



THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
OF TIMOR-LESTE TO THE UNITED NATIONS IN NEW YORK

STATEMENT OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC,
DR FRANCISCO GUTERRES LÚ OLO
BEFORE THE 76TH SESSION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
UNITED NATIONS

TO BE READ BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TIMOR-LESTE TO THE
UNITED NATIONS IN NEW YORK

Check Against Delivery

**Excellency the President of the United Nations General Assembly, Mr. Abdulla Shahid,
Excellency the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. António Guterres,**

Excellencies,

Precisely 19 years ago Timor-Leste became the 191st Member of the United Nations, and it is an honour for me to stand in front of all you today to address the General Assembly at its 76th Session.

I would like to congratulate the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Adbulla Shahid and appreciate the contributions made by his predecessor, H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir, and commend his qualified leadership and determination in leading the Assembly during a difficult time, as well as for making an in person session possible.

Timor-Leste would also like to congratulate H.E. Mr. António Guterres on his re-appointment as the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The theme chosen by the President of the General Assembly for the General Debate of the 76th Session accurately captures the opportunities and challenges our United Nations is facing.

Excellencies,

The COVID-19 pandemic has created global challenges affecting not only the health sector, but also has created a devastating impact on the socioeconomic sector by reversing hard-won achievements, generating economic recession, and further exacerbated the pre-existing structural challenges, deepening inequality among nations, causing social distress, conflict and hunger that eventually pushed people into extreme poverty.

The United Nations has a key political role in mobilizing international cooperation and solidarity to address the current global multifaceted and interlinked pandemic challenges. The United Nations needs to continue serving as a platform for international cooperation and worldwide

solidarity to address the current COVID-19 pandemic in order to build back better in a more resilient and sustainable manner.

In this context, it is pertinent that international cooperation addresses the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 and focused on the most disadvantaged and vulnerable people and countries, especially the Least Developing Countries (LDCs), Small Islands Developing States (SIDS), Landlocked Developing States (LLDCs) and countries in conflict and those emerging from conflict, in order to alleviate their structural challenges that are further exacerbated by the pandemic.

Excellencies,

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Timor-Leste has recorded more than nineteen thousand cases with more than eighteen thousand having fully recovered and one hundred and thirteen (113) deaths (27/9/2021). As an LDC and SIDS, the COVID-19 puts a high pressure to our already weak health system, with lack of facilities and resources to effectively cope with the pandemic.

My country continues to endorse vaccine as a global public good, that needs to be accessible to everyone, including developing and low economic countries and countries in special situation. The international community must address the vaccination gaps at low income countries who only vaccinate 1.1% of their populations. Without equal access to vaccines, many countries, including Timor-Leste will not be able to protect its citizens and people from the virus.

Timor-Leste commends the development partners, the United Nations, International Organizations and other actors who have contributed to overcoming the circumstances of COVID-19. Our deep gratitude for the generosity of our partners, which allowed us to administer more than six hundred thousand doses, thus vaccinating a total of 30% of its adult population.

Excellencies,

Climate change continued to be at the top of our agenda. We are experiencing the hardship of climate change impact while battling against the covid-19 pandemic. Countries in special

situations including Timor-Leste are often forced to deal with severe climate events such as floods, landslides, droughts, sea level rise and global warming, which eventually undermine our existence and threaten humanity and human rights.

In our national context, the Government has been committed to reforestation and correction of watercourse beds. It is also worth mentioning the Government's action to combat plastic waste. In fact, the reforestation action ensures greater rainfall and a cleaner environment. Reinforcing this action, the President of the Republic launched the national campaign "A citizen, a tree", which has had special support from youth organizations.

Reaffirming the action in this area, the President of the Republic has recently appointed a Special Envoy and Roving Ambassador of Timor-Leste to ensure our representation and ensure that our voice is heard in international discussions and negotiations on issues related to climate change.

As we are preparing for Glasgow this year, Timor-Leste appreciates the preparatory process undertaken and looks forward-for a productive outcome of COP26 for generating international cooperation to scale up global efforts to fulfilling our obligations under the Paris Agreement to protect our planet for current and future generation based on common but differentiated responsibilities.

Excellencies,

There are 9 years remaining from achieving the global targets of Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. However, we are far from achieving the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development goals with the current low pace of the development. The LDCs are furthest left behind, many of the LDCs have high levels of external dependency and exposure and low levels of resilience to recover from socioeconomic shocks, compounded by effects of climate change that has made achieving the SDGs even more challenging.

Timor-Leste welcomes the report and recommendations of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on Our Common Agenda to best respond to our current and future challenges, in this

regards the government of Timor-Leste has contributed a sum of 50,000 thousand USD to support the Secretary-General's efforts.

We have come to an end of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme for Action for LDCs, however we have seen no much progress made in its realization, hence it is important that our recovery efforts from the pandemic should focus on addressing the barriers in the realization of the Istanbul Program of Action for achieving the sustainable development goals.

Above all, Timor-Leste wishes to reiterate that SDG16 shall be the catalyst for development, given that peace, justice, inclusion and strong institutions would create the conditions for economic growth and are the foundation for decent work, health education and prosperous nations.

Excellencies,

Timor-Leste is fully committed to the principle of multilateralism enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, such as respect for sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States.

Timor-Leste is considered as one of the success stories of the United Nations' engagement in realizing the principle of the right of self-determination. Our experience in undertaking reconciliation process with Indonesia following its invasion and occupation, illustrates the importance of reconciliation to restore good relations and cooperation, despite the past pain and tragedy. Therefore, Timor-Leste continues to promote peace building and state building through the sharing of experiences on reconciliation and justice through south-south cooperation and the g7+, which is the platform for cooperation and solidarity between countries affected by conflict, fragility and on transition towards resilience.

Timor-Leste is also committed to upholding international law and the international rules-based order, promotes the use of peaceful settlement mechanism to settle differences and disputes. In relation to this, Timor-Leste has led by example in utilizing for the first time ever, the United

Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea Compulsory Conciliation Committee to resolve its maritime boundary dispute with Australia.

We wish to underscore that unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo is in contravention of the values and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Therefore, Timor-Leste continues to be greatly concerned with the prolonged economic, commercial and financial embargo that has been imposed against Cuba for more than six decades and has caused harsh impact in the lives of the Cuban people and the development of the country, including the efforts of Cuba in effectively coping with the COVID-19 pandemic. In this sense, Timor-Leste firmly supports the lifting of the embargo and opposes any extra-territorial measures.

We are also concerned about the increasing of tension and conflict in Myanmar and Afghanistan, which resulted in the loss of lives, deterioration of human rights and loss of shelters and hinder access to basic services. Timor-Leste calls upon all parties involved, to solve their divergences through dialogues and reconciliation to reach a peaceful and permanent solutions.

In the specific situation of Myanmar, Timor-Leste welcomes the regional mechanism to address the security and socioeconomic challenges and appreciates the 5-points consensus adopted by ASEAN in its last leaders' meeting.

In the case of Afghanistan, Timor-Leste would also like to call for the respect of the rights of women's right and the rights of Afghan people and foreigners who wish to leave the country.

In the context of multilateralism, we wish to underline that language and culture connect us and foster our partnership with the countries and people of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries, which we are proud to be part of, in the context of south-south and north south cooperation. The culture and the language that we have adopted as one of our official languages has helped to foster quality education, expand knowledge and strengthen our people to people connection. We believe that Portuguese language that is spoken by approximately 280 million people worldwide in 2021 could also be considered as one of the UN official languages.

Excellencies,

As we are embarking in the Fourth decade for the eradication of colonialism, Timor-Leste wishes to take this opportunity to urge the United Nations to commit to the work the Special Committee on Decolonization (C-24) aiming at realizing the decolonization of the remaining 17 non-self-governing territories, to enabling those people in the territories to exercise their rights for self-determination.

Timor-Leste also wishes to take the opportunity to refer to the Western Sahara, whereby the United Nations Mission MINURSO has been in the territory for about three decades, but progress has yet to be seen satisfactorily. Thus, we reiterate once again our appeal to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his Special Envoy for Western Sahara to urgently reactivate the negotiation process between the Polisario Front and Morocco, and to allow the people of Western Sahara to exercise their right to self-determination, based on the Charter of the United Nations and its relevant resolutions.

Timor-Leste maintains diplomatic relations with both Israel and Palestine, and it is our opinion that a lasting solution is only possible with the existence, side by side, of the State of Israel and the State of Palestine.

Excellencies,

We are living in an everchanging world where the speed of change goes hand in hand with growing uncertainty. After 76 years of existence, different challenges and circumstances require effective global response through cooperation and partnership. To keep us on the right pace, there is an urgent need to restructure our Organization that is committed to Peace, Security and Development.

In this sense, Timor-Leste appreciates the efforts in revitalizing our Organization to adjust with the challenges of our current situation and we reiterate our full support to the United Nations Security Council reform to better reflect our contemporary world and to properly address global challenges in the areas of Peace, Security and Development.

Excellencies,

Timor-Leste is fully committed to the protection and promotion of human rights and has ratified 7 core Human Rights Treaties and their protocols.

On this occasion, Timor-Leste wishes to emphasize its commitment to the promotion and protection of women's rights. Timor-Leste has made extensive efforts to achieve gender equality, through Policies, Legislation and Programs that contribute to achieving this objective. Although we still face cases of gender-based violence and difficulties in accessing justice, Timor-Leste is strongly committed to removing these obstacles from our path in order to achieve gender equality.

Timor-Leste is grateful for the support it has been receiving from the United Nations, from our development partners and from various civil society organizations that help us in the effort to eliminate gender-based violence in our society.

Currently Timor-Leste has made considerable progress in terms of complying with international human rights instruments and reporting, and it feels increasingly confident to participate in discussions and decisions on human rights issue.

In addition to the aforementioned national context, as a Country that also went through a bitter experience of human rights violations to restore our independence, and, on the other hand, our existence as a Country, is a success story of the United Nations, in the defense of human rights principles and values. We therefore feel a moral obligation to contribute in promoting human rights at the global level.

Thus, Timor-Leste decided to apply to the Human Rights Council for the period of 2024-2026 with the aim of contributing to the work of this body in promoting and advancing the principles and values of human rights, in the Country and at a global level. Timor-Leste counts with the support of Member States to be able to contribute in this regard.

I thank you.