



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

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Dionisio Babo Soares
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to the United Nations

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Thank you for giving me the floor.

Mr. Chair,

Water plays a crucial role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While it is directly linked to SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), it also significantly impacts goals related to health (SDG 3), hunger (SDG 2), gender equality (SDG 5), economic growth (SDG 8), and climate action (SDG 13). Addressing water-related challenges and ensuring universal access to clean water and sanitation is fundamental to advancing all the SDGs.

Timor-Leste is actively working to improve access to water and sanitation across the country, with strong government investment in both urban and rural areas. The establishment of the public utility company Bee Timor-Leste (BTL) is a key step toward managing water supply and achieving universal access to basic water and sanitation by 2030. These efforts are supported by international organizations such as the World Bank and the European Union. However, significant challenges remain, particularly in infrastructure development and extending services to remote communities.

Mr. Chair,

According to the most recent 2022 census, approximately 85% of Timor-Leste's population has access to a basic water source. However, only about 57% have access to basic sanitation, based on the 2021 Joint Monitoring Program update (using data up to 2020). These figures reflect steady progress since the country's independence in 2002. However, bridging the rural-urban gap in water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services remains a critical challenge.

Recognizing the WASH sector's role in national development, the Government of Timor-Leste has undertaken institutional reforms to improve service delivery. This includes the establishment of Bee Timor Empresa

Pública and the Water and Sanitation Authority (Autoridade Nacional Água e Saneamento), alongside medium- to long-term investment planning. Annual government budgets have allocated substantial funding for water and sanitation, complemented by financial support from development partners. The Government has also contributed through counterpart funding (CPF) to further strengthen these initiatives.

Mr. Chair,

The European Union (EU) is a key partner in Timor-Leste's water and sanitation efforts, collaborating with the government to develop and finance investment projects focused on water supply, waste management, and forestry. The European Investment Bank (EIB) plays a crucial role in funding these initiatives, which aim to improve infrastructure and foster sustainable development.

With appropriate investments, Timor-Leste can enhance the quantity and quality of its water resources, expand access to clean water and sanitation, and improve service levels for all citizens. These efforts require not only financial resources but also improvements in human capacity, organizational effectiveness, governance, and leadership within the government.

International cooperation is essential for achieving SDG 6, as water management often transcends national borders. Effective collaboration between countries is necessary to address shared water resources, exchange best practices, and tackle challenges such as water scarcity and pollution. Global partnerships play a critical role in ensuring sustainable and equitable water access.

Looking ahead, the 2026 UN Water Conference will serve as a vital platform for accelerating action towards the realization of SDG 6. It is expected to bring together global stakeholders to outline concrete commitments, strengthen

governance, secure financing, and promote sustainable water management. The conference will emphasize collaboration among governments, civil society, the private sector, and the scientific community, while also addressing the interconnections between water, climate change, and poverty eradication.

In conclusion, Timor-Leste reaffirms its commitment to achieving SDG 6, making access to clean water and sanitation a national priority. The country continues to seek international cooperation to overcome existing challenges and ensure that all citizens benefit from these essential services.

I thank you.