



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child

Fourth periodic report submitted by Timor-Leste under article 44 of the Convention, due in 2020*

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Acronyms

CC	Civil Code
CMT	Coordination and Monitoring Team
CPC	Criminal Procedure Code
CPLP	Community of Portuguese Speaking Nations
CPN	Child Protection Network
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRVS	Civil Registration and Vital Statistics
CSC	Civil Service Commission
CRPD	Convention of Persons with Disabilities
DHS	Demographic Health Survey (DHS)
CMJPLOP	Conference of Ministers of Justice of Portuguese Speaking Countries
EmONC	Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care
ICERD	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
IMNCI	Integrated Management of Childhood Illness
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KNDL	National Commission on the Rights of the Child
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoH	Ministry of Health
MPDSR	Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response
MSSI	Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion
NAPC	National Action Plan for Children
NDRN	National Directorate of Registry and Notary
NDS	National Directorate of Statistics
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
PC	Penal Code
PCIC	Scientific Police for Criminal Investigation
PDHJ	Ombudsman for Human Rights and Justice
PNTL	National Police of Timor-Leste
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEFOPE	Secretary of State for Employment Policy and Vocational Training
SISCA	Integrated Health System
UPMA	The Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VPU	Vulnerable Person Unit

I. Introduction

1. The Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste takes this opportunity to update the Committee on the progress made in the implementation of the Convention since the submission of the last periodic reports. This report covers the period between 2015 and 2019 for the Convention and from 2008 to 2019 for the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.

2. Upon the adoption of the last periodic report submitted under article 44 of the Convention, the Government of Timor-Leste embarked on the preparation for the formulation of an action plan to further strengthen the system for the implementation of the treaty and to follow-up on the recommendations of the Committee. This process resulted in the adoption of the National Action Plan for Children in 2015. The Action Plan provides guidelines for all relevant institutions in their programs and planning in areas related to the right of the child.

Preparation of this report

3. In the development of this report, the Government of Timor-Leste conducted a broad consultation across ministries and other relevant state institutions to collect information on the implementation of various recommendations made by the Committee.

4. Following the completion of the first draft report, the National Commission for the Rights of the Child held a meeting with national and international civil society organizations as well as the country representatives of various United Nations agencies to seek their views and comments on the draft report.

II. General measures of implementation

Follow-up information on the concluding observations (CRC/C/TLS/CO/2-3)

A. Information relating to paragraph 9 (legislative framework)

5. During the reporting period, Timor-Leste has taken significant steps to strengthen the legislative framework for the protection of the rights of the child. In January 2017, the President promulgated the Law to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons.¹ Several other legislations related to the protection of the child have also been enacted. They include key legislation in the area of education,² combatting illegal trafficking of drugs³ and the legal regime to regulate the practices of martial arts.⁴

6. Additionally, a number of approved laws have secured specific guarantees directly related to the rights of the child, including the legislation on social security, the new law on immigration and asylum with specific guarantees on family reunification and control for entering and departing the country,⁵ a specific regime to support the quality control of institutions providing for alternative care for children⁶ and laws on new curriculum for preschool and basic education.⁷

¹ Law Nr. 3/2017, January 25th.

² Laws Nr. 3/2015 and 4/2015, January 14th.

³ Law Nr. 2/2017, January 25th.

⁴ Law Nr. 05/2017, April 19th.

⁵ Law Nr. 11/2017, May 24th.

⁶ Decree-Law Nr. 25/2017, July 26th.

⁷ Laws Nr. 3/2015 and 4/2015, January 14th.

7. The development of the legal system in Timor-Leste is an evolving process. This provides an opportunity for the country to develop a legal framework capable of providing adequate protection to the rights of the child, right from the outset. However, it must be acknowledged that building an entire legal system afresh is a challenging task. The adoption of legislations relating to the rights of the child has been slow. In part, this is owing to the necessity to ensure effectiveness and coherence among various legislations in this area.

8. A process was commenced for the formulation and approval of the Child Protection Law. However, this process could not be concluded due to legal procedural restrictions concerning outstanding laws before the National Parliament owing to early elections in 2017. This proposed law aimed at providing a special legal framework, with specific legal procedures, to secure speedy protection for children who at risk of having their rights violated, notably including those in a situation of abandonment and serious neglect.

9. With the premature conclusion of the process for the approval of the Child Protection Law, there are now considerations to conclude the drafting process of an overarching child rights umbrella law, following exemplary practices in other countries with civil law systems. The challenge persists in the timely development of a legislative framework which takes into account evolving matters in relation to child rights and the country's overall legal framework, readiness of the implementing institutions, while at the same time allowing sufficient time to ensure a participatory process, including by children.

10. In the meantime, in cooperation with UNICEF, the MoJ took the initial steps to draft regulations to implement an open regime for juvenile offenders. The Criminal Execution Regime provides for the open regime to be the generally applicable to sentenced juveniles, however this general rule has not met with practice due to lack of regulatory instruments. Although the drafting process was aiming for an adoption by the end of 2020, it appears to be suffering further delays.

11. In March 2019, the Government approved the Policy on Legal Reform.⁸ The policy sets a clear framework for the development of legislations. This policy aims to improve the legislative processes, having broad public participation, to promote a more coherent legal framework which provide better protection for human rights of the citizens. It calls for legislative process to acquire views of various government departments in fields relevant to each legislation, allowing for a multidisciplinary scrutiny of legislations. It is expected that future development of child related legislations will benefit from this policy.

B. Information relating to paragraph 11 (comprehensive policy and strategy)

12. As referred to in paragraph 2 of this report, the Government adopted the National Action Plan for Children (NAPC) in 2016.⁹ The NAPC is a consolidated response to the Committee's Concluding Observations of 2015. By Government Resolution no 27/2017, the Action Plan was made a general guideline for all ministries in the formulation of their annual programmes and planning. The Action Plan is aimed to achieve specific objectives which correspond to the Committee's Concluding Observations and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹⁰

13. The NAPC identified various thematic priority areas relating to the Committee's recommendations, and assign specific responsibilities to government ministries and agencies for addressing issues within those thematic areas in their planning, programming and budgeting. This has enabled the Government to take a more consolidated approach in the efforts to better protect the child and to provide a more enabling environment for the development of the child.

⁸ Adopted by Government Resolution No. 14/2019.

⁹ National Action Plan for Children in Timor-Leste 2016–2020.

¹⁰ Resolution of the Government:

http://www.mj.gov.tl/jornal/public/docs/2017/serie_1/SERIE_I_NO_20.pdf.

14. The Government sees the NAPC as a valuable tool for planning, as allows a whole-of-government approach to the protection and fulfilment of the right of the child. However, it recognizes that time is required for the commitments in the Action Plan to be fully incorporated into the planning processes of relevant Ministries.

C. Information relating to paragraph 13 (coordination)

15. The NAPC identified the National Commission for the Rights of the Child (Komisaun Nasional Ba Direitu Labarik – KNDL) as the agency in charge of the coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the Action Plan. This is done through the Coordination and Monitoring Team (CMT) for the Action Plan, which composed of focal points from each of the ministries and agencies tasked with the implementation of the Action Plan.

16. As mandated by the Action Plan, the Government appointed focal points within each ministry and institutions. The appointment of the focal points is to ensure that the ministerial or agency level plans are coordinated and to avoid duplicity among Government institutions.

D. Information relating to paragraph 15 (allocation of resources)

17. For the effective implementation of NAPC, the Government Resolution no 27/2017 instructed all ministries to, among others: include budgeting process with child right perspective and specify a clear allocation for children in the relevant sectors; prioritize children in each Ministry's Annual Action Plan; to give priority to the execution of the PANC in the allocation of funds from the Ministry's budget; to ensure adequate human resources for program areas affecting children.

18. Since the fiscal year of 2017 – 2018, the Government implemented child sensitive budgeting across government ministries. In that fiscal year, the Ministry of Education (MoE) executed a total budget of US \$10,055,000, with approximately 43,6% allocated to programs related to the implementation of the NAPC. This portion of the budget covers the implementation of the new curricula for pre-school and basic education levels, the adoption and implementation of the National Policy on Inclusive Education, and refresher training for 11,962 teachers from all levels of basic and secondary education.¹¹

19. Within the Government of Timor-Leste, the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (Unidade de Planeamento, Monitorização e Avaliação – UPMA)¹² under the Office of the Prime Minister is responsible for the equitable allocation resources, monitoring and evaluation of programs across line ministries. This unit is coordinates, organizes and supervises the process of planning, monitoring and evaluation of programs of the whole government to ensure that resources are allocates adequately and used efficiently to achieve the identified development goals.

E. Information relating to paragraph 17 (data collection)

20. Besides the statistical data collected by the National Directorate of Statistics (NDS), the collection of child related data is done at the sectoral level by different ministries, appropriately disaggregated to serve ministerial planning and programming needs. The National Directorate of Statistics is responsible for the collection and maintenance of overall statistical data in the country. Statistical data on different sectors gathered through censuses and surveys are compiled by the National Directorate for further use by relevant line ministries for program planning and implementation.

21. The NAPC makes it a priority to strengthen the existing data collection system to ensure that they are accessible across ministries and compatible with the planning necessities of different ministries. For this purpose, the National Directorate of Statistics works with line

¹¹ Final Report of the VII Constitutional Government 2017.

¹² Established by Decree Law no. 22/2015 on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation.
http://www.mj.gov.tl/jornal/public/docs/2015/serie_1/SERIE_I_NO_25.pdf.

ministries with capacities to collect, maintain and process statistical information, and provide them with training and the necessary IT support to conduct data collection and tabulation.

F. Information relating to paragraph 19 (independent monitoring)

22. The Provedoria (Office of the Ombudsman) for Human Rights and Justice is an independent statutory body, empowered to monitor, receive complaints and investigate human rights violations through action or omission by public bodies and private entities providing services to the public with this power, the Provedoria is active in monitoring a broad range of cases of human right violations, including those involving children. As the National Human Rights Institution of Timor-Leste, the Provedoria has further strengthened its institutional capacity to serve as a key independent institution to monitor and advocate for the full implementation of the rights of the child.

23. The staff of the Provedoria are trained to receive, investigate and address complaint by children or cases involving children, with the protection of the best interest of the child in mind. The Provedoria conducts regular monitoring of prisons and detention facilities, and scrutinize various government programs including those relating to children, and provide feedback to relevant government agencies for improvement.¹³ Currently PDHJ designates 2 (two) staff as focal points at its national office to deal with matters related specifically to child rights.

24. Since 2019, the Provedoria established a system to disaggregate cases of human rights abuses, which includes a separate category of human rights abuses against children. The existing mechanisms allow the Provedoria to refer cases of abuse to relevant Government agencies and victim support institutions for follow-up. Several cases have been referred for criminal investigation, and others, such as those involving teachers' misconduct, have been referred to the Civil Service Commission (CSC) for disciplinary actions.

25. Besides monitoring of human rights abuses, the Provedoria also conducts public awareness campaigns through workshops targeting students. Between 2015 and 2019, a total of 4,815 students – 2,479 female and 2,336 male students, participated in human rights workshops conducted by the Provedoria. The workshops cover a broad range of child rights related subjects, including the criminal nature of corporal punishment, early marriage and pregnancy, stigmatization against victims of child abuse and domestic violence, and the mechanism available for reporting cases of child abuse.

26. The strengthened capacity of the Provedoria to support the rights of the child is evidenced by its ability to submit a complementary report to the CRC third and fourth periodic report already in 2015 as well as its implementation of a number of monitoring activities on children rights, including prison conditions for juveniles, school feeding programme, violence against children in schools as well as early pregnancy. The Provedoria has also ensured that it contributes to support the increased access to information for children through target awareness sessions at schools' settings. In the last 5 years, approximately 8000 children have participated in public awareness sessions organized by the Provedoria.

27. The Consultative Commission within the Provedoria responsible for deliberation of plans and programs, and evaluate the work of the institution, include among its members civil society organizations which represent children.¹⁴

¹³ Annual Reports of the Provedor for Human Rights and Justice 2016, 2017 and 2018, Prison Monitoring Report 2019, Detention Monitoring Report 2019, Monitoring of School Feeding Program 2019.

¹⁴ Art. 7(3)d of Decree Law no. 25/2011.
http://www.mj.gov.tl/jornal/public/docs/2016/serie_1/SERIE_I_NO_27.pdf.

III. Definition of the child

A. Information relating to paragraph 21 (definition of the child)

28. The Government of Timor-Leste wishes to reiterate that, as it has presented in the previous reports, the legal system of the country adopts the definition of the child as contained in the Convention, by virtue of Section 9 of the Constitution. Various legislations in the Timorese legal system governing different matters determine a varying range of age of majority and/or minority. This is done for the purpose ensuring better protection and guarantees for the enjoyment of the rights of the child, while attributing the appropriate responsibilities to the child, maintaining, at the same time, the child's best interest and development as the primary focus and consideration.

B. Information relating to paragraph 23 (elimination of harmful practices)

29. As already reported, the Civil Code of Timor-Leste determines 17 to be the age of majority.¹⁵ It follows that, as a general rule, legal age for marriage is above 17 years for both boys and girls. An exception is made in the Civil Code, which is that marriage between boys and girls below the age 17 but older than 16 years are permitted, with the consent of his or her parents or guardian, or the authorization of the Head of Civil Registry. Minors married under such conditions are considered to be emancipated, and are attributed the full abilities to exercise their rights.

30. Under no circumstance the marriage of a child below the age of 16 is permitted.

31. Although the Civil Code makes an exception to allow marriage of children between the age of 16 and 17 year, the Government continues to conduct public awareness campaign, in collaboration with UN Agencies and national NGOs, to encourage young people to postpone their marriage.

32. It has been reported that one of the factors contributing to underage marriage is the high incidences of teenage pregnancy, either from engaging in a relationship or as a result of sexual abuse, and the cultural practice of arranged marriage. Teenage victims of rape are often pressured to marry their attackers, especially when the rape results in pregnancy. Challenges in navigating decisions on their sexual lives and limited access to information on reproductive health, often lead to early pregnancy.¹⁶ Bearing a child as an unmarried girl is still considered in some communities to bring shame upon the family.

33. There is an increased understanding that pressuring a teenage victim of a sexual offence to marry her attacker is a clear violation of children's rights. The view has been taken, notably among the Court actors, that a victim of rape should not be pressured marry her attacker, and that a marriage under such conditions constitutes forced marriage. While there remain a number of reported cases in this area, it is noted that these are becoming rarer with the increased knowledge from Court actors and community leadership alike.¹⁷

34. The latest available data has shown a significant reduction in the incidences of early marriage. The Population Census of 2015 and the Demographic Health Survey (DHS) of 2016 found that 14.9% of population under the age of 18 are married, representing a significant reduction compared to 19% in 2010. Out of this figure, girls and boys under the age of 17 years account for 2.2% and 1.1% respectively.¹⁸ This reduction can be attributed to

¹⁵ Article 118 Civil Code (Law Nr.10/2011, September 14th).

¹⁶ Cfr. Provedoria for Human Rights and Justice, Annual Report, 2018, p. X and UNFPA, Secretary of State for Youth and Sport and Plan International, Teenage Pregnancy and Early Marriage in Timor-Leste: Research on the Decision-Making Pathways of Young Women in the Municipalities of Covalima, Aileu and Dili, 2017, p. 4.

¹⁷ Cfr. One case was reported through an interview in Judicial System Monitoring Programme, Labarik sira-nia Asesu ba Justisa Formal iha Timor Leste: Relatóriu Situasaun, 2014. Similar trend has been reported by the US Department of State, Timor-Leste 2018 Human Rights Report, 2019, p. 16.

¹⁸ Timor-Leste Population and Housing Census 2015 – Analytical Report on Gender, Vol. 13, 2018, p. 8.

a number of factors, including the extensive public awareness campaign, greater access to education and the desire to pursue professional carrier among young people.

35. The Government continues to conduct awareness raising campaigns throughout the country, in cooperation with civil society organizations, on various practices which are harmful for the child, targeting children, youth, parents and community leaders. The awareness raising workshops covers such issues as early marriage, prevention of early pregnancy, sexual crimes and stigmatization of victims of child sexual abuse victims and corporal punishment of children, including within the family environment.

36. An important step has also been taken to create better conditions for the child's health. The Law number 22/2016 on the Regime for the Control of Tobacco prohibits the sale of tobacco by and to children under the age of 17, and in places specifically designated for children. The law also prohibits smoking in places designated for children such as child care centers, places of leisure, and primary and secondary education establishments. Importers of tobacco products are obliged under the law to print warnings against the sale of tobacco to children under the age of 17.

IV. General principles

A. Information relating to paragraph 25 (non-discrimination)

37. The Government continues to make the efforts to ensure that services are available and accessible to all children without discrimination. As elaborated in other parts of this report, significant resources and efforts have been put into ensuring that services such as health, education, clean water and electrification are available and accessible for throughout the territory, including in the rural areas. Although still being developed, the civil registry system is now better organized and accepts documents other than baptism certificate as the basis to issue the birth certificate.

38. With regards the issue of children not in possession of baptism certificate referred to in paragraph 24 of the Concluding Observation (CRC/TLS/CO/2-3), the Government wishes to inform the Committee of the following. While baptism certificate remains acceptable, it is not the only basis for the issuance of the birth certificate. A birth certificate may be issued to a child on the basis of the Boletim do Nascimento or Assento de Nascimento (Birth Record or Birth Registry). There is not legal requirement to present a birth certificate to enrol in schools in Timor-Leste, however, it is required for enrolment in university.

39. As it concerns children of returnees which is also referred in the paragraph referred above, the Government wishes to clarify that incidents of spontaneous unwelcoming expression among community members did occur in some parts of the country in the years immediately after the restauration of independence. However, after almost two decades of continuous process of reconciliation, Timorese families formerly associated with the occupying power are now fully integrated into the society. Children belonging to those families fully enjoy their rights as any other Timorese children, without distinction of any sort.

40. The Government recognizes that there remain challenges in ensuring access to education for children with disabilities.

B. Information relating to paragraph 27 (best interest of the child)

41. The adoption of the NAPC represents an important milestone in the Government's effort to ensure that the best interest of the child receives priority attention the decision making across sector at all levels. The current debate around draft legislation relating to juvenile justice is an indication that serious consideration being given to the necessity to strike a balance between punitive measures and child welfare and development.

42. As referred to in paragraph 6 of this report, several new legislations adopted during the period of reporting, namely Decree Law number 14/2016 on the Regime for the Control

of Tobacco, Law number 11/2017 on Immigration and Asylum, Law number 3/2017 on Prevention and Fight against Trafficking in Persons and Fourth Amendment to the Penal Code (PC), all contain provisions to protect the best interest of the child.

43. For example, in relation to denial or entry of unaccompanied children, Article 19.2 expressly states that repatriation of a child in those circumstances can only be permitted if his or her state of origin or a third state can guarantee that the child will be received and adequately supported. Article 16.4 of law 3/2017 requires that all measures to support and protect children victims of trafficking primarily serve the best interest of the child. Furthermore, Article 37 of the same law provides that women and children victims trafficking are protected by the relevant provisions of law on domestic violence.

44. The protection of the best interest of the child is also strongly reflected in the Criminal Procedure Code (CPC). On the rule concerning limitation of court proceedings, article 76 (4) provides that the court may prohibit the presence of children under the age of 18 in the proceedings of cases deemed sensitive, even if the proceeding in question is not closed to the public. Furthermore, article 76 (5) of the Code provides that court proceedings in cases of sexual crimes where the victim is a child under 18 year are conducted with restriction of publicity.

45. Training on the primacy of the best interest of the child is provided to Social Workers, personnel of the Vulnerable Persons Unit (VPU) of the National Police and other officials working on child related matters. Although no specific curriculum has been devised, materials relating to the protection of the best interest of the child are included in the courses of the Judicial Training Center.

C. Information relating to paragraph 29 (respect for the views of the child)

46. The Civil Code contains a number of provisions which, combined, provide comprehensive bases and mechanism for the courts to take the views of the child into account when deciding on matters which affect the interest of the child.

47. Article 1782 of the Civil Code provides that parental powers are share equally between both parents. In case of a disagreement in the exercise of this power in relations to matters of particular importance, where a court's is required to intervene, the views of children above 14 years of age need to be heard before a decision is made. Similarly, in the appointment of tutor or guardian for the child, where one has not been appointed by the parents, the court shall hear the views of a minor aged above 14 years of age before making a decision.

48. When deciding on a case of adoption, if the child older 12 years of age, the court is required to acquire the consent of the child,¹⁹ and in case of adoption by a family with children, the judge shall hear the view of children of the adopting family who are aged above 12 years.²⁰

49. In case divorce where the parents cannot agree on the custody of the child, the court shall decide on the matter, based on the best interest of the child.²¹

V. Civil rights and freedoms

A. Information relating to paragraph 31 (birth registration)

50. Timely registration of birth continues to be a challenge for Timor-Leste. Current statistics shows that 60.4% of children under the age of 5 years are registered, and 29.2% of children have birth certificate. The primary responsibility for civil registration lays with the National Directorate of Registry and Notary (NDRN) of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). At the

¹⁹ Art. 1815 of the Civil Code.

²⁰ Art. 1863 of the Civil Code.

²¹ Art. 1787 of the Civil Code.

municipal level, there is currently one civil registry office in each of the 13 municipalities of the country. With the assistance of UNICEF, 5 out of the 13 municipal registry offices have been computerized.

51. The National Registry Office and all the 13 municipal offices are equipped to register birth and issue birth certificates. However, the registration of the child remains the responsibility of the parents. Birth certificate is issued free of charge for children under 5 years of age. A fee of USD 5 is collected for the issuance of birth certificate for children older than 5 years, as a means to disincentivize late registration of a child.

52. Different processes are available to register a child, depending on where the child was born. If a child was born in a health facility, the registration may be done by filling out the form provided in the Mother and Child Card (Livrinho da Mãe e da Criança – LIBIO) issued by the Ministry of Health (MoH). Parents need to present the form to the registry office to register the child, and a birth certificate will be issued. If a child has been born at home, a community leader will issue a birth declaration, which can then be presented by the parents at the registry office to register the child. To fill gap of registry services, the NDRN dispatch mobile registry unit to remote communities, in an ad-hoc basis. Out of 35,156 children registered between 2015 and 2018, 68.63% were registered through regular registration, 12.85% through mobile registration and 18.52% were registered with birth declaration from community leaders.

53. The Government is conscious that birth registration is important to ensure the child's protection under the law, and provides essential basis for planning and delivery of services to the child. Several attempts have been made to boost birth registration, including the development of draft legislation on civil registry and draft Strategic Plan on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS). However, due to the evolving nature of the Government's administration structures, constant adaptations are required from the draft documents to accommodate the changes.

54. The Government is committed to devise a strategy to develop a registration system which is capable of addressing the existing challenges and anticipating the changes in the administration structure inherent in the state-building process. For this reason, the Government conducted a baseline assessment on birth registration in 2018. The absence of legislative and policy frameworks, lack of coordination among Government institutions at the national and sub-national levels, limitation of resources, lack of parental and community awareness of the importance of birth registration and limited technical capacity of personnel have been identified among the causes of the bottleneck in birth registration.

B. Information relating to paragraph 33 (corporal punishment)

55. Corporal punishment has been one of the important subjects included in the public awareness campaign on child's rights conducted by Government agencies and NGOs. Since 2016, the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion (MSSI) has been conducting public awareness campaign on positive disciplining in the municipalities. The campaigns focus on showing parents, educators and community leader alternative non-violent methods of parenting and disciplining children, while emphasizing the negative consequences the child will suffer from psychological or physical violence, abuse and neglect. To deliver the same message, MSSI also produced a non-violent education film, in collaboration with a national NGO, Ba Futuro (For the Future). The film has been aired in several municipalities. In the municipalities of Ermera and Viqueque, the film has been viewed by 21,973 people, out of whom 12,075 are women, between 2017 and 2019.

56. With particular reference to educational establishments, the Government recognizes that there remain incidences of the use of corporal punishment by teachers in some schools as a mean to discipline. However, the increased awareness of the negative impacts on the child's development and the crime associated with corporal punishment has led to a significant reduction of incidence, with a higher percentage of cases being reported. Provedoria's report of 2015 found a drastic reduction in the use of such practices of disciplining in schools nation-wide, as more schools have now adhered to the MoE's policy on zero violence.

57. To curb practices of corporal punishment in educational establishments more effectively, the Government issued the Decree number 29/2017. The Decree identifies the legal regime applicable for the exercise of the disciplinary action related to the violation of professional duties of teaching or no-teaching staff in educational establishments and institutions responsible for their enforcement. It also establishes corrective measures to be taken, depending on the gravity of the act, and other measures for the protection of children. The corrective measures range from administrative disciplinary action by the Civil Service Commission to the institution of criminal proceedings against perpetrators. In conjunction, the MoE issued the Ministerial Diploma no. 4/2018, which clearly identifies practices considered to be in breach of the professional duties of staff of educational institutions.

58. As a result of the application of the Government Decree, several cases of corporal punishments have been investigated, resulting in the application of disciplinary actions and criminal proceedings against alleged perpetrators.

C. Information relating to paragraphs 35 (abuse and neglect) and 37 (sexual exploitation and abuse)

59. As described elsewhere in this report, the Government has implemented a number of programs of awareness rising to combat child abuse and neglect during the reporting period. Protection of the child from abuse and neglect has also been strengthened through the application of criminal legislation, and the provision of services and support for physical and psychological rehabilitation children victims of abuse. Through the public awareness sessions Government officials also provide information on the available mechanisms and procedures by which victims or members of the community can report incidences of child abuse and neglect.

60. In 2019, in collaboration with the UN Women, the MSSSI commenced the process to develop the National Policy on the Establishment of special hotline for reporting cases of abuse of women and children. The approval of this policy will see the establishment of a toll-free hotline services to receive reports and complains about child abuse and neglect.

61. MSSSI continues to improve its services to provide protection for victims of child abuse, and support to recover, physically and mentally. Between 2016 and 2019, through the work of the Child Protection Network, the MSSSI a total of 1,262 children, victims of physical, psychological or sexual abuse and neglect. The children, 912 girls and 350 boys, were placed under protection in 9 Social Solidarity Institutions or Uma Mahon (Safe Houses) across the country. These safe houses are managed by partner NGOs, with financing from the MSSSI. Based on the assessment of the Child Protection Officer, children sustaining psychological harm are referred for treatment by mental health professionals. From the cases received and handled by the Child Protection Network during the reporting period, 794 victims (681 girls and 113 boys) were referred to undergo psychological recovery process, with the support of PRADET – a national NGO providing professional mental health support to victims of abuse. All victims are examined by a medical doctor and, where any physical harms have been sustained, specific treatments are provided.

62. The MSSSI continues to develop the capacity of its team to identify incidences of child abuse and to take appropriate measures to ensure that the victims receive the necessary legal protection and psychological support. The Ministry designated Child Protection Officers in all the 13 municipalities of the country as lead personnel for child protection. The adoption of the National Action Plan for Children in 2016 formalized the Child Protection Network (CPN), and inter-agency inter-sectoral coordination network which have been in existence since 2008. The CPN which involves officials from the Ministry of Health, MoE, Ministry of Justice, officers from the National Police (including the Vulnerable Persons Unit of the Police and the Community Police Unit), and staff members Non-Governmental Organizations. The CPNs have been established in all 13 municipalities, and, in 5 municipalities, the Networks have been established at the sub-districts level.

63. Over the course of the reporting period, technical capacities of officials responsible for child protection have been continually increased. Several training programs have been conducted in cooperation with NGOs and the UN Agencies in Timor-Leste to enhance the

capacity to personnel responsible for child protection. One of such programs is the Spotlight Program of the National police, which is conducted as part of cooperation between the Government of Timor-Leste, the UNDP and the European Union, to train personnel of the Vulnerable Persons Unit (VPU) of the National Police as well as personnel of the PNTL Police Training Centre, in conducting investigation into sexual abuses, including sexual abuses against children²². Nation-wide, there are 111 officers from PNTL involved in the CPN across the 13 municipalities, 72 of whom are female officers. All of these officers are equipped with the skills to conduct interviews with children victims of sexual abuse.

64. Furthermore, to enhance the capabilities to investigate child abuse and violence against children, a training session on the “Criminal Act of Child Sexual Abuse and the International Protection of Human Rights was organized in April 2019. Among the participants are personnel of the Scientific Police for Criminal Investigation (Pólicia Científica de Investigação Criminal – PCIC).

65. Child abuse and neglect, child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse are crimes under the Timorese laws. From 2016 to the time of reporting, 200 defendants have been incarcerated in the prisons of Becora (Dili) and Baucau in relations to crimes committed against children. Out of the 200 inmates, 129 have been sentenced and 71 are in various stages of criminal proceeding. These inmates are accused of various criminal acts against children, ranging from physical and sexual abuse of children to failure to provide child support. PCIC are currently investigating 72 other cases relating to allegations of criminal acts against children between 2019 and 2020, which include sexual assault, sexual abuse and one case of child prostitution.

66. Progress continues to be made in developing and implementing policies, guidelines and oversight mechanisms for agencies tasked with child protection to prevent and respond to occurrences of violence against children, and child exploitation, abuse and neglect. In 2017, the MSSSI established social welfare teams in the municipalities, led by the local officials of the Ministry.

VI. Family environment and alternative care

A. Information relating to paragraph 39 (family environment)

67. Since the last report, the Government has finalized and approved the Child and Family Welfare System Policy. This policy was developed following a nation-wide consultation involving Government institutions and other key stakeholders. The Policy outlines the national collaborative approach to enhance the wellbeing and protection of the child. It aims to address a wide range of vulnerabilities through a combination of preventative strategies (social protection, material and financial benefits, information and awareness raising, and family support services) and a package of specialized services to assist and strengthen families and communities to address child wellbeing and child protection issues.

68. With the Child and Family Welfare System Policy, the State does not seek to replace the role of the family and the community. It recognizes the central role of the family and the community for the wellbeing and protection of the child. However, the responsibility remains with the State to provide support and services to ensure that the appropriate condition is available for the families and communities play their roles.

69. The policy further identifies the different roles played by various governmental and non-governmental agencies-including faith-based organizations for its implementation. The overall responsibility for the implementation of the policy lays with MSSSI, with various departments within the Ministry responsible for providing specific services and support. The National Commission for the Rights of the Child is responsible for overseeing the

²² <https://www.thediliweekly.com/tl/notisias/jender/18581-undp-fasilita-formasaun-kombate-violensia-seksual-ba-membro-vpu>; <http://www.tatoli.tl/en/2020/09/07/eu-supports-pntl-with-us13-2-million-to-pntl-vpu-to-combat-sexual-abuse-of-minors/>.

implementation of the policy, assess and report on progress in the implementation and provide feedback for future improvements.

70. As an immediate follow up to the adoption of the Child and Family Welfare System Policy, the MSSI developed and implemented a comprehensive training program for personnel involved in the implementation of the policy. They include staff of the MSSI, MoE, police officers, community leaders, staff members of NGOs and journalists. One of the focus areas of the training is on the mechanism to address child protection issues, and to respond to issue of child welfare collectively and in a coordinated manner. As at 2017, 382 social welfare workers have participated in the training sessions and are equipped with knowledge and skills to collectively address child protection issues and better coordinate their response to protection cases.

71. The Government considers that a positive family environment is essential for the child's development. In coordination with UNICEF, the Government continues to implement the education program "Hametin Familia" (Strengthening Family) to assist parents with additional skills to support the growth and development of their children. The program delivers information on early stimulation, beneficial nutrition and health habits, positive discipline, hygiene, supporting children's education and birth registration. Information in this program is delivered through face-to-face interactions, home visits and communication for development (C4D) interventions, as well as through community radios and youth theatres.

B. Information relating to paragraph 41 (alternative care)

72. As stipulated in the Child and Family Welfare System Policy, the Government recognizes the central role of the family in ensuring the child's welfare and protection. Therefore, the Policy seeks to, first and foremost, support and strengthen the family to build a strong and harmonious environment within the family to support the healthy upbringing of the child. The Policy adopts a family-oriented approach in the provision of support where it becomes necessary.

73. The Policy considers the out-of-home placement of the child only as the last resort, and of a temporary nature. In situations where the child's security and wellbeing come under threat in the family environment and the child needs to be removed from the family, the first alternative for placement will be sought within the extended family. Even in such cases, the purpose remains to ensure the long-term wellbeing of the child, with the view to re-integrating the child with the biological family with the minimum delay possible.

74. Placement of the child in alternative facilities will only be considered if it offers services which are not available in the community. Assessment must be made to ensure that the alternative facility is capable of ensuring the wellbeing of the child, the child's physical safety, support the child's recovery from trauma, and the maintenance of the child's contact with his/her community and culture. In the event that a child is identified to at risk of physical, emotional and social harm, both the child and his or her family are provided with assistance and counselling until such time that the risk has been averted and the child is ready to reintegrated into the family.

75. The Decree Law number 25/2017 provides the legal regime for institutions providing alternative care, referred to in the Law as Social Solidarity Institutions (SSI), including establishing duties, responsibilities and entitlements of such organizations. The law requires that SSIs must have an office based in Timor-Leste, committed to the social protection of citizens and are governed by clear rules for accountability and transparency. It also affords SSIs with entitlements to benefit from the support of the Government participating and providing their views to policies in the areas relevant to their work, and to bear the status of social utility organizations.

C. Information relating to paragraph 43 (adoption)

76. The Demographic Health Survey of 2010 found that approximately one-fourth of families in Timor-Leste have a child who are not their biological child under their care. This

practice of informal adoption has been practiced in the close-knit Timorese society for a long time. There are a number of factors, including cultural, economic and education ones, which led to the prevalence of this practice. Extended family often looks after children of a relative, at times as their own²³, at times as temporary guardianship.²⁴ In majority of the cases, such adoption does not sever the relationship between the child and his or her biological parents.

77. Examples similar to the practices of informal adoption in Timor-Leste can be found in the system of suppletive tutorship in Quebec, Canada, kinship in Namibia and voluntary delegation of parental powers in Cape Verde.

78. The Timorese legal framework does not provide for suppletive tutorship or kinship. The Civil Code (CC) requires that the care of a child by parties other than parents, which amounts to transfer of parental responsibilities, must be brought before a judge for review and decision.

79. The challenge is that the use of a court to deal with family matters is not yet a common practice.

80. In 2016, an attempt was made to develop mechanisms for inter-country adoption. However, the process did not continue for lack of compliance with the requirements of the Hague Convention. The application of The Hague Convention is contingent upon the existence of a national system of adoption, which is absent in Timor-Leste.

81. So far, the limited number of adoption cases involving foreign nationals have been decided by the court on a case-by-case basis, with express consent of the parents and taking the best interest of the child as the paramount consideration.

82. Note: The Government needs to decide on the recommendation to ratify the following treaties:

- the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000;
- 1993 Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Inter-Country Adoption;
- ILO Convention No. 138 on minimum age.

VII. Disability, basic health care and welfare

A. Information relating to paragraph 45 (children with disabilities)

83. State continues to make the efforts to ensure that children with disabilities receive adequate support for their development and enjoy equal opportunity of access to education, healthcare and other services. The Government's policy concerning support for vulnerable families, Bolsa da Mãe, considers the presence of a child or a dependent with disability in a family as a factor that increases the family's vulnerability status and consequently increases the nominal amount of support allotted to the family in question.

84. The preschool and basic education curriculum, adopted in 2015, takes an inclusive perspective – children with disabilities are to attend general school system. The curriculum also includes materials to support pupils to develop a diversity perspective, with books in Tetum featuring stories of children with disabilities.

85. To consolidate the efforts to create a more inclusive education framework in Timor-Leste, the MoE adopted in 2017 the National Inclusive Education Policy, which was prepared

²³ Families who lack heir often take the child of a relative look after as their own as a means to continue the family line.

²⁴ For example, in case of the loss of the parents, until such time that the child reaches maturity and able to provide for himself or herself, or children from less endowed families who are attending school are taken in by a relative to support the studies until the completion of the child's studies.

with the support of UNICEF. The Inclusive Education Policy is aimed at addressing barriers for certain groups of school age children to access education. These barriers include disabilities, gender, geographical location and poverty.

86. The Government recognizes that a significant portion of children with various forms of disabilities do not have access to education. Only small percentage of approximately 38 thousand of children with disabilities are currently attending school. The adoption of National Policy on Inclusive Education further consolidates the efforts to provide broaden the opportunities for children with disabilities to have access to education. A joint effort between the MoE and Plan International resulted in the training of 30 Inclusive Education Master Trainers from the municipalities of Aileu, Dili and Lautem. Subsequently, the first three Inclusive Education Resources Centers in the country were opened in those municipalities, where the Master Trainers have trained more than 300 classroom teachers to teach pupils with disabilities. Currently, braille literacy and sign language are taught, and children with disabilities are encouraged to attend²⁵.

87. Following the adoption of the Inclusive Education Policy, more Resource Centers have been opened in the country. More teachers have been trained in methods to teach children with disabilities. The Government is aware of the limitations of facilities and personnel for children with disabilities to enjoy their equal rights to education, and is working with all agencies, including the associations of persons with disabilities to improve the conditions.

B. Information relating to paragraph 47 (Health and health services)

88. Progress continues to be made in the development of the health sector in Timor-Leste. In 2015, the Comprehensive Primary Health Care (PHC, Cuidados de Saúde Primários - CSP) saw the inclusion of a new program with the launching of the National Program of Health in the Family (Programa Nacional de Saúde na Família). With the Health in the Family program, a medical team consisted of one doctor, one nurse and a midwife visit every household in the country to provide consultation, treatment and referral for illnesses that required further attention. The team also gather relevant information on medical status of the household and each of its members. The information is then entered into the integrated health information system, allowing the health authorities to establish the medical profile of each individual. Information gathered through the program will be enormously beneficial for future planning. By the end of 2017, the program has visited 213,717 households, which include 1,022,417 individuals.

89. Based on the results and recommendations of an assessment in 2015, the Ministry of Health also developed a new Plan of Action to improve the Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care (EmONC) which was introduced in the previous year. In cooperation with the National Institute of Health, the Ministry of Health also revised the module for the training on the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMNCI).

90. In 2017, the Government provided scholarship for medical doctors and new high school graduates to enrol in specialist and bachelor degrees in the country and overseas. Forty-Three medical doctors were pursuing specialist (post-graduate) degrees, along with 158 in medicine, 70 in dentistry, 214 in nursing, 204 in medical technology, and 181 were to be trained as midwives. In 2018, 284 medical doctors attended refresher courses in the areas of Essential Community Care for New-borns, Clean and Safe Birth, IMCI, HIV/AIDS and school health. In the same year, 402 nurses and midwives received refresher courses in Essential Community Care for New-borns, Clean and Safe Birth, IMCI and HIV/AIDS. Refresher courses were also provided to 32 medical technicians. To support the improvement of the health system management, 56 administrative personnel also received refresher course on management and leadership.

91. Furthermore, between 2019 and 2020, 2,584 health professionals received training in immunization, family planning, clean and safe birth, EmONC, IMCI, essential community care for new-borns, management of new-born illness and complications, as well as maternal,

²⁵ <https://plan-international.org/press-releases/inclusive-education-centres-launched-timor-leste>.

neonatal and perinatal care. With particular reference to EmONC, the trainings are aimed to assist health care practitioners to better understand the guidelines and the seven signal functions of EmONC in order to detect obstetric complications at the community level at the early stage, and to make referral to the appropriate level.

92. During the reporting period, Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response (MPDSR) capacity has also been strengthened. MPDSR systems were established in the National Guido Valadares Hospital and 5 referral hospitals, with a system of verbal autopsy established for all the 12 municipalities and the Special Administrative Region of Oecusse-Ambeno.

93. Efforts to strengthen the health system and the capacity of health care professionals brought encouraging results. During the period of 2015-2017, 77,430 pregnant women (78%) received prenatal care during the first visit and 51,729 pregnant women (52%) during the fourth visit. Additionally, 58,566 women (64.5%) benefited from births assisted by a health professional. Concerning postnatal care, 46,243 mothers and new-borns (51%) received postnatal care during the first week after delivery and 43,196 mothers and new-borns (46.5%) were seen in the first six weeks after delivery.²⁶ In the first semester of 2018, 63.4% of pregnant women benefited from at least 4 prenatal care visits.²⁷ This figure is an increase from 58.4% in the first semester.²⁸

94. Mortality rates of infants and children under 5 years of age decreased considerably. The last demographic health survey in 2016 shows that mortality rate among children under five declined from 64 in 2010 to 41 per 1,000 live births. Within the same period, infant mortality rate has also declined from 45/1,000 live birth to 30/1,000 live births. As reflected in the National Health Sector Strategic Plan (2011-2030), the Government is committed to a further reduction of under 5 and infant mortality rates to 27/1,000 live birth and 21/1,000 live birth respectively by 2030. At a similar pace, maternal mortality rate has also been reduced from 557 to 218 deaths per 100,000 live births in the same period.²⁹

95. The Government of Timor-Leste has made significant progress and continues to reassure its commitment to address malnutrition in all its forms through policies, legislation and programmes.³⁰ The concerns with nutrition can be identified throughout several national policies such as the National Nutrition Strategy (2014-2019); National Zero Hunger Action Plan (2014); National Parliamentary Resolution to prioritize nutrition (2016) and National Food and Nutrition Security Policy (2017). Additionally, other sector-specific policies are 'nutrition-sensitive' and seek to recognize and address underlying elements that can cause malnutrition or are aware of them and take the necessary caution to not cause any harm.³¹

96. Between 2015 and 2017, the program to combat malnutrition for children under the age of 5 years included 30% of children in the regular growth monitoring. One hundred and six thousand and ninety-nine children aged between 6 and 59 months (59%) were included in the vitamin A coverage program and 84,969 children (53%) benefited from treatment against roundworms.³² In the first semester of 2018, 72.4% of children under the age of 5 years old benefited from controlled growth monitoring, a figure which surpassed the intended target of 30%.³³ The vitamin A coverage for children between the age of 6 months and 59 months reached 83.9%, also above the original target of target of 80%.³⁴ All of the existing cases of moderate malnutrition (100%) were treated and received food supplement.

97. Vaccine management system has improved nationwide. A National Effective Vaccine Management Standard Operating Procedures was adopted, and health workers and vaccine handlers from health facilities were trained on their application. In July 2015, the

²⁶ Portrait of the VI Constitutional Government, p. 36.

²⁷ Report of the second quarter 2018, p. 31.

²⁸ Report of the first quarter 2018.

²⁹ Demographic Health Survey 2016.

³⁰ Fill the Nutrient Gap Timor-Leste Final Report, p. 16.

³¹ Fill the Nutrient Gap Timor-Leste Final Report, p. 24.

³² Portrait of the VI Constitutional Government, p. 37.

³³ Report of the second quarter 2018, p. 31.

³⁴ Report of the Second Quarter 2018, p. 31.

Government launched a 2 weeks National Immunization Campaign for measles and polio, covering 501,394 children (95%). This increased the coverage immunization against measles to 73% and the coverage of polio raised to 75%.

98. The national immunization program between 2015-2017 included the administration of vaccines against polio, measles, tuberculosis, tetanus and the pentavalent vaccine.³⁵ During that period, pentavalent vaccines were administered to 101,048 children, 12,784 children received vaccine against hepatitis B, 18,40 children received vaccine against polio, 70,091 children received BCG and 59,567 pregnant women received vaccine against tetanus.

99. To expand the coverage of the national immunization program, health personnel, through SISCA and mobile clinics, conduct regular visits to areas with limited access to health services.

100. The national immunization program has led to the elimination of measles and control of rubella and congenital rubella syndrome in the country, two years ahead of the 2020 target. Timor-Leste was certified by the WHO South East Asia Regional Office as a measles-free country.

101. The Government of Timor-Leste attributes great importance to the availability and accessibility of safe drinking water, and continues to improve services in this area. In the 2015 Census, 31 % of all households in the country had access to safely managed sanitation, compared to 8% in 2010. At the time of reporting, the provision of safe drinking has reached 74% of the population in the rural, and 78% in the urban areas. A draft policy on the water resources management and water supply is currently being discussed by the Council of Ministry. The approval of this policy is expected to an increase in the resource allocation to this area and, in turn, improve the access to clean water for the population in both urban and rural areas.

102. Through the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in School (WASH) program, the supply of clean and safe drinking water to schools have been improved. Seventy percent of public basic education schools have an improved water supply. Only a few schools have segregated toilets, which is required by the WASH guidelines for Timor-Leste.³⁶ WASH is a collaborative program involving several ministries within the Government of Timor-Leste, NGOs and UN Agencies.

103. Through public information campaign, the Government continues encourage communities to abandon practices of open defecation. Messages on billboards on the main roads, radio and television programs as well as visits by Government officials to schools in the municipalities are used as avenues to raise awareness on the importance of personal hygiene. classroom sessions disseminate public information to motivate behaviour and practices which promote hygiene.³⁷ Actions to eradicate open defecation are now incorporated into the Community Action Plan for Sanitation and Hygiene (Planu Aksaun Komunitaria ba Saneamentu no Ijenia – PAKSI), implemented on all the 12 municipalities and the Special Region of Oecusse-Ambeno.

104. Communities have become more aware of the negative effects of open defecation and are committed to eliminate open defecation and achieve the status of Open Defecation Free Area (Área La Soe Foer Arbiru – ALFA). In February 2018, Ermera, with a population of 130,000, was declared the first municipality to be Open Defecation Free (ODF). This was followed by five other municipalities, making six municipalities in Timor-Leste declared ODF. In terms of administration units below municipality, 31 Sub-Districts (out of 65), 201 Villages (out of 442) and 1361 Aldeias (62%) are now declared ODF.

105. Combination of a number of factors, including the awareness on the negative effects of inhaling smoke from cooking with firewood, the obligation to comply with strict environmental protection regimes, improvements in the household economy, greater access to electricity and convenience, have provided some households with the option not to use

³⁵ Portrait of the VI Constitutional Government, p. 37.

³⁶ Report on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: from ashes to reconciliation, reconstruction and sustainable development - Voluntary National Review of Timor-Leste 2019, p. 85.

³⁷ Report of the Second Quarter 2018, p. 37.

traditional cooking methods and cook with kerosene, gas or electrical stove. At the time of reporting, electricity is provided free of charge, or paid at a very reduced price in most of the villages of the country. However, the Government recognizes that this option is not available for a majority of the households, especially in the rural areas. Some NGOs have attempted to introduce briquettes produced from organic wastes and used for cooking with a special stove. However, although using simple technology, such technology remains inaccessible for most households.

106. The Secretariate of State for the Environment, in collaboration with Mercy Corps, has been working to produce and provide households with energy efficient cooking stoves, which consumes less firewood and produces very little smoke. The Secretariate of State for the Environment will continue to promote this simple but efficient technology, which will reduce health risks deriving from traditional cooking methods, with minimum carbon footprint.

107. Timor-Leste recognizes the importance of exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months after birth for the development of the child. The National Food and Nutrition Strategy (NFNS) places exclusive breastfeed for the first six months of a child's life and the introduction of nutritious complementary food thereafter as an important strategy to ensure infants nutrition security. The NFNS set a target for exclusive breastfeeding for children under six months to exceed 70% by 2020. However, data from 2003 to 2016 indicated that the percentage of exclusive breastfeeding have been fluctuating from one year to the next.

108. While it appears that the 2020 target of over 70% exclusive breastfeeding may not be achieved, a recent Food and Nutrition Survey³⁸ conducted by the Ministry of Health provides reasons for optimism. The Survey found that there is a reduction in the rate of early breastfeeding, while the rate of exclusive breastfeeding increases. Sixty-three-point five percent (63.5%) of new-borns received breast-milk within one hour of birth, and 64.2% of children received exclusive breastfeeding until they reach the age of 6 months. Ninety-one-point-two percent (91.2%) of children continues to breastfeed until they are 1 year old, and 67.8% until they are two years old.

109. The draft policy on the promotion of breastfeeding is under discussion, and consultations are underway on the adoption of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes.

110. In 2018, a total of 119 health workers from three hospitals received training on Kangaroo Mother Care, essential new-born care and lactation management. Subsequently, the hospitals of Maubisse and Maliana were certified as baby-friendly hospitals and are equipped to help mothers initiate breastfeeding quickly after birth and continue it during the adequate time.³⁹ Additionally, workers and midwives from the Comoro Community Health Centre also undertook training Essential New-born Care.⁴⁰

111. The maternity leave in the Labour Code remains 12 weeks long, however, other provisions of the Code establish protections to the working mother who is breastfeeding. These include the right to be excused from work two periods with the duration of one hour each, to feed her child, until the child completes 6 months. This dispensation given without loss of remuneration or any other rights.⁴¹

C. Information relating to paragraph 49 (mental health)

112. All public health facilities provide mental health care as part of a comprehensive health care. Additionally, the Ministry of Health established close cooperation with NGOs providing mental health care such as PRADET, the clinic of *São João de Deus* (St. John of God) and Klibur Domin Tibar, to extend their support when psychological therapy becomes

³⁸ Preliminary Report, Timor-Leste Food and Nutrition Survey 2020, pg. 21.

³⁹ 2018 – A Journal of Change in Timor-Leste, p. 16–17.

⁴⁰ UNICEF-TL, Healthcare workers expand their skillsets to help mothers give their babies the best start in life: <https://www.unicef.org/timorleste/stories/healthcare-workers-expand-their-skillsets-help-mothers-give-their-babies-best-start-life>.

⁴¹ Art. 62(2) and Art. 62(3) of Law no. 4/2012 on the Labour Code.

necessary. This cooperation has proved effective in providing psychological support to children victims of abuse as well as children in conflict with the law.

D. Information relating to paragraph 51 (adolescent health)

113. The Government recognizes that limited access to information in reproductive health among adolescent has been among the main challenges faced in the efforts to reduce teenage pregnancy. Therefore, one the areas in which focus attention has been given is the provision of information through public awareness campaign,⁴² including the provision of reproductive health information integrated in in the school curriculum. Awareness raising to reduce teenage pregnancy and combat the unintended risks of unsafe sexual life of adolescents is conducted through cross sectoral collaboration, involving agencies and organizations working in the area of youth, education, labour and religious organizations. The public awareness campaign has been focusing on the danger and disadvantages of teenage pregnancy. The campaign also involves parents, teachers, religious and community leaders, both as target groups as well as agents of information. Strategically, municipalities with highest teenage pregnancy have been identified and selected as the priority target in the public information campaign.

114. As stated in the National Strategy on Reproductive, Maternal, New-born, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) 2015 – 2019, the Government intends make the delivery of all RMNCAH services in an integrated manner with other relevant health services, requiring all health service providers the conditions to deliver RMNCAH services.

115. The Situation Analysis conducted in the process of formulating the National Strategy on RMNCAH also identified that the consumption of among young people leads to reduced self-control, lack of caution and poor judgment, which can expose them to risky behaviours.⁴³ The Government public information campaign has also included information on the health risks associated with the consumption of alcohol and tobacco among young people. The Ministry of Health is currently preparing the law on the sale and consumption of alcohol, which will appropriately determine the minimum age for the consumption of alcohol.

E. Information relating to paragraph 53 (standard of living)

116. Decree Law no. 18/2012 which establishes the Bolsa da Mãe program expressly stipulates that the program is aimed for households in vulnerable economic and social situations, with children under their care. The final objectives of the program are the reduction of poverty, promotion of participation in compulsory basic education, and access to primary health care. To implement the program, the Ministry of Social Solidarity issued Ministerial Diploma number 12/2012, which determines the criteria for households for benefit from the program. The Ministry of Social Solidarity is tasked with the implementation of the program, with regular and periodic assessments of the beneficiaries' conditions to determine the continuation or termination of their status as beneficiaries.

117. While the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion believes that the Bolsa da Mãe provides part of the most needed assistance to vulnerable families, it is conscious that the program needs to be revaluated and readjusted with the reality of Timor-Leste in order for it to have significant impact in reducing poverty in the country. In a recently published document,⁴⁴ the Ministry presents several alternatives by which the Bolsa da Mãe program can be redesigned to become an effective tool to combat poverty, including child poverty, in Timor-Leste.

⁴² See also paragraph 36.

⁴³ National Strategy for Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health 2015 – 2019, pg. 16.

⁴⁴ MSSI Case for Bolsa da Mãe – Advocacy Brief, 2020.

VIII. Education, leisure and cultural activities

Information relating to paragraph 55 (education, including vocational training and guidance)

118. Statistics obtained from 2016 to 2019 shows a great disparity between children enrolling in pre-school and those entering basic education. This indicates that the majority of pupil enrolling in basic education never attended school. The Government is doubling its efforts to promote enrolment in pre-school, including by establishing community-based pre-schools. The program was initially piloted in the municipalities of Aileu and Ermera, and has now been expanded to other municipalities, in collaboration with UNICEF and the Government of New Zealand. In addition to the Pre-School Curriculum adopted in 2014, the MoE issued a Ministerial Diploma in 2016,⁴⁵ which establishes the minimum standard for community-based pre-school institutions to be accredited by the Government.

119. Additionally, an on-going five-year cooperation program between Timor-Leste (ME) and New Zealand, the HANDS (Halimar, Aprende, Deskobre Susesu) Programme is being implemented, aiming to increase access to quality pre-school education⁴⁶.

120. To enhance the opportunities for children from low-income families to access higher education The Ministry of Social Solidarity scholarships for the children of martyrs, to study in the country and abroad.⁴⁷

121. Greater access to education at the basic education level is further enhanced by the publication of bilingual books and teachers' manual, although currently limited to social science. The Government also supports to private schools through the provision of school furniture and salaries of teachers. The MoE continues to provide introductory and advance courses to teachers. During the reporting period 2,656 teachers of basic education from all municipalities have completed a course with the duration of 170 hours. This is the last batch of teachers to complete the course, concluding a process which started in 2005 to ensure that every teacher in the basic education level has the required qualification to teach. This means that every basic education teacher in Timor-Leste today has accumulated the basic requirement to teach.

122. To encourage parents' and communities' participation in supporting a greater school retention, the law on the Structure and Head of Suco (Village) of 2016 gave competencies to the Suco, the Chefe de Suco (Chief of Village) and Aldeia (Hamlet, smaller community units that make up a Suco), to "Sensitize members of the community on the importance of child schooling and mobilize them to combat school dropouts".

123. Mainstreaming gender equality in schools and conscientization to eradicate discrimination against vulnerable students such as girls and students with disabilities continues to be conducted, in collaboration with other Ministries and Secretaries of States, as well as with UN Agencies and NGOs. In 2019, The MoE and the Secretariat of State for Equality and Inclusion jointly held information sessions, involving 1,200 students and teachers at secondary education level.

IX. Special protection measures

A. Information relating to paragraph 57 (economic exploitation, including child labour)

124. To better understand the situation of child labour in the country, the Government, in collaboration with the ILO, conducted the National Child Labour Survey in 2016. The Survey

⁴⁵ Ministerial Diploma no. 8/2016, 1 February 2016, Approving the Regulation on the Licensing of Educational and Teaching Establishments.

⁴⁶ HANDS Programme Mid-Term Review, p. 5.

⁴⁷ Summary of the main results, p. 18.

found that approximately 67,688 children aged 5–17, representing 16.1 percent of the children population, are engaged in some form of economic activity.⁴⁸ Out of this, an estimate of 62,710 are engaged in subsistence agriculture activities to support their parents, while 4,978 work in various field in the urban areas. From the total number of children working, 15,037 are considered to be engaging in permissible work. The remaining 52,651 are in child labour.

125. The Secretariat of State for Vocational Training and Employment is currently conducting consultation to develop the draft National Action Plan on Child Labour. In the meantime, the draft list of Hazardous and Prohibited Activities for Children is in its final version, awaiting approval from the Secretary of State Vocational Training and Employment.

B. Information relating to paragraph 59 (children in street situation)

126. Due to economic hardship, some children are forced to sell merchandises on the streets, especially in the capital. Some of these children are orphaned, while others have left their parents' homes in the municipalities and came to the capital to find money to finance their schools. Others remain with their parents in Dili, but sells goods on the streets to help their families. The Ministry of Social Solidarity is working with *Fundasaun Forun Comunicasaun Juventude Oratorio Dom Bosco*, a registered Social Solidarity Institution, to provide support to street children in Dili. The Foundation assist street children with shelter and other assistance they need, with financial support from the Ministry of Social Solidarity. Between 2016 and 2019, the Ministry has disbursed a total amount of 526,950.67 to the Foundation to support their work with street children.

C. Information relating to paragraph 61 (sale, trafficking and abduction)

127. The Law on the Prevention, Suppression and Punishment of Trafficking in Persons was approved by the National Parliament and entered into force on 26 January 2017.⁴⁹ This law represents a significant step in combating trafficking in persons in Timor-Leste. It is important to note that, for the purpose of this law, a child is defined as any person below the age of 18 year, and that the law provides especial protections for children.

128. It is a very important piece of legislation as it goes beyond the simple criminalization of human trafficking. Human trafficking was already a crime under the Timorese law since 2005, by virtue of the Criminal Code. The Anti Trafficking Law provides a strong framework for prevention, protection and redress.⁵⁰ The Law is in full compliance with the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols, and incorporates as criminal liability of legal persons for involvement and participation in illegal human trafficking. It establishes, inter alia, rules for criminal investigation and prosecution, and victim's right to compensation. It also determines a number of duties for the public authorities to implement preventive actions. The legislation also sets the obligation to promote international cooperation to identify victims, conduct investigations and prosecutions and prevent illegal human trafficking.

129. For its implementation, a working group has been established to ensure that sufficient attention is given to the multidisciplinary nature of this law, which is that, to be effective it, requires the involvement of a number of government agencies. While there are challenges to secure the coordination, this forum is key to promote faster and more adequate response from the perspective of supporting child victims of trafficking.

130. A National Action Plan has been drafted to strengthen the coordinated implementation of the law and it is, as of the end of 2019, waiting for approval of the Council of Ministers.

131. As a result of these efforts, increasing the number of trafficking incidences have been investigated and referred to the prosecutors. The Judicial Training Center now has included

⁴⁸ Report of the National Child Labour Survey 2016, 2019.

⁴⁹ Law Nr. 3/2017, January 25th.

⁵⁰ Also read paragraph 0.

the subject of human trafficking in its curriculum for the training of new judges, prosecutors, and defense attorneys, as well for the existing members of the judiciary.

132. Article 9 of the Law on Prevention, Suppression and Punishment of Trafficking in Persons provides that victims of trafficking in persons are entitled to compensation for losses and damages arising from the crime. Articles 11 provides for the protection specific protection to witnesses and victims who are below the age of 18 years, and specifically requires that their interests become the primary consideration throughout the criminal proceeding. The law also amended the PC strengthening the investigation, prosecution and punishment of offenders and promotes international cooperation.

133. Article 16 of the Anti-Trafficking Law establishes the general principles for the provision of support and assistance to victims, while article 17 lists specific measures, rights and access to legal assistance, medical treatment, including psychological treatment, as well as social support. Additionally, Article 18 determines that minor victims have priority access to the protection and assistance mechanisms available.

134. In addition, articles 23 to 25 introduce a special regime for granting residence permits to foreign victims if they wish to remain in Timor-Leste. Articles 26 and 27 place an obligation on the country to provide support and assistance for the return of the victims to their country of origin. This includes cases in which Timorese citizens or legal residents are taken abroad, or foreign citizens trafficked into the country.

135. The Ministry of Social Solidarity has been working with the Child Protection Network children victims of sexual exploitation, and accompany them in their recovery and eventual reintegration.⁵¹ As regard protection and support for trafficking victims, the Government's effort is benefiting greatly from experiences already acquired by partner NGOs such as PRADET, which, long before the adoption of the Anti-Trafficking Law, has been partnering with the IOM to provide support for victims of human trafficking.

136. The primary responsibility for the enforcement of the Anti-Trafficking Law remains with the Government. However, article 33 of the Law provides for the cooperation between the Government and the civil society to strengthen the prevention of trafficking in persons and the protection and assistance of victims. Prior to the adoption of the Law, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has organized a training which involved 660 participants from a broad range of fields, including law enforcement officers, government officials, social services staff, NGOs, judges and prosecutors. The training has helped the participants to enhance their understanding on the development and strengthening of a national surveillance system and increase their awareness on human trafficking, the capacity to address root causes of vulnerability to trafficking, as well as providing them with the ability to identify potential victims of trafficking.⁵²

137. The IOM continues to work with the MoJ to disseminate information on human trafficking.

D. Information relating to paragraph 63 (administration of juvenile justice)

138. The Government in partnership with UNICEF has been developing modules and conducting training for the police and judges in the methods of child justice administration. They have also been focusing on capacity development for various actors in the system including child protection officers. As part of this cooperation, 52 judicial actors and 25 prison guards have been trained on issues relating to child rights, child development and child-friendly procedures.⁵³

⁵¹ See Paragraph also 62.

⁵² 10 facts about human trafficking in Timor-Leste (https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/country/docs/timor-leste/10_facts_about_human_trafficking_in_timor-leste_iom_counter-trafficking_programme_2018.pdf).

⁵³ UNICEF Annual Report 2017, p. 4.

139. The subject of administration of juvenile justice has also been included in the material for training of judicial actors, including judges, prosecutors and public defenders. Members of the judiciary has also participated in training courses provided by institutions in countries with similar systems such as Brazil and Portugal.

140. Discussions are ongoing for the establishment of a comprehensive legislative framework for juvenile justice. There are several draft laws in the pipeline that will initiate a distinct division within the district courts to handle cases of children in conflict with the law, enable diversion at the prosecutorial level, and even ensure a better future by expunging the criminal record upon completion of the sentence.

141. Currently, the psychological support provided by Social Protection Network of the Ministry of Social Solidarity is also available, and has been used by minors in detention. Such psychological support is provided with the view to facilitate the rehabilitation of the inmates and prepare them for reintegration upon the completion of their sentence, and to avoid repetition of criminal offence. The MoJ is working with the MoE, MSSI and the Secretariat of State for Vocational Training and Employment to devise the most appropriate skill training for inmates, including juvenile inmates, to assist them with their future reintegration and allow them to lead a normal life.

142. Cumulatively since 2016, there are 63 juvenile inmates out of 2,283 inmates in the entire penitentiary system of Timor-Leste. Twenty of the 63 juvenile inmates are repeated offenders.

X. Ratification of international human rights instruments

A. Information relating to paragraph 64 (ratification of optional protocol on communication)

143. Timor-Leste is a party to seven core human rights treaties, and taking all the necessary legislative, policy and administrative measures to ensure that those treaties are properly implemented in the country.

144. The Government notes that the Committee has made a number of recommendations for Timor-Leste to make further ratifications of a number of human rights treaties and optional protocols. At this juncture, the Government wishes to report that Preparation is underway for the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). This process receives a broad support nation-wide, from community members as well as the National Parliament. In October 2019, the National Parliament passed a resolution containing 13 recommendations to be implemented by the Government in relations to the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities.⁵⁴ These recommendations include the commencement of the preparation for the ratification of the CRPD. As part of this process, the Government is preparing the establishment of the National Council for Persons with Disabilities, and formulating the National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities

145. Timor-Leste will consider the implications of any further ratification treaties, including the optional protocol on communication, and the appropriate decision in due course.

B. Information relating to paragraph 65 (ratification other human rights instruments)

146. It is suggested to consider adopting the wording proposed in paragraph 167.

⁵⁴ Recommends the Government to adopt measures relating to the protection of persons with disabilities, National Parliament Resolution no. 21/2019, 3 October 2019.

XI. Cooperation with regional bodies

Information relating to paragraph 66 (cooperation with regional bodies)

147. Timor-Leste continues to pursue cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and conclude its formal application for membership in 2011. Timor-Leste became a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in 2005 and acceded to the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation. As a member of ARF, Timor-Leste has hosted three ARF Workshops in 2011, 2017 and 2019. In August 2019, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation hosted a meeting with his ASEAN counterparts, where reiterated Timor-Leste's commitment to be part of ASEAN, and its preparedness to follow the accession process as determined by the Association.

148. The Provedoria is a member of the Southeast Asia National Human Rights Institutions Forum (SEANF). The Provedoria actively participates and has hosted several meetings of the SEANF, and coordinates with other members of the Forum to discuss and address human rights issues of common concern.

149. It is worth noting that Timor-Leste's Provedoria of Human Rights has been in close cooperation with the parallel institution from one of ASEAN countries, the Indonesian Human Rights Commission, on various aspects of personnel training and institutional development, as well on the follow up of the findings and recommendation of the countries' joint Commission for Truth and Friendship (CFT).

150. Timor-Leste strengthened bilateral cooperation with the CPLP countries, with protocols in the area of justice having been established with Portugal, Cape Verde, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe and Brazil. These protocols cover the training of human resources, technical and legal advice, support for the functioning of justice institutions, exchanges, internships, sharing and exchange of legal information, among others. The XIV Conference of Ministers of Justice of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CMJPLOP) was held, within which important activities were carried out in the field of land rights, children's rights and the fight and prevention of trafficking in human beings.⁵⁵

151. Moreover, in July 2019, the XXIV Ordinary Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the CPLP adopted the CPLP Strategic Cooperation Document 2020-2026, reinforcing the previous CPLP Strategic Cooperation Document 2016-2026. The recent document focuses on establishing cooperation among the member states towards the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals and, particularly, in human rights and good governance, education, gender equality, youth and sports, health and food and nutrition security.

XII. Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Pornography and Child Prostitution

A. Information relating to paragraph 6 (data collection)

152. The proper collection and maintenance of data relating to the crime of trafficking and sale of children are essential for effective prevention, prosecution and the provision of adequate protection to victims and witnesses. This, in turn, require the law enforcement agencies and the justice system to have the capacity to conduct thorough investigations and identify the perpetrators and victims, and gather all the necessary information.

153. With the establishment of the Scientific Police for Criminal Investigation, the enhanced the capacity of the law enforcement authorities in conducting investigation. The Government acknowledge, however, that the overall system of justice and law enforcement

⁵⁵ Portrait of the VI Constitutional Government, p. 120–121.

need to be further developed to face the challenge posed by the crime of trafficking and sale of children, which often involve large networks in their operations, and conduct their activities in a clandestine fashion.

B. Information relating to paragraph 8 (national plan of action on human trafficking)

154. As presented in the initial report in 2007,⁵⁶ the Inter-Agency Working Group on Human Trafficking made a number of recommendations, including the development of a national action plan on human trafficking. The working Group also played an important role in the development of the Law on the Prevention and Combatting Trafficking in Persons, which was adopted in 2017. The Government recognizes that trafficking in persons is a crime which is well thought and often involve meticulous calculations to evade the law enforcement authorities. Therefore, the efforts to combat this crime must also involve good planning, with clear mechanisms for cooperation among all the relevant agencies. With this in mind, a National Action Plan on trafficking in persons will a desired addition to the framework to combat this crime. Consideration is being given to the development of this action plan.

C. Information relating to paragraph 10 (coordination and evaluation)

155. The National Commission on the Rights of the Child was established in September 2009.⁵⁷ Are reported in paragraph 2 of this report, the National Action Plan for Children in 2016, in which the National Commission for the Rights of the Child is assigned with the responsibilities of coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan.

D. Information relating to paragraph 12 (dissemination and training)

156. The National Commission for the Rights of the Child, in cooperation with the MoJ, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other organizations have been conducting awareness raising campaigns, both at the national level and in the municipalities. In the efforts to combat trafficking in persons, the Government recognizes the pivotal role which have been played by the UN agencies and the IOM. In 2016, the IOM facilitated the provision of training to law enforcement officials, officials from other relevant ministries, as well as NGO staff members.

157. The Government recognizes that further training is required for the law enforcement officials and officials of the judiciary to strengthen the countries capabilities to combat trafficking in persons.

E. Information relating to paragraph 14 (allocation of resources)

158. The structure of Timor-Leste State Budget does not permit the acquisition of specific budget allocated to specific action which constitutes the implementation of the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children. However, the National Action Plan for Children requires ministries to incorporate in their planning and budgeting, activities which aimed toward implementing the CRC and its Optional Protocols.

F. Information relating to paragraph 16 (preventive measures)

159. In the reporting period, various legislations have come into force and strengthened the countries capacity to prevent the commission of crime under this protocol. The social protection system has also been developed to provide support to victims when needed.

⁵⁶ Paragraph 5, document CRC/C/OPSC/TLS/1, 28 June 2007.

⁵⁷ Also refer to paragraph 25 of the Combined Second and Third Periodic Report of 2014, document CRC/C/TLS/2-3 for information.

160. Through economic development and social programs, the Government continues its efforts to eradicate poverty, one of the root causes of vulnerability to child trafficking and prostitution.

G. Information relating to paragraph 18 (birth registration)

161. For information with respect to birth registration see paragraphs 52 – 55 of the present report.

H. Information relating to paragraph 20 (legal framework)

162. The National Parliament of Timor-Leste approved Law number 3/2017 on the Prevention, Suppression and Punishment of Trafficking in Persons,⁵⁸ which defines a minor to be any person below the age of 18 years. Other articles of the law guarantee special protection to minor who is a witness or a victim of Trafficking in Persons.⁵⁹

163. The definition of the crime under Article 2 of the law encompasses all acts listed under article 3 of the Optional Protocol.

I. Information relating to paragraph 21 (ratification of UN conventions)

164. See paragraph 165 of the present report.

J. Information relating to paragraph 23 (extradition)

165. Timor-Leste has not signed any extradition treaty with any State. However, it has cooperated with other States in several cases of cross-boundary crimes, and is able to consider extradition on a case-by-case basis.

K. Information relating to paragraph 25 (protection of the rights of victims)

166. Article 11 of the Anti-Trafficking Law provides guarantee of the State's protection for children who are witnesses or victims of a crime of trafficking in person. Article 4 of the Law prohibit the application of any legal sanctions against victims of the crime of trafficking in person for having entered the territory illegally. Furthermore, Article 24 provides that victims of trafficking in persons, while entering the territory illegally, are permitted to remain in the country, where deemed necessary by the competent authority, until his or her eventual repatriation.

XIII. Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Protection of Children in Armed Conflict

- Follow-up information relating to paragraph 6 of the Concluding Observations of 2008 (measures for implementation).
- Follow-up information relating to paragraph 8 of the Concluding Observations of 2008 (prevention).
- Follow-up information relating to paragraph 10 of the Concluding Observations of 2008 (human rights education).

⁵⁸ See also paragraphs 122 and 123 of this report.

⁵⁹ Article 18(7) of Law no. 3/2017.

- Follow-up information relating to paragraph 12 of the Concluding Observations of 2008 (prohibition and related matters).
- Follow-up information relating to paragraph 14 of the Concluding Observations of 2008 (martial arts groups).
- Follow-up information relating to paragraph 16 of the Concluding Observations of 2008 (protection, recovery and reintegration).
- Follow-up information relating to paragraph 18 of the Concluding Observations of 2008 (follow-up and dissemination).

167. Unfortunately, no data available to present in this period of the report to cover the optional protocols of Children in Armed Conflict as so far Timor-Leste no case on children in Armed Conflict.

XIV. Additional Information

The Government commitment to reform the specific policy in response to pandemic covid 19

168. The Covid 19 pandemic is affected all around the world, including Timor-Leste with the emergency and the government decided to lock down all the movement either inside or outside the country. The Covid 19 Pandemic has contributed to state economic and increased poverty, particularly in vulnerable families.

169. Through the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion, the government of Timor-Leste has taken a concrete step in response to the actual situation faced by all counties, including Timor-Leste. In February 2021, the Council of Ministers approved a reform initiative called “Mother’s purse for new generation”/Bolsa da Mãe Jersaun Foun. The Bolsa da Mãe Jersaun Foun is a cash transfer program for pregnant women and children up to primary school (6 years). Its coverage will be universal (within the eligible population). It will provide transfer values significantly higher than Bolsa da Mãe (proposing \$15 per month for pregnant women and \$20 per month for children within the eligible age group).

170. The VIII Constitutional Government recognizes the importance of Bolsa da Mãe in reducing poverty, improving health, nutrition, and education outcomes. The Economic Recovery Plan (p81) states that Bolsa da Mãe “can have a significant impact in poverty reduction among children, who are currently particularly vulnerable to poverty” and priorities creating “conditions for the Bolsa da Mãe to increase its coverage.”

171. The Jersaun Foun will be introduced initially in three municipalities and progressively roll out across the country. The Jersaun Foun is a significant component of MSI’s National Social Protection Strategy (in preparation) and its Strategic Plan for 2021–2025 and the pilot phase for three years (2022, 2023, and 2024). However, MSI has a high commitment to extending the Jersaun Foun to all municipalities as soon as possible.