



## **Ministério da Solidariedade Social**

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### **The Statement**

**By**

**H.E. Mrs. Isabel Guterres Amaral  
Minister for Social Solidarity of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste**

**at**

**The Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction  
Sendai, Japan- 14 to 18 March 2015**

***Mr. President/ Madam Chair,***

***Honorable Guests,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,***

I am delighted to be here to join you all for the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. On behalf of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, I would like to thank the Government of Japan and United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) for organizing the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR).

In addition I wish to thank the Government of Japan for hosting the conference and its generous support to Timor-Leste. It is indeed an honour and a serious responsibility to represent my Government at such an important event, in which we will all work together to finalize the planning for a post 2015 global strategy and framework for disaster risk reduction.

For the Government and people of Timor-Leste the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction represents opportunity.

Opportunity to learn from the lessons world-wide in implementing the Hyogo Protocol and using those lessons to inform planning for a roadmap for a post 2015 global strategy and framework for disaster risk reduction.

Opportunity to learn from the people of this City of Sendai and more broadly the people of Japan, our generous hosts for WCDRR 2015, in responding to and recovering from the 2011, Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami and its aftermath.

The Earthquake and subsequent Tsunami caused over 20,000 deaths, there were more than 130,000 buildings collapsed and over 260,000 severely damaged.

Nevertheless the highly developed Japanese Earthquake and Tsunami Early Warning System saved many lives.

We can learn from all of this and emulate the subsequent recovery measures and approach to mitigate and reduce the impact of future disasters in Japan.

The city you see before you today is testimony to the resilience and capacity of the Japanese people.

We in Timor-Leste, will in May this year celebrate 13 years since the restoration of our Independence and also reflect on the resilience of our people in facing past challenges.

It is this same resilience that we tap into as we face the potential negative impact of climate change and associated increase in the incidence of disasters.

***Mr. President/ Madam Chair,***

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***Ladies and Gentlemen***

Timor-Leste is susceptible to medium to high levels of disaster risk due to its location and vulnerability to cyclical climatic events.

Many of our people have experienced the impact of what are commonly small-scale localized disasters such as floods and landslides, which highlights the vulnerability of many communities to these disasters.

The people of Timor-Leste have indeed proven that they are very resilient and have had to overcome many hazards in their lifetime, both natural and man-made.

Timorese knowledge and traditional law and practices such as *Tara Bandu* have always been a key strength of the people of Timor-Leste.

***Mr. President/ Madam Chair,***

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In the wake of a disaster, response and recovery are naturally a key focus of our efforts. However Risk Reduction also needs to be increasingly addressed as a strategic policy and operational priority.

This includes strengthening capacity of our Municipal Disaster Management committees and providing support and building capacity at village level.

Since the restoration of Independence we have made significant efforts to address disaster risks.

In 2010, we developed National Adaptation Programme of Action for Climate Change.

We have established agencies and systems for civil protection, disaster response and recovery throughout the country.

We have established a National Red Cross Society, Cruz Vermela de Timor-Leste under relevant Legislation.

We have developed and applied contingency plans for floods and droughts.

We have adopted mechanisms for post disaster damage and needs assessment.

We have built systems and infrastructure such as warehouses for distribution of food and non-food items and shelter rehabilitation materials to ensure effective emergency response.

We have worked with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in developing a new Food Security Policy, which mainstreams Disaster Risk Management.

Our partners the Timor-Leste Red Cross and those in the International and National NGO sectors and private sector have been supportive in working with communities in mitigating disaster risks, building resilience and responding to disasters across the country.

***Mr. President/ Madam Chair,***

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The Strategic Development Plan of Timor-Leste and the program of the newly inaugurated Sixth Constitutional Government, led by our new Prime Minister H.E. Dr. Rui Maria de Araújo, both recognize the need to address underlying risk factors and reduce vulnerabilities to natural disasters and climate change.

Mainstreaming DRM is one way to do this and the recently approved decentralization law in Timor-Leste is an example of this where DRM has been incorporated into legislation.

In 2013, in conjunction with UNDP, Timor-Leste undertook a National Hazard, Vulnerability and Risk Assessment. This assessment has informed the Timor-Leste Government, in the development of a new Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Policy and Legislation.

The new DRM Policy and Legislation will ensure that the needs of all our citizens are addressed in preparing for and disasters and addressing their aftermath, particularly the needs of vulnerable groups such as women, the elderly and those with disabilities. In conjunction with this are also working to ensure that adequate social protection measures are in place post-Disaster.

Significant resources have been allocated by the Timor-Leste Government and its development partners in working together strengthening resilience of communities to climate-induced disasters.

An example of this is the Community Based Disaster Risk Management and Disaster Risk Reduction projects along the Dili Ainaro Road Corridor Construction Project.

These projects facilitated by the World Bank and UNDP and funded by the Global Environment Facility and the Government of Japan will work with Line Ministries including the Ministry of Social Solidarity and with communities along the road corridor project to enhance climate resilience and sustainable community based DRR practice.

We are working also with our international partners such as UNDP on pilot projects for strengthening community capacities in building shelter back better after disaster events.

We are increasing awareness of our youth by planning for incorporating Disaster Risk Reduction in our School Curriculum.

We also have started mainstreaming risk reduction into key development ministries through formalizing the roles and responsibilities of ministries' Disaster Risk Management Focal Points and building their capacities for pursuing risk reduction in their own respective sectors.

These achievements are important however as the newest nation in Asia our government still experiences many competing development priorities. Currently, our country has strong economic growth and significant investment in infrastructure.

We must work with the private and public sector to ensure that future development and infrastructure investment is risk resilient.

***Mr. President/ Madam Chair,***

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Timor-Leste looks forward to taking the opportunity of continuing of maximizing preparedness, strengthening partnerships with our International Partners, Red Cross, the NGO sector and civil society in order to achieve the targets set under the post-2015 framework arising from this WCDRR conference.

**Thank you.**