



**THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF
TIMOR-LESTE TO THE UNITED NATIONS IN NEW YORK**

STATEMENT BY

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**PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
OF TIMOR-LESTE TO THE UNITED NATIONS IN NEW YORK**

**United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the
Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action,
“Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028**

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New York

Check Against Delivery

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

Timor-Leste conveys its appreciation to the Netherlands and Tajikistan for co-hosting the UN 2023 Water Conference, and to the President of the General Assembly for his leadership.

Timor-Leste acknowledges the importance of the convening of this conference. As many have said before us, water is essential to our survival and is a nutrient for life. Water is not simply a vital need for our bodies — it is also a resource we benefit from every day, so water is our human right.

Sustainable management of water resources and access to safe water and sanitation will unlock economic opportunities and growth as well as provide significant leverage for investment in health and education. Therefore, the Government of Timor-Leste strives to make progress in ensuring every household—nearly 60%—has access to safely managed water sources. The progress has been uneven as rural households have not benefited to the same extent as urban neighborhoods, underlining the need to improve water quality testing and data collection to ensure universal access and mitigate the urban-rural divide.

Like other small island states, climate change, drought, deforestation, land degradation, sea level rise, pollution, and other natural disasters are among the most pressing environmental challenges in Timor-Leste. These challenges have resulted in water scarcity as well as diminished water quality and have caused interlinked consequences on agriculture, food insecurity, malnutrition, and health-related problems. These impair the progress towards achieving the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental.

To address our challenges, Timor-Leste emphasizes the importance of investing in climate adaptation to explore the beneficial synergies between climatic resilience and environmental and

resource management, which includes ecosystem-based adaptation and other nature-based approaches.

Timor-Leste's national legislation incorporated *Tara Bandu* as an integral custom of Timor-Leste's culture, which regulates human relationships with the environment. This also serves as an entry point for strengthening engagement with and involvement of local communities in resilience-building efforts.

Investment in infrastructure and water management system is critical. We are putting great efforts to improve our water system and improve equal distribution within the country. Timor-Leste welcomes partnerships and international cooperation to increase institutional capacity to manage water supply systems and diversify its utilization for the development of the country towards the full realization of Goal 6 of the 2030 agenda.

To conclude, Timor-Leste remains committed to support and contribute in global efforts towards sustainable use and management of water resources as well as in ensuring equitable access to clean water and sanitation for all. This Conference will serve as an important step in scaling up commitments and actions to accelerate implementation of water-related goals and targets – as we recognize water as a vital resource, a human right, and a key towards a sustainable world.

This statement is associated with the previous statement delivered by Cuba on behalf of the G77 and China and by Samoa on behalf of AOSIS.

I thank you.