 30% of women's participation in infrastructure development. It is also evident in the MOP's Roads for

Development (R4D)⁵ Social Safeguards Framework for local contractors and others establishing a quota of at least 30% representation of women and 2% representation of people with disabilities in infrastructure development projects. Under Phase-I of the Maubisse Declaration, 9 State institutions (the majority operating in the economic sector) signed and became implementing agencies of the Declaration. Under Phase-II of the Maubisse Declaration, SEII undertook an advocacy campaign and effectively influenced an additional 7 State institutions to commit to work under the Declaration, bringing the total to 16 State institutions including Timor-Leste's National Commercial Bank (BNCTL). In addition, the implementation period for Phase-II of the Maubisse Declaration was extended from two to five years (2018-2023).

- The existing National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2016-2020) is a transformative gender policy focused on how to develop more equal relationships between women and men in areas including: the separation of powers, control over resources, decision-making, social and political statutes, and access to justice and security. This policy provided strategies and concrete actions to enhance East Timorese women's participation in peace-building, state-building, conflict resolution and the development process.
- The National Action Plan (NAP) for Children in Timor-Leste (2016-2020) is a policy roadmap for the government to create an environment where boys and girls' rights are respected and protected, with a particular focus on children who are living in unfavorable situations in Timor-Leste.
- The National Youth Policy approved in 2016 recognises young girls and boys as a vital socio-economic resource for Timor-Leste's future. This policy provides a framework and vision outlining the guidelines for youth development to promote an optimal environment for young boys and girls to thrive. This youth policy aims to address key challenges and concerns confronting young boys and girls in their daily lives.
- Approval of the Suco Elections Law No. 9/2016 has been reinforced in Article 65, ensuring that at least two women candidates run in the election for Suco Chief.
- Approval of Decree-Law No. 3/2016 on Municipal Administration to institutionalize the integration of gender issues at the municipal level.
- Approval of Law No. 3/2017 on the Prevention and Elimination of Human Trafficking on 24 October 2016. This Law provides measures to prevent and combat human trafficking and also protection measures and assistance to victims. Approval of this legal instrument is an important step for Timor-Leste to address human rights concerns relating to human trafficking. Approval of Law No. 05/2017 on the Crimes of manufacture, importation, transport, sale or possession of *rama ambon* and the use of weapons to commit crimes and the unlawful practice of martial arts and rituals.

⁵ R4D is a Government program led by the Ministry of Public Works (MOP) with the support of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the ILO that aims to improve rural communities, improve rural road access, include and a r d accessible bridges for people with disability and provide a fair and equal employment opportunity for men and women.

- Approval of Government Resolution No. 34/2017 on the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Coordination, Implementation and Monitoring of the NAP-GBV on 6 June 2017. This Resolution provided concrete directives to monitor and supervise the implementation of the NAP-GBV from 2017-2021.
- Approval of Government Resolution No. 35/2017 on Inter-Ministerial Working Group, National Gender Working Group, and Municipality Gender Working Groups. This Resolution has adapted to those working groups established in 2011, to improve administration, intersectoral cooperation and coordination. These working groups will help to enhance the knowledge of gender issues across government agencies and ministries by developing gender strategies. They also contribute to incorporating gender issues in their work plans and the integration of knowledge from the national level to the municipalities.
- Approval of Government Resolution No. 38/2017 on the Recognition of the rights of men and women to receive equal pay for equal work.
- The government evaluated the National Action Plan (NAP) on Gender-based Violence (GBV) for the first phase of its implementation. This related to the strategies and mechanisms that the Government and civil society have implemented and the reaffirmation of ongoing commitment for the elimination of gender-based violence in 2017 with the reapproval of the NAP-GBV for its second phase for the period from 2017-2021. The objective of Phase II is to improve multi-sectoral strategies in addressing GBV in Timor-Leste, focusing on service providers' delivery of assistance services to victims and survivors of violence. The policy covered a broader Gender Mainstreaming policy, which invested efforts in the provision of services to victims in multiple sectors. These included essential services, access to justice, and the establishment of coordination mechanisms to ensure effective implementation and monitoring and evaluation. The government is continuously showing its commitment to end violence against women and has taken prevention measures through the implementation of the "Zero Tolerance for Violence" policy. This policy aims to limit administrative negligence in the education sector, focusing on eradicating sexual violence and corporal punishment in schools to increase security for girls and children and to improve the learning process. The government has approved operational guidelines on "No to Sexual Harassment in Public Service" in order to address sexual harassment that occurs within the public administration. SEII has introduced a GBV subject at the Judicial Training Centre, and will introduce this GBV subject in the National Institute of Public Administration (INAP) in 2019.
- The government approved a Decree-Law on the Regime for Competition, Recruitment, Selection and Promotion of Public Administration Officers, a Decree-Law on the General Regime for Public Officers' Career Promotion and the Decree-Law on Distinctions and Awards in the Public Administration that provide preference for women when final results showed that male and female candidates had achieved equal scores. This is a mechanism that aims

to increase women's participation in the public sector, particularly at the decision-making level.

- The government approved two major Land Laws, the Law on Expropriation for Public Purposes, and the Law on the Special Regime for the Definition of Ownership of Real Estate both approved in 2017. These two Land Laws state that men and women have equal rights of property ownership and inheritance in Timor-Leste. These two laws were developed based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Convention on the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and CEDAW using a participatory consultation process with local communities, including rural women throughout the country.
- The existing Gender Responsive Budgeting Policy in Public Financial Management (PFM) reform provides clear institutional responsibilities and detailed guidance, describing how to integrate gender issues into the annual State budget cycles and 11 critical areas of Public Finance Management reform based on the government's Roadmap for Public Finance Management reform.
- Gender Markers defined for use in the government's planning and budgeting system will provide data that will indicate how much budget the government allocated and spent for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment.
- The government began the roll-out for the implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting in PFM reform. For the 2019 Annual Action Plan (AAP) gender issues have become an obligation for all government entities including autonomous agencies, and as such all entities are required to allocate budget for their activities and programs that contribute to the promotion of gender equality. Having all government and autonomous agencies dedicating efforts to achieve gender equality demonstrates Timor-Leste's progress in gender equality promotion, particularly as a leader in the Asia Pacific region and also at an international level. Through reforms in the planning and budgeting system for gender responsive budgeting, significant data resources will be collected to inform policies, programs and political decisions that will contribute to improving the promotion of gender equality in all service delivery areas.

These achievements and successes demonstrate that Timor-Leste is strongly committed to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The approval of legal frameworks that address gender issues, and various gender policies are the first steps in the process to eliminate gender inequality. These processes will not achieve results quickly, as they require changes in knowledge, behaviour and education. The State is strongly committed to reduce discriminatory behavior that limits the attainment of gender equality in Timor-Leste.

3. Major Challenges and Setbacks

While Timor-Leste has achieved significant progress in promoting gender equality through the development, approval and implementation of new policies and legislation, women are still experiencing barriers to their access education, the labour force, formal justice, and healthcare. These barriers increase their vulnerability to gender-based violence, particularly domestic violence. In some communities interpretations of women's rights and gender equality are seen as confronting traditional customs inherited from their ancestors, where women are still seen as guests, limiting their ability to exercise their rights. This perception has created obstacles for women candidates to participate in local government and at other decision-making levels. Furthermore, women have limited rights to land ownership or inheritance. While the National Parliament has approved the package of Land Laws that define men and women's equal rights to land ownership, traditional patriarchal views are still impeding women's opportunities to own and inherit land and other property. These examples suggest that traditional social norms and cultural values are still influencing men and women's roles in Timor-Leste. Society still largely views men as responsible for decision-making in the family, the household and in the public sphere, and believe that only men should generate family income, particularly in the formal sector. This patriarchal ideology still dominates much of Timorese society, particularly the perspectives of people living in rural communities. This ideology and associated cultural attitudes create barriers for women in accessing the formal justice system when they experience violence, in accessing education, participating in the labour force and receiving healthcare related to their sexual and reproductive health rights. Key challenges still being experienced in Timor-Leste in relation to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls include:

Domestic violence prevalence is still high throughout the country. Based on the national data from the 2016 Demographic Health Survey 33% of women aged 15 to 49 have experienced physical violence. Almost 74% of women and 53% of men agreed that husbands are justified in beating their wife if the wife doesn't comply with her domestic obligations. This can include incidents where meals are prepared late, undercooked or burnt, if the wife debates with her husband, if she leaves home without informing her husband, if she abandons her children, or if she refuses sexual intercourse with her husband. While the implementation of the Law Against Domestic Violence has enabled some progress with an increase of domestic violence cases reported to the court, many domestic violence cases are still resolved at the family level. When no acceptable solution is reached within the family, many cases are referred to local authorities. Moreover, many victims and survivors also confronting various additional barriers, particularly access to formal justice due to the limited number of police and judicial actors available to support gender-based violence cases and distance from the courts. Low language and literacy levels and long delays for legal proceedings are also barriers to accessing the formal justice system. Implementation of the Law Against Domestic Violence is experiencing significant challenges in rural areas as many communities still have only very

limited presence. Increasing access to specialised police for gender-based violence cases and improving judicial processes is very important to strengthen support for victims and survivors of domestic violence.

The Land Law that was approved in 2017 provides a modern legal framework to ensure equal rights to land ownership; however, it is still a challenge to guarantee land title ownership to vulnerable women and girls. In 2010, 80% (4/5) of land in Timor-Leste was obtained via inheritance in accordance with traditional law. This meant that women had limited access to and control over land (IFC, 2010). This is a challenge particularly for adolescent mothers who have been abandoned or left by their partners (spouse/husband) and for widows who are more vulnerable when participating in land issues/disputes. The proportion of women with formal ownership of land is still very low and often they have no rights to be own land. Some women must negotiate with land owners about their rights to use the land, which is essential for them if they want to invest in farming and in developing their business ideas (TOMAK 2016). Security of the right to own property is still a critical factor in supporting East Timorese women's ability to invest their time and finance in agricultural production compared to other non-agricultural activities. The Land Law that was approved in 2017 is very progressive in the promotion of equal rights and protection of vulnerable groups.

Although women's labour force participation rate increased from 54.7% in 2010 to 56.1% in 2015, women's participation in the labour force is still low. The employment rate in Timor-Leste is different between men and women in all areas; with the male employment rate higher than that of women. Domestic labour and low literacy and education levels are barriers for improving women's participation in the formal economy. Generally, women's labour participation is in the hospitality, horticulture, administration and finance sectors. In the private sector women's participation has reached 40% (AEMTL, 2017) with the majority of these being business owners. The government has established '*GovernEstabele*' a specific program with resources provided by "Public Funds Transfers" for women's economic empowerment. The program aims to support women to run small businesses, improve their living standards and to actively participate in economic development.

However, evaluation results from the implementation of the Maubisse Declaration (first phase) showed that in the agriculture sector, women's capacity for efficient production remains low. In addition, women are experiencing difficulties accessing national and international markets for their products. Moreover, irrigation systems are still not able to facilitate strong production due to their seasonal cycle limitations. This means that there is an over reliance on imports rather than promotion of local products, leading to food insecurity concerns. Although the government has reaffirmed its commitment to the Maubisse Declaration, this sector needs strong investment from all parties including the government, civil society, development partners and the private sector to better support gender equality and

facilitate greater progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Promoting women's participation in the labour force, including as entrepreneurs or business owners, will increase women's incomes and contribute to improving private sector development. Greater participation of men and women in the economically productive sectors will improve family well-being, community and society and will in turn positively impact the country's economic development.

Budget allocation for gender policy implementation was still insufficient to address gender issues in rural areas for the period from 2014 to 2018. A major effort has been made by the government and the parliament to socialise and implement the Parliamentary Resolution on Gender Responsive Budgeting approved in 2009. However, these efforts have not lead to any increase in the budget allocations for gender equality promotion nor to contributions to support inclusive development. There are still some implementing line ministries that have not allocated sufficient budget to implement the gender activities set forth in the gender policies. Since 2012, the government through SEII has developed gender checklists to analyse the line ministries' programs and monitor their implementation. Before the establishment of the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (UPMA) in the Office of the Prime Minister, SEII received the line ministries' Annual Action Plans through the Ministry of Finance, but the SEII only received these Annual Action Plans after they had been submitted to the Parliament, and as a result the majority of line ministries did not incorporate any of the observations and suggestions made by the SEII. However, in 2015 with the establishment of UPMA, with the role of improving the planning and monitoring systems for government policy and program implementation, this provides the entry point for the SEII to introduce reforms relating to gender. Since 2017, the SEII has worked together with UPMA to integrate gender perspectives into the reform of Public Finance Management that has resulted in the introduction of gender responsive planning and monitoring instruments, including Gender Markers in the line ministries' Annual Action Plans for 2019. As an additional part of these gender reforms, SEII and UPMA have introduced a Gender Standards Program into the Annual Action Plans, which requires the implementing line ministries to allocate budget for gender policy implementation such as for the NAP-GBV and the NAP-UNSCR 1325.

SECTION II: PROGRESS ACROSS THE 12 CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN FOR THE PERIOD 2014-2018

The RDTL Constitution articles 16 and 17 provide protection for women to enjoy their human rights in their daily lives. These articles outline that women have universal and equal opportunities to live without experiencing discrimination based on sex. The Constitution requires the development of further laws and regulations that are gender sensitive and without discrimination. The State's role is to promote laws that enable women to compete and to participate fully in the development of the country.

Despite the challenges and obstacles noted above, in 2015 the Government of Timor-Leste adopted the Sustainable Development Goals – SDGs (hereinafter referred as the “2030 Agenda”). These include specific objectives to improve gender equality and women and girls’ empowerment (SDGs No. 5) and goals to strengthen implementation in 12 critical areas of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (BPfA). The 2030 Agenda emphasises the importance of systematic integration of gender perspectives as a cross-cutting issue across all policy areas to enable the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Considering the relationship between implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action and the 2030 Agenda; there are many goals in the 2030 Agenda that are strongly linked to addressing the critical issues of the Beijing Declaration from women in extreme poverty to women in environment.

I. Women and Poverty

Extreme poverty has the greatest impact on women and children. Women’s access to financial means and family income are very low in rural areas. This is one of the root causes of poverty and of great concern for the health of families and children. The Poverty Mapping and Gender Perspective analysis study produced by the General Directorate for Statistics and the World Bank in 2019, shows that while Timor-Leste has made significant progress in poverty reduction over the past ten years this progress has not been evenly distributed throughout the country and that there are ongoing concerns about gender inequality in socio-economic life including access to economic activity, education, health, power and agency. The Poverty Mapping and Gender Perspectives study provided two key results showing that the high level of poverty was caused by women’s low participation rates in education and high percentages of women experiencing domestic violence. In addition, the mapping also showed inequality between men and women’s participation in the labour force. The Poverty Mapping and Gender Perspectives study will assist the Government in developing policies and programs at the village level and to increase resource allocations aimed at improving living standards in areas of extreme poverty while simultaneously reducing gender inequality and poverty rates, particularly for women living in extreme poverty.

The government has already taken a series of measures to address these issues including through the approval of gender sensitive and inclusive policies and programs and also providing financial support through Public Funds Transfers and access to micro-credit. For example; SEII has a Women's Economic Empowerment program, which provides financial support through Public Funds Transfers and also capacity-building in the areas of business management, accounting, and market systems through collaboration with IADE, SERVE and Trade Invest. SEII has also assisted 5 women's groups from the Municipality of Dili to access credit from the BNCTL in order to run their businesses.

In 2017,⁶ SEII in collaboration with Heineken provided support for 6 vulnerable families in the municipality of Dili to improve their family livelihood and income and to liberate them from extreme poverty. These supports included provision of basic food stuffs for vulnerable groups and also to built their capacity in business management, accounting, and market systems. The program has transferred US\$4,500 from 2017 with financial support of US\$750 for each vulnerable group. The monitoring and evaluation report, "Women's Economic Empowerment through Public Funds Transfers from 2008-2014" produced in 2015, showed that 77% of vulnerable groups that received assistance were still running their businesses successfully. The main challenges beneficiaries experienced included placement of their products in markets, transport and bad road conditions, market channels and supply chains, and how the groups dealt with distribution of their goods and products. In February 2019, the Office of Support for Activities of the Wife of the President of the Republic, Women's Business Association in Timor-Leste (AEMTL) and Heineken also offered kiosks (small shops) to seven vulnerable families as small businesses to improve their livelihoods, family income and to be able to provide their communities with goods and basic needs in order to actively participate in the national development process of Timor-Leste.

The government of Timor-Leste believes that women's economic empowerment and financial inclusion is the correct, fair and intelligent investment and is essential to the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Women's economic empowerment means that women have self-confidence, they can generate their own income, manage their own money and make decisions, defend their rights, and say no to violence, discrimination and traditional practices that have a negative impact on women. Women's economic empowerment will lead to a reduction of poverty and inequality, and will improve children's nutrition, their health, and enable their active participation in education. Moreover, the Government recognizes that a review and analysis is needed for the total value of the *Bolsa da Mãe* program budget, to be able to contribute to the elimination of extreme poverty and achieve the objective of providing assistance to vulnerable women and children in Timor-Leste.

⁶ During the 2018 political impasse, government entities only utilized temporary monthly budget therefore, there was no budget allocated for Public Funds Transfers.

For 2019, SEII will provide financial support to the following beneficiaries:

No.	Group Name	Group Total	Budget Amount (USD)	Total Amount (USD)
1.	Beneficiary groups (new groups)	35	US\$ 2,000	US\$ 70,000
2.	Success groups (6 municipalities)	12	US\$ 2,500	US\$ 30,000
3.	Vulnerable groups (new groups)	25	US\$ 1,000	US\$ 25,000
4.	NGOs in economic sector	4	US\$ 5,000	US\$ 20,000
5.	NGOs in policy sector	4	US\$ 5,000	US\$ 20,000
6.	NGOs in prevention of GBV sector	4	US\$ 5,000	US\$ 20,000
7.	Support for Women National Congress	13	US\$ 5,000	US\$ 65,000
TOTAL				US\$ 250,000

II. Education and Training of Women

Education is a key priority for Timor-Leste post-independence. The country has a development plan that provides a clear mandate for investment in primary and secondary education, vocational training and higher education to support education for all without discrimination. The Ministry of Education (MoE) is responsible for developing and implementing educational policies at all levels and for providing the infrastructure for public schools and curricula. Since 2008, Timor-Leste has had a formal education system consisting of a four levels (preschool, basic education covering primary and secondary education and higher education), where basic education is universal, compulsory and free of charge. Secondary education consists of general secondary and vocational/technical education. Higher education is classified into two areas; university and technical higher education. University education includes undergraduate and postgraduates degrees and also specialized post-graduate diplomas. Higher technical education is provided by a number of institutes that offer short courses (1-2 years) in specialized areas and technology. There are 11 higher education institutes in the country.

Education from pre-school to secondary school is free for public schools. Generally private school fees range from \$5-\$10 per month. However, there are other costs incurred associated with things like school uniforms and books. Rural or urban households spend around 30% of their household budgets on education costs. The languages of instruction are Tetun and Portuguese. There are many children who cannot communicate in either of these two languages, as they are most familiar with their local language (mother tongue) and this can significantly impact some children's ability to achieve important learning outcomes. The Ministry of Education has implemented a policy to allow the use of mother tongue languages in the initial stages of primary school and has obtained support from donors to translate educational materials as a bridging communication tool to ensure equal opportunities for educational success irrespective of the language knowledge at the start of the school life.

Non-formal education mainly includes the national literacy campaign, (focused more on Tetun and Portuguese languages) and adult education targeting people over the age of 14 years. Since the demand for adult education has fallen, vocational education has also become important providing the specific knowledge for adults in response to the demands of economic growth. The technical and vocational education and training sectors have undertaken reforms and made efforts to address gender disparities in employment and occupations through providing vocational training opportunities for women. The Ministry of Education is responsible for vocational and technical education at the secondary level, while vocational and technical training at the higher (tertiary) education level is conducted in coordination with the Secretary of State for Vocational Training and Employment (SEFOPE) to promote an integrated effort between education and employment opportunities.

The policy process for achieving quality education is linked to Sustainable Development Goal Number 4. From 2014 to 2018, the Ministry of Education was particularly focused on the process of promoting quality education including a) strengthening learning (improving curriculum quality and improving the skills of teachers), b) strengthening the quality of schools as institutions (including school management and the school feeding program) and c) improving school infrastructure.

Curriculum Development

From 2012 to the present, the MoE has worked to ensure education quality for all students considering their economic situation, language and cultural skills because the teaching methodology in the 2004 curriculum was not responding to the East Timorese reality, as shown by extremely poor results in the 2009 Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA). Thus, the Ministry of Education has developed a new curriculum for pre-school and Basic Education 1st and 2nd cycles in order to establish a modern, student-centred pedagogy, and also to encourage parent's participation in schools, and the full participation of students. The methodology for language learning has also changed in order to engage children from differing backgrounds. Education is initially taught in Tetun then gradually changes to Portuguese. There is also a directive for teachers and handbooks to support students who do not speak Tetun and Portuguese. Students are able to use their first language for communication in the classroom while they are learning Tetun and Portuguese (DM-7/2015). In order to better accommodate children whose primary language (mother tongue) is not one of the official language and explore the use of different teaching methodologies, the Ministry of Education has developed the Multilingual Education Based on Mother Tongue (EMBLI) program, which is being piloted in 10 schools. The pilot schools have shown better results in literacy and numeracy for children who do not speak Tetun or Portuguese. This new methodology will improve education access for children who cannot communicate in one of the official languages before they enter school.

The new official curriculum has provided prescriptive lesson plans to enable teachers to teach according to the pedagogy determined by the curriculum, and has also provided student textbooks for respective subject areas. By 2018, the MoE had distributed these textbooks to students from pre-school to the 4th grade, and in 2019, the MoE plans to distribute textbooks to all 5th and 6th grade students. The Ministry of Education has developed supplementary materials such as videos to facilitate learning processes. In addition, the MoE has provided a small library in each classroom to provide students the opportunity to develop their reading skills. The new curricula has also integrated gender issues into the curriculum and the content of learning materials. There is a further emphasis on reproductive health, changes that take place during puberty, and healthy relationships.

In 2017, the Ministry of Education with the support of the World Bank conducted the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) diagnosis in four municipalities to evaluate changes to the curriculum and new training methods such as mentoring. It demonstrated that there have been positive changes in students' reading and writing skills, however the MoE is still seeking better ways to support children in rural areas to better communicate in the official languages before they enter school.

The School Quality Assurance Programs

The Ministry of Education has conducted teacher training sessions 3 times per year for subjects including Mathematics, Science, and the official languages of Tetun and Portuguese. The MoE has also started implementing mentoring programs to support teachers and leaders (managers) in individual schools to improve their skills. The MoE has also been encouraging the sharing of experiences in teachers working groups as part of the mentoring program. All of these programs are supported by SEAMEO and UNESCO.

In order to ensure the minimum standard for schools, licensing standards have been developed for each level and accreditation processes are being conducted for all schools. The Ministry has developed a set of disciplinary rules to teachers to facilitate the process between the MoE and the Civil Service Commission for imposing disciplinary sanctions on teachers and school directors who do not follow ethical and professional standards in their teaching practice, including the use of corporal punishment. There has been increased reporting of incidents of sexual harassment and abuse against girls in schools due to increased understanding of the fact that these should result in both disciplinary and criminal actions against the perpetrators, who are most often teachers or school managers.

Timor-Leste has education inspectorates to support the function of oversight of schools. These are gradually becoming more familiar with issues related to gender equality due to provision of training in relation to the MoE's gender policy. The General Inspectorate for Education has added one pre-school inspector to expand the oversight of this policy, and aims to provide training for school inspectors according to their respective area of work. Moreover, the Ministry of Education has

started generating educational data and carried out preliminary diagnostic on human resources to support institutional strengthening.

School Facilities

The school feeding program has been decentralized to the municipalities with the aim of facilitating the budget transfer process. In order to facilitate the school feeding program, the Ministry of Education has also reviewed school guidelines, and started implementing a school gardens program as an integrated part of the curriculum which has increased the nutritional content and quality of meals provided to children through the school feeding program.

The MoE is carrying out an in-depth analysis of classroom needs for each school, including projected needs to 2025. Schools and classrooms for respective education levels continue to be built in accordance with budget allocations, and currently all schools must include good quality bathrooms and toilet facilities. In 2015, 100,000 chairs and tables were distributed to schools. In 2018, a playground design was developed that will be installed in all 126 public pre-schools.

The Ministry of Education has carried out an analysis of the education sector, with support from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) conducted by the World Bank. This analysis will allow the MoE to review its Strategic Plan and ensure its relevance to the current situation and with strengthening of working relationships with development partners it will be able to increase offerings of trainings, materials, infrastructure, and school management at the central level. These includes partnerships with UNICEF, and the governments of New Zealand, Korea, Japan, Portugal, Thailand, The Phillipinnes and the United States of America.

Inclusive Education

The MoE has implemented policies to ensure that no-one is left behind, particularly women and girls, to support their participation in education. These enable the understanding that inclusive education means good quality education for all. Good pedagogy that supports male students must also be good for female students. Good pedagogy that support students with special needs is also a focus of the curriculum, to ensure equality of education for all children. The Basic Education Law No. 14/2008 highlights this focus, stating clearly that education should provide equal opportunities for all boys and girls, and that education must ensure gender balance.

In January 2017, the Council of Ministers approved the Government Resolution on Inclusive Education Policy that guarantees equal rights for men and women at all levels of education and also promotes increased participation by women as teachers and in management positions in schools. The Water and Sanitation Policy requires that all schools must have bathroom and toilets facilities, specifically designed and constructed to meet the needs of female students while they are attending school, including menstrual hygiene needs.

a. Provision of assistance to female students with special needs

In schools providing special assistance to students with special educational needs, non-discrimination between male and female must be exercised. According to the EMIS 2018 data, there are more female students than male students, and the MoE is currently collecting the data on students with special educational needs.

In order to address the needs mentioned above, the MoE has provided training to school Directors and Coordinators, who have all taken part in the mentoring program on how to provide assistance to students with a disability. The curriculum and trainings provide clear directives on providing education services to male and female students with special needs.

Based on the priority areas of the 8th Constitutional Government, some schools have already been building ramps and modified bathrooms and have received approvals from the Ministry of Finance for budget provision for construction of necessary classroom modifications for students with special needs.

The MoE continues to ensure proper education services to male and female students through:

- i. 520 teachers have received specific training on inclusive education (Female: 250, Male: 270).
- ii. A total of 931 students with a disability have received formal education (Female: 430, Male: 501). This doesn't include all students, and thus in 2019 a new policy will be developed to enable collection of more accurate data.

b. Laws and regulations that provide guidance on Inclusive Education

The Inclusive Education Policy mentioned in the previous paragraph was approved by the Council of Ministers in 2017, and came into effect in 2018 regulating the EMBLI program which is used to encourage girls to attend school, and which also strengthens regulations to ensure that young women students who become pregnant are able to complete their final school exams.

Laws and regulations for the Ministry of Education have integrated gender perspectives by providing rules governing equality of treatment, and highlighting various other issues that may have a negative impact on girls and other vulnerable students. The curriculum legislation provides for equal treatment as expressed in articles 11 and 19 in the Pre-school Education Curriculum Decree-Law No. 3/2015; articles 8, 16 and 27 in the Basic Education Curriculum Decree-Law No. 4/2015; and articles 2, 13, and 14 in the Ongoing Education Curriculum Decree-Law No. 30/2016. The disciplinary regulation for teachers clearly states that discrimination is an offense for which all teachers will be held accountable under the legislation.

At present, improvements are required for the legislative framework of the education system covering many issues including student discipline, national exams, student attendance and school management. The MoE identified these areas as a

priority for consideration to ensure the protection of the rights of girls and ensure that there is no indirect non-discrimination in the reality of the local context. The National Directorate for Pre-School Education has conducted research on the gender balance between boys and girls in pre-schools. This work will be completed in 2019 and includes collection of accurate data on children with special education needs and the development of a specific action plan for inclusive education.

Recruitment Process for Training and Promotion

For the period from 2014 to 2018, the Ministry of Education has not conducted any recruitment processes, however in view of the lack of women in school leadership positions, commencing in 2016 training has been conducted for local leaders, including female teachers in each school, in order to ensure women's participation in and readiness to compete in recruitment processes. In relation to priority trainings overseas for teachers and staff, there is always a balance of participation between women and men. The MoE is committed to conducting recruitment in 2019 and to ensuring that at least 25% of the leadership positions are women.

III. Women and Health

The Government has prioritised maternal and infant health, resulting in a reduction of maternal and infant mortality rates, and an increase in ante-natal and post-natal visits for pregnant women. According to national data from the 2016 Demographic Health Survey Timor-Leste has made significant progress, particularly in the reduction of maternal and infant mortality rates in comparison with the 2010 data. The following provides detailed information on maternal and infant mortality rates:

- the maternal mortality rate has reduced from 557/100,000 live births (DHS, 2010) to 218/100,000 live births (DHS, 2016)
- the infant mortality rate has reduced from 45/1,000 live births (DHS, 2010) to 30/1,000 live births (DHS, 2016)
- the mortality rate for children under-5 has reduced from 64/1,000 live births (2010, DHS) to 41/1,000 live births (DHS, 2016)
- the fertility rate has reduced from 5.7 children (DHS, 2010) to 4.2 children (DHS, 2016).

These improvements are the result of investment in ante-natal care visits⁷ supporting a significant increase in the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel, from 30% in 2010 to 56.7% in 2016 (DHS). The remarkable progress in maternal and infant health is also a result of government investment in the health workforce and strengthening of the health system in Timor-Leste. The National Strategic Plan for the Health Sector (2011-2030) was approved in order to improve and strengthen the quality of services and access to universal free

⁷ The first Ante-natal visit (ANC I) and the fourth Ante-natal visit (ANC IV) have increased from 74.6% and 41.6% in 2014 to 78% and 46% in 2018, respectively. Births attended by skilled health personnel have also increased from 57.7% in 2014 to 65% in 2018 and births at health facilities have also increased from 42.2% in 2014 to 45% in 2018. The first post-natal visit (PNC I) and the second post-natal visit (PNC II) have increased from 43% and 42.4% in 2014 to 50% and 46% in 2018, respectively.

healthcare as set forth in the RDTL Constitution). The Department of Maternal and Child Health in the Ministry of Health together with the National Institute of Health (INS) have been providing training and capacity building for midwives and doctors working in Community Health Centres in order to increase their skills in the area of Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (EmONC). Improvements to health infrastructure have also contributed to the reduction of maternal and infant mortality rates. Timor-Leste's efforts up to 2018 in relation to health infrastructure include establishing health facilities as follows: 1 National Hospital, 5 Regional Hospitals, 69 Community Health Centres, 317 Health Posts, 48 Maternity Clinics, and 388 SISCa – Community Health Integrated Service Posts.

The Ministry of Health has established a comprehensive package of primary healthcare services, particularly the "*Family Health Program* Bringing health services closer to the household". This program performs an important role in strengthening access to health care in rural areas. The Family Health Program has been adopted from the primary healthcare system in Cuba, which aimed to bring key health services to its people in their own homes, and the program has been designed to ensure that "no one is left behind". Through 'family/household visits', health professionals assess, register and ask questions about the health conditions of all family members living within the household. By bringing healthcare to households and to communities, people in the household needing assistance are identified. This program has contributed greatly to the reduction of maternal and infant mortality rates. From May 2017, through the Health Family program, health professionals have visited 94% of households in Timor-Leste (WHO, 2018).

The *Liga-Inan*⁸ mobile health program (*Connecting Mothers*) being implemented by the Ministry of Health with development partners is also contributing to the reduction of maternal and infant mortality rates. The *Liga-Inan* program began in Timor-Leste as a pilot project in Manufahi Municipality in 2013. Since 2013, almost 47,000 pregnant women have participated in the *Liga-Inan* program in Timor-Leste and the program is now well on the way to achieving 50,000 registrations. The *Liga-Inan* program through telephone SMS and "CallMe" messages has been established in 12 municipalities, and the RAE OA. This program facilitates direct communication between pregnant women and health professionals by sending weekly text messages to mothers that promote healthy behaviours while pregnant, including messages about nutrition during pregnancy, birth planning and pregnancy danger signs. The objective of this innovative technology is to enable health professionals, particularly in rural areas, to support the health of pregnant mothers during their pregnancy. This means knowing about their upcoming delivery and encouraging them to come to the health facility for the delivery of their child, where there are proper facilities available for childbirth. Through the *Liga-Inan* program, following

⁸ Liga Inan is an innovative program, funded by the Australian Government through the Partnership for Human Development (PHD), that uses mobile phones to connect pregnant women with health providers in Timor-Leste, with the aim of increasing the number of women who give birth in a health facility. In 2019, the implementing partners Health Alliance International and Catalpa International have begun the process of national handover of the program to the Ministry of Health.

delivery mothers continue to receive postnatal and neonatal care messages and support including nutrition, breastfeeding and family planning messages until their baby is six months old. The program has shown promise through contributing to its main objective, with a 2015 evaluation of the program showing that women participating in *Liga Inan* are twice as likely to give birth in a health facility and seven times more likely to receive postpartum care than women who do not participate in the program.

Additionally, the government has worked closely with civil society groups in establishing health programs for mothers and infants, and has made efforts to increase the knowledge of the community about the importance of maternal and child health, family planning, access to health facilities and nutrition for pregnant women, mothers and their children. This program has promoted breastfeeding for babies aged 0- 6 months and has established support groups for mothers and children in 12 municipalities, and the RAEOA. This program has also carried out demonstrations and promotions of the use of local nutrient rich foods for pregnant women, mothers and their babies to enable a reduction in malnutrition.

The government has recognised that there are still significant inequalities relating to access to ante-natal and post-natal care in Timor-Leste. These inequalities are based on wealth, level of education, and geographical area (rural and urban areas). Women who are living in extreme poverty often don't receive ante-natal and post-natal care. Wealthier women, with higher levels of secondary education tend to have greater access to ante-natal and post-natal care. The government has recognised challenges and barriers in its National Strategy for Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent Health (2015-2019) and also in its Action Plan for Emergency Obstetrics and Neo-natal Care in Timor-Leste (2016-2019). This plan includes recommendations to improve coverage, availability and geographical distribution of facilities for emergency obstetric and neonatal care throughout the country.

Over the past 15 years Timor-Leste has achieved a rapid reduction in its fertility rates. In 2003, the fertility rate reached 7.8 which was considered the highest fertility rate in the world. However, from 2009/10 the fertility rate reduced to 5.7, and by 2016 (DHS) the fertility rate has reduced further to 4.2. Currently, the average women in Timor-Leste is estimated to have 4.2 children, however, in rural areas the fertility rate is higher (4.6 children) compared to those living in urban areas (3.5 children) (DHS 2016). Although there has been a significant reduction to the fertility rate, this rate is still considered the highest in the Asian region. The fertility rate can continue to reduce, but the major barrier to further reduction is that many women do not properly understand the need to use contraception. National data from the Demographic Health Survey showed that only 47% of women of reproductive age (15-49 years) said that they are satisfied with the availability of family planning using modern methods of contraception.

The government working together with non-government organizations (NGOs) have implemented many activities that focus on the prevention of HIV-AIDS, and have also established safe rooms for patients with HIV-AIDS. The government has established the National Commission for Combatting HIV-AIDS as an autonomous state organ to advance the implementation of the National Strategy for Combatting HIV-AIDS and STIs and to improve multi-sectoral coordination to focus on the prevention and education, to limit the transmission of HIV-AIDS in Timor-Leste and deliver services for women and children living with HIV-AIDS. The HIV-AIDS Commission has conducted many activities that contribute to the prevention of HIV-AIDS including national campaigns and seminars to share basic information on HIV-AIDS to the public. Groups that are especially targeted include students and at-risk groups with the aim of changing people's attitudes and high-risk behaviours, and also to raise public awareness for voluntary participation in the Voluntary Confidential Counseling and Testing – VCCT at the HIV-AIDS Centre, established by the Ministry of Health in each of the Referral Hospitals.

The Ministry of Health through the National Commission for Combatting HIV-AIDS has also been working with local NGOs to disseminate HIV-AIDS information and other relevant information on prevention and the impact of HIV-AIDS, particularly for women and young girls. The Commission also works with local organisations Estrela Plus Group and Esperansa to provide support to Timorese people affected by HIV-AIDS. The Commission also invited a gathering of women sex work providers to listen to their concerns and to help find solutions to their problems, and also to share information to increase this group's knowledge of prevention, availability of health services and the impact of HIV-AIDS. The Ministry of Health has collaborated with the Red Cross of Timor-Leste (CVTL) and the Global Fund to conduct awareness-raising campaigns in 8 Municipalities with participation from a total of 73,000 individuals. During this campaign, there were also group discussions and debates with the aim of reducing stigma associated with HIV/AIDS and to distribute campaign materials and condoms as part of awareness raising for prevention of HIV-AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections.

The government has established safe rooms for women and girls with HIV-AIDS, such as the HCT Centre that provides confidential and friendly assistance while offering voluntary confidential HIV testing and offering treatment for those who have been infected. HCT Centres have been established in the National Hospital, the Bairopite Clinic, the Vera-Cruz Community Health Centre, as well as in the Referral Hospitals and Health Centres throughout the country. Health professionals and laboratory technicians have also received professional training and been sworn in to maintain patient privacy. The government has established a hospice (the *Casade RecuperaçãodeSaúde*) in the municipality of Liquiça to provide care. This hospice is not to quarantine or to place people living with HIV-AIDS, but to be able to provide better care for people living with this condition. In this facility, patients not only receive treatment and counselling, but there is also capacity building for language skills, weaving and sewing and other activities for people living with HIV-AIDS.

The HIV-AIDS report published by the Health Information Statistics Service in the Ministry of Health shows that for the period 2013 to 2018, of the 832 individuals known to have HIV-AIDS, 338 were receiving ARV (Anti Retro Viral) treatment. Conversely there are 361 individuals that are not accessing the ARV treatment for various reasons including 'drop-outs' wither no longer being able to access the or simply deciding to no longer attend the centre. Some individuals have a greater belief in traditional treatments rather than undertaking conventional medical treatments while others are ashamed to visit the treatment room out of fears relating to stigma and discrimination that they believe is associated with HIV-AIDS. In some cases patients are no longer receiving active treatment of ARV because of problems with stigmatisation and discrimination from health workers and laboratory technicians.

Health workers and others who work within the wider community in Dili have noticed that some widowed women as well as some children in orphanages are affected by HIV-AIDS. Incidence of transmission of HIV-AIDS from mother to child has also been observed resulting in several child deaths. HIV-AIDS has been present in Timor-Leste for more than 10 years and despite this, while the current numbers of cases of HIV-AIDS are relatively low, those that are HIV positive continue to be vulnerable. It is evident that there are a multitude of factors in Timor-Leste contributing to the vulnerability of people living with HIV-AIDS. Conditions of poverty combined with limited opportunity for employment, particularly for women, contribute to a greater risk of contracting HIV-AIDS through commercial and transactional sex. Additionally, low literacy rates are barriers to social mobilization and education campaigns for the prevention of HIV-AIDS. Although there are numerous factors contributing to the rates of HIV-AIDS in Timor-Leste, a key factor is the high level of gender inequality within the supply and demand relationship for commercial sex. In Timor-Leste, women living in conditions of poverty have a higher probability of resorting to providing sexual services while men with available income have a higher probability of being able to pay for sexual services.

The Ministry of Health has developed and implemented various guidelines and Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs) in order to ensure the quality of health service delivery by health workers. During the period 2014-2018, the Ministry of Health established guidelines for Establishment of Review of Maternal Mortality in Hospitals and SOPs for Verbal Autopsy for Low Level and Community Facilities, and also provided capacity building for the *MaternaDeathSurveillance and Response* MDSR system to health workers at the HNGV and the 5 Referral Hospitals (Baucau, Maliana, Maubisse, Suai and Oecusse) and guidelines for verbal autopsy to health workers in Community Health Centre. As well as health workers, these trainings were also provided for local authorities, community leaders, NGOs women's groups, and others working in relevant sectors. The Ministry of Health has developed an SOP for intrapartum and immediate postpartum care in hospitals, and community health centres. Currently, the Ministry of Health is in the process of final revision of the guidelines on Gender-based Violence that will be utilized in health

facilities throughout the country and that will assist in educating health workers on how to provide assistance to victims and survivors of various types of violence.

There is an existing national NGO specializing in the provision of health assistance to victims of Gender-Based Violence. PRADET is a national NGO that provides psychosocial assistance to people that have experienced trauma, mental health, and other psychosocial problems. PRADET is responsible for the forensic documentation of injuries relating to gender-based violence, and also offers medical treatment to victims of gender-based violence. PRADET has provided medical assistance to victims in Health Centres or in the PRADET building. PRADET works in collaboration with health services to conduct medical forensic examinations and evidence collection in the 5 Safe Space facilities established in the National Hospital, and in the Referral Hospitals in Oecusse, Suai, Maliana, and Baucau. Currently, a total of 64 health workers including doctors and senior midwives have been trained and accredited to perform medical forensic examinations. From this total of 64 health workers, 42 are actively performing medical forensic services working together with the examiners from PRADET and also in the Health Centres in the municipalities of Ainaro, Viqueque, Lospalos, and Manufahi.

IV. Violence against Women

The following information details the progress and challenges in thematic areas according to the four (4) pillars of the National Action Plan (NAP) against Gender-based Violence (GBV): Prevention of Gender-based Violence, Provision of Essential Services for Victims and Survivors, Access to Justice, and Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation.

Prevention of Gender-based Violence

The government of Timor-Leste is strongly committed to the prevention and elimination of all types of gender-based violence through the approval and implementation of gender policies at the national and international levels. The Government has approved and implemented the NAP-GBV with the following objectives:

- Prevent all forms of gender-based violence
- Address the needs of victims;
- Provide multi-sectoral services to victims, including access to justice, access to health and also establishment of coordination mechanisms including monitoring and evaluation to guarantee the plan's effective implementation.

In 2010, the Government of Timor-Leste approved the Law Against Domestic Violence (Law No. 7/2010), which criminalize domestic violence, including sexual violence within marriage. The government of Timor-Leste understands that the impact of rape and gender-based violence are very serious not only for the victim, but also their family, society as a whole, the nation and the world. When a woman is raped or experiences physical violence this has a negative impact on her health and

on her active participation in the economy, the family, in political life and society more broadly. This impact affects the development process of the country and contributes to gender inequality across sectors. The SEII is responsible for the Prevention pillar in the NAP-GBV, and has the important role of working in cooperation with all partners including government ministries, civil society, local NGOs and the international community to undertake advocacy to eliminate gender-based violence. During the period from 2014-2018, SEII has conducted numerous campaigns, workshops, community dialogues, talkshows and other activities as mechanisms for advocacy to increase the knowledge of the community and community leaders about gender-based violence prevention. The 16-Days Campaign Against Violence Against Women has also become a major activity for the government and civil society to advocate for the prevention of GBV. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports have included study of human rights within the curriculum in primary and secondary schools in order to educate new generations to respect each other and particularly respect for the dignity of women. The National University of Timor-Lorosa'e (*Universidade Nasionál Timor-Lorosa'e*) has also integrated a gender curriculum within their teaching materials. The National Institute of Public Administration (*INAP*) integrates gender topics in the induction and training modules for civil servants.

The government of Timor-Leste has evaluated the first phase of implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) to assess the outcomes of strategies and mechanisms implemented jointly by government and civil society and continues to reaffirm its commitment to eliminating gender-based violence. In 2017, the government approved the second phase of the NAP-GBV for the period 2017 to 2021. For this second phase, this policy has the objective of improving the multisectoral approach established during the first phase of the NAP-GBV to respond the problem of GBV in Timor-Leste, particularly in regards to service delivery by providers of services to victims and survivors. The government continues to demonstrate its commitment to end violence against women and has continued its efforts in prevention including implementation of a policy of “zero tolerance” to violence in order to prevent violent acts in schools throughout the country. The government has also approved operational guidelines on “No to Sexual Harassment in the Public Service” in order to respond to sexual harassment occurring in the public administration. The SEII has introduced materials on GBV for the training at the Legal Training Centre and for the Judiciary, and will also introduce training materials on GBV at the National Institute for Public Administration (INAP) in 2019.

Civil society organisation implementing agents of the NAP-GBV have also contribute to the prevention of GBV through socialisation activities and provision of assistance and services to victims and survivors at both the national and municipality levels. For instance, the organisation PRADET has implemented strategies for prevention which directly target families and households with the aims of:

- promoting gender equality,

- developing good communication skills;
- changing violent attitudes and behaviors; and
- reducing alcohol consumption as well as other measures undertaken by the organisation.

By 2018, these activities had been implemented in 2340 households across 26 villages (*SUCO*). Civil society organisations also used the opportunity of the celebration of International Women's Day to hold workshops on gender-based violence. For example, FOKUPERS organized workshops on Trauma Healing for survivors, women prisoners in the prison at Gleno, and for the national police on International Women's Day and also during the 16-Days' Campaign against Gender-Based Violence. Cooperation between government and civil society groups in integrating reforms and policies relating to gender-based violence will have a beneficial impact in reducing rates of violence against women in Timor-Leste.

While Timor-Leste has achieved significant progress in the prevention of gender-based violence, victims and survivors continue to face many challenges. Access to justice continues to be a barrier for victims of gender-based violence and a severe backlog of pending cases within the judicial system results in a loss of motivation for victims in pursuing formal legal action within the judicial system. Family attitudes can be a barrier to victims seeking legal action. In cases of spousal violence, there are instances where victims decide against seeking legal action due to financial dependency on their partner. Coercion by way of threats by family members or other members of society also impacts on whether a victim decides to seek legal assistance. Victim-blaming continues to be commonplace in Timorese society. Furthermore, despite government approval, implementation of witness protection provisions approved in law remains weak.

Provision of Essential Services for Victims and Survivors of GBV

The government together with civil society groups has established *SafeSpaces* as secure and protected places for victims and survivors. The purpose of this service is to provide support to victims and survivors, provide temporary accommodation for one or two nights and to provide specialized services to victims and survivors of sexual violence, domestic violence, child abuse, abandonment or trafficking. Safe Spaces have been established across Timor-Leste and are currently available in the National Hospital, four Referral Hospitals and four in-patient health centres in the municipalities of Ainaro, Viqueque, Lospalos, and Manufahi. According to data from PRADET, clients who accessed PRADET's Safe Space services numbered between 600 and 750 by 2018. Current government and civil society plans for 2019 are to establish more Safe Spaces for clients in six in-patient health centres. The establishment of these Safe Spaces is to provide protection not only to persons who have experienced violence, but also to those who are threatened by family members and/or the perpetrator.

In addition to the Safe Spaces, there are also Shelters (*Uma Mahon*) available to victims. Shelters are secure and protected, designed to provide support to victims

and longer term accommodation (for two nights or more). Victims are able to access shelters and no charge and without any forms of discrimination. Between 2014 and 2018, the government together with civil society groups established seven Shelters and one Transitional House to provide integrated assistance to women and girls who become victims of GBV. When victims and survivors are living in the Shelter, psychosocial assistance is provided in addition to 'Life Skills' training. When victims and survivors decide they are ready to return home to their family and wider community, the Shelters will also provide assistance and support to help them re-integrate into their community.

The government continues to maintain and strengthen positive and collaborative working relationships with referral networks that provide vital services to clients, including those that provide of legal aid to support women and children to deal with situations of violence in the family and community, and those that provide training for suco authorities and local leaders, communities and students.

Access to Justice

Since the restoration of its independence, Timor-Leste has faced remarkable challenges in establishing a judicial system. The normative framework and institutional structures needed to be established from zero and to deal with a complex post-conflict situation. Access to formal justice system remains a challenge for the majority of the population and continues to be a pervasive issue for victims and survivors of gender-based violence. Courts have only been established in four locations, which in practice means that geographic access is extremely difficult for most people. The majority of victims face a long journey from their community to the nearest court, creating further difficulties in accessing judicial support. The backlog of thousands of cases presents an additional challenge. Resources within the police and judiciary systems that are afforded to gender-based violence cases are often very limited. Furthermore, the co-existence of a customary justice system and a formal justice system can be another barrier for victims trying to access justice. For most Timorese the customary justice system an integral part of everyday life and plays a central role in resolving disputes between individuals and communities, such as land disputes, conflict between communities, domestic violence and conflicts over natural resources management. These traditional systems focus on maintaining community and environmental harmony, in contrast to the formal justice system, which is perpetrator focused. Customary justice is the natural first resort for the vast majority of the population. The customary justice system is settled at the hamlet (*aldeia*) or village (*suco*) level. These are decided by local Elders (*Lia-Nain*) or the elected Suco Council according to customary rules established by the local community. These rules are based on spiritual traditions of sacred practice (*Lulik*) which for many centuries have regulated community relationships according to kinship in sacred houses (*Uma Lulik*). Hearings in customary justice systems are commonly conducted in public, which is clearly unsuitable for crimes relating to vulnerable victims of domestic violence and child abuse. Additionally, language barriers and low literacy rates also create difficulties for victims needing to understand the legal process of the formal justice system.

Also, many Timorese judges were trained in Indonesian language under Indonesian rule and were then required to operate in the official languages Portuguese and Tetun. Judicial actors thus operate in languages that are not mother-tongue for the majority of the population. Only in 2017 was Tetun explicitly recognised as an official language in the justice sector (Decree-Law No. 11/2017) and interpreters in indigenous mother-tongue languages remain unavailable.

Notwithstanding these barriers, there progress has been made in resolving cases of gender-based violence through the formal justice system. Data obtained from the Office of the Public Prosecutor and depicted in the table below shows that between 2014 and 2018 a clear majority of registered cases were indicted through the formal legal system.

No.	Year	Crime	Registered	Indicted	Archived	Pendent	Observation
1.	2014 – 2018	Sexual violence	610	384	92	89	Dispatch to archive the processes as there was no evidence and the accused person is unknown
2.	2014 - 2018	Sexual abuse to minors	217	169	24	13	
3.	2014 – 2018	Domestic Violence	3891	3430	177	263	

Source: Data from Public Prosecution

Furthermore, the Ministry of Justice is continuously working with the SEII to achieve the objectives set out in the NAP-GBV, particularly in regards to improving access to justice for victims of gender-based violence and also in regards to the provision of further training for judicial actors including prosecutors, public defenders and lawyers.

Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation

Government Resolution No. 34/2017 on the establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Committee for Coordination of Implementation and Monitoring and Evaluation of the NAP-GBV for the period from 2017 to 2021 was approved by the government in June 2017. The Resolution provides guidelines for monitoring and supervising the implementation of the NAP-GBV from 2017 until 2021. There was an official dispatch from Prime Minister on the approval of focal points at the ministerial level for the Inter-Ministerial Committee to monitor the implementation of the NAP-GBV. The Inter-Ministerial Committee will hold meetings three times every year. The SEII

will also hold coordination meetings with referral network members four times a year. Meetings with the referral networks are aimed at identifying risks as well as other important factors that will assist in providing protection and assistance to women and children victims of GBV. The SEII will also hold workshops with Municipal Administrators with the aim of disseminating information on the structure of the Municipal Gender Working Groups while arranging re-appointments from the SEII to the groups in order to continue implementation of the gender mainstreaming approach at the municipal level including prevention of all forms of GBV.

The government has established coordination mechanisms with development partners, civil society actors, national and international NGOs and the wider community regarding provision of services to vulnerable people who have suffered or are experiencing domestic violence, sexual violence, child abuse, abandonment and human trafficking, and also to women in prison. Throughout 2019, the government will continue to work with development partners, NGOs, civil society actors, and the private sector to continue prevention efforts, provision of assistance to victims and ongoing improvements to mechanisms for monitoring cases of gender-based violence.

V. Women and Armed Conflict

Women and children as citizens of Timor-Leste have the right to live in peace in a safe and secure environment, free from all forms of violence and discrimination. They also have the right to participate and contribute actively and equally to peace-building and to national development. Timor-Leste gained its independence through a long history of conflict and violence. East Timorese people have felt and experienced the consequences of such conflict. Women and girls in particular who lived through these conflicts were victims of many different forms of violence. As a consequence of war, people were subjected to horrific experiences including death, disappearances, torture, rape, sexual slavery and imprisonment, all of which are gross human rights violations. Such experiences have not only resulted in life-long damage to individuals, but have also impacted upon State institutions. The government of Timor-Leste recognises its responsibility and is committed to ending such violence through establishing laws and policies that prohibit violence and discrimination, while also raising awareness about the value and dignity of individuals. The Government is also committed to fostering respect amongst all citizens, and promoting peace in all communities. The violence experienced by Timor-Leste in past times of conflicts have taught Timor-Leste as a nation to focus on peace-building from the grassroots level of community to its national institutions. As a result, individuals are taught to respect each other and to work together to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination in daily life. It is recognised nation-wide that everyone has the right to live peacefully in a secure environment, free from all forms of violence and discrimination and that this is

essential for citizens full participation and active contributes to peace-building, state-building and overall development of the country.

The government of Timor-Leste is committed to eliminating all forms of violence and discrimination against women through the implementation of the National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (NAP-UNSCR 1325) and the National Action Plan (NAP) on Gender-based Violence (GBV). Preventing violence against women will further enhance women's participation in decision-making and peace-building. The National Parliament signed and ratified the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 2003. A number of other international treaties and conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women have also been ratified by the government of Timor-Leste. The approval of the NAP-UNSCR 1325 has reaffirmed the government's commitment to continue the promotion of gender equality and furthering of women's rights in accordance with the Constitution of RDTL and international conventions. The implementation of NAP-UNSCR 1325 has also demonstrated Timor-Leste's commitment to implementing the recommendations of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR). The objectives behind the approval of NAP-UNSCR 1325 include compensating and recognising women's suffering during past conflicts as well as recognising and valuing the contribution made by women during the struggle for national liberation. Women had an integral role in the civilian and armed resistance during the struggle for national liberation. In acknowledging the valuable contributions that women have made in the past and continue to make in the present and future, the government recognises the importance of implementing policies that encourage women's participation in the development of Timor-Leste.

In 2018, the Timor-Leste National Police (PNTL) established and launched a gender strategy for the period from 2018 to 2022. This strategy will help contribute to the achievement of the Timor-Leste National Police's mission. This mission is to defend East Timorese citizens' rights and liberties, and support professional development, within an inclusive security force which is trusted by the population. This gender strategy will support the PNTL to provide services according to the security needs of both men and women in Timor-Leste. It will also assist in ensuring the full and equal participation of men and women within the PNTL. This strategy will also support PNTL in executing its responsibilities in accordance with the NAP-UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security for the period from 2016 to 2020, and the NAP on Gender-Based Violence for the period from 2017 to 2021. Currently, there are six (6) women in the PNTL out of total of sixteen (16) participants in the PNTL who will take part in trainings for United Nations Peacekeeping Missions. The government has also established Community Policing Councils (CPCs) in order to resolve conflicts in the community.

The State has a moral responsibility to ensure that women and girls are free from any future armed conflicts, and to create secure conditions for the entire population, particularly for women and children. The establishment of laws and application of

heavy sanctions and punishment for groups that create conflict and threaten the rights of the population has helped maintain Timor-Leste's internal peace and security. Following armed conflict in 2006, the government has put in place measures to ensure stability for the entire population, to prevent internal displacements, and particularly for women and girls to live in peace and the full enjoyment of their daily lives. The government through the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion (MSSI), has provided social assistance to victims of past conflicts. The *Centro Nacional Chega (CNC)* has been established under the Office of the Prime Minister using the materials of the CAVR report to increase public awareness of the negative impacts of armed conflict. The information disseminated is aimed particularly at young people, with the intention of increasing their knowledge of past historical events in order to prevent them becoming involved with martial arts and other organised violent groups.

In addition to efforts made by the Government, civil society groups have also been heavily involved in taking care of victims and survivors of past conflicts. ACBIT, for example, has carried out research in consultation with victims. This has allowed ACBIT to hear the opinions and experiences of victims, which has informed the core basis of their research. Together with development partners, they have provided training to survivors in conflict resolution, which can assist them with being advocates for peace in their communities. Civil society actors across Timor-Leste are strong advocates working closely with the government, development partners and the private sector to ensure gender sensitive and inclusive peace and justice in Timor-Leste. The local NGO, BELUN, works on conflict prevention in the community. BELUN has developed innovative systems contributing to conflict prevention. Each month BELUN publishes the Early Warning System which provides data for social networks on indicators of potential conflicts in a total of 66 areas covering the economic, political and social sectors. As an example, in September 2018 the Early Warning System identified a significant increased in violence against women and girls. BELUN also identified large-scale conflicts affecting the wider community as a whole. The conflicts identified include land disputes, conflict among youth (martial arts groups), domestic violence and conflict between police and communities. BELUN also provides this information with recommendations to the government to to supporting decision-making and action to minimise and prevent such conflicts.

VI. Women and the Economy

Women are disproportionately represented in the informal labour sector. Domestic labour throughout the majority of the country is undertaken by women. Throughout the country, women are tasked with the responsibility of caring for children and elderly relatives, gathering food and preparing meals for the family and undertaking household chores such as cleaning and washing. Such work is not considered formal employment, meaning that many women are not afforded an equal chance of participating in the formal labour economy.

Women are more likely to be employed in vulnerable or unsteady employment, with many women than men receiving unstable salaries and benefits. This is particularly commonplace in rural areas, where 87% of rural women work in vulnerable employment compared to 54% of women in urban areas. This trend is also similar to the figures of men working in vulnerable employment, with 78% of rural men working in vulnerable employment compared to 37% of urban men. Distribution of formally employed men and women in industry sectors show that 25% of employed women work in selling goods and managing small-business, whilst 12% are in education, health, sports, arts, and other areas. Compared to women, men have greater opportunity to gain employment in the private sector within a range of larger industries and in primary industry.

Through the SEII, the government between 2014 and 2017 has provided financial support to beneficiary groups, success groups, vulnerable groups, and NGOs in economic sectors aiming to:

- Promote gender equality and equality of opportunity for work;
- Strengthen women's subsistence economies through self-employment and self-confidence;
- Provide opportunities to women to practice and demonstrate their skills and capacities;
- Encourage women to organize and to work in groups or teams;
- Contribute to the poverty reduction by encouraging women to participate in the process of national economic development; and
- Provide opportunities to women to gain trust from micro-finance institutions for women to access credit.

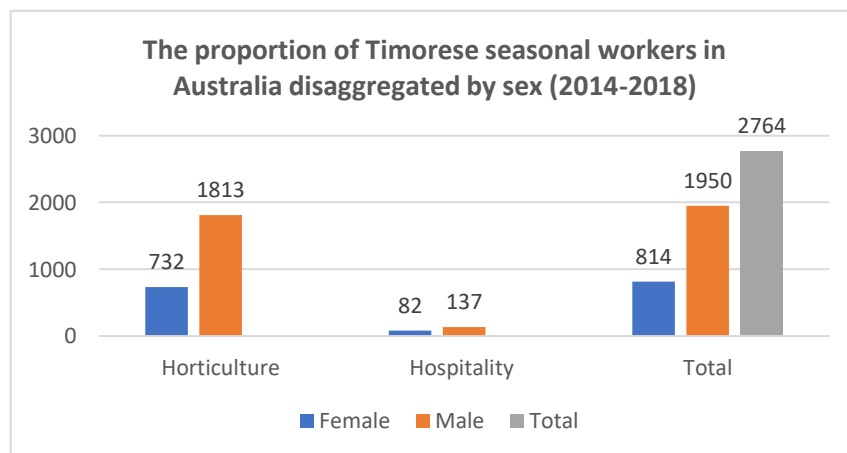
Budget support from Public Funds Transfers have provided funds equally distributed to the 12 municipalities and the RAEOA and a range of different economic activities to achieve gender equality in economic life and reduce women's economic dependency on men, thereby empowering women's economic capacity particularly in rural areas. For the period 2014 to 2017, a total of 194 beneficiary groups received Public Funds Transfers totalling USD347,807. Ten NGOs that operate in the economic sector received financial support from SEII in 2016 and 2017 (5 NGO beneficiaries per year) totalling USD49,875. For the period 2015 to 2017 SEII conducted training on accounting management on two occasions. Beneficiaries of the training are small-business groups, women in business, success groups, and vulnerable groups. These trainings were conducted to increase their skills in financial administration and business.

The government and civil society groups also conducted the Women's Economic Empowerment Program. Between 2010 and 2018, Fundasaun Alola's work with this program resulted in the creation of 52 women's groups in 12 municipalities and the RAEOA. This work has helped increase family income and enabled women to participate in activities and programs aimed at preventing economy dependency and reducing violence against women and children. Fundasaun Alola continues to

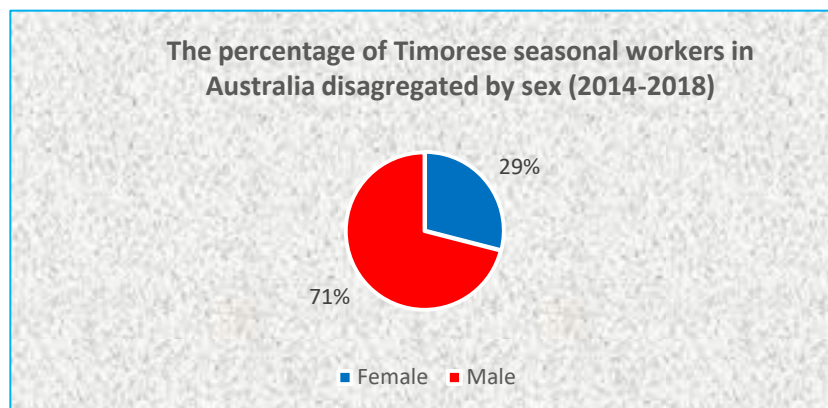
provide assistance to these 52 women's groups particularly at Christmas and Easter when Fundasaun Alola organizes fairs to provide opportunity for these groups to promote their products and sell their goods, helping to increase their income. Access to financial services is also very important for economic empowerment, particularly for women who have a tendency to have less opportunity to control their own wealth. Improving women's access to financial services, improving banking services, increasing access to micro-finance programs and money transfers all have an important role in assisting women to manage their own financial resources, and to contribute to economic development.

Women in Overseas Seasonal Workers Program

The Secretary of State for Professional Training and Employment (SEFOPE) is the State entity responsible for matters relating to vocational training, employment and labour. The government, through SEFOPE, has established non-discriminatory legal frameworks for men's and women's skills development and improving productivity to ensure the promotion of gender equality in national development. SEFOPE has established legal provisions to ensure women's labour rights including annual leave, maternity leave, and breastfeeding leave for those with young babies. SEFOPE has also established agreements for at least 50% participation by women in recruitment for trainings and for employment. SEFOPE has had an attaché to assist in its work regarding labour. The attaché's role involves overseeing women working overseas, assisting them in receiving fair and equal treatment. In the period from 2014 to 2018, SEFOPE has assisted many East Timorese youth in obtaining work overseas. The graph below presents data regarding seasonal workers in Australia disaggregated by sex for the period 2014 to 2018. As can be seen, the representation of men in the seasonal workers program in Australia is higher than women.

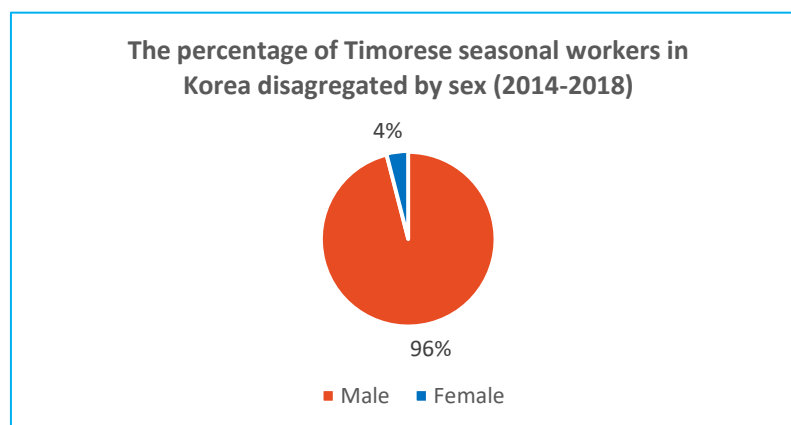


- The graph below shows that the percentage of women in the workforce has not yet reached the 50% stipulated in the recruitment agreement, but that women beneficiaries have reached 29%.



The participation of Timorese women in South Korea at 4% is very low in comparison to their participation in the seasonal workers program in Australia where employment offered by the majority of companies is in hospitality and horticulture, leading to greater participation (29%) from women. Even though the 50% participation rate agreed has not been achieved, SEFOPE considers women's participation in the seasonal workers program to be a significant contribution to the promotion of gender equality.

Work Sector							
Year	Manufacturing		Agriculture		Fisheries		Total per annum
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
2014	7	111	0	0	0	128	246
2015	6	147			0	264	417
2016	10	148	0	0	0	346	504
2017	13	128	0	0	0	143	284
2018	4	160	0	0	0	138	302
	40	694				1,019	
Total							1,753



Women in Business

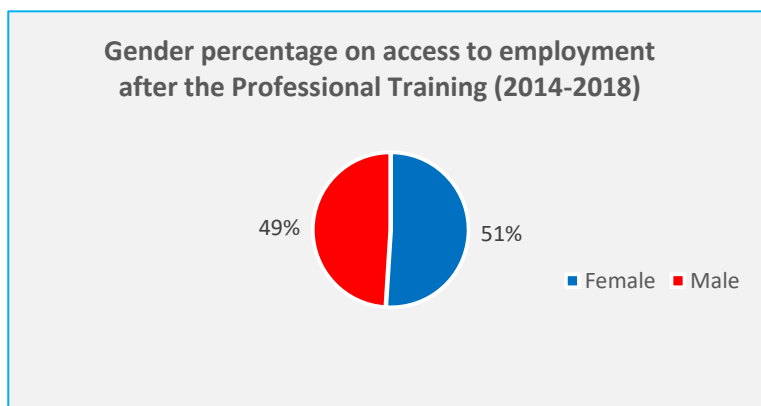
It is estimated that women are the owners of 40% of the small businesses in Timor-Leste, with about 16% of these businesses formally registered in 2010. Although women have a lower representation in the formal sectors, their participation is very high in agricultural businesses, where many sell their products in markets, and also manage kiosks. Women in businesses face a number of obstacles. Barriers for women in business include lower educational participation in a cultural environment which is dominated by men. Current legal frameworks and operation of these frameworks are not yet sensitive to the need for balancing business with social and domestic responsibilities. Small business initiatives have been established as important mechanisms for dialogue between the business community and the government. A women's business association has been established and consists of 15 women who lead medium-sized businesses in Dili. This formal organization does not wholly represent the interests of women involved in agricultural production, nor their many interests in small and larger businesses. The NAP for Gender and the Private Sector for the period 2014 to 2017 provided recommendations to the government to undertake reforms to improve legal frameworks for women's businesses, ensure gender sensitive business registration processes and raise awareness about women's rights, particularly in law relating to commerce.

The Ministry of Tourism, Commerce and Industry (MTCI) has also been providing technical and financial support for the development of business activities for women in micro and small enterprises in the capital Dili, in the municipalities and rural areas. MTCI's programs include but are not limited to granting of financial support, equipment and short-term technical-vocational education and training (TVET) courses for women entrepreneurs, supporting cooperatives, building basic infrastructure to facilitate economic activities including markets, training/incubator centers, industrial parks and tourist areas, and promoting and facilitating producers especially women's groups in accessing domestic and international markets. According to the MTCI's database, from 2014 to 2016 the number of women conducting business activities in the areas of commerce, handcrafts, and micro and small enterprises was significantly higher than men, with a total of 584 groups and individuals. In the area of development of micro and small industries, around 369 women's groups are involved in micro and small enterprises registered at the national level from a total of 1,326 groups. Annually, there has been an increase in the number of women and men in respective business areas. In regards to the development of cooperatives, as of 2016 women's participation in the organization and operational activities in different branches of cooperatives for micro, small and medium scale economic activities was 9,886 (46.7%) in comparison to men's participation of 11,288 (53.3%).

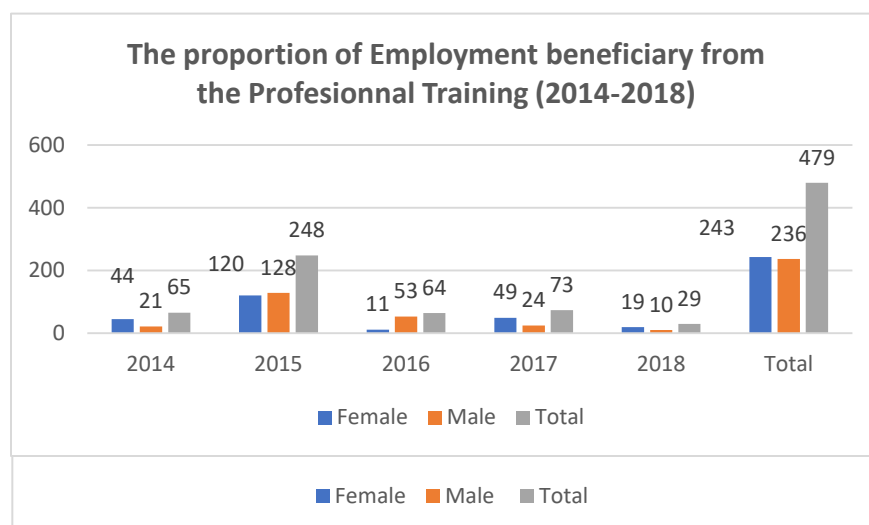
Women in Vocational Training Programs

SEFOPE has established vocational training centres providing education for women to enhance their careers in the private and public sectors. SEFOPE also provides financial support to accredited training centres and community training centres to

provide training for adolescent youth (boys and/or girls) to increase their skills for creating self-employment. During the period 2014 to 2018, women's participation in these training programs reached more than 50%. This is a positive development, where it is anticipated that the greater participation of women in training will lead to a greater opportunities for women to participate in the workforce. Results from evaluation reports show that the high rates of participation by women may have been boosted by the specific programs on offer, with the majority of training provided by the training centres being in hospitality, bakery, administration and IT.

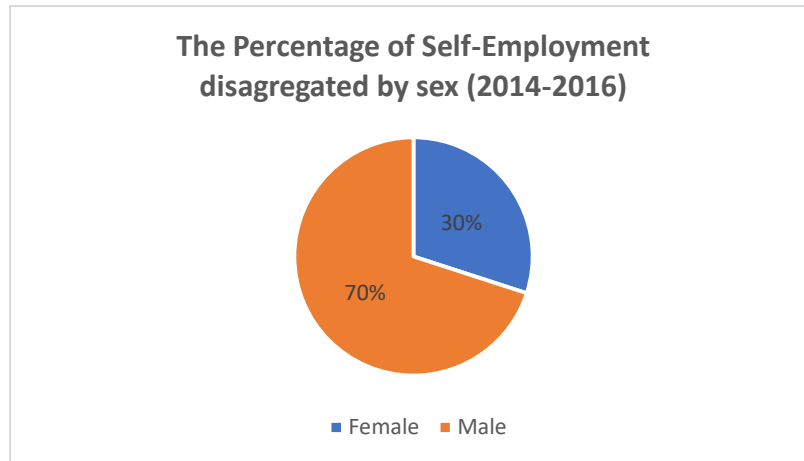


SEFOPE has also carried out data collection regarding the benefits of employment opportunity in private and public sectors. Women's participation is high in the private sector as many women are working in areas of Hospitality, Administration and IT as presented in the following graph.



51% of those who benefited from professional training by obtaining jobs were women:

SEFOPE provided financial support to self-employed individuals to assist them in managing their small businesses. This financial support assists them with raising animals, tailoring, growing vegetables, and fish-farming with the aim of helping improve their living standards and increase their family income. The following data provides information on beneficiary groups for the period 2014 to 2016:



Women's Access to Credit

In Timor-Leste, access to financial services and credit is very difficult when starting up a business. This is especially the case in rural areas. Despite the recent increases in credit growth, banks and financial institutions continue to prefer larger clients as the transaction cost is smaller and there is greater availability of collateral. This has disproportionately affected women as many of them are involved in small enterprises and have limited access to collateral.

The government has successfully adopted the Maubisse Declaration. This is a guideline for improving the economic empowerment of women by strengthening their capacity, improving their access to resources and developing favorable environments for them to be able to contribute to economic development. The strengthening of women's power and socio-economic capacity, as well as for people with disability is a pre condition for the creation of a modern and developed society. MTCI in collaboration with the Timor-Leste National Commercial Bank (BNCTL) has been implementing a program called Social Business which provides micro-credit funds to cooperatives to help in the development of micro-businesses. As of 2018, there have been a total of 18,005 people who have accessed micro-credit funds of which 8,727 persons were women, representing approximately 48.47% of those benefiting from access to credit through their cooperatives.

The SEII's program for women's economic empowerment through Public Funds Transfers supported the initiative to start up productive economic activities in agriculture (agri-business, horticulture, animal husbandry and fisheries), home industries, tourism and also commerce in urban and rural areas (including also in remote areas). This is aimed at promoting gender equality and employment

opportunity for women. This program aims to empower the economic development of women through self-employment, and provide opportunities for women to practice and demonstrate their skills and capacities by encouraging women to organise to work together in groups or teams. The Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion has worked together with SEII to provide support to women groups, particularly women who have been engaged in provision of sex services and groups affected by HIV-AIDS. This support is to assist them in conducting business activities such as starting up kiosks, restaurants, weaving and sewing activities to improve their living standards.

Civil society groups and NGOs also provide support in assisting women to gain access to credit. The Judicial System Monitoring Program (*Programa Monitoriza saun Sistema Judisiál (JSMP)*) has a policy on internal loans and it gives priority to women based on their salary level, and tailors the credit to their capacity for repayment. PRADET also provides direct credit to beneficiaries or women clients who wish to improve their family income with an amount ranging between \$15 and \$350 for each client. The majority of beneficiaries utilized the credit to pursue business opportunities, such as starting up a kiosk and raising animals (chicken, pigs and goats).

VII. Women in Power and Decision-Making

The Parliament of Timor-Leste has established a quota as a special measure to increase women's participation in political life. This quota provides that at least 30% of seats in the National Parliament are held by women. At present women's participation in the National Parliament has reached 38%, which is the highest figure in the Asia Pacific region. The Political Party Law has also promoted the participation of women and youth, particularly at decision-making levels.

Women's representation at the executive level of government is only 21% of the 29 government members. There was an increase of women's representation at the local level as Suco Chief from 2% in 2009 to 5% in 2016, and women's participation as Aldeia Chief has increased from 35 in 2009 to 87 in 2016. The Suco Election Law No. 9/2016 aimed at encouraging women to become candidates and run in the Suco Election. The “100% flis Brontô”⁹ program, National Program for Suco Development (*Programa Nasional Dezenvolviment Suku (PNDS)*),¹⁰ and Women's Congress for Potential Women in 12 Municipalities and the RAEOA, also contributed to the increase in women's participation at the local governance and decision-making level and to the empowerment of women at the local level. The government

⁹ The Program of 100% flis Brontô was a program organized by the Government and Civil Societies in order to increase women's participation in political life and local governance, particularly in rural areas. From the recruitment done, it was able to provide training and finally, women were having courage (brave) to candidate themselves to be Suco Chief in total 339 of 442 sucos.

¹⁰ PNDS is the Government program led by the Ministry of State Administration (MAE) aimed to improve citizens' living standards in rural areas by supporting men and women to establish and rehabilitate small-scale infrastructure projects based on their needs and priorities.

of Timor-Leste has recognised that it needs to review the legal frameworks to address women's participation as Municipal Administrators in order to achieve its goals for the promotion of gender equality in politics and government.

% participation of women at decision making level in the Parliament 2002-2018

No.	Legislature	Total seats	Total women	%
1.	I	88	22	25%
2.	II	65	20	30%
3.	III	65	25	38%
4.	IV	65	25	38%
5.	V	65	25	38%

% participation of women at the executive level (government members):

No.	Legislature	Total government members	Male	%	Female	%
1	I	25	21	84%	4	16%
2	II	35	30	85%	5	15%
3	III	31	24	77%	7	23%
4	IV	39	34	87%	5	13%
5	V	53	43	81%	10	19%
6	VI	38	30	79%	8	21%
7	VII	37	31	84%	6	16%
8	VIII	22	22	78%	6	21%

% participation of women at the village and hamlet levels

Position	Results of Suco Election							
	2004	%	Total Suco and Aldeia	2009	%	2016	%	Total Suco and

								Aldeia
Village Chief	7	2%	442	11	2%	21	5%	452
Hamlet Chief	22	1%	2225	37	2%	87	3%	2225

In the public sector, women's participation in the public administration reached 11,847 of the total of 34,142 civil servants in 2018. From this total, 1,971 hold positions at decision-making levels of whom only 409 (21%) were women. While this figure is significantly lower compared to men's participation, it has increased from the previous year where women's participation at decision-making levels was 384. There were only two sectors of the public administration where women's participation at decision-making levels was more than 50%, being amongst Health Professionals and the Parliament. The government recognises that achieving equal representation is an ongoing challenge, particularly in regards to women's participation in civil service, which is currently at 35%. In order to address this issue, the government approved the Decree-Law on the Regime for Recruitment, Selection, Promotion, Distinctions and Awards in the Public Service. This provides preference to women in instances where there are several candidates with the same skill and experience levels. This strategy has shown that gender-sensitive legislation, increasing knowledge and building capacity in regards to gender can have a significant impact. The government is currently carrying out a long-term strategy to inspire cultural change and promote the value of women's involvement in political life and at decision-making levels.

Nevertheless, women continue to encounter internal and external obstacles in political life, including a lack of political skills, lack of self-confidence and courage, lack of self-motivation, and also lack of financial resources to support their campaigns. External obstacles include social and cultural norms that present barriers for women in gaining access to political opportunities, and have contributed to on-going discrimination occurring in public and domestic life. Another important obstacle is the lack of opportunity for women to gain experience in leadership within their communities. Media has an important role in increasing the representation of women in government as it can influence public opinion regarding women and their participation in political life. In response to the obstacles facing women, SEII is implementing the program "Empowering Women in Political Life" to help increase women's participation in suco and municipal elections and also to assist them in preparing for their roles in governance. The SEII has been implementing programs focused on enabling women's empowerment in political life since its establishment in 2002. In 2014, SEII worked together with civil society groups and international agencies to establish a strategic framework on women's participation in political life. This strategy consists of seven (7) priority areas:

- 1) Capacity building and training;
- 2) Strengthening gender equality in political parties;
- 3) Infrastructure and logistics;
- 4) Security of women candidates and voters;
- 5) Media and communication;
- 6) Gender responsive budgeting for women in political life; and
- 7) Strengthening a gender equality culture.

The government has conducted dissemination of its decentralization policy directly led by the Prime Minister. SEII has also been involved in disseminating information on decentralization policy and ensuring that women are actively participating in expressing their opinions in meetings conducted in the 12 municipalities and the RAEOA. These meetings have shown that it is necessary to identify women with potential for leadership and to identify women's human resources in all areas, so that they are able to actively participating in the political process and in decision-making when the municipalities are established in 2020.

In 2014, SEII began to hold municipal women's congresses to identify women with potential for leadership to become candidates for the suco and municipal elections, and also to ensure that women's voices can be incorporated into policies, programs and budgeting for local development. These municipal women's congresses identified empowerment and skills building for women as an important component in preparing women for suco and municipal elections. In 2015, SEII developed strategies for direct support to women's associations to enable their better functioning. In addition to supporting municipal women's associations, the SEII has supported civil society groups including Fundasaun Patria and Fundasaun Caucus and provided training identified in the platforms for action arising from the municipal women's congresses. Both of these foundations work in the area of women's political empowerment, building the capacity of women with potential in rural areas to prepare them transformative leadership roles in their communities.

Timor-Leste has established the Human Capital Development Fund (HCDF) that provides scholarships and training for East Timorese citizens, including civil servants, to professional skills and abilities and level of educational attainment. This program has an important role enabling young people to access opportunities in major industry sectors such as petroleum, tourism, agriculture and civil construction. The Human Capital Development Fund (HCDF) program also includes technical training for civil servants, school teachers, defense force and police service members, aiming to provide academic diplomas for civil servants, which will also contribute to increasing women's participation at decision-making levels.

VIII. Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women¹¹

The Secretary of State for Equality and Inclusion (SEII) is the State institution responsible for the promotion of gender equality and inclusion operating directly within the Office of the Prime Minister. The SEII's roles and responsibilities include advocacy, coordinating, implementing, and evaluating the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy (GMS) in the context of policies, laws, programs, plans, and budgets within State institutions with the aim of promoting gender equality, eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against women, girls, and at-risk groups, economic empowerment of women and increasing women's participation in political life and decision making at national, municipal and local levels. It is very important for the SEII to ensure that government has in place appropriate mechanisms for women's effective participation in the political, social and economic development of Timor-Leste. The vision of the SEII as stated in the National Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030 is that "By 2030, Timor-Leste will be a prosperous and peaceful nation and a society of gender equality and inclusion in which human dignity and the rights of women and girls are valued, protected and promoted by our laws and cultures."

IX. Human Rights of Women

Population, development and human rights all intersect. Women's emancipation and women's reproductive health needs are important components of human centred development. Since the restoration of independence, the government is committed to enabling all East Timorese to have access to information regarding sexual and reproductive health as well having access to impartial, comprehensive and evidence-based sexual and reproductive healthcare, including family planning and contraceptives.

The government of Timor-Leste has adopted the National Policy for Family Planning and also the National Strategy for Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent Health (2015-2019), which state that women have the right to decide freely and responsibly upon the number, spacing and when to have children. Women also have the right to access information and mechanisms to enable these conditions, and the right to high quality sexual and reproductive healthcare. The National Health Sector Strategic Plan 2011-2030 identified maternal and child health as the two main priorities for the national health program. Reproductive rights are included within the greater human rights framework, and have been recognised in domestic laws, international human rights documents and other consensus documents. The Civil Code (Law No. 10/2011) also provides for equal rights for women and men within marriage.

The government has approved various legal frameworks and national policies that affirm that everyone has the right to be free from practices which may harm women

¹¹ Please refer to section III for more details of the national women's strategy 2014-2018 and interministerial gender coordination.

and girls, including sexual violence and gender-based violence. Article 18 of the RDTL Constitution states clearly that children are entitled to protection, and the Law Against Domestic Violence criminalises domestic violence, including sexual violence and rape within marriage. The Penal Code, the Witness Protection Law, and the Labour Code also prohibit verbal and non-verbal abuse, physical and sexual abuse. The National Action Plan for Gender-Based Violence outlines the policy of “Zero Tolerance” towards administrative negligence, which covers sexual violence and corporal punishment. A nation free from violence against women will have a positive impact on women’s ability to work, and their participation will bring great benefits for national development. An important step in promoting women’s rights is to raise awareness of human rights for rural women, so that they are empowered to protect themselves and fight for their right to enjoy the benefits of national development. Empowering women to become financially independent, and helping them stand against all forms of violence, discrimination and traditional practices which prejudice women will help strengthen women across all of Timor-Leste. Women are a strong component of society, and can be strong partners for men, so as to be able to contribute to the development of the country.

Timor-Leste has an independent Human Rights Institution, the Ombudsman for Human Rights and Justice (*Provedoria Direitos Humanos e Justiça* (PDHJ)) which is responsible for the promotion of human rights and good governance. The PDHJ’s role is to investigate and monitor human rights abuses and government standards, and also to make recommendations including for indictments against relevant authorities. Gender-based violence has become a serious problem. Although sexual violence, including rape in marriage is criminalised with a prison sentence of up to 20 years as penalty, the reporting of crimes and finalisation of investigations into allegations remain low. The PDHJ has worked with the organization Coalition on Diversity and Action (CODIVA) to raise awareness and understanding of the LGBTI communities regarding their rights, including legal remedies available for them to lodge complaints of human rights violations.

While the government has created and approved laws and policies that are gender sensitive and recognise human rights, women in rural areas continue to have a low level of understanding of their human rights. Socio-cultural and religious influences continue to be barriers for women in the exercise of their rights, particularly their sexual and reproductive health rights.

X. Women and the Media

The Secretary of State for Social Communication (SEKOMS) places a high priority on the promotion of gender equality issues. During the 16-Days Campaign Against Violence Against Women, SEKOMS worked closely with the Australian Embassy’s NABILAN program, being implemented by The Asia Foundation, to produce and launch a media resource package on the prevention of Violence Against Women. This package may assist journalists in having a deeper awareness and understanding of gender issues, and may enable them to report and present news in

a gender sensitive manner. This could help to enable changes to values, attitudes and beliefs relating to gender, thereby helping to combat all types of violence against women and girls. In 2018, the SEKOMS in cooperation with SEII and supported by the Australian Embassy, the NABILAN Program, and UN Women conducted training for journalists and editors (24 female and 24 male) on gender sensitive media and news reporting. The training aimed to enhance the knowledge of journalists and editors regarding gender concepts, and to help educate how to make a gender sensitive news report where victims of gender-based violence are not blamed for the crime. Since 2014, SEKOMS has also provided opportunities for women to continue their studies both in Indonesia and to attend other trainings both inside the country and overseas, and upon completion to continue to support the work of the SEKOMS. SEKOMS considers the roles of both men and women in the media to be extremely important, particularly in changing attitudes and behaviours that promote transformation in development.

FOKUPERS is a non-governmental organization that provides support services to victims, particularly to victims from during the Indonesia occupation period. They also provide non-violent, non-gender based, early childhood education, and work in advocacy and empowerment of women in communities. During the period 2013 to 2018 FOKUPERS has carried out media campaigns to enhance women and civil society's critical awareness using various publications including:

- a. *Hatun*(15 editions, 250 copies for each each edition);
- b. *Babadok*(19 editions, 500 copies for each edition); as a quarterly publication Bulletin providing information to beneficiary members, government, civil society and the general public.
- c. Created 2 special editions of success stories from five survivors with 250 copies for each edition.
- d. Produced T-shirts "I'm a Survivor Agent of Change" *fl Sobrevivente* *Autór*
ba! ± Ÿ Š ª ~ Š
- e. Produced bags and handbooks presenting the facts of victims' stories.

A media campaign was conducted with the aim of sharing information to communities on the chronology of cases faced by victims. This included the use of media for effective local discussions and trainings provided by FOKUPERS.

XI. Women and the Environment

In Timor-Leste, the role of men is more noticeable and prevalent in the public sector whereas the role of women is more concentrated in domestic affairs, commerce and business, financial matters, education, health care and other social issues. Climate change affects women's roles and activities, and is a particular threat to the agriculture sector and small and micro-businesses such as kiosks. The government provides support and compensation to women who run their businesses on the sides of roads and rivers that are affected by climate change, and especially those that are at risk of natural disasters such as landslides. The government carries out gender analysis when building public infrastructure,

considering any potential impacts on women. Women's access to water and the time required to carrying it back to the home is also a major consideration where in some communities, the household is dependant on women going out and fetching water.

Agricultural activities may be economically vulnerable as the agricultural activities are seasonal-based and rely on the meteorological conditions as well as market conditions. Many women do not have access to information on utilising modern materials in addressing the climate change. Many women lament the low financial returns from their agricultural products. The TOMAK assessment report has shown that many women are not land and property owners. Some women have been able to negotiate with land owners to use land to conduct their businesses. Property rights are still a critical problem in determining East Timorese women's ability to make financial investments in agricultural production compared to other non-agricultural activities. The Land Law that was approved in 2017 is considered very progressive in terms of the promotion of equal rights and the protection of vulnerable groups. The national parliament and government work together to address these issues and ensure that these rights can be exercised, particularly by women living under the Timor-Leste norm of the *defacto* union.

XII. The Girl-Child

The government ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in April 2003 and has made great effort during the period 2014 to 2018 to ensure that the rights of children are considered during the process of developing laws, policies, programs and budgets. Following establishment of the National Commission for the Rights of Children (NCRC) in 2016, the NCRC worked closely with UNICEF to launch the NAP for Children in Timor-Leste for the period 2016 to 2020 which serves as a roadmap for the government for the creation of an environment that respects and protects the rights of boys and girls, particularly those who living in unfavourable conditions in the country. The NCRC's role is to promote, protect, and safeguard the rights of children. One important role of the NCRC is being a mediator in cases of violence against children and also in cases of separation of the parents, in supporting children whilst referring to Public Prosecution and the Court for any final decision regarding custody. From 2013 to 2017 the NCRC also provided capacity building for children, particularly girls in the municipalities of Ermera, Bobonaro, and Baucau, focusing on issues relating to health and education, including advocating for improvements to create fair health and education systems free from discrimination.

In the education sector, the Law for Basic Education No. 14/2008, provides for a system of education that is universal, compulsory and free for all children. This Law shows that the education system promotes development in the spirit of democracy and pluralism, promoting mutual respect and a free education to enable the exchange of ideas and opinions. The government has reaffirmed its Policy of Zero-

Tolerance for administrative negligence in the education sector, covering sexual violence and corporal punishment in schools, to guarantee the safety and security of girls and children in schools and to improve teaching methods. The government recognises that it needs to review these legal frameworks and mechanisms in Timor-Leste and also to monitor the implementation of these laws and policies. The Government continues to work to improve legal frameworks that protect children and their rights in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

FOKUPERS has provided full support to 20 girls who were victims of rape and incest cases to enable them to continue their schooling. Although there is no “return to school policy” in place for minors the Ministry of Education allows space for this work to provide a good opportunity for victims of incest and sexual violence to continue and not lose the opportunity to complete their education. At school, the family and school are encouraged to provide support to the victim. The NGO ALFeLa has worked to accelerate the progress of gender equality promotion and promote the rights of child by providing assistance and access to justice through free legal aid. They also provide protection to women and girl victims as well as provide legal education to the wider community. Actions already undertaken by ALFeLa include making submissions in cases of incest, cases of human trafficking, making submission under the Child Protection Code and utilising the CEDAW Optional Protocol to defend victims who have been charged and punished for defending themselves from violence. ALFeLa has a gender sensitive data collection method that has a particularly focus on cases of gender-based violence. In terms of the legal aid provided by ALFeLa, the following statistics show the number of cases that have been able to be resolved by legal proceeding in the Public Prosecution and the Court:

- 702 cases have received court decisions
- 1216 cases have pending legal proceedings
- there are 27 cases where the victim withdrew their complaint because the clients no longer wished to receive legal aid from ALFeLa

The JSMP has broadcast programs on TV and radio on the Rights of the Child in order to promote access to formal justice. JSMP has also held active discussions with members of parliament regarding cases of infanticide and has participated in audiences with members of parliament, government, and other relevant institutions regarding women and children’s issues, particularly relating to the implementation of laws.

SECTION III: NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, MECHANISMS AND PROCESSES

The evolution of the national women’s machinery dates back to Timor-Leste’s restoration of Independence in 2002 beginning with the office of the Advisor to the Prime Minister on the Promotion of Equality. In 2007, this office was transformed

into an independent government body as a Secretary of State.¹² Most recently, Decree Law N.º 14/2018 of 17 August 2018, which approves the structure of the eighth Constitutional Government of Timor-Leste, renamed the national women's machinery as the Secretary of State for Equality and Inclusion (SEII). The Secretary sits under, and reports directly to the Prime Minister. This mechanism is beneficial to the SEII, as it provides political authority for the national women's machinery to execute its mandate and coordinate the process of gender mainstreaming across all government entities, including other cross-cutting portfolio services.

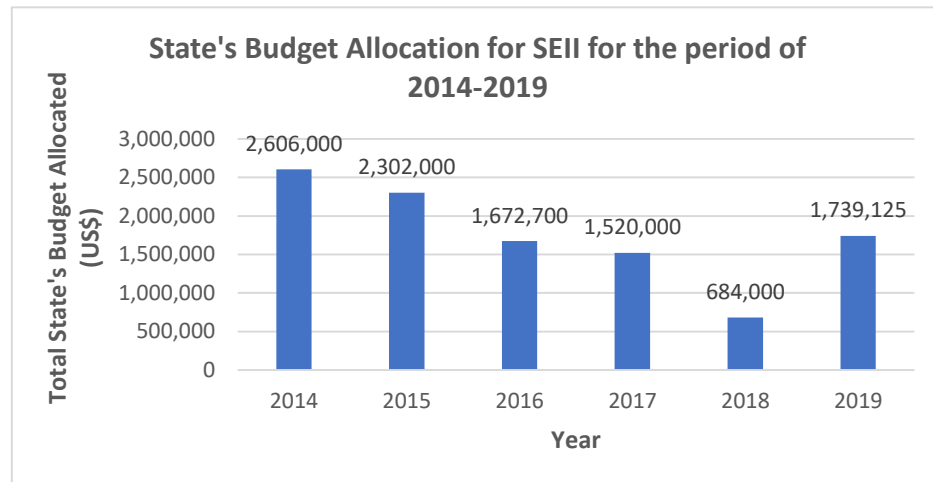
The SEII's strategic plan for five years (2018-2023) provides strategic clarity regarding the roles of the SEII and its partners. Based on this plan, the SEII has identified 4 principal objectives aligned with the National Strategic Development Plan (2011-2030) as follows:

1. Reinforce the gender mainstreaming strategy in all government policies, laws, programs, plans, and budgets as well as continue to strengthen gender equality advocacy at the national, municipal and village levels;
2. Advocacy for ending violence against women, girls, and at-risk groups;
3. Empower and promote effective participation of women in the economic development of Timor-Leste;
4. Increase the participation of women in politics and in decision-making at national, municipal and local levels.

Since 2017, the role and mandate of the SEII has been broadened to include advocacy for social inclusion, especially for marginalized communities such as at-risk groups and the LGBTI community. The SEII participates in the Council of Ministers and has an important role in advocating for gender equality in laws, policies, plans and programs, and is responsible for coordination with all other entities in government. The SEII is a member of the Budget Review Committee (BRC), and has an important role to ensure that gender issues are integrated into the government plan and the state budget.

During the period 2014 to 2018, the SEII was faced with the problem of budget reductions. In 2019 however, SEII's budget has increased to USD1,739,125. Despite the reduction to the SEII's budget between 2014 and 2018, the SEII continued to demonstrate significant progress in the promotion of gender equality and in empowering women and girls in Timor-Leste. This is especially evident in the development of strong and gender sensitive legal frameworks and policies in response to gender-based violence.

¹² Between 2015-2017, the name of the secretariat has changed from the Secretariat of State for the Support and Socio-Economic Promotion of Women (SEM) to the Secretariat of State for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (SEIGIS). Under the Decree Law N.º 6/2015 of 11 March 2015 of the sixth Constitutional Government (2015-2017), SEM reports directly to the Minister of State, Coordinator of Social Affairs (MECAS) who meet ordinarily once per month with the members of the Government for which it is responsible for and inform the Prime Minister subsequently. Under the Decree Law N.º 35/2017 of the seventh Constitutional Government (September 2017-June 2018), SEIGIS was under a direct supervision of the Prime Minister.



Since the government adopted the 2030 Agenda in 2015, the government has established the Inter-Ministerial SDG Working Group led directly by the Office of the Prime Minister and involving line ministries and other government entities in implementing and monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The government has also developed a roadmap for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and in accordance with the plan will revise the National Strategic Development Plan (2011-2030) to ensure the alignment of priorities and global commitments ratified by Timor-Leste. This includes commitments relating to the promotion of gender equality. The roadmap presents gender issues as priority and overarching cross-cutting goals of the development plan for short, medium and long-term. Timor-Leste will, for the first time, present and submit its Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as a State report in July this year during the High Level Policy Forum (HLPF) meeting at the UN in New York. The SEII is also a permanent member of the SDGs Working Group for monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Gender Working Group Mechanism

The SEII has made great progress in strengthening governance mechanisms to improve coordination and decision-making regarding gender equality. In June 2017, the government approved Resolution No. 35/2017 to establish effective and efficient coordination at three levels, including the Inter-Ministerial Working Group, National Working Group, and Municipal Working Groups. This was an amendment to Resolution No. 27/2011 to improve coordination mechanisms and representation, particularly at the municipal level in the process of administrative decentralisation. The resolution reaffirms the gender commitments through the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy for government policies, plans and programs, including improving coordination and monitoring mechanisms for implementation of gender policy at the national and municipal levels.

The SEII has provided support and assistance to gender working groups at the national and municipal levels through training in a range of areas, particularly those related to gender issues, implementation of gender policies, strategies for gender

equality promotion, and gender responsive planning and budgeting. The SEII will continue to support the implementation of this resolution and provide assistance to gender working groups to guarantee the implementation of agreed action plans. The SEII will continue to advocate and lobby line-ministries to allocate sufficient financial resources to support the activities of gender working groups.

Supplementary Coordination Mechanism

As well as Gender Working Groups, the government of Timor-Leste has also established high level coordination mechanisms to ensure effective implementation of the NAP-GVB and the NAP-UNSCR1325. The Inter-Ministerial Committee for Coordination and Monitoring for implementation of the NAP-GBV was established by the Council of Ministers through approval of Resolution No. 34/2017 in June 2017. This Committee is responsible for coordinating, monitoring and evaluating, identifying challenges and obstacles and providing recommendations for effective implementation of the NAP-GBV. The resolution also provides authority for the Prime Minister to appoint members of this high-level Inter-Ministerial Committee. The SEII's role is to organise regular quarterly meetings and too organise other strategies to mobilise resources for implementation of the NAP-GBV.

The Ministry of Interior is the entity responsible for leadership and coordination mechanisms for implementation of the NAP-UNSCR1325, under supervision by the Office of the Prime Minister. The Ministry of Interior has established an Advisory Committee, a Gender Working Group for implementation of each Pillar under NAP-UNSCR1325, and a Secretariat for NAP-UNSCR1325 to ensure that its effective and efficient implementation. The Advisory Committee consists of the Director Generals from line ministries and Executive Directors from civil society organisations as implementing agents of this gender policy.

SECTION IV: NATIONAL DATA AND STATISTICS

The General Directorate of Statistics (DGE) under the Ministry of Finance leads the production of essential national data such as the Population and Housing Census and national surveys such as Demographic Health Survey (DHS) and Living Standards Survey (TLSLS). This Directorate also works with government entities and partners to produce joint research and to provide advice on sampling design for data production. The DGE has an important role in guiding and providing assistance to government entities on statistical data production from administrative data sets such as the IMS, EMS, and HMIS, to ensure that data production meets the required standards, uses consistent definitions and classifications and to ensure that the DGE are aware of the data and are able to share it when necessary.

The National Statistics Data system in Timor-Leste prioritises the production and utilisation of gender statistics obtained from statistical data generated over many years using gender-sensitive analysis. The government's efforts related to data

collection and the strengthening of administrative systems will enable it to establish baselines and to monitor targets and indicators related to gender issues under the 2030 Agenda. On the 25th of March 2019, the General Directorate of Statistics working together with the World Bank produced and launched a Poverty Map with Gender Perspective to village level coverage. In July 2018, the SEII in cooperation with the General Directorate of Statistics produced and launched various thematic reports from the 2015 Census and also published an innovative report entitled “Gender and Sustainable Development: The key to leaving no one behind”. The aim of the launching these reports is to enable the government to establish its program for future development. The summary report on Gender and the SDGs in Timor-Leste was produced in collaboration between SEII and the General Directorate of Statistics, UN Women, and the SDGs Working Group within the Prime Minister’s Office, and with generous support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Bank and the European Union.

This report contributes to ongoing efforts by government to advance localisation of the SDGs and the upcoming review of the National Strategic Development Plan (2011-2030). This summary report provides key information, including:

1. The main gender issues that need to be considered in the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs (along with targets and indicators) in Timor-Leste, based on recommendations, commitments and consultations with civil society, government and development partners;
2. Identification of available data on gender issues and recommendations to prioritise the SDGs’ objectives in reviewing the targets and indicators of the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP), as part of State’s commitment to promote gender equality, to enable the establishment of baselines and revision of the NSDP to enable achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

CONCLUSION

In conjunction with civil society partners, the government of Timor-Leste has made significant progress in reducing gender inequalities. This success is the result of the implementation of a range of policies, as discussed throughout this report. Policies targeting areas such women’s health, access to justice, access to employment and access to political representation have contributed to closing the gap of gender equality. Timor-Leste is proud to have one of the highest rates of women’s representation in its national parliament, and is committed to empowering women throughout the whole of the country to become community leaders and to further contribute to the development of Timor-Leste.

Notwithstanding the significant progress made, there are still a number of key concerns for women in Timor-Leste. Domestic violence rates continue to be high, with victims facing barriers in accessing justice and support. Gender-based violence is a pervasive issue for women across the country, especially those in rural areas.

Furthermore, although land laws providing equal rights to ownership of land have been approved, the provisions of these laws are not being implemented throughout the country. This has a detrimental effect on women's livelihoods as many women work in the agricultural sector. Women working in the agricultural sector are unable to access land to assist in growing produce, meaning that they are not able to maximise their economic potential.

Participation of women in the labour force continues to be disproportionately low notwithstanding improvements made in recent years. The disproportional representation of women in the informal labour sector means that women are unable to reach their full economic capacity, thus impacting negatively on family incomes.

The overall budget allocation for implementation of gender policy is insufficient to enable full implementation in rural areas. This is a major concern as it is consistently evident that women in rural communities face the most extreme effects of gender inequality due to their isolation from support networks.

The government of Timor-Leste reaffirms its commitment to improving gender equality. It recognises the challenges that women in Timor-Leste continue to face, and is committed to working in close partnership with civil society groups, NGOs and international agencies to enable a better future for women, where women are empowered to fully and actively participate in political, business and public life, free from fear of violence or discrimination. The government believes that with strong women comes a strong nation. It is proud of the efforts Timor-Leste has made in reducing gender inequalities, and is committed to continuing its work in further dismantling barriers affecting women across the country.

