



## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE IV CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT

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MEDIA RELEASE

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*Statement*

*By*

*The Spokesperson of the IV Constitutional Government,  
The Secretary of State for the Council of Ministers*

### **Gusmão Government social policies put people first in 2010 budget**

The 2010 budget, mandated by the national priorities for the 2010 State budget to empower the people of rural areas, will continue to support the strong social policies started by the IV Constitutional Government in late 2007 which puts the people of Timor-Leste and the reduction of poverty at the forefront of the national agenda.

One of the major achievements of the Government was the development of the Ministry of Social Solidarity Strategic Plan for 2009-2012 and Long Term Plan 2010-2030. The plan is a living document that will guide the Ministry of Social Solidarity into the future in the next 20 years. The implementation of the plan will begin with the annual plan for 2010.

The Government through the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MSS) has pioneered reforms and legislation which have contributed to the ongoing stability of the nation and have contributed to better rights and conditions for the most vulnerable in Timor-Leste.

The 2010 budget will continue to support a myriad of innovative programs like **Social Protection for mothers, the “Mother’s Support Fund”**, an effort by the Government to respond to households headed by women. The policy is part of the overall Ministry of Social Solidarity strategy to increase the social conditions of the groups in need of assistance, like single mothers.

The approval and implementation of the **Children at Risk Protection Policy** defends the fundamental rights of every Timorese child. The policy protects from sexual abuse, domestic violence and forced labor and guarantees a child’s inalienable rights to care and schooling. The policy guides the state to intervene, advocate, assist and respond as required for children in need.

As Healthcare infrastructure and human resources are limited in Timor-Leste, in 2008 the Government approved and implemented the **Social Protection Policy for Families in Special Circumstances**, such as those needing overseas medical treatment. This policy assists patients that cannot be treated in Timor-Leste to be transferred overseas and targets most vulnerable citizens of Timor-Leste.

Since independence, the country hasn't had a legal framework to deal with disasters even though Timor-Leste is highly prone to natural disasters. The legal framework of the **National Disaster Management Policy and Housing Recovery Guidelines** assists the Government through the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Social Solidarity to prevent, mitigate, respond to and aid recovery from the impact of disasters that take place in Timor-Leste every year. The implementation of the policies was launched in 2008. Based on these policies, the MSS has established disaster response structures in all 13 districts and has given aid to thousands of victims.

The Decree Law No.19 June 2008 on **Subsidies for the elderly and Invalid People by the Council of Ministers and the Approval of Decree Law for National Liberation Combatant by the National Parliament** has paved the way for the first social pensions to be paid to targeted citizens of Timor-Leste. Since 2008, 141,000 payments have been made to elderly and some 4,173 former veterans and their families have received pensions.

The Approval and Implementation of the **National Recovery Strategy for Internally Displaced People (IDP's)** relocated and resettled some 150,000 internal refugees. Those payments have now contributed to a reduction in the 2010 budget but **The National Policy Guidelines for Social Housing for Vulnerable Groups**, the housing policy which was established to increase the standard of living for vulnerable groups, will continue in all 13 districts.

Social compassion has even extended to taking care of those in mourning by providing assistance in terms of funeral cars and coffins. **The National Policy for Funeral Vehicles** is also implemented in all 13 districts, giving dignity to families most in need after a death.

A total of US\$1,433,000 has been paid to mothers in grants. In 2008, 7,050 students were supported by the Government, in 2009 the number increased to 9,738.

In 2008, \$1.59 million has been paid to send the sick for specialized overseas treatment, this year \$1.6 million covered a further 308 patients. \$13.3 million in pension payments have been made to the elderly.

This year \$45,986.00 has been paid in scholarships to 78 children of veterans to study overseas and by the end of 2009, \$17 million will have been paid to veterans and their families in pensions.

The Secretary of State for the Council of Ministers and the Official Spokesman for the IV Constitutional Government Ágio Pereira said "We are not a Government that is perfect and not a Government that has gotten everything perfect, and as much as we would like to eradicate poverty in the immediate, we acknowledge it is a long term proposition which will not be achieved in our short term in Government; but I hope we are always remembered as the Government that introduced the concept of **honest, accessible and responsive leadership**, focusing on national development but also on the very crucial elements of social responsibility and compassion." **ENDS**

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