



## VIII GOVERNO CONSTITUCIONA



### MINISTÉRIO DO INTERIOR GABINETE DE VICE MINISTRO DO INTERIOR

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### Statement of Timor-Leste

#### IOM 113th Council Session: High Level Segment

29 November 2022, 3pm-6pm (Geneva)

113th IOM Council Chairperson, IOM Director General Antonio Vitorino, Deputy Director Generals Ugochi Daniels and Amy Pope, Excellencies, ladies and gentleman.

I begin in expressing appreciation of the Government of Timor-Leste to the International Organization for Migration, which has had a strong presence in Timor-Leste since 1999. IOM has also been instrumental over the last ten years in supporting disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management programming in the country, including leading work on displacement tracking and data, protection of vulnerable persons in emergencies and addressing gender-based violence in crises. Climate related risks in Timor-Leste is primarily driven by vulnerabilities and coping capacity of the affected population.

Today's session focusing on climate change, food security, migration and displacement is one that is imperative for Timor-Leste.

Timor-Leste, a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), is vulnerable to hazard-related shocks, including floods, droughts, landslides, sea level rise and strong winds given its geography, topography and fragile infrastructure. Timor-Leste is also susceptible to earthquakes and tsunamis, although their occurrence has been rare. Cyclical climate events, such as the El Niño Southern Oscillation, have seen related weather anomalies, such as droughts, occur every couple of years, as well as episodes of La Niña, resulting in floods, landslides and coastal erosion, as a consequence of seasonal monsoon rains with higher intensity and a prolonged wet season.

Last year, Cyclone Seroja which hit the country in March significantly devastated the country. Coupled with COVID-19 it had severe impacts on an agriculture-dependent population. We now face worsening overall food security, and intensified weather-related events which is causing severe drought during the dry season and severe floods and landslides during the wet season.

Timor-Leste is pleased that COP 27 has developed a fund for loss and damage, as well as acknowledging that climate induced displacement is a reality. Action and support to countries such as Timor-Leste that is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change must be a priority. Without international support Timor-Leste will be unable to respond and be resilient to the climate crisis – which is already being felt by our communities. Minimizing and address the losses and damages is an urgent and global concern.

This includes ensuring an evidence-based approach to understanding displacement in the context of climate change and a better overarching framework that directly links natural disasters to climate change. Because no longer are these two phenomena separate – especially for a country like ours, and our very livelihoods depends on it.

In the context of the acute impacts of climate change, already we are seeing this as an increasing driver of not just internal migration but possibly also international migration. For example, as a result of the loss of income in rural agricultural municipalities, they are driven to find economic opportunities in urban areas such as Dili. Causing challenges for urban planning as well as social services. Increasing unemployment in the country, as a direct result of climate change impacting the agricultural sector is also resulting in greater international migration flows to other countries. In tandem, this is a driver for irregular migration as criminal networks prey on vulnerable groups. Gender based violence and counter-trafficking is a real concern in Timor-Leste especially in the context of displacement, disasters and climate change.

Whilst migration and displacement maybe sensitive and controversial issues, here in this fora of IOM we feel we are amongst friends. IOM has consistently been supporting to address migration management and disaster risk reduction in the country through a wide range of programmes including important ones now such as counter-trafficking, working with vulnerable communities and groups, and border management.

Human mobility and displacement is a reality of climate change, and for a small island states such as Timor-Leste, we count on you to support our collective efforts so we can develop solutions for the most affected.