



## SPOKESPERSON V CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Timor-Leste awarded by the World Health Organization

The World Health Organization for the Southeast Asia Region [WHO-SEARO] has honored Timor-Leste's National Malaria Control Program [NMCP] with an "Award for Excellence in Public Health."

The award was conferred by WHO's Regional Director for the South-East Asia, Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September at the 67<sup>th</sup> Session of the Meeting of the WHO-SEARO in Dhaka, Bangladesh and received on behalf of Timor-Leste by the Minister of Health, H.E. Dr. Sérgio Lobo. It was one of only two awards conferred.

In 2006 223,000 cases of malaria were recorded in Timor-Leste and over 68 malaria related deaths. Last year the malaria cases declined dramatically to 1,042 with only three deaths. With the incidence of <1 case per 1000 population, Timor-Leste has achieved its MDG target for malaria.

This impressive outcome is the result of a vigorous antimalarial effort across the country conducted by the NMCP supported by appropriate technical assistance and strong political commitment. Contributing factors to the achievements of the program have been the implementation of new rapid detection tests, the introduction of more effective Malaria treatments and improved access to health centres. Malaria program staff are now active in all of Timor-Leste's 65 Sub Districts.

Disease prevention activities have also been prioritised, including the distribution of mosquito nets to pregnant women in prenatal care, and to 80% of the population living in areas most at risk. Indoor Residual Spraying has been undertaken in homes in these areas.

Dr. Singh noted that Timor-Leste's National Malaria Control Program was to be congratulated for its laudable success and was to be "commended for saving lives and achieving the MDG target for malaria in such a short time and with such a dramatic result." He noted that Timor-Leste's efforts "can well inspire other malaria control programmes in developing countries."

Spokesperson for the Government, Agio Pereira warmly congratulated Timor-Leste's Public Health workers and supportive partners on this excellent result; "an improvement in the living conditions of the Timorese people and the outcome of sustained efforts over many years."**ENDS**



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