



**REPÚBLICA DEMOCRÁTICA DE TIMOR-LESTE
SECRETARIA DE ESTADO DA PROMOÇÃO DA IGUALDADE
GABINETE DA SECRETÁRIA DE ESTADO**

**The Role of Women's Civil Society Organisations in Peace-building in Timor-Leste
29 October 2012
UN North Lawn Building (CR 6)
13:30 to 15:00**

Good afternoon to Ms. Michelle Bachelet, USG and Executive Director of UN Women, Mr. Hervé Ladsous, USG of UN DPKO, Excellency Mr. Christian Wenaweser, Permanent Representative of the Principality of Liechtenstein to the UN, and to my esteemed colleague from Timor-Leste, Ms. Laura Abrantes of the Asia Pacific Support Collective Timor-Leste (APSCTL).

I am very pleased to be here today, on the occasion of the 12th anniversary of SCR 1325 and the successful drawdown of UNMIT.

SCR 1325 and the topic of our discussion today recognizes the very important role that women's CSOs have to play in peace-building, given that women are among the most vulnerable and most affected by conflict. Women, and women's CSOs, have a unique understanding of community needs. The history of the women's movement in regards to peace-building is a long one, extending to period of the Indonesian Occupation, prior to the Restoration of Independence in 2002.

The first women's organization in Timor-Leste was the Popular Organization of Timorese Women (OPMT), begun in Aug 1975, and they engaged women in the struggle for independence, for the same rights as men, and for emancipation. A key peace-building activity was a Participatory Dialogue held in 1998 led by the East Timorese Women's Communication Forum (FOKUPERS), Women's Wing of the Student Solidarity Organisation (GFFTL) and East Timorese Women against Violence (ET-

WAVE/GERTAK). At this event, flowers were presented to the Indonesian Army as a symbol of peace in front of the Government Palace.

The Government and Civil Society have continued to work together to present day, the predecessor to my organization SEPI, the Office for the Promotion of Equality (GAPI), together with the Women's Network called Redefeto, established Women's Committees in all IDP camps in 2006, with the aim to enhance women's voices and to protect women from GBV, trafficking, HIV/AIDS, and increase reproductive health. Information, training and material support such as hygiene kits were provided, and suspected traffickers were identified and referred to the police. Even during the crisis, when the government was temporarily suspended, many of the GAPI staff continued to work together with civil society through the Women's Network to visit camps and hospitals to monitor and attend to the special needs of women and girls. During this time, civil society and the UN mobilized talks with the government to protest the crisis and call for peace.

We now have a new 1325 Working Group, called N-Peace (Peace Network), composed of civil society and government. It includes staff from my office SEPI, along with members from the National Police, Asia Pacific Support Collective Timor-Leste (APSCTL), East Timorese Women's Communication Forum (FOKUPERS), Alola Foundation, UNMIT and Ismaik, which is a Catholic organisation. This year, a notable activity was a Long March for Peace organized before our Presidential and Parliamentary Elections.

SEPI has also worked with civil society in the delivery of gender sensitivity training, along with measures that ensure the protection of respect for the human rights of women and girls. First I would like to speak about this in relation to security and defense. In 2008, SEPI began training new UN Police arrivals, the National Police and the Defense Force in partnership with the Secretaries of State for Security and for Defence, the Human Rights Unit of UNMIT, and the Association of Justice and Human Rights (Yayasan Hak). These trainings are aimed to increase knowledge on human, women and children's rights and GBV in terms of conflict and post-conflict situations. In 2010, SEPI organized a Dialogue with the Defence Force and their wives, to explore issues of women's representation and

DV. Our Secretary of State for Security (SES) is also a strong advocate of measures to protect women and girls from GBV. There are strong female recruitment targets ranging from 20-30% for new police cadets, migration service and firefighters, and a number of trainings for both the police and the military in prevention and protection, including in the area of CEDAW, 1325, GBV, the Law against Domestic Violence. Civic education to community police is promoted to increase access to justice to victims of GBV and DV. The Secretary of State for Security is also looking to create a network to support victims of human trafficking, a Professional Code of Conduct and strengthen data collection and registration of DV cases. More recently, in April of this year, the N-Peace network conducted Training on Awareness-Raising and Advocacy Skills to government institutions, women community leaders, and religious leaders.

SCR 1325 also calls for the participation of women in reconstruction, and SEPI works to foster the participation of the most marginalized and vulnerable. In October 2009, SEPI conducted a Dialogue with the Widows of Kraras, the site of a brutal massacre in 1983 which took the lives of all the males in the village. On 10Dec 2010, on the occasion of Human Rights Day as part of the 16 days Campaign, SEPI conducted a Cross-Border Dialogue with Timorese women residing in the Mota'in border area, and women, police and military officers from the Indonesian side. More recently, Asia Pacific Support Collective Timor-Leste (APSCTL) and Ismaik went to visit women at the border just a few months ago. We are now discussing working with APSCTL to conduct a Border Dialogue together, with support from UN Women. These dialogues are intended to open the channels of communication between the government and the most marginalized women, and identify areas of needed support.

SCR 1325 also calls for support to local women's peace initiatives, and the involvement of women in the implementation of peace agreements. Within our Ministry of Social Solidarity, there is a new Department of Peace-building and Social Cohesion. This Department has a Strategy which looks for the increased participation from women in the promotion of peace and social cohesion at the national and community levels. They are currently working to increase the participation of women in the community dialogues,

mediations and stabilisations that they run. Recently, the Department asked SEPI for gender sensitivity training, and we are planning to invite trainers from the N-Peace network to co-facilitate.

In 2010, the Parliament debated the report of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR), and created a Resolution to create an institution to implement the CAVR recommendations. This will be important to redress past human rights violations including SGBV, and recognize the critical role women played during the resistance movement. **The preservation of the memory of those dead and disappeared is important to our President and to my people.**

Despite the many successes we have seen, many challenges remain. In spite of the long history of the women's movement with regards to peace-building, strongly entrenched patriarchal attitudes remain, which hinder women's active participation in reconstruction and development. Resources to implement SCR 1325 remain limited, both in human and financial terms. A key area that requires more attention is the issue of the repatriation and reintegration of the Timorese still living across the border in Indonesia, many in very poor conditions.

SEPI believes its strategic alliances with civil society are critical for the implementation of SCR 1325 for the full realization of SEPI's Vision: for gender-fair society where human dignity, human and women's rights are valued, protected, and promoted by its laws and culture.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today.