



# GENDER CHAMPIONS DEFENSÓR JÉNERU

Women and men advancing equality  
through mainstreaming gender in Timor-Leste





United Nations Entity for Gender Equality  
and the Empowerment of Women

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. UN Women supports Member States on setting global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with Governments and civil society to design the laws, policies, programmes and services required to implement these standards. UN Women stands behinds women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on the following five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

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# FOREWORD

Timor-Leste is a nation in transition, moving from the success of its efforts in peace-building and preparing the state toward sustainable development. This requires a collective effort to strengthen the state's institutions, policies and plans for the future.

In 2013 UN Women Timor-Leste initiated the project *Institutional Strengthening for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment* with generous support from the Government of Norway. Throughout the three-and-a-half-year programme, UN Women worked with civil society and Government partners to support inclusive state-building through gender mainstreaming.

Gender mainstreaming puts the concerns of women and men at the forefront of policy makers' minds to ensure these priorities inform the laws, plans and budgets supporting the nation's development.

Since Timor-Leste regained independence in 2002, important steps have been taken by the Government in addressing the complex problem of gender inequality. These steps are visible in the Constitution and in the laws and international commitments made to advance equality between women and men. These efforts continue to be visible through the inter-ministerial reforms and programme initiated under the Sixth Constitutional Government, under Prime Minister Dr. Rui Maria de Araújo as an outspoken advocate for gender equality.

However, despite this progress, the empowerment of women and girls is limited by the discrimination they face in reaching their potential. This is evident in the ongoing high rates of maternal mortality and gender-based violence, as well as the persistent barriers to women's education and economic opportunities that continue to exist. It is these challenges that gender mainstreaming seeks to address.

At the global level, gender mainstreaming has been recognized as an effective strategic approach for advancing the position of women. Gender mainstreaming was first endorsed at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women and the resulting Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action mandates all member states and civil society actors to implement gender mainstreaming.

Through its project, *Institutional Strengthening for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*, UN Women worked with partners across Government and civil society who are determined to see change. In the following pages, these gender champions share in their own words the actions they have taken to mainstream gender for equitable change. UN Women applauds the efforts of these partners and their institutions and encourages all stakeholders to continue these efforts and strategies for advancing women's empowerment toward achieving greater progress for the nation.

Sunita Caminha  
Head of Office a.i.  
UN Women Timor-Leste

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	6
TIMOR-LESTE'S COMMITMENTS TO GENDER EQUALITY .....	7
GENDER MAINSTREAMING AT WORK: TWO SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES.....	10
WHAT MOTIVATES TIMOR-LESTE'S GENDER CHAMPIONS.....	12
Laura Pina Director of Fundação Pátria and co-founder of 100% Hau Prontu .....	17
Alcina Carvalho Dos Santos Xefe Suku Kampung Alor, Dili Municipality .....	19
Filomena Fuca Advocacy Officer, Rede Feto .....	21
MP Lurdes Bessa Member of Committee A, Vice-President and Chair of the Democratic Party (PD), National Parliament of Timor-Leste .....	23
Henrique da Silva National Director gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment, Secretary of State for the Support and Socio-Economic Promotion of Women (SEM) .....	25
Brigida Soares Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Prime Minister's Office .....	27
Gallieni S.F da C Galhos Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Director in Aileu Municipality .....	29

# INTRODUCTION

The following pages contain first-person interviews with the women and men who are promoting gender equality through gender mainstreaming in Timor-Leste. They are a few of Timor-Leste's many gender champions, or *defensór jéneru*, each using their own experiences and role to create a society where women and men can enjoy the same rights and opportunities.

Through this booklet, UN Women hopes to share examples of successful advocacy strategies for advancing gender equality through gender mainstreaming and promote more widely the achievements and motivations of Timor-Leste's gender champions.

The report provides an overview of gender mainstreaming and the focus of gender mainstreaming efforts in Timor-Leste, including the process and stakeholders involved. The report opens space for each gender champion to explain their motivations through a full interview, to identify what they do to promote gender equality, how they do it, and what successes they have had, as well as the factors that contributed to their transformative role.

The report highlights in-depth two examples of successful advocacy facilitated through UN Women's project: *Institutional Strengthening for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*, funded by the generous contributions of the Norwegian Government. The first example relates to the 100% Hau Prontu Campaign (*100% I'm Ready*) and the second features the experience of gender mainstreaming in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

The 100% Hau Prontu Campaign was initiated by the local women's organisation Fundação Pátria in 2014, with a goal to increase the number and the abilities of female candidates competing in local elections.

The second strategy, gender mainstreaming in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF), is an example of joint civil society and Government advocacy to put the concerns of women and men into the plans and budgets of line ministries. The advocacy resulted in plans and budget for MAF to improve the livelihoods of women in agriculture.

UN Women hopes the report is informative and inspires continued action from advocates and partners working to achieve equitable development through gender mainstreaming in Timor-Leste.

# TIMOR-LESTE'S COMMITMENTS TO GENDER EQUALITY

The Constitution of Timor-Leste provides the mandate for action on gender issues across all sectors. It calls not only for equality between women and men in all areas of family, political, economic, social, and cultural life (Article 17), but also for non-discrimination on various grounds, including gender (Article 16).

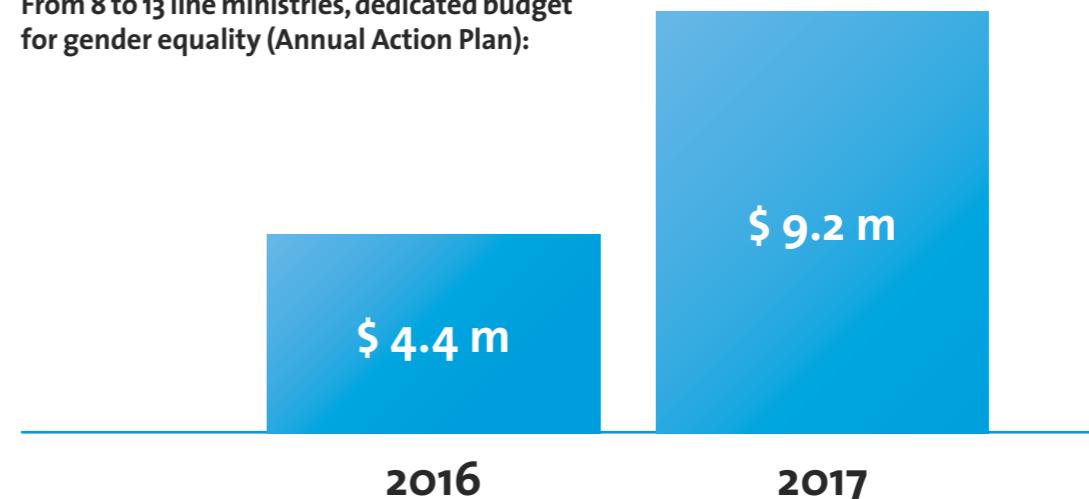
The Government has adopted gender mainstreaming as a strategy for achieving gender equality since 2002 and has committed to ensure laws, policies, programs, processes and budgets in all Government institutions at national and local levels are responsive to gender issues, as articulated in the Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030.

A significant step in Timor-Leste's commitment to gender equality was the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol by the Parliament on 16 April 2003. These require the Government to be accountable for its actions in addressing gender issues across the full spectrum of social, economic, and environmental sectors through regular reporting. Timor-Leste's commitment to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) is particularly important, as it recognizes women's role in the reconstruction of the country and its active involvement in state-building. Those international commitments have been translated into national laws and policies, as the Law Against Domestic Violence (2010), National Action Plans on Gender-Based Violence (2012-2016 and 2017-2021), the Maubisse Declaration for Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (2015-2017) and the recently approved National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2016-2020).

Following its predecessors, the VI<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Government has taken incremental steps to transform these commitments into reality, by including them in their plans and with adequate budgets.

A result of these efforts is that 13 out of 21 Government Institutions assessed (not including the autonomous agencies) have dedicated budgets for gender equality in their 2017 Annual Action Plan (compared to eight institutions for 2016 Annual Action Plans), for a total amount of USD \$9.2 million. This is double the budget allocated to gender equality actions compared to the 2016 State Budget (USD \$4,396,500).

From 8 to 13 line ministries, dedicated budget for gender equality (Annual Action Plan):



## What is Gender Mainstreaming?

*Gender Mainstreaming is a strategy to achieve equality between women and men, by considering their different concerns and needs in:*



### SEM

SEM is the Government Institution that is responsible to coordinate and provide technical support to the Government on gender equality priorities. They support the revision of laws from a gender perspective, including the State Budget Law and the annual action plans and budgets, providing recommendations for Government Institutions to advance commitments made.



### Line Ministries

Line ministries have the responsibility to mainstream gender, and thus to ensure that their institution's operations and programmes and the services they provide are addressing the needs of women and men, and are contributing to the elimination of gender inequality.



### National Parliament

National Parliament, representing the people of Timor-Leste, approves the laws, including the State Budget Law, and monitors the Government, which is accountable to the Parliament. The Members of Parliament can propose changes to these laws, which are then adopted or not by the Parliament.



### Civil Society and Gender Advocates

Civil society and women's organizations are representing the diverse women's and men's voices from the community to the national level. They advocate with the Government and Parliament to make sure the laws, plans and budgets of the country are addressing women's priorities and gender equality, among other rights. They ensure the Government holds its promises through monitoring the actions of the Line Ministries and other State institutions.



### Prime Minister's Office and Ministry of Finance

The Prime Minister's Office is responsible for the Government planning and monitoring, the Ministry of Finance for the budgeting. Annually those two institutions guide the whole of Government in their annual planning and budgeting process. They coordinate with SEM to ensure that the budget and planning preparations require all Government Institutions to address gender inequality.

## Key players for implementing gender equality commitments in Timor-Leste

Working towards gender equality involves the whole of Government. While the Secretary of State for the Support and Socio-Economic Promotion of Women (SEM) has a dedicated mandate to coordinate and guide the integration of gender equality measures across the Government, *all Government institutions* have the responsibility to address women's concerns and promote gender equality. This means that all Government partners must ensure that they provide adequate information, opportunities, and services to both women and men, and consider their socio-economic and cultural differences in all aspects of their work.

UN Women has been working with different partners, strengthening their capacities and aiming at bringing gender equality to the core of their mandates. Some of these partners are traditionally advocating for gender equality, such as Rede Feto (the national women's network of Timor-Leste), others were quite new, such as the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Finance.

At the heart of gender mainstreaming, as we have seen historically, progress towards gender equality is driven by motivated individuals; we call them Gender Champions. Those men and women, who through perseverance, motivation and hard work, bring the little and bigger changes that will make society a more equal and better place, where women and men can equally benefit from the same opportunities and rights. UN Women has been working alongside those individuals to make their dreams a reality.

# GENDER MAINSTREAMING AT WORK: TWO SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

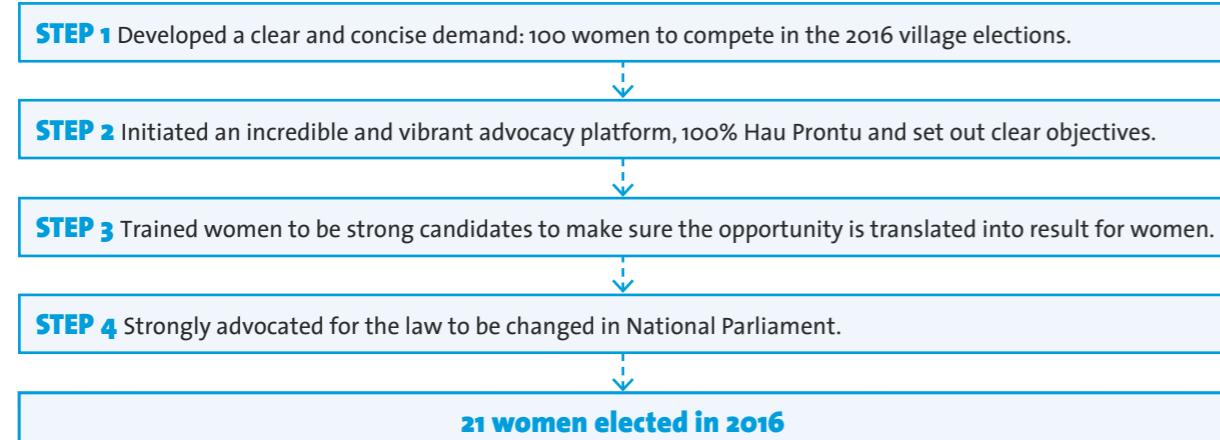
## 1 100% Hau Prontu Campaign: making gender equality a reality in village elections

**The problem:** In the 2009 local elections, only two per cent (11 of 442) of sukus in Timor-Leste voted for a woman as *Xefe Suku* (Village Chief).

**The goal:** To increase the number of women to stand for the election as *Xefe Suku* to 100 in the 2016 village elections.

**UN Women involvement:** UN Women provided financial and technical aid to its partner Fundação Patria, which helped the organization to create a vibrant campaign (*100% Hau Prontu* – I am ready). The campaign amassed a broad coalition of civil society actors. It successfully advocated for a change in the *suku* (village) law to mandate that at least one woman from each *suku* be included on the ballot in *suku* level elections for the position of *Xefe Suku* (Village Chief).

**The 100% Hau Prontu advocacy strategy:**



MP Lurdes Bessa, member of Committee A, Vice-President and Chair of the Democratic Party (PD) on the advocacy of 100% Hau Prontu

*"They were very committed. They attended all the Committee A meetings and were almost intimidating in their presence. Committee A is where new laws are discussed article by article and has representatives from all the parties. It then goes to Plenary and then for a final vote. 100% Hau Prontu put in a special request to be present at the meetings, they are normally closed but the Chair together with the members agreed for them to be allowed in. The Committee A meetings went on for 10 days. Each day, 100% Hau Prontu members were there. They cannot speak during the meeting but they lobbied their points in the breaks and submitted written analysis to support their argument. It would look very bad if we did not consider their arguments – and the members of 100% Hau Prontu knew this. They made sure the law went through."*

**The result:** For the first time, 319 women competed for the position of *xefe suku* and *xefe aldeia* tripling the initial target of 100 women. In total, 21 women were elected (5% of the total), near doubling of the result of the 2009 local elections (where only 11 women were elected). In the words of campaign founder Laura Pina, the result is *"the start of the process of changing societal attitudes and influencing the patriarchal system. It has demonstrated that women have the potential and the ability to be leaders and that women can be involved in the process of developing our country – especially as decision makers.*



Participants at a 100% Hau Prontu training organized by Fokupers

## **2 From budgets & plans to inputs for women farmers: Gender mainstreaming in the Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries**

**The problem:** The work of women in the agriculture sector is often undervalued and under-resourced. Gender blind policies and budgets have resulted in missed opportunities for women and improving the agriculture production and profit overall.

**The goal:** Create a stronger commitment from the Government and the Ministry of Agriculture to address inequalities between women and men in access to resources and training by working with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF).

**UN Women involvement:** UN Women has been supporting gender mainstreaming for more than 10 years in Timor-Leste, and works with SEM, PMO and MoF to integrate gender mainstreaming into the planning, budgeting and monitoring system. UN Women also provides specific support to MAF to build the institutional capacity on gender equality. It has supported the development of the gender equality policy and provided training on gender to key staff. UN Women also supported the drafting of the Maubisse Declaration for Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (2015), signed by nine Government institutions under leadership of the Prime Minister, which engaged each of them to achieve specific targets for rural women.

**The strategy:**

<b>STEP 1</b> Strengthen capacity of SEM, allowing them to lead the gender mainstreaming process	<b>STEP 2</b> Build gender mainstreaming into Government planning and monitoring systems	<b>STEP 3</b> Accompany line ministries to strengthen their capacity on gender equality	<b>STEP 4</b> Monitor line ministries to make sure their plans become realities
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**The result:** MAF allocated USD \$674,500 for youth groups working in horticulture and agriculture in its 2017 budget, targeting 3,360 people of which half are women. One of the beneficiaries is Fatima, the leader of the cooperative in Suku Saboreia who provides an income to 13 families in her community.



Fatima, the leader of the cooperative in Suku Saboreia

# **GENDER CHAMPIONS DEFENSÓR JÉNERU**



## WHAT MOTIVATES TIMOR-LESTE'S GENDER CHAMPIONS

Below are a few of Timor-Leste's many gender champions, or *defensór jéneru*, each using their own experiences and role to create a society where women and men can enjoy the same rights and opportunities.



*I'm motivated by the need to change the situation of women in Timor-Leste. Women need more support to transform the situation for themselves. Especially in remote areas. Women need to have the same opportunities as men.*

**Laura Pina, Director of Fundação Pátria and Founder of 100% Hau Prontu**



*I am not shy about working to improve the situation for women. For me it's very important. During the crisis of 1999 women were very involved and it was the same during our struggle for independence. It is thanks to women's contributions that we have our independence.*

**Alcina Carvalho Dos Santos, Xefe Suku Kampung Alor, Municipal Dili**



*At first I didn't know much about gender. At my former position in a local NGO we ran a literacy program for older women. I spoke with the husbands and brothers of women in the program, and they said "why do you bother? She is old, she doesn't need to learn how to read or write...". This was a shock to me. Now I know the scale of the problem I want to use my knowledge and experience to create change.*

**Filomena Fuca, Advocacy Officer, Rede Feto**



*When I see injustices – like families who send their sons to school over their daughters or the violence that women experience – it motivates me to take action. It's not just physical violence but the attitudes to women. I cannot just stand back and watch.*

**MP Maria Lurdes Bessa, Member of Committee A, Vice-President and Chair of the Democratic Party (PD)**



*We need to appreciate what women do. My own life experience has taught me this. My mother is a single mother and worked hard her whole life to give me opportunities. She took on what is traditionally seen as the man's role – bringing in an income – as well as being the care giver.*

**Henrique da Silva, National Director Gender Mainstreaming and Women's Empowerment, SEM**



*My father really encouraged me to go to school and to do well. He gave me opportunities, like joining the scouts and leading activities in church. He didn't say to me "you can't speak out". Because I am smart and confident my family invested in me. I did well to make my father proud.*

**Brígida Soares, Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, Office of the Prime Minister**



*I was influenced by my mother. She was a great role model. When I was four my parents divorced and my mother was alone. She worked hard to send us to school and to go on and make something of our lives. My mother had to do the work of a man and a woman together. She raised me and my five siblings. One woman to look after us all.*

**Gallieni S.F da C Galhos, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Director in Aileu**



## Laura Pina

Director of Fundação Pátria and co-founder of 100% Hau Prontu

### **What are you doing to promote gender equality?**

I am the Director at Fundação Pátria, a women's advocacy organisation. Fundação Pátria was established in 2013. I am one of seven on the senior management team.

### **How are you working to promote gender equality?**

By establishing 100% Hau Prontu (100% I'm Ready). We knew there was a big gap in the leadership of men and women but when we looked at the numbers - just two per cent of villages in Timor-Leste had a woman as Xefe Suku (Village Chief) - we knew we had to push for more women. At the same time, we had a recommendation from CEDAW for more women to be elected in this position. So, in 2014 we started to mobilize women from across the country to stand as candidates in the 2016 village elections.

We came up with the idea that 100 women could be prepared as candidates and formed an alliance – 100% Hau Prontu with 15 national and international organizations, including Plan International, NGO Caucus, Alola Foundation. UN Women provided technical advice and resources. They supported our advocacy at the national level [to change the electoral law] and helped to make the campaign successful.

### **What are some successes you've had?**

We surpassed our initial goal of a 100 women candidate. In October 2016, 319 women stood for the elections. The change in the Suku law and the success of women in the election is a very significant step towards gender equality in Timor-Leste. It has started the process of changing societal attitudes and influencing the patriarchal system. It has demonstrated that women are ready, that they have the potential and the ability to be leaders and that women can be involved in the process of developing our country – especially as decision makers. It's been very important.



## Alcina Carvalho Dos Santos

Xefe Suku Kampung Alor, Dili Municipality

### What are you doing to promote gender equality?

I am Xefe Suku [Village Chief] of Kampung Alor in Dili Municipality. I want to help develop my village and improve the lives of women and children. I hope together with my community to make our lives better and to create a better future for everyone. I received support from 100% Hau Prontu [100% I'm Ready], from 2014 until now. I learnt a lot about public speaking, about the law, about how to advance the position of women. I now apply that in my work.

### How are you working to promote gender equality?

I was the women's representative on the Suku Council [previous to being Xefe Suku]. In my role, I worked closely with women to give information about health and other important issues. I work especially close with the most vulnerable women: the widows and the poor.

When I campaigned [for the position of Xefe Suku], I said to the people in my community, look around, until now, have you seen any changes in our community? Nothing's changed. Why don't you try putting your faith in a woman to lead and see what happens? Women have the ability to lead, you need to have confidence in my abilities.

### What are some successes you've had?

In our culture, women are not given the opportunity to lead. But when the Suku Law was changed, it said women have every right to contest the position of Xefe Suku. Women can do it, they just need to be encouraged and given the confidence to stand.

I believe I was successful in my campaign because I am brave and I believe in myself. I am patient, I sit with my neighbours and friends to help them resolve conflicts. They in turn supported me to stand in the elections. They helped give me the confidence to campaign.



## Filomena Fuca

Advocacy Officer, Rede Feto

### **What are you doing to promote gender equality?**

I am the Advocacy Officer at Rede Feto, the national network of women's organizations. I also work on advocacy and authored the recent Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Shadow Report [a report prepared by NGOs tracking the Government against its commitments to the Convention].

### **How are you working to promote gender equality?**

I represented Rede Feto on a civil society working group to conduct a gender analysis of the Annual Action Plan and budget for each of the line ministries. Based on the observed gaps, we prepared a submission to National Parliament and to each political party. In our submission, we looked at the Ministry of Education, the Ministry for Health and the Ministry for Social Solidarity's plans among others. We looked at what they were doing to reduce gender-based violence and areas in their portfolio that concern women.

### **What are some successes you've had?**

Our submission to the Ministry of Health (MoH) to allocate more funding to address gender-based violence was successful. Health services are a key service for victims of gender-based violence, but was previously not acknowledged by the MoH. We had the support of the Parliamentary Women's Caucus, GMPTL (Grupo de Muhleres Parlamentar de Timor-Leste). The [GMPTL] President, MP Senora Florentina Smith, together with the Presidents of the political parties all supported our submission. The advocacy was successful and the Ministry of Health allocated USD 85,000 for the safe spaces in the referral hospitals.

Working with Government can be difficult. We don't have access to the information we need and the Government's transparency portal is not complete. We can't see how much the Government has spent or who benefits or do a year-on-year comparison. We also worry about the implementation; commitments might be made but without seeing the report how can we hold Government to account?

UN Women provided the technical advice on our submission, working very well with the partners. At Rede Feto, we like working with UN Women. UN Women provided us with the information we otherwise wouldn't have access to. They helped to bridge the gap between Government and civil society.



## MP Lurdes Bessa

Member of Committee A, Vice-President and Chair of the Democratic Party (PD),  
National Parliament of Timor-Leste

### What are you doing to promote gender equality?

I am Member of Parliament (MP), as well as the Vice-President and Chair of the Democratic Party (PD) in National Parliament. UN Women has helped me to gather data on how the Government is implementing its commitments for the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). I use [the information] to ask and follow-up on questions here in Parliament. In discussions with my party and within the Parliamentary Women's Caucus, the GMPTL (Grupo de Muhleres Parlamentar de Timor-Leste) I share a gender perspective. Internationally, I am a member of the Asian Women's Caucus for MPs in Asia. I've had a lot of support from UN Women to help me feed relevant information into the meetings.

### How are you doing it?

One thing I believe strongly is that we need to work as an example of our values. We need to be role models. People are sometimes surprised to see a woman as an MP, a woman in my position of power. As women in leadership, we are affecting change through the roles that we hold. We need to use that in a positive way.

In our party we have regular community meetings to discuss issues with our constituents. I try to get out of Dili as much as I can and talk to people in the municipalities. When I travel, the Secretary General of Democratic Women's Organization, the OMD [an organization promoting women within the PD party] always makes sure women are present at the discussions. I use these meetings as an opportunity to talk about the everyday problems women have.

### What are some successes you've had?

We are getting good support for gender equality from our Prime Minister. It's having a positive impact. In Parliament, the issue is now on the agenda. There is one big problem that still concerns me and that's gender-based violence. That's still a big issue. The Government has presented the action plan but we need to work hard to solve this.

In the PD party, we have a balanced party bench, four women and four men. We also have a women's organization with the party, the OMD. It makes people in the party realise that you don't have women just to fill the spots [there is a quota ensuring one third of MPs are women], but they need to be prepared.

A newly elected chair of the OMD is a young woman and I think that's changing things as young women tend to be more outspoken.



## Henrique da Silva

National Director gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment, Secretary of State for the Support and Socio-Economic Promotion of Women (SEM)

### What are you doing to promote gender equality?

SEM is the main Government institution to promote gender equality. As National Director for gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment, I am responsible for the gender-mainstreaming and women's capacity building programs.

### How are you working to promote gender equality?

We look at how to influence the Government's key line ministries to incorporate gender into their annual plans and budget and we have a program where we give training on gender mainstreaming, gender-based violence, gender equality and other issues so the line ministries are aware of the problems women face.

We have developed a "gender checklist", translating CEDAW and other national commitments, such as the Maubisse Declaration or the National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence, into practical recommendations for the line ministries. It encourages decision-makers at the ministry to think about gender by giving practical ideas. At the same time, this checklist provides a framework to analyse the annual plans of the line ministries. Using the checklist, we can see where the gaps are. In our experience, the ministry may come back to us and say they will include some of our recommendations as a priority, while other recommendations may be left until next year.

We also sit on the Budget Review Committee to observe if our recommendations have been adopted. The Secretary of State represents SEM on the Budget Review Committee and the Director and an advisor support her in the meetings to give comments and feedback. That's where all the line ministries are represented and is an important forum. Since 2015, we are working closely with the planning unit of the Prime Minister's Office, so that gender is part of the state budget and planning process, and not a parallel process.

### What are some successes you've had?

In the 2016 Budget Review Committee, we saw that 13 Government Institutions had taken on our recommendations. For example, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries(MAF). They set targets for the number of women in some of their activities. MAF also allocated budget to support women's agriculture groups.

Overall we see that we still have a problem with some of the line ministries. Some line ministries consider gender and some do not. But we don't stop there, we are continuing the work by coordinating with the Prime Minister's Office. Together we are following up with the line ministries so they start to make gender a priority.



## Brigida Soares

Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Prime Minister's Office

### **What are you doing to promote gender equality?**

I work across all the key line ministries on planning, monitoring and evaluation. I work with the ministries to encourage them to consider gender in their annual action plan. I work together with the Secretary of State for the Socio-Economic Promotion of Women (SEM) and UN Women.

### **How are you doing it?**

I learnt about gender responsive budgeting from UN Women when I went to Bangkok and Korea for two major conferences. Whilst I was there I was inspired. I thought, yes, this is simple, I can take this back to my work on planning and monitoring in the Government. It's in line with the commitments we the Government have made, for example the Maubisse Declaration for Rural Women's Economic Empowerment, CEDAW, the Strategic Development Goals. It reflects the views of the Prime Minister. He supports gender mainstreaming and he supports accountability.

We have political support at the planning level. Now it's a matter of implementation, to encourage each line ministry to think about how their activities and programs and budgets are sensitive not just to gender but to all people – people with a disability to children, to everyone.

### **What are some successes you've had?**

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) have incorporated gender into their Annual Action Plan and Budget. I worked closely with MAF and SEM to show MAF how to come up with a really good program as well as sub-programs and activities.

Overall, we saw a great improvement on the number of line ministries that address gender concerns through specific programs and are actually committed to implement them. We are also better able to monitor the line ministries, as those gender priorities are part of their plans.



# Gallieni S.F da C Galhos

Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Director in Aileu Municipality

**What are you doing to promote gender equality?**

I am the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) Director in Aileu. In my role, I help to establish and support women's agricultural cooperatives.

**What are you doing to promote gender equality?**

The Ministry currently provides support to six women's agricultural cooperatives in Aileu. The work is aimed at developing women's roles in leadership. It's a pilot program. If the groups do well, it will be rolled out to other areas.

Our extension workers have been supporting women's agriculture cooperatives in Suku Saboreia and Suku Fahuria. So far they have received technical support and a small amount of funding. For example, MAF have provided the sheets to cover the soil to stop evaporation. The groups in Suku Saboreia and Suku Fahuria grow a variety of vegetables. They grow broccoli, cauliflower, capsicum and tomatoes. In Suku Saboreia the group has 12 women and 3 men.

**What are some successes you've had?**

The women's cooperative in Suku Saboreia are connected with two Dili supermarkets [Dili Mart and Kmanek]. The group can choose which they sell their vegetables to. It's up to them which one they choose depending on price and conditions. The group usually sits together to decide. The impact is massive. They have a good income. I helped them to open a bank account. They agreed that when they sell their vegetables, 50% goes into a bank account. This is money they save.

When the women in the group have an income, they can be independent and make their own decision about clothes they can buy, to send their kids to school, to look after their health. When women are strong, children are strong and families are strong.



