



**P R I M E
M I N I S T E R**

**REMARKS BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
OF TIMOR-LESTE, HIS EXCELLENCY DR. RUI MARIA DE ARAÚJO ON THE
OCCASION OF SIDE EVENT ON HEALTH AT THE**

**GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON THE 2030 AGENDA: A ROADMAP FOR SDGs
IN FRAGILE AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED STATES**

“HEALTH IN THE AGE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT”

21 MAY 201Y

Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished guests,

The 2030 Agenda asks of us to ‘Leave no one behind’, and ‘Reach first those who are furthest behind.’

This is very important for us in Timor-Leste given our context and because approximately 70 per cent of our population lives in rural and/or very remote areas of the country.

This is the essence of the reason why we are here today, at this Side Event of the SDGs Global Conference, talking precisely about a program that will allow us to reach every single Timorese person, regardless of where they are and who they are.

The Health in Family Program or Programa Saude na Familia, that the VI Government of Timor-Leste committed to implementing on 22 July 2015, is part of an integrated approach that will ensure good health for every Timorese in this country.

We pushed ourselves through the good work of the Ministry of Health to rather than expect people to access basic services, often having to travel many hours through rough terrains and crossing high rivers on foot, that we would take health services to the people instead.

When the VI Government started implementing this initiative, I mentioned that only with a strong and healthy people we could have a strong nation.

What we were attempting to do with the Program Saude na Familia is in most respects straightforward. We have joint integrated teams composed by health professionals (one doctor, one nurse and one midwife) and we send them out from health centres and posts to visit every single household across the 12 municipalities and special economic zone ZEESM.

Using a tool called ‘Dispensarizasaun’ (the way in which we dispense health services), these teams have been observing and taking note of the health status of families and individuals while at the same time stratifying them according to their particular health needs.

Through this tool, we are assessing the health condition of individuals and families but also looking at the overall demographic and environmental context in which people live in. We assess risk factors, hygiene characteristics at the household level, socio-economic factors impacting families as well as individuals and the overall conditions of households.

Using this disaggregated data, we then analyse and establish health diagnostics that allow us to determine the priorities and develop plans for the dispensing of health services according to the health needs of the community. Thus, we are and will be able to better and more efficiently targeted and delivered health services.

The data makes it also much easier to determine the prioritize the frequency of future home-visits by the integrated teams of health professionals.

Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished guests

‘Leave no one behind’, and ‘Reach first those who are furthest behind.’

As I mentioned previously approximately 70% of our population lives in rural areas and/or in very remote areas, in what is a very mountainous and rugged country. One of the big problems, apart from accessibility, is lack of information, and most Timorese are unaware of their health status requiring our teams to travel far and face many challenges to try and reach everyone.

But we tried nonetheless, and we have already had key early successes, thus giving small but important steps in a long road to ensure better health to all our people.

I am very glad to announce that despite only starting the Program Saude na Familia in 2015, that our integrated health teams have already been able to visit **94 percent** of all households/families and at the individual level we have been able to register the details of **84 percent** of all our population across Timor-Leste.

When we embarked on this endeavour, of bringing health services to every single woman, child, elderly and Timorese living with disability, this was one of the way ways we are investing in our future. So if our vision by 2030 is to have an upper middle income society, I can tell you, as a politician but also as a medical doctor that we won't reach this goal in the absence of a healthy population, able to make constructive contributions to our sustainable development.

Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished guests

Reaching the households is often the difficult first step. Next the teams speak to every member of the household first as a family and then individually to determine their health history, therefore grasping a comprehensive health picture of individuals, families and of the community as well.

Through this process of registering the health details of our population both manually and digitally, we have come across astounding cases.

The most salient stories in my mind, that are in the Programa Saude na Familia book, being launched later today include the story of a patient who told us that the last time she had been to a health clinic to see the doctor was during Indonesian times, thus, more than 15 years ago.

Another patient, who suffers a mental health condition was locked inside his home for over ten years. There are incredible cases that are very real. And these are the cases that make the Programa Saude na Familia so important and so humane. Through it we can identify, diagnose and provide adequate health services and treatment to the underserved, the ones at the end of the line, who we must bring to the front, thus leaving no one behind and reaching the last ones first.

The next step after this is very important as well, not just for us in Timor-Leste but also because it fits in the overall context of this global SDGs conference. Despite being a small

country with many challenge and priorities, we have turned to technology as a tool that will help us deal on our health promises.

This is the other side of the Programa Saude na Familia that we showcasing today at this Side Event. Whilst we are focussed on the human side of 'leave no one behind' with this important program and ensuring that every single Timorese has adequate access to universal health care coverage, we are also using technology as an important tool that will allow us to do this more consistently and equitably. Leave no one behind means every single one of us, woman, man, child, elderly and those living with disability.

We will not be able to do this if we do not know who they are and where they are.

This is where we have enlisted new technologies that will enable us to record the health records of all Timorese families and individuals so that the health sector can best service them.

David Montalvão, IT specialist in my office will next make a short presentation on how we have been able to use ICTs to ensure we are able to deliver on the promise of the SDGs and Agenda 2030 and of the Health SDG Goal 3.

Lastly a special word about SDG Goal 17 on transformative partnerships. Since we started the Program Saude na Familia that we have been able to count on the support of the UN, in particular its agencies, WHO and UNICEF, both here with us today, to jointly launch the Programa Saude na Familia Book and Video.

It is this spirit of partnerships, instrumental and crosscutting, to the implementation of the SDGs in Timor-Leste by 2030, that has enabled us to successfully register over 90 percent of families across Timor-Leste in record time. We count on your continued support not just in terms of the implementation of the Programa na Saude, but with all our health sector development efforts.

Together we can, in a long road that is best travelled with friends.

Thank you