



**SPOKESPERSON**  
SIXTH CONSTITUTIONAL  
GOVERNMENT



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**Timor-Leste estimated to have reduced Maternal Mortality Ratio  
by over 75% since 1990**

A report by United Nations agencies published last week in the Lancet Medical Journal has revealed that Timor-Leste is one of only nine countries estimated to have reduced its Maternal Mortality Ratio [MMR] by over 75% since 1990.

With 2015 the final reporting year for the Millennium Development Goals, the United Nations Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-Agency Group “comprehensively assessed the MMR for 183 countries” with the resulting estimates providing “the first comprehensive overview of the progress that has been made in reducing the MMR from 1990 to 2015, worldwide, within regions, and within individual countries.”

Ninety-Five countries with a high Maternal Mortality Rate in 1990 [MMR>100 deaths per 100,000 live births] were grouped into four categories on the basis of their rate between 1990 and 2015 to assess whether the Millennium Development Goal number 5 was achieved. MDG 5, “improve maternal health” had two associated targets – the first being “Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio”.

The report published in The Lancet last week noted “The greatest relative reduction in MMR occurred in the nine countries in category 1 (Bhutan, Cape Verde, Cambodia, Iran, Laos, Maldives, Mongolia, Rwanda, Timor-Leste), for which the point estimate of the reduction between 1990 and 2015 suggests that the MDG 5 target of a 75% reduction has been met.”

Worldwide the MMR fell by an estimated 43.9% over that period, so although the goal was estimated to have been met in Timor-Leste it was not achieved at the global level.

Timor-Leste Government programs have focused on strengthening human resources in the area of maternal health and ensuring that health units are adequately equipped. Additionally, the Government has led policies aimed at raising awareness on maternal health issues, advancing the nutritional status of mothers and improving family planning services.



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Spokesperson for the Sixth Constitutional Government, Minister of State Agio Pereira noted “this recent report is an encouragement that our country is making good progress in reducing what was previously one of the highest rates of maternal mortality in the world. This is to be celebrated and spur us on to further improvement. Challenges still remain. Efforts to lift our standards, improve our training, extend our education programs and broaden access to services must be unrelenting so that we can be sure that we are doing our best to care for our mothers and babies.” **ENDS**



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