



### Timor-Leste says no to violence against women



» UN Photo/Antoninho Bernardino  
Launch of the postcard campaign tackling violence against women.

Singing, dancing, flower petals cascading into the warm sea and an unveiled painting ensured that Timor-Leste's National Women's Day, November 3rd 2009, was marked with creativity, color and flair. Approximately 300 people attended the celebrations, honoring Timorese women's role in the history of the country, from their involvement in the struggle to independence to their work rebuilding the nation.

In the midst of the celebrations, the current challenges women face were not forgotten. Vows to end violence against women were made by dignitaries and attendees alike.

President Jose Ramos Horta, Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao, President of the Parliament Fernando Lasama de Araujo and the Minister for Social Solidarity, Maria Domingas Alves, among other notables, launched a joint campaign to combat domestic violence. Each signed and wrote individual messages on postcards proclaiming

"Domestic Violence is now a public crime. Anyone can report it. You could go to jail."

The postcard campaign tackling violence against women is part of the United Nation's efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in Timor-Leste. Spearheaded by UNIFEM, the joint campaign is a combined effort of UNMIT, UNFPA, UNICEF, and IOM, and the Spanish MDG Achievement Fund. The Secretariat for the Promotion of Equality (SEPI), the National Police of Timor-Leste (PNTL) and a variety of Timorese NGOs led by FOKUPERS are also instrumental in ensuring the campaign's success.

The postcards will be circulated throughout Timor-Leste so Timorese people have the opportunity to express their feelings, opposition, and hopes for change on the issue of domestic violence. The campaign will raise awareness that domestic violence is a crime, featuring for the first time in the penal code. It also promotes the approval of the Law against Domestic Violence, which has been passed by the Council of Ministers but yet to be debated in National Parliament.

Despite the inspiring stories of many women woven into Timorese history, domestic violence is prevalent. Many women reportedly live with, or with the threat of, physical abuse. A 2003 study by the International Rescue Committee found that 51% of women consulted felt unsafe in their relationship with their husband.

The postcards are part of a larger public education strategy concerning the legal status of domestic violence, with a media publicity campaign to be launched in Oecussi on November 24th.

### Youth Congress in Fohorem, Covalima

Over four hundred (400) young people attended recently a Youth Congress in Fohorem, Covalima, to discuss culture, peace and human rights issues. The 'Consuelo Pastoral', a Church organization, together with the community Priest Justino Galvao, chief of the congress committee, organized the event. He said: "the objectives of the congress are to consider the future of our young generations and to promote a culture of peace and human rights. Our youths are the bone of our church, our family and our nation".

Herculano Oliveira Amaral, a secondary school student in Fohorem, said: "the congress taught me to be patient



» UN Photo/Domingos da Costa  
Youth congress in Fohorem, Covalima.

with others and find solutions to solve problems instead of fighting". He added that both young men and women have the same responsibility to build peace in Timor-Leste.

### WFP nutrition training in Baucau

The World Food Programme (WFP) and the Ministry of Health (MoH) conducted training on basic nutrition for mother and child health, on 28 and 29 October in Baucau. Attendees included staff from Baucau district nutrition programme, Ministry of Health representatives as well as WFP food aid monitors. The topics discussed included types and causes of malnutrition, as well as the objective of Supplementary Feeding Program, aimed at preventing and reducing malnutrition.

Angela da Costa Gusmao, a participant in the training, said: "during two days we have received lots of new information. I did not have any knowledge of nutrition, now I can improve my capability to work in the field".

## More capacity in place to tackle malaria in Timor-Leste

The fight against malaria, a disease without borders, has recently received a boost in Timor-Leste. Today, with an additional 62 personnel recruited to work in the country's malaria control programme, districts and sub-districts will have more resources to tackle this disease.

"The control programme was not as effective until now due to a lack of human resources but today we are more confident that with these regional malaria officers and the assistants on board, we will have the basic tools to carry out an effective control programme in the districts," said Dr Nelson Martin, Minister of Health.

These individuals received an intensive month long training where they learned

how malaria was transmitted, how to carry out proper diagnosis and treatment as well as the effective management of mosquitoes.

In addition, 80 existing analysts with the malaria control programme attended a two-week refresher training session on malaria microscopy to further improve their diagnostic capabilities.

This is just the first of many crucial interventions taken by the Ministry of Health, with the financial assistance of The Global Fund and technical expertise of the World Health Organization, to address the country's Malaria situation. There are annually over 100,000 reported cases of Malaria, mostly affecting children under five.



» UN Photo/Martine Perret  
Protect your life by using mosquito net.

"Malaria is a preventable disease and sleeping under a long-lasting insecticidal net is one way of avoiding it. It is also curable, but those on medication must complete the entire course in order to recover completely," said Dr Paramita Sudharto, the World Health Organization's representative in Timor-Leste.

Malaria thrives in coastal landscapes and forested areas. It particularly affects pregnant women, children, remote groups, urban poor, mobile populations, young adults and border communities.

## UN seeks global attention for Timor-Leste's food security needs

Increasing food productivity through the application of better seeds and fertilizers coupled with diversification of agricultural systems and adoption of new nutrition and farming methods provide the key to meeting Timor-Leste's food security needs and improving the welfare of the country's poor, a UN expert has said.

Concluding a seven-day mission to Timor-Leste on 14 November 2009, Mr. Stephen Jarrett, Principal Adviser of the Coordination Team of the UN High Level Task Force (HLTF) on the Global Food Security Crisis said, however that in the short-term, there's need to search for what he termed as "quick wins" in ensuring food security such as installing a solo for every household to store food, rain water-harvesting as well as providing extension workers with the skills, tools and resources to do their work effectively.

Food security in the country, he said, entails "a complex set of aspects where different

elements of the government have to work together to resolve the underlying issues," he said, describing as "fundamental" the development of the agro-livestock and fisheries area as the country moves to diversify its economy. While the country has a niche market in its coffee, other products like cocoa, cloves and copra also have great potential in the country.

Praising the work of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Timor-Leste, the Adviser described the United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2009-2013 as a "compact and smart strategy" which "hits the nail on the head" by addressing the core issues facing the country. "UN has had an important role and will continue to have an important role in the future of Timor-Leste."

As a post-conflict country, Timor-Leste remains a low-income, low-capacity country and therefore the international community has to support the country

over the longer-term. This is compounded by the problems associated with rapid population growth.

Following the outbreak of the Global Crisis in 2008, Timor-Leste was seen as one of the countries facing significant challenges in terms of food security. It is one of 15 vulnerable countries worldwide visited by the HLTF and the recommendations of the expert are important because they will put Timor-Leste on the map of food security, creating a better global understanding of the situation in the country.

Established in April 2008, the HLTF is under the leadership of the UN Secretary-General. It brings together the Heads of the UN specialized agencies, funds and programmes, as well as relevant parts of the UN Secretariat, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the World Trade Organization. The primary aim of the Task Force is to promote a comprehensive and unified response to the challenge of achieving global food security, including by facilitating the creation of a prioritized plan of action and coordinating its implementation