



## **REDE FETO TIMOR LESTE**

Rua Mascharinhas-Balide, Dili

Tel. (+670) 3 317 405, email: redefeto@yahoo.com

---

### **Presentation in the Timor Leste Donors Meeting**

#### **Introduction**

Rede Feto Timor Leste is a national network for 24 women's organizations who are connecting, informing, and supporting people and organizations to improve the lives of women and girls, and advance gender equality and women's rights for sustainable development in Timor Leste.

On September 5 2009, Rede Feto spearheaded the conduct of the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Women's Congress. The output was a Platform of Action of issues that concerns women. There were 7 thematic issues such as: Education, Health, Justice, Cultural, Economy, Media and Politic.

We would like to express our appreciation to the government of Timor-Leste for its efforts to promote gender equality and awareness of women's rights within Timor-Leste. Specifically we acknowledge the increased number of enrolments of women in higher education, although we must also recognize that many women are forced to drop out of high school because of pregnancy.

Concerning health issues, we recognize and warmly support the efforts by the government to address the high maternal mortality rate in Timor-Leste.

We appreciate the government's support for upholding the quota for women's participation in parliament and public sector, however we acknowledge the need to encourage women in rural areas so that they can take a more active role as decision makers.

We appreciate the government's efforts to promote increased access to credit, small business development for women and women as entrepreneurs but we encourage government to strengthen its efforts in rural areas where opportunities are still very limited.

We also appreciate the government's programs to provide pension support for elderly people, scholarships for children of widows and its strenuous efforts to respond to the problems of internally displaced people.

Rede Feto would like to highlight the priority issues that we hope the donor community will consider in preparing their development assistance for Timor Leste.

**Law and justice:** PNTL and F-FDTL are institutions established to uphold law and order. We are sad to observe the involvement of PNTL in violating the statutes it is intended to uphold. The main victims of mistreatment are women and youth. Use of force should be the last choice yet it appears that PNTL is not yet able to interpret its function well. There is a

sense that they cover up issues that might damage their image. There are also cases where PNTL is involved in protecting the interests of family members and this is affecting people's sense that PNTL 'belongs to' the people. PNTL are not open to criticism, or to recognize and repair their mistakes. We urge the government to invest in in-depth training that will help them to fulfill their role in upholding law and introduce them to national and international laws protecting the rights of women, children and citizens; and commence psychological testing for new recruits. Using guns should be a last choice in dealing with the community, who are their own people.

**Trafficking:** There is still a lack of attention from the government and donor community to address human trafficking in Timor-Leste. There is no law to regulate this issue, even though reality shows that there is internal trafficking from rural areas to Dili and international trafficking into Timor-Leste. This is a difficult problem to investigate because of weak immigration controls and the networks to support these activities are strong. Victims of trafficking are existing in massage parlours and karaoke clubs in residential areas. This has an impact upon the local community. We are calling for attention from the local authorities, including immigration authorities, to pay serious attention to these issues by coordinating with civil society to conduct research into this issue, strengthening prevention programs and providing rehabilitation programs. We call for the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Tourism, Commerce and Industry to consider the social impact to the community before providing a license for a company to operate.

**Corruption:** Rede Feto congratulates and welcomes the creation of creation of the Anti-Corruption Commission in Timor-Leste. We acknowledge the government's significant efforts in combating corruption by establishing an office under the Vice-Prime Minister to prepare an anti-corruption strategy. We also acknowledge the creation of the position of the Inspector General for dealing with this issue. However we see that they face a lack of human and other resources to investigate cases and many cases are still pending in the Prosecutor General's office due to this. We are calling on the government to show their political will and provide assistance and resources that will allow these offices to respond quickly; and to strengthen these organizations so that they can carry out their duties without political interference and in an independent manner.

**Women and Labour:** Until today in Timor-Leste there is no law in existence to protect workers other than the Labour Code which is quite sensitive to the needs to women in the workplace, for instance in maternity leave, annual leave, support for breastfeeding mothers. However we have not seen any implementation of these regulations yet. Women do not have equal payment to men and their contracts are insecure. Many women face sexual harassment in the workplace. Many women do not receive maternity leave and are forced to resign when they are pregnant. We encourage government to monitor and follow-up seriously the implementation of the Labour Code and we urge government to adopt the ILO Convention 111 concerning fair remuneration for women. Conduct research to have exact data on these issues and take necessary action against private companies that do not comply with the regulations of the Labour Code.

**CEDAW implementation:** Timor-Leste ratified the Convention on Ending all forms of Discrimination Against Women in 2002. In 2009, the government of Timor-Leste sent a report to the CEDAW Committee and civil society sent a Shadow Report to the committee. At the moment parliament is in the process of ratifying the Domestic Violence Law. This will give a lot of support to domestic violence victims. National government is the main actor

with responsibilities for implementing all aspects of CEDAW, however we are sad to see that this is not yet reflected in national planning and budgeting issues. For example, in the distribution of funds for civil society from the Prime Minister's office, women's organizations received very little support. In the execution of programs within the Ministry of Infrastructure there is no evidence of support and consultation or involving women in their programs. We also urge the government to strengthen support for women with disabilities and the many women who care for people with disabilities by signing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Finally, we call for the attention from the international organizations and the donors to look at the issues mentioned above in their program design and implementation, and to make sure that women are consulted and that their needs are included.

***“As women, we want to contribute our thinking and idea for the development of our country. We have a dream that Timor Leste will have justice, peace, security and equality “***

Dili, April 2010

Rede Feto Timor-Leste

*Note : Attach the Platform of Action (POA) from Women Congress.*