



UN supports national conference on reproductive health and family planning



» UNMIT Photo/Bernardino Soares

The United Nations recently supported the Timor-Leste Women's Parliamentary Group (GMPTL) to conduct a National Conference on Reproductive Health, Family Planning, and Sexual Education which took place on 11-13 July, 2010.

The goal of this conference was to discuss the importance of adolescent sexual education, especially for young people, and methods

of family planning as an aspect of human rights.

UN Envoy for Asia-Pacific on HIV/AIDS, Dr. Nafis Sadik said that maternal mortality rates in Timor-Leste are extremely high—approximately 600 per 100,000 births—making it one of the highest in the world. Several methods of reducing deaths were discussed including preventing unwanted and unintended pregnancies. This would reduce maternal mortality by between 13 to 15 per cent, a substantial achievement. Providing prenatal services, and most importantly attended delivery, were also emphasized. Dr. Nafis further discussed studies on maternal mortality, all of which have shown that a trained birth attendant can significantly reduce maternal mortality.

Audience member Agio Belo said that it is essential for adolescents to understand reproductive health as many do not have enough information. Belo commented that it is not a moral issue and that young people need to have the ability to defend themselves.

GMPTL Member Fernanda Lay reiterated that infant mortality rates in Timor-Leste are extremely high. Compounding this is the increase in the population growth and high national fertility rate; each woman has between five and seven children. Adolescent pregnancy rates are also the second highest in Southeast Asia with 51 per 1,000 pregnancies.

Minister of Education João Cândia Freitas confirmed that the reproductive health subjects presented by the Women's Parliamentary Group, would be included in the public education curriculum. He called on the GMPTL and participants to make suggestions or recommendations for review before implementation.

The Minister also said that the Ministry of Health would make every effort to provide education on family planning methods and how to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

Attending the conference were members of the United Nations, government, church, and civil society.

Nafis Sadik, champion of women's health

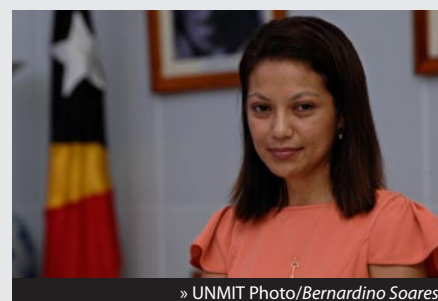
Dr. Nafis Sadik, a national of Pakistan, received her Doctor of Medicine degree from Dow Medical College (Karachi), and began her career practising obstetrics and gynaecology in rural communities in Pakistan. In 1971, she joined the United Nations and became a technical adviser to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). In 1987, Dr. Sadik was appointed executive director of UNFPA, with the rank of under-secretary-general, becoming one of the highest ranking women in the UN system. Dr. Sadik has consistently called attention to the importance of addressing the needs of women, and of involving women directly in making and carrying out development policy. Dr. Sadik is currently special adviser to the United Nations secretary-general.

Milena Pires appointed member of CEDAW in New York

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in New York has chosen Ms. Milena Pires to become a member of the CEDAW commission making Ms. Pires the first Timorese candidate.

"I am very pleased because this victory does not belong to me. This victory is a step for Timorese women, for the women's movement and for all organizations which work on women's rights in Timor-Leste, particularly the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality and the Women's Network [Rede Feto], and I think a victory for diplomacy in Timor-Leste as well," said Ms. Pires.

Speaking to the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality, Ms. Pires said she believed that the CEDAW candidacy was very important as it increases the ability of Timor-Leste to contribute to the international community, especially in terms of human rights.



» UNMIT Photo/Bernardino Soares

At a farewell party for Ms. Pires, she expressed the importance of celebrating the victory of the Timorese nomination to CEDAW.

She said she believed that this is a significant responsibility and that she would continue to support the struggle to gain full rights for women in Timor-Leste as well as women around the world.



Community Policing takes center stage at forum in Timor-Leste



» UNMIT Photo/Martine Perret

“PNTL should always speak with their communities to transmit important information, but they must also listen to what the communities want from their police” said Commander Joao Belo, Head of Community Policing in the PNTL.

Commander Belo made these remarks at a forum to discuss the topic ‘Strengthening Security through Community Policing’, held at Hotel Timor on 23rd July, 2010.

In Timor-Leste the law that establishes the PNTL recognizes community policing as an essential institution-wide approach to maintain peace and prevent crime. The community policing

approach engages communities and police to work together to solve problems.

The Asia Foundation has been working in Baucau and Becora to help communities and police to work side by side in Community Policing Councils. Through these councils, communities identify security problems and work with the police to find solutions.

The forum allowed PNTL’s partners, such as Asia Foundation, the New Zealand UNPOL, and the Timor-Leste Police Development Programme to share their experience with PNTL members and community leaders.

2010 Census



» UNMIT Photo/Bernardino Soares

The enumeration of the Timorese population, including foreign residents and tourists, will go on until the 25th of July. The data collected during the 2010 Census will provide the Government of Timor-Leste and its development partners with a much-needed update of the country’s demographics, as well as the necessary tools for the planning and implementation of adequate and realistic public policies and development programmes.

Timorese youth love sports



» UNMIT Photo/Martine Perret

Timorese youth love sports, particularly football. Despite the late hours, many gathered in front of big screens around towns to watch the 2010 World Cup, ended on Monday. “I encourage governments to work with the

UN system and my Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace, Mr. Wilfried Lemke to clearly recognise sport as a recognized development and peace-building tool” said Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his Message on the World Cup on 13 July.

UNPOL trains national officers



» UNMIT Photo/Martine Perret

UNPOL officers contribute to the training and capacity building of PNTL officers, including by working with the Police Training Centre. Courses completed include station and district commanders’ course, close security protection, community policing, traffic management, basic criminal investigation, basic intelligence, and disciplinary investigation

Heavy rains increase malaria and dengue risks



» UNMIT Photo/Bernardino Soares

The risk of occurrence of Malaria and Dengue Fever cases have increased following the unseasonably large rainfall and subsequent flooding. Many mosquito breeding sites, particularly containers, tyres, mud, etc., may contain stagnant water, resulting in an increase in the number of mosquitoes. As a result of the heavy rains, there may also be an increased risk of diarrheal illness due to exposure of contaminated water through food preparation or poor hygiene

Avian Influenza



» UNMIT Photo/Martine Perret

Timor-Leste has smallholder farming systems often characterized by close contact among people, poultry, and other animals. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the country is still free from avian influenza, although its nearest neighbour, Indonesia, has seen the disease reach endemic proportions.



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