



## **Second International Conference on Nutrition**

19-21 November 2014 - ROME

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**STATEMENT BY:**

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SECURITY AND SOVEREIGNTY IN TIMOR-LESTE  
(KONSSANTIL) and MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE AND  
FISHERIES**

H.E the Representative of the Republic of Italy,

H.E Dr. Jose Graziano da Silva, Director General of FAO

H.E Dr. Margaret Chan, Director General of WHO

H.E the Mayor of Rome

Chairperson,

Distinguished guest, participants, Excellences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, the delegation of Timor-Leste would like to express our profound gratitude to FAO and WHO especially to the Director

Generals, for inviting us to participate in this very important conference.

On behalf of the Government of Timor-Leste, I and my colleague Dr. Sergio Lobo, the Vice President of the National Council for Food and Nutrition Security and Sovereignty in Timor-Leste (KONSSANTIL) and the Minister of Health, we are very honored to be here today to share, and learn new perspectives and strategies on nutrition as well as food security.

There is no question that this conference will provide unique experiences and offer great opportunities, to ascertain brilliant strategies, obtain valuable knowledge, and share lessons, to strengthen and sustain the improvement of the nutrition and food security in our country, in the region and globally.

### **Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen...**

To halve the number of undernourished people by 2015, the target sets by MDGs, remains a challenge, with approximately 827 million people in the developing world who are still struggling to have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to maintain healthy and active life.

Timor-Leste in particular, made a positive change in reducing stunting for children under five from 58% in 2009 to 50% in 2013, and wasting declined from the critical level of 19% in 2009 to 11% in 2013. Underweight among women has also slightly decreased from 27% in 2009 to 26.5% in 2013, and vitamin A deficiency is at 8.1%.

The other great news for is that Timor-Leste is one of the highest rates of early initiation of breastfeeding in the ASIA region with 93% of our infants are breastfed within the first hour of birth. Despite to this encouraging change, Timor-Leste still among the highest-ranking nation with exceptional under nutrition.

Generally, food are available and accessible in the country, although, our domestic production still insufficient to cover our annual consumption requirement and there still months where our people experiences food shortage especially in off-grid communities. Although, our food deficit, has been compensated with food imports.

The latest Nutrition Survey suggests, that food diversification and utilization as well as nutrition awareness, being the main areas for improvement to achieve sustainable food and nutrition security.

### **Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen...**

In spite of so many challenges, the Government of Timor-Leste (GoTL), continue to be confident to fight and vanquish the scourge of hunger and malnutrition in our country. Among the recent mechanisms and policies we have is our newly developed Food and Nutrition Security Policy, National Nutrition Strategy, the National Action Plan to end hunger and malnutrition in Timor-Leste under the Zero Hunger Challenge Initiative.

These new policies and plans – builds on a strong collaboration and coordination of relevant stakeholders, adopted a holistic and inclusive approach, whereby aims to tackle both under nutrition

and food insecurity through behavioral change at the household level, and interventions all along the food value chains, such as improving household nutrition knowledge and practices; ensuring equitable access to adequate, nutritious and affordable food; developing sustainable food systems; increasing smallholder farmer productivity and incomes; ending food loss and waste, and strengthening access to health services, water and sanitation are among the key objectives of these policies and plans.

The aforementioned Zero Hunger Challenge National Action Plan to end hunger and malnutrition, has provided us with a framework to a more comprehensive and coordinated actions – with clear directions and committed allocation of resources from stakeholders, to steer the vision of increasing food security and reducing under nutrition in Timor-Leste.

Multi-sectors approach is the only path towards attaining sustainable and positive change.

Therefore, Timor-Leste established the inter-ministerial called the National Council for Food and Nutrition Security and Sovereignty in Timor-Leste (KONSSANTIL), the national nerve center of the effort to eliminate poverty, hunger and malnutrition in Timor-Leste.

### **Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen....**

Despite our limited resources, the Government of Timor-Leste remains committed and optimistic to meet our vision to be free from hunger and malnutrition. During the launching of the Zero

Hunger Challenge National Action Plan, we committed that 10% of the government annual budget should be allocated to programs and activities for nutrition and food security as stipulated in the plan.

The efficient and effective implementation of our nutrition and food security centered policies, strategies and plans represents a significant challenge, however, with the growing coordination, collaboration and partnership between the Government of Timor-Leste, UN system, regional forums such as Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP) and Association of Southeast East Asian Nations (ASEAN) are very important driver in achieving Timor-Leste's efforts to transform our ambitious vision and plans into reality, to improve nutrition and food security.

The Government of Timor-Leste is determined to support the regional and international efforts to achieve the MDGs targets and the Zero Hunger Challenge initiative especially in reducing the proportion of under nutrition, eradicating poverty, and hunger.

### **Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen...**

On behalf of the Government of Timor-Leste, I would like to congratulate FAO and WHO for convening this international conference. This is of great importance to build synergy, better cooperation and partnerships.

Timor-Leste is definitely looking forward for any partnerships and collaboration to help the country achieve food and nutrition security.

Thank you for your kind attention!