

***Operationalising Strategic Development Plan  
for Effective Results***

**Presentation by Development Partners**



**Social Strategic Sector**

presented by AusAID

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(TLDPM)**

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## The Social Strategic Sector:



## Background

- The rate of economic growth in Timor-Leste is high on the back of strong public sector investment, but human development indicators remain poor
- There have been some gains, but women and children and those living in rural areas are not yet seeing material improvements in basic services and opportunities (jobs and income)
- The Social Strategic Sector may be the toughest challenge in Timor but is important for economic as well as social development

➤ There is no doubt that Timor is making progress and that the outlook is for more of the same. If we take an overall view then there is a lot to be positive about. Economic growth (year on year) is high driven in large part by public investment. But that is off a low base, when you add 10% to a small economy you have a small increase. Not to be derided, strong growth is a necessary condition for development, but it means that growth itself will take a long time to make a material difference to the lives of poor people. And growth as a measure does not tell us much about equality.

➤ There have been gains, and I will touch on a few of those in a moment, but for the majority of Timorese people living in rural communities and particularly for women and children, improvements are pretty marginal. I am not going to quote figures at this room, everyone here knows the facts, but we need to acknowledge the challenges ahead, and I will touch on some of those as well.

➤ What we do know is that the social sectors present some of the toughest problems in Timor-Leste, but improving the health, welfare and education of all Timorese is as much an economic as a social challenge. Investment in national infrastructure is about creating jobs, but people need to be educated and healthy in order to take up those jobs. Economic prosperity is something everyone contributes to, and investment in human capital is a way to share the opportunities and minimise inequality.

## **Examples of effective joint work with Social Sector Ministries (i)**

### Health

- The rapid decline in child mortality through improved services to mothers
- The scale-up of outreach to communities through Sisca
- National Nutrition Strategy (draft) and commissioning a national nutrition survey

- So looking briefly at some of the achievements in the social strategic sector. In Health Timor-Leste has seen a dramatic drop in child mortality over recent years. There is no single answer to why this has happened, it has been a combination of better services, more outreach to communities, education and a falling birth rate.
- The Sisca program has increased the reach of the health system to try to reach every community. Donors and the Health Ministry have combined to deliver information, advice and some basic services where they are needed.
- Nutrition is a difficult and complex issue, but one that has to be addressed in Timor-Leste. During 2012 and 2013 donors and the Ministry of Health agreed to a national nutrition survey to be conducted by UNICEF with the Ministry and supported by all the donors. This is a first step to implementation of a National Nutrition Strategy with everyone working with locally generated data led by the relevant Government authorities.

## **Examples of effective joint work with Social Sector Ministries (ii)**

### Education

- Significant improvement in net enrolment rates
- Strengthened focus on early childhood and early school years
- Getting more materials into the schools

- We all know that the future of the country is in its children, and that education is a key driver of economic as well as social outcomes. The Government has scaled up investment in education over recent years, but there is a long way to go with many challenges.
- Net enrolments are now over 90% so we know that children by and large are making it to school. The challenge for all of us is to keep them there and to ensure that they are learning. Development partners and the Government are working together on everything from infrastructure, to curriculum, to providing materials, to teacher training, to making sure that schools have clean water and toilets.
- The increased focus on early childhood and the first few years of school have also been a positive development. The Government is piloting the use of local languages for the first 1 or 2 years of school then phasing it out around 3rd grade when Tetum takes over as the primary language. While this is a policy over which there has been much debate, there is a lot of international evidence that making sure that kids are learning right from their first day at school is crucial to their long term academic attainment, and using their “home” language is one way to make sure that happens.
- There has also been some more recent emphasis on the need to provide teachers with more materials in Tetum, particularly for Primary Schools. This is an on-going challenge but with continued cooperation more books are being produced and distributed.

## **Examples of effective joint working with Social Sector Ministries (iii)**

### Social Solidarity

- Preventing youth violence
- The Law on Domestic Violence (2010) and the National Action Plan on gender-based Violence in (2012)
- The National Disability Policy

- It is also important to highlight the many achievements in making Timor-Leste a safer and more inclusive society for all members of the community.
- We have seen some great examples of coordination with the State Secretariat for Youth and Sports to align cooperation with civil society organisations and district youth centres for youth violence prevention reaching over 100,000 young people. There has also been support for the Martial-Arts-Law socialisation in all 13 districts, including monitoring of youth violence in coordination with CSOs.
- The Law on Domestic Violence and the subsequent National Action Plan has been a huge step forward in addressing a serious problem for women in Timor-Leste. There are now more dedicated health services for women who are victims of violent crime and there is a Vulnerable Persons Unit in many PNTL commands around the country with dedicated officers for crimes involving domestic violence.
- The National Disability Policy is also a massive step forward. While people living with a disability make up a small proportion of the population, they are often some of the most disadvantaged, and they are part of families and communities. This is an example of great leadership by the Government and good coordination by the development partners. There is much work ahead to improve the opportunities for people living with a disability but this is a great platform on which to build.

## Challenges

- Human development statistics remain very poor in Timor-Leste
- Coordination – the Social Strategic Sector faces large capacity gaps, complex multi-sector issues and logistical challenges
- It is important for the poor of Timor to see tangible results now, as well as sustainability in the future
- We know this is hard in Timor-Leste as it is in all countries – so long term commitments are needed

- There is no getting away from the scale of the challenge in Timor-Leste. Improving education and health, and making sure that those who are disadvantaged or simply poor are also benefiting from the growth of the country is going to be the work of the next 20 or 30 years. There will need to be sustained and consistent investment in capacity, infrastructure and policy development.
- Coordination in the social Strategic Sector is going to be difficult and will require significant leadership and resources from the lead Ministries. Many of the problems we need to solve are caused by capacity gaps (doctors but no nurses), complex multi-sector issues (nutrition and food security) and significant logistical challenges (reaching remote communities in the wet season, providing suitable places for those delivering services to live and work in rural communities).
- There are so many day to day problems that it is hard to think strategically. People rightly want to see improvements in their access to services and quality of life now, but equally, systems have to be developed to sustain services forever.
- This is going to be very hard work and will require long term commitments. Inter-ministerial and Development Partner coordination must improve. The New Deal gives us a framework but it can not be business as usual. Better coordination will require time and resources on both sides. As development assistance falls over time, planning will need to improve and annual budgets will need to reflect recurrent costs and maintenance.

## Challenges

- It is a huge challenge to create sufficient jobs and higher incomes – particularly for the youth of Timor-Leste
- Improving the productivity of the labour force through better access to and improved quality of basic services is crucial
- This is going to require sustained investment in the social sectors

- The investment in the social sectors by all of us is really about the future as I have said. Growth is only good if you can participate in the opportunities that arise from development. We need to focus our investments based on analysis of what will provide more jobs and higher incomes to the most number of people.
- The young demographic profile of Timor-Leste means that there are more people looking for a job than there are jobs. The economy can create more jobs, but for the next generation, many families will still rely on the family farm. So if we are talking about Technical and Vocational Training then we need to be thinking about how to increase the productivity, and therefore the incomes, of rural farmers. If a poor farmer doubles his or her real income, then they are still poor but they will be better placed to feed their children and send them to school, giving them the chance to get out of poverty when they grow up.
- Better access to and improved quality of basic services like health and education make a huge difference and in the long term are the key to sustainable growth through productivity. Eventually the return from more fixed capital – infrastructure – levels off and the growth of your economy becomes a function of improvements in technology and the ability of people to apply that technology. Put simply, the future incomes of all Timorese rely on sustained investment in these social sectors today.



## **The way forward (i)**

- The New Deal is all about focus and trust
- Development Partners need to genuinely engage and design joint programs
- Ministries need to devote time to talking through their priorities with Development Partners

- The spirit of the New Deal is partnership. Timor-Leste must own and lead its own development, and we as development partners must align our assistance with local priorities. But that is not the same as development partners being relegated to implementation machines. It is the obligation of good partners to enter into a dialogue in good faith and to understand that outcomes need to be shared. Good partners need to be honest with each other and hold each other to account for achievements, and for times where we fall short of our goals. Focus we should all be able to do now, trust will take some time to build.
- The Development Partner Coordination Mechanism is a good tool, but it needs to be implemented in practice with ownership of all stakeholders involved. The Government and in particular line Ministries must put resources into the coordination of policy. It is a complex task and cannot be someone's part-time job.
- All partners need to be involved in policy discussions including CSOs and INGO's. It is only through sustained commitment to partnership under the framework of the New Deal that we will achieve our goals.

**Obrigado**