



MINISTRY OF SOCIAL SOLIDARITY AND INCLUSION (MSSI)
Office of Deputy Minister of Social Solidarity
Rua de Caicoli, Dili
Timor-Leste

Timor-Leste Country Statement
By H.E. Signi Chandrawati Verdial
Deputy Minister of Social Solidarity, Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste
To the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
Committee on Social Development
Seventh Session
Bangkok and online, 6-9 September 2022
Item 4 of the agenda

Follow-up to the Outcome of the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the
Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Action of Plan on Ageing

*Her Excellency Dr. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and
Executive Secretary of ESCAP*

Dr. Srinivas Tata, Director, Social Development Division, ESCAP

ESCAP member States delegates

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen.

The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) was adopted in April 2002 as Timor-Leste was one month away from restoring its independence. Yet, Timor-Leste has been working to build a society for all ages in line with the Madrid Plan for Action on Ageing. The Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste guarantees special protection to its senior citizens. Article 20 of the Constitution states:

- 1. Every senior citizen has the right to special protection by the State.*
- 2. The old age policy entails measures of economic, social and cultural nature designed to provide the elderly with opportunities for personal achievement through active and dignified participation in the community.*

Since 2008, with the approval of the Allowance for the Support of the Elderly and the ‘Invalids’ (*Subsídio de Apoio a Idosos e Inválidos – SAI*), the Decree-Law No. 19/2008 of 19 June 2008, revoked recently by the Decree-Law No. 53/2022 of 20 July 2022, Timor-Leste has made some progress toward the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action for Ageing. With Decree-Law No. 53/2022, the Government decided to increase the payment of social pensions from \$30 to \$50 /month under the internationally defined standard of extreme poverty of \$1.90 a day.

As of July 2022, 93,713 senior citizens were benefiting from the Support for the Elderly and the Invalids. If the population is projected to have reached 1,372,556 in 2022, then the aging population of Timor-Leste accounts for 6.8%. The percentage is higher than the total number of persons with disability in Timor-Leste, which in 2015 was about 3.2%. Globally, the number of older persons is predicted to be higher than that of children and youth in the coming decades.

Concerning item 4 on the agenda, Timor-Leste would like to:

1. Take necessary measures required to adopt Madrid International Action Plan on Ageing and its implementation in Asia and the Pacific in designing policies and actions related to three priority directions: (a) *older persons and development*, (b) *advancing health and well-being into old age*, and (c) *ensuring enabling and supporting environments*.
2. Welcome the recommendations of the *Accelerating Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action for Ageing, 2002, to Build a Sustainable Society for All Ages in Asia and the Pacific*.
3. Establish multi-sectoral and/or inter-ministerial working groups to work on an action plan on aging.
4. Work with the Executive Secretary of the ESCAP in the formulation of forward-looking policies and actions.

With all these, let me conclude by reiterating Timor-Leste’s commitment to continue working to improve better enabling and supporting environment for its senior citizens.

Thank you very much.