



**Permanent Mission of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste
to the United Nations in New York**

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Karlito Nunes
Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to the United Nations**

**General debate:
“Building momentum towards the SDG Summit”**

Trusteeship Council Chamber, UNHQ
19-20 July 2023

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished delegates,

I am honored to represent the Government of Timor-Leste as we discuss our progress and challenges in achieving sustainable development goals. Our second Voluntary National Review provides a clear picture of where we stand at this midpoint of our journey.

Out of the 17 SDGs, we have made significant strides in 9 goals, while 5 goals are regressing, and 3 goals lack sufficient data for measurement. Notably, SDG 16 is showing robust advancement, and SDG 1 is on track for achievement by 2030 if we maintain the current progress. SDG 6 has witnessed a notable rise in universal and equitable access to safe drinking water.

Despite our progress, we face considerable challenges that hinder our path to sustainable development. Targets related to food and nutrition (SDG 2), poverty and social protection (SDG 1), and quality education (SDG 4) require immediate attention. Early childhood

education and enrolment rates in technical and vocational education show concerning trends. Additionally, achieving an inclusive economy with decent work opportunities for all (SDG 8) by 2030 appears unlikely at the current rate of progress.

Timor-Leste also grapples with one of the highest rates of youth aged 15-24 not in employment, education, or training in the Asia-Pacific region. This rate stood at 30.5% in 2021, up from 21.0% in 2016. Fostering inclusive economic growth and providing decent jobs for women, youth, rural communities, and people with disabilities is a significant challenge. Our labor force participation rate of 30.5% in 2021 reflects this difficulty.

Examining the 93 SDG targets assessed, only 16% are on track, while 28% are regressing from the baseline. To achieve the 2030 targets, we must expedite progress for 56% of these targets. This underscores the urgency for collective action and the acceleration of our efforts to achieve the SDGs.

Several factors contribute to our progress, including addressing administrative inefficiencies, improving data collection and analysis, mitigating the threat of climate change, bridging infrastructural gaps, and navigating economic complexities such as our reliance on oil revenues and imports.

It is evident that the Government alone cannot successfully implement the SDGs and while our challenges may seem daunting, we must remain determined to expedite our progress.

Together, with unwavering goodwill, we must promote inclusivity and foster collaboration, leaving no one behind. The path to sustainable development may be arduous, but through our collective efforts and shared commitment, we can transform challenges into opportunities for a brighter and more prosperous future.

Thank you.