



## SPOKESPERSON SIXTH CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT



## MEDIA RELEASE

Dili, 5 May, 2017

### **Government salutes midwives on International Day of the Midwife**

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of May, the International Day of the Midwife, the Government salutes the midwives of Timor-Leste for their remarkable contribution to the wellbeing of mothers, newborns and families, and recognizes their role in improving maternal and newborn health. Over 500 midwives are on the staff of the Ministry of Health and work throughout the country to provide care needed during pregnancy and childbirth.

In recent years Timor-Leste has been recognized for its progress in the area of maternal and newborn health and there is no doubt that the work of midwives has made a significant contribution to this progress. In 2015 United Nations agencies [reported](#) that Timor-Leste was estimated to have reduced its Maternal Mortality Ratio by over 75% since 1990. Recent figures, although still unacceptably high, show a reduction from 450 per 100,000 live births in 2007 to 215 per 100,000 in 2015.

There are several factors contributing to this improvement. One is that an increasing number of expectant mothers are visiting their local midwives and health professionals. The proportion of those making at least one prenatal visit has risen from 67.9% to 86% over the last 7 years. In the most recent figures 53% of expectant mothers are undertaking at least **four** prenatal care visits. Another factor is the increasing number of births assisted by health professionals. The proportion of births assisted is now 66%, more than double the number from 2010.

The Government is committed to strengthen the skills and capacity of midwives and to work towards ensuring more even access to their services throughout the territory. In the last two years 157 midwives have received training. Since February 2015 the Government has built 57 new Health Clinics and rehabilitated 22 Health Centres across the country. The newly [inaugurated](#) Eduardo Ximenes Regional Hospital in the municipality of Baucau currently has 22 midwives on staff.

Maternal and child health are a focus of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3, to “ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.”

Spokesperson, Minister of State Agio Pereira, noted “Today we pay tribute to the midwives of Timor-Leste who care for women and newborns throughout our country with great skill and compassion. The Government recognizes that their care is vital to ensure mothers and babies survive and lead a healthy life. We commend them for all their efforts.” **ENDS**



**Agio Pereira**  
+670 77045002  
[agio.pereira@cdm.gov.tl](mailto:agio.pereira@cdm.gov.tl)  
[govtlmedia@gmail.com](mailto:govtlmedia@gmail.com)  
[www.timor-leste.gov.tl](http://www.timor-leste.gov.tl)