

## **Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste Statement at High Level Meeting 2010: Getting on Track for the Sanitation and Drinking Water MDG Targets**

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (RDTL) is represented at the High Level Meeting (HLM) 2010 scheduled to be held in Washington DC, USA on 23 April 2010 by H.E. Minister Emilia Pires, Minister of Finance, RDTL. H.E. Minister Pedro Lay, Minister for Infrastructure responsible for water and sanitation, and H.E. Minister Dr. Nelson Martins, Minister of Health, responsible for sanitation and hygiene. The participation of the Minister of Finance and the two key sector ministers highlights the importance that the Government of RDTL attaches to this HLM.

Timor-Leste is encountering a series of challenges in ensuring that all its people have access to basic services including water, sanitation and hygiene. As confirmed by the 2008 Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP), thirty per cent (30%) of Timor-Leste's population lack access to improved drinking water supply and almost 50 percent of the population practice open defecation or do not have access to improved sanitation facilities. Most of the people who lack access water and sanitation are in the rural areas where most of Timor-Leste's population reside. Our current efforts are inadequate and lagging behind in meeting the MDGs for both water and sanitation with the sanitation gap much higher than the water gap.

Sanitation and Water for All, the global partnership between developing countries, donors, multi-lateral agencies, civil society and other development partners working in a collaborative manner to achieve sustainable access to sanitation and drinking water, with focus on achieving the MDGs, is indeed laudable and the Government of RDTL is pleased to participate. We are confident that working together globally, maximum results can be achieved utilizing an accountable, results-oriented, and transparent framework for action under which we all share a common vision including values and principles. In view of the fact that Sanitation and Water for All is a partnership committed to the principles of aid effectiveness and national ownership of plans and based on mutual trust, the Government of the RDTL is committed to the aims of Sanitation and Water for All.

A significant increase in investment in sanitation and water is required in Timor-Leste in order to achieve the water supply and sanitation MDGs. The Government of Timor-Leste has identified Infrastructure and Water including Sanitation as National Priority Number 1 for 2010 and the government investment in the water sector increased from US\$4 million in 2009 to US\$11.2 million in 2010. In addition significant increase in investment is expected to continue up to 2013 to cover the current development plan period. The Government, through the Ministry of Infrastructure, is leading the water and sanitation sector coordination with the involvement for other government agencies, NGOs, donors, bilateral agencies and other stakeholders at the national level. At the district, sanitation, water and hygiene

activities are coordinated through the District WASH committees involving the Ministries of Education, Health and Infrastructure including NGOs, UN agencies and other stakeholders.

Close monitoring of the situation in the sanitation and water sector is very essential in providing evidence. In addition to our national monitoring, we strongly support the UN-Water Global Annual Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking Water (GLAAS) and the WHO-UNICEF Joint Monitoring Program on Drinking Water and Sanitation (JMP) which provide added value to the sector monitoring efforts by integrating and strengthening the evidence base of information and assisting in improving policy-making for the MDGs. Our response to future GLAAS surveys will more comprehensive. Furthermore, we resolve to use coverage data in making budget allocation decisions to ensure targeting of the un-served and the poor population.

The Timor-Leste National Sanitation Policy was drafted in November 2009 and the consultation process is being conducted before approval by the Council of Ministers. The policy provides a direction for the growing sanitation investment and capacity building efforts towards the RDTL development objectives, guidance to sector stakeholders on policy principles and outlines the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders involved in the sanitation sub-sector. A water resource policy is being drafted to plan water resources in a holistic approach. The national sanitation plan along with the water supply plan is being drafted and is expected to be completed and approved before the end of 2010. The plan identifies the investments required to meet the MDGs and beyond as the plan envisages higher targets than the MDGs.

The Government of Timor-Leste is cognisant of the huge gap in human resource capacity across many sectors in our country. A study on human resource capacity gap assessment was done early this year and the government is implementing extensive training programmes in collaboration with bilateral agencies and water and sanitation sector partners.

Investing in sanitation and water in Timor-Leste will help to tackle basic economic challenges as well as improved health for our people.