



## Timor-Leste's Statement 4th Global Platform for DRR, Geneva, 19-24 May 2013

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*Dear Chair, Honorable Guests, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The Government of Timor-Leste would like to extend its appreciation to the Government of Switzerland for being the host of this Fourth Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, and to the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction for organizing this event. It is indeed an honour and a serious responsibility to participate in such an important event, in which we will consult on a post 2015 global strategy and framework for disaster risk reduction.

Timor-Leste is prone to medium to high levels of risks of natural disasters due to the country's location and vulnerability to cyclic climatic events. Most of the country's population has already experienced the impact of disasters, and every year people suffer from localized events, including floods, landslides, destructive winds and droughts. Due to its proximity to an active seismic zone, the country is also prone to earthquakes and tsunamis, which could affect the lives of many people and have enormous impact on economic and social infrastructure.

While development gains and investments are adversely affected by disaster events throughout the country, Timor-Leste realizes that a proactive approach, with secured and sustained investments in disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and response, will help reduce disaster risks. Disaster risk reduction needs to be a priority issue of development across all sectors. Effective, systematic and decentralized response to the needs of affected people is also of critical importance and should incorporate a comprehensive approach to recovery, including reducing disaster risks.

Timor-Leste needs to always stand ready in case a disaster strikes. Communities in Timor-Leste, as in many other places, have learned how to live with small scale and low impact disasters through their indigenous knowledge and practices. But in the current context of climate change and increasing risks of climate-induced disasters, such as water shortage and food insecurity, they will no longer be able to address these issues without greater efforts and investments to assist them to become more resilient to these changing risks.

*Dear Chair, Honorable Guests, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Although just eleven years have passed since the establishment of the First Constitutional Government of Timor-Leste, our nation has made significant efforts to address disaster risks. We have developed a National Disaster Risk Management Policy and National Adaptation Programme of Action on climate change. We have also established a national directorate system for disaster response and recovery throughout the country, developed and exercised contingency plans for floods and droughts, adopted mechanisms for post disaster damage and needs assessment, and built systems and infrastructure, such as warehouses, for the distribution of food and non-food items and shelter rehabilitation materials to ensure effective emergency response. We have developed and expanded capabilities for monitoring weather, food security and disaster damage and loss. As part of

this work, civil society has been extensively supportive and instrumental in working with communities to mitigate disaster risks across the country.

The Strategic Development Plan of the country and the programme of the Fifth Constitutional Government both recognize the need to reduce vulnerabilities to natural disasters and climate change; nevertheless, the priority of these issues needs to be elevated and acknowledged more specifically.

In line with the recommendations of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) in relation to building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters, Timor-Leste has reported its progress on implementation of priority actions of the HFA through a multi-stakeholder consultation process since 2010.

*Dear Chair, Honorable Guests, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

We are still building our new state. In relation to disaster risks, we have been undertaking a Comprehensive National Hazard Assessment and Mapping through a multi-stakeholder consultation that will be completed shortly with a National Risk Assessment. This assessment is to inform and guide decision makers of the Fifth Constitutional Government in the development of a new Policy, Act and investments for disaster risk management across all sectors and levels of government in the country.

This year we are hoping to secure significant resources for strengthening resilience of communities to climate-induced disasters along an important road corridor, in close cooperation the Global Environment Facility, the UNDP and the World Bank. We are working also with our partners on pilot projects for strengthening capacities of communities in 'building back better' after disaster events.

Information sharing and coordination among stakeholders and key players for disaster management and risk reduction is being strengthened through development of a web-based platform. We have started the process of mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into key development ministries' planning and budgeting through formalizing the roles and responsibilities of ministries' Disaster Risk Management Focal Points and building their capacities for pursuing disaster risk reduction in their own respective sectors.

Despite these achievements, Timor-Leste still has many competing development priorities to address. It remains a challenge to fully elevate the disaster risk reduction agenda. The country is experiencing high economic growth and significant investment in infrastructure, and we must ensure that these infrastructure investments do not add to existing risks and that they are risk resilient. Our priorities are to strengthen inter-ministerial coordination, raise public awareness on disaster risk reduction through media campaigns, provide professional and formal education, and expand integrated community-based disaster risk management and adaptation with a focus on the participation and needs of women.

We still have a long road to pave to become a nation resilient to natural disasters, and we still need international assistance on this long journey. I take this opportunity, on behalf of the Government of Timor-Leste, to thank our development partners for the continued international support for building our country's resilience to disaster risks.

Thank you.