



**THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE**  
**The Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion (MSSI)**

**New York, 11-13 May 2024**

**(5 minutes)**

**Brief Intervention of H.E. Ms. Céu Brites, Vice-Minister of MSSI**

**on**

**"The government's effort to support Persons with Disabilities."**

Mister or Madam Chair,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Representatives,

Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Timor-Leste prioritizes the protection and promotion of the rights of individuals with disabilities as a key component of its foreign policy. A significant achievement was reached on January 13, 2023, when Timor-Leste officially ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), underscoring the government's strong commitment to advancing the rights of individuals with disabilities.

In February 2024, at the 55th Human Rights High Council meeting in Geneva, the government of Timor-Leste showcased its progress in the field of Human Rights. This included their commitment to implementing the UNCRPD and active participation in the UNCRPD Committee meetings.

Excellencies,

With a population of around 1.3 million, Timor-Leste is home to approximately 38,000 individuals with disabilities, representing about 4% of the population according to the 2022 Census. While this may seem small, the challenges faced by people with disabilities in the

country should not be overlooked. Many individuals with disabilities live in rural areas where access to crucial rehabilitation services may be limited. Among the disabilities present in the country, vision impairment is the most common, while intellectual disabilities and mental health issues are less prevalent. Additionally, there is a higher proportion of men living with disabilities compared to women in Timor-Leste.

More than a decade ago, in 2012, the government officially approved the National Disability Policy on Inclusion and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities through Resolution No. 14/2012. This policy outlined key sectors and strategic initiatives, empowering the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion (MSSI) to lead in formulating and implementing the 2021-2030 Disability National Action Plan. Involving collaboration among eleven ministries, this action plan includes a disability marker to monitor progress. Developed with input from Persons with Disabilities Organizations, with MSSI as coordinating Ministry, this plan marks a significant step forward in advancing disability rights.

In November 2022, the Council of Ministers approved the National Social Protection Strategy for 2021-2030. This strategy aims to expand social protection coverage, improve effectiveness, and reduce poverty and vulnerability. MSSI continues its dedication to supporting individuals with disabilities through various initiatives, including providing annual financial support to organizations representing persons with disabilities to implement programs aligned with the National Disability Action Plans.

The Government is implementing various social protection programs, including a Conditional Cash Transfer initiative aimed at supporting vulnerable families and children in accessing education by providing \$5 per child per month for up to 3 children in a family. Out of approximately 49,000 beneficiaries, 147 students with disabilities are benefiting from this program. The Government has recently increased the cash transfer amount to \$10 per child per month for up to 3 children, with an additional \$5 for children with disabilities, to further support their education.

Excellencies,

In addition to the Conditional Cash Transfer program, the Government of Timor-Leste is committed to providing a universal Social Pension for elderly individuals as part of its social protection efforts. Currently, around 8,724 elderly individuals with disabilities are receiving government assistance. The monthly stipend is adjusted based on age, with \$60 for those aged 60-69, \$80 for individuals between 70-79, and \$100 for those aged 80 and above.

Around 2,751 individuals residing in 7 Social Solidarity Institutions nationwide receive regular allowances to support their daily living expenses. Additionally, nearly 6,000 persons

with disabilities benefit from a range of supports including physiotherapy, wheelchairs, mobility aids, prosthetic limbs, and mental health services. The government is also in the process of enacting legislation to provide immediate social assistance to those with urgent needs, aiming to reduce vulnerability and enhance long-term livelihood opportunities. Timor-Leste's government is committed to establishing the National Council of Disability and is actively working towards finalizing the necessary legal framework this year.

In early 2024, Timor-Leste's government engaged in meetings with the UNCRPD Committee in Geneva and locally, proposing support for capacity building and assistance in preparing the UNCRPD implementation report, with the nation's first report slated for submission in 2025.

In closing, we reaffirm our commitment to fully implement the UNCRPD and continue to seek opportunities for learning and collaboration with other member states on CRPD implementation. We welcome any advice, the sharing of ideas, strategies and experiences on CRPD implementation.