



## **Country Statement**

**By H.E. Rui Augusto Gomes, Minister of Finance, Head of  
Delegation**

**Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste**

77<sup>th</sup> UN-ESCAP Session

Agenda item (2). Theme topic: “Building back better from crises  
through Regional Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific”

**Excellency Professor Armida Alisjahbana, the Executive Secretary  
of the UN-ESCAP.**

**Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a great honour for Timor-Leste to address the 77<sup>th</sup> ESCAP Session in the midst of the global pandemic of Covid-19, which is really reversing much of the progress made on poverty reduction, paralyzing economies and, in our case, exacerbating many of the pre-existing vulnerabilities.

On behalf of the Prime-Minister, General Taur Matan Ruak, I would like to thank you for inviting Timor-Leste, which is also an active member of ESCAP, to attend this multilateral forum.

The recent floods in Timor-Leste caused widespread damage to public infrastructure, destroyed some 5.000 homes, displaced 20.000 people and killed 45 people. The calamity has strangulated the foundations of our economy and weakened our capacities to address the high levels of poverty.

We called for international assistance and our development partners responded in time with aid and emergency relief, for which we are deeply grateful.

The involvement of the international community is truly a sign of solidarity in time of crisis and Timor-Leste is, once again, a success story of meaningful international cooperation.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Timor-Leste has experienced three recessions in four years due to a prolonged political impasse, we are in the midst of the first Covid outbreak and the destruction is visible. This situation places the country far more distant from achieving an upper-middle income status by 2030.

But the Government is determined **to sustain** the economy, so as not to let the crisis worsen and to defend the people's wellbeing, on the one hand and, on the other hand, **to transform** the foundations of Timor-

Leste's economy and society so as to make them more resilient to future shocks.

Last year, the Council of Ministers approved the **Economic Recovery Plan**, a plan that puts people at the centre of development. It is a plan that seeks to strengthen our national healthcare system, better prepare our citizens for any future emergency, enhance skills, and better protect our people.

We are also committed to improve our infrastructure to facilitate international connectivity, through the expansion of the International Airport with significant improvement of ground services and navigation facilities. We are also constructing a major port at Tibar, which is expected to be completed by mid-2022, and negotiations are at its final stage to install a submarine cable from Darwin to Dili for the internet.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Finally, I affirm that Timor-Leste is open to more collaboration at a multilateral level, because we are committed to improve the lives and livelihoods of our citizens.

On behalf of my country and delegation, I would like to welcome the recommendations made by the UN-ESCAP Secretariat to strengthen

cooperation in the region towards a joint recovery, building back better during the post-pandemic period.

Thank you.

*Dili, 27 April 2021*

*Time: 12:00pm*