



Permanent Mission of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste  
to the United Nations in New York

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Karlito Nunes  
Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste  
to the United Nations

16<sup>th</sup> Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with  
Disabilities

June 13-15, 2023  
New York

*Check against delivery*

Mr. Chair,

At the outset, let me express my sincere congratulations to you and to the other members on your respective election to the Bureau of the 16th Conference of States Parties to the CRPD. I wish you all the best for the successful completion of the session and assure my delegation's full support to you and the Bureau members.

Timor-Leste just ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and became a State Party in July 2022.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, it gives me great pleasure, **for the first time**, representing my country to participate and deliver the statement as a State Party to the Convention at its 16<sup>th</sup> Conference of States Parties.

Mr. Chair,

Persons with disabilities constitute a significant portion of the population worldwide, yet they remain one of the most marginalized and vulnerable populations. Over the past decade, the awareness and understanding of issues related to disability rights has grown. In particular, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), adopted in 2006 and entered into force on May 3, 2008, has been integral to advancing recognition of the human rights of persons with disabilities.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is the most comprehensive human rights treaty that we have today to guide us to change our attitudes and approaches towards persons with disabilities.

---

<sup>1</sup> CRPD was ratified by TL National Parliament on 4<sup>th</sup> of July 2022, promulgated by the President of the Republic on 17<sup>th</sup> on July 2022, Conclusion of the Accession Process was signed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs on 20<sup>th</sup> of July 2022 and was deposited to the UN in January 2023.

Disability is also referenced in various parts of the SDGs, specifically in parts related to education, growth and employment, inequality, accessibility of human settlements, as well as data collection and monitoring of the SDGs.

Mr. Chair,

Timor-Leste is fully committed to the rights of persons with disabilities. The Constitution of Timor-Leste guarantees that disabled citizens have equal rights, and no citizen can be discriminated against on the grounds of physical or mental condition.<sup>2</sup>

The Government of Timor-Leste has taken promotive, preventive, protective, and transformative measures to ensure rights and provide assistance to persons with disabilities so that they are able to lead a dignified life, participate in social activities, and enjoy the rights and freedom as other fellow citizens in the country.

Some policies and programmes have been formulated and implemented to ensure rights-based and non-discriminatory approach to persons with disabilities. As part of this political commitment, the Government grants subsidies to persons with disabilities, therapy centre, endorsed its National Action Plan 2021-2030, and initiating the process of establishing the National Council for Person with Disabilities which aims to promote, protect, and ensure the full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities.

---

<sup>2</sup> Paragraph 1 of article 21 and paragraph 2 of article 16.

Mr. Chair,

Though we have come a long way, we are cognisant that there is still much to be done to make these services and facilities evenly accessible to every person in need, living both in urban and rural areas. States Parties to the CRPD have their own realities and have different levels of fulfilling their obligations to the Convention, some are more advanced, and some are less. Despite this difference, our goal does not change—it remains to reach out to the furthest behind, help them unleash their potentials, and create an environment for them to live a life free of stigmatization.

Mr. Chair,

To conclude, I would like to reiterate Timor-Leste's commitment in building inclusive society, leaving no one behind, and reaching out to the most marginalized. In doing so, Timor-Leste stands ready to join hands with the international community.

I thank you.